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NO. 7

THE SAVIOUR

OF THE WORLD

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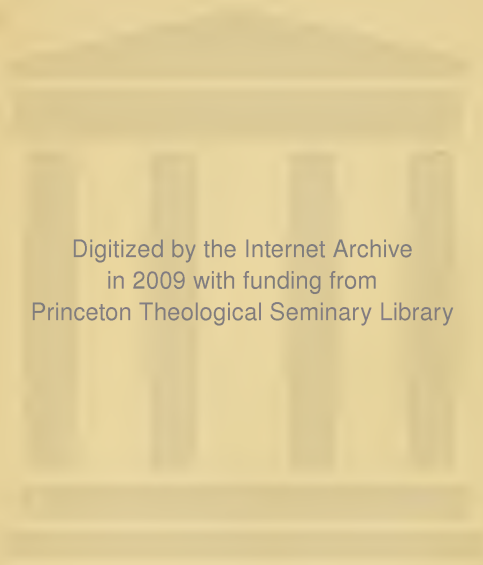
CHARLES ELWOOD NASH D.D.



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The saviour of the world





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EDITED BY REV. J. S. CANTWELL, D.D.

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Manuals of Faith and Duty.

No. VII.



THE

SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

BY

✓
CHARLES ELLWOOD NASH, D.D.

THE FATHER SENT THE SON TO BE THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.
1 JOHN iv. 14.

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“The world sits at the feet of Christ
Unknowing, blind, and unconsolèd;
It yet shall touch His garment’s fold,
And feel the heavenly Alchemist
Transform its very dust to Gold.”

J. G. WHITTIER.

Great harm may be done by misconceiving the person of Christ; but the greatest harm — the only unmitigated harm — is done when we deny that somehow God is in him and in him most of all.

Prof. MARCUS DODDS, D.D.

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.



INTRODUCTORY.

THE theme of this essay might well have been discussed under the inclusive titles of other volumes which have preceded it in the series of Manuals. Between the gaps, however, of the treatment of those titles, necessarily meagre as prescribed by a strict page-limit, the editor finds room for the line of study pursued herein.

The theme itself is central, spermatic. In our times the real incidence of infidelity is at this point. The most vital challenge of unbelief is that which casts suspicion upon the perpetual mastership of Jesus; while the resources of Christian apologetics are more and more being called in from merely tactical or ornamental outposts to rally around this doctrine as the very bleeding heart of the Gospel.

The object of our little book is not to defend but to interpret the right of Jesus to the title "the Saviour of the World;" to show what occasion there is in human need and in the divine plan for such a Saviour; to indicate the methods by which Jesus effects the task, and to point out his qualifications for the immense undertaking.

I. — THE CLAIM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

JESUS OF NAZARETH CLAIMED TO BE THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. This, indeed, was his dominant and most distinctive pretension, the essence and aggregate of all his claims. Whatever else he professed to be and to do was subsidiary to this supreme office. In his self-apprehension, sonhood, messiahship, ambassadorial function, and "miracle" power were each but a part of the absorbing whole of his Saviourhood. That, above every other relation, expresses the motive, method, mission of his life.

So familiar is this claim that our ears are dull to its import. Its very magnificence and audacity render it difficult to seize. The initial

proposition above is, however, offered in good faith; its terms are meant to be literal and precise; every item is premeditated and emphatic. In the scientific sense of the words, we repeat that Jesus claimed to be the Saviour of the world.

The full weight of this postulate can best be felt by first estimating each member separately.

1. *It is Jesus himself that testifies.* — Note, first, that what we allege is the self-consciousness of Jesus, his deposition on his own behalf, — not any extravagant *post obit* laudations of certain over-fond, half-hypnotized admirers. The witness of apostles and evangelists has of course its own value; but here we have the “mind of Christ.” The self-appraisal of Jesus is of the very texture of the Gospel record, expressed in his words, implied in his philosophy, assumed in his attitude, necessary to his authority. It cannot be detached and discharged from the narrative, except by a violence of *a priori* tyranny which tears the story to tatters, leaving scarcely a shred upon which faith may hang with confidence. The claim as put forth by Jesus is not casual nor incidental; it is central, italic, inevitable,

appearing consistently and characteristically throughout his sayings and doings. It is not ecstatic but calm and normal; not covert but pronounced; is urged without apology or proof, and equally without sign of vanity or of embarrassment; is emphasized in each of the four Gospels, though more definitively in that according to John; and must be regarded as one of the most distinguishing marks of the doctrine of Jesus.

The very conception of such a claim is a surprise and a marvel. It was not one to be easily invented by the infatuation of that age. Other heroes have aspired to world-wide dominion; but who had dreamed of the possibility of a mortal man swaying and moulding, not the behaviors, professions, opinions, but the very characters of universal humanity? What a mind must have been his who first entertained the thought of salvation for the whole world! What measureless assurance in the boast by any man, of power vested in him to achieve that stupendous result! There are moral as well as material impossibilities. The evangelists were not competent to the originality, the grandeur, the hardihood, of such an invention.

There is even less likelihood that, if they could have fabricated the vision of such a conquest for their hero, they would have imposed upon him the peril of sounding his own trumpet before men. At first blush, such a pretension would seem to argue only a maudlin or insane conceit. It would more readily excite derision or contempt than command credence and homage. It is probable that no other great Founder of a Religion ever put forward such personal claims. Not Confucius, assuredly, who humbled himself rather before the superior merits of ancient teachers: "I cannot bear to hear myself called equal to the sages and the good. All that can be said of me is, that I study with delight the conduct of the sages, and instruct men without weariness therein." Not Gautama the Buddha: "The Perfect thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the Buddhist order is dependent upon him. Why, then, should he leave instructions in any matter concerning the order?" Not Socrates, who said to his pupil Alcibiades: "Unless it please God to send us some one from Him to instruct us, do not hope ever to succeed in reforming the morals of men. The best course we can take is

to wait patiently. Yes, . . . we must wait till some one comes." In a word, the almost exceptionless humility of great men is proverbial. Is it, after all, humility, or rather a deep sense of real limitation to which shallow souls do not attain? Jesus too acknowledged limitations, but not with any hint of deference to other men. Before the Father only he made obeisance; as to men he asserted mastery and lordship. Was this mere egotism? Was it monomania? Or was it a true and tremendous self-revelation? Whatever answer we find for these questions, whether we regard the claim as a blemish or an effulgence in his character, the claim remains as a substantive element in the teaching of Jesus. He *claimed* to be the Saviour of the world.

2. *An actual Saviour.* — Next, the claim is that Jesus really saves, and is to save, men. He is not merely an experimenter or endeavorer; not a would-be reformer; not a weaver of pleasant dreams; not simply a preacher of salvation, but actually a *saver* of sinners. His announcement of the fact is not weakened by any accent of uncertainty. He never says "I wish," or "I'll try," or "It may be." No mere

assurance of sympathy or promise of effort is extended. The ability to do whatever is needed is serenely assumed or boldly alleged. He not only wants to save or will try to save, — he *can* save, he *will* save. This is uniformly his tone.

The outcome of his mission is, indeed, conditioned but not contingent. He engages unqualifiedly to effect the result, but recognizes also the perplexities of the problem to be solved. He lets it be known that his method is one of persuasion and education, not of bare compulsion; that he proposes to respect the individual's liberty of choice; that there are inexorable requisites, — such as faith, repentance, obedience, the birth from above, the baptism of the Spirit, — without satisfying which no one can be saved. These conditions are presumed; they are *implied*, not as preliminary to salvation, but among the elements which define salvation. They indicate just what needs to be done, what constitutes the predicament of "the lost," what work a Saviour has before him. Merely to analyze and announce these conditions a philosopher, or at most a prophet, would suffice; it is the business of a Saviour to *meet* them, to *get them fulfilled*. To cite these as limiting the

triumphs of Jesus is simply to affirm his impotence, to argue that *because* there is something to do, *therefore* it will be not done! Jesus certainly did not offer just to explain the nature and terms of salvation, but pledged himself actually to save the world.

3. *The whole world to be saved.* — Thirdly, the ability and purpose to save are said to involve *all men* in their beneficent operations. The variety of expression given to this assumption seems to preclude every rational demur, which does not repudiate the historicity of the record, or impugn the authority of Jesus. Let the array of evidence below speak for itself.

4. *The only universal Saviour.* — More yet, much more did Jesus claim, — more than genuine saving power, more than world-wide victories. He presented himself as *the* Saviour of men; that is, the only adequate and unlimited Saviour.

He recognized, to be sure, the value of the service rendered by others. He did not claim a monopoly of virtue or helpfulness. He acknowledged other prophets of God: their work he came not to destroy but to fulfil. They too in their degree were saviours, but not able to

carry the process clear through. He honored their endeavors, but declared their insufficiency. He was wholly without jealousy in the matter, generously welcoming the alliance of those even who denied his authority, saying with fine hospitality, "He that is not against us is for us." Nevertheless he asserted his own primacy, not as a boast, not as a merit, not as an ambition, but simply as a fact, — this in language that shows no trace of intended metaphor or hyperbole, — tranquil, straightforward, consistent, decisive.

It is sometimes said that Jesus "claimed nothing for himself," — a capital error. Not "as an end," if you please, but surely "as a means," he claimed a great deal for himself. In the very foreground of his teaching he placed himself, his office, his mission, his dignity, his authority, dwarfed and subordinated there only by the supreme majesty of the Father. He, quite as much as his disciples, admitted "no rival near the throne." His own language far more than theirs insists upon his undisputed mastership over the faiths and fruits of the discipleship that professed allegiance to him, subject, always, it may be well to reiterate, to his

Father and our Father, his God and our God (John xx. 17).

This then is the significance of our proposition. With an accent upon every word, Jesus claimed to be the Saviour of the world. This, we say, is his own plain declaration concerning himself, not the flattery of his followers, not the slow accretion of myth-making centuries. If anything in the canonical records is trustworthy as history, this self-estimation is so. We do not at this point touch the inquiry whether the claim itself is credible. We only affirm that Jesus actually made the claim in all its radicalness and magnitude.

Let us appeal to the texts for evidence which justifies this ascription.

II. — REALITY OF THE CLAIM.

We cannot undertake within the dimensions of our small volume to develop this evidence fully. Yet what we cite will probably be ample for all who are content to leave the veracity of the records unimpeached.

1. *That Jesus himself made the claim* will appear in the fact that all the references given

under the following heads are to his words, and not to any opinion or commentary of others, which, for the present, we exclude.

2. That he claimed the power and prerogative of *an actual saviour of men* — not a mere philosophizer or philanthropist — is evinced as follows: —

He is the “bread of life,” which will infallibly appease the hunger and thirst of those who come to him (John vi. 35).

He is “sent” from the Father, not simply to propose a scheme or offer a chance of salvation, but “that the world should be saved through him” (John iii. 17).

He is the “door” that opens, not into an opportunity merely, but into effectual salvation (John x. 9).

To those that “labor and are heavy laden” he promises (through coming to him and wearing his yoke) not sympathy alone, but assured rest (Matt. xi. 28, 29).

To his sheep he *gives* (not offers) eternal life (John x. 28).

He has received “authority over all flesh,” that he should *give* eternal life (John xvii. 2).

He has “power on earth to forgive sins” (Mark ii. 10).

To the centurion his pledge is, "I will come and heal" thy servant (Matt. viii. 7).

"The Son of man is come to *seek and to save* (not seek to save) that which was lost (Luke xix. 10).

"I came that they may have life;" not "if they choose," but unequivocally *may have it* (John x. 10).

"I am the light of the world," not I am willing to be, or ambitious to be, but *I am* (John viii. 12).

And his full competency to meet all these self-imposed obligations is summed up in the immense affirmation, "All power (authority) hath been given me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

These are fair specimens of an habitual use of language than which nothing more confident or explicit can be conceived. There is no diffidence of self-distrust, no dismay before apparently insuperable tasks, no misgiving as to the ultimate outlook. He believes in himself; he feels able to "save to the uttermost (i. e., completely) them that draw near unto God through him" (Heb. vii. 25).

In all this there is no countenance whatever

for the pettifogging suggestion, begotten of certain creed exigencies, that a distinction is to be made between the *potential* Saviour which Jesus is to all alike, and the *actual* Saviour he is to some; or that Jesus or anybody else can be a saviour to those he does not really save. These are speculative refinements (where they are not rank absurdities) which are wholly alien to the unvarnished, matter-of-fact modes of Jesus' speech. He came not to propound a theory, but to execute a task, — that of reintroducing the Father to his children and effecting a reconciliation between them. That task he expected to accomplish in due time, because he felt himself to be adequately endowed thereto, and that as God's representative having limitless resources failure was out of the question. Such are the tone and posture that characterize him at all times.

3. The very texts which assert his actual saving influence assert also its *world-wide scope*. He customarily thought and spoke of himself, not as a saviour merely, but as a saviour of mankind, — of the whole world. Thus the proof under each particular largely duplicates that under the others. To the citations

already quoted we may, however, add the following:—

He came “not to judge the world but to save the world” (John xii. 47). If it be objected that “the world” may mean the race, rather than every human being (though how it is possible to save the race without saving every member of it has not yet been shown), at least the passage proves that the outlook and hope of Jesus were not local, national, nor transient in their reach, but humanity-wide and humanity-long; a minimum interpretation scarcely less awesome than the plenary one.

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me,” and shall be “in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37). Nothing of that gift shall be lost (39). Does this mean merely that he will save those whom he will save? How many are given? Is not this the answer: “The Father hath given all things into his hand” (John iii. 35; xiii. 3), and has “given him authority over all flesh” in order expressly that he may “give eternal life” to all (John xvii. 2).

When he has completed his labors “there shall be one flock, one shepherd” (John x. 16), which certainly negatives the dogma of two

flocks forever, one in heaven, one in hell. On this prophecy, the only logical alternative of Universalism is annihilation.

On condition that he be "lifted up from the earth," — a condition which was presently satisfied by the Cross, or, if not by the Cross, by the Ascension, — he "will draw all men unto (not toward) himself" (John xii. 32). Only invincible prepossession could imagine this pledge to be satisfied by race evolution, instead of by the lifting up of each individual soul to the side of the Master.

Finally, the limitless outstretch of his plan and ambition is given voice in the farewell commission which enjoined the apostles to go forward with his work, — to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15).

It is not here pretended even to outline the argument for the final universal victory of the Gospel. The point we emphasize is, that Jesus regarded himself as sent to save the world, — not a race, not a generation, not a class, but mankind past, present, and future. If there are those professing loyalty to him who cherish misgivings as to his ability to accomplish so

much, let us hope that none will be disposed to cast suspicion upon the sincerity of his aspirations or the universality of his sympathies. He has sketched for us his own portrait in that of the good shepherd, who could not endure to miss even one lamb from his flock, but persisted in his search for that straying one "until he found it" (Luke xv. 4). It is certain that this compassionate, Christ-taught age would not tolerate any would-be saviour who did not at least yearn for the recovery of *all* the lost.

4. Jesus *affirms his own peerlessness and indispensableness* in terms that cannot be mistaken: "Every one that hath heard from the Father and hath learned cometh unto me" (John vi. 45). That is, along the line of his spiritual evolution, however originated and promoted, every man, taught of God, comes at length to Jesus, — comes, so to say, to complete the higher, the university course of heavenly instruction, whose rudiments may have been learned elsewhere.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6). That is, through the eyes of Christ men gain their first transfiguring sight of the

Immense Fact, through the vitalizing touch of his spirit they first effectually lay hold of the Father. *Towards* the Father by other assistance, it may be: *to* the Father only by his.

Not merely to start, but also to perfect the higher life, through all the processes of its growth, is Christ indispensable. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye except ye abide in me. . . . Without me ye can do nothing" (John xv.4, 5). Strong words, easily travestied and made grotesque, but containing at their lowest valuation an amazing claim of pre-eminence and universal serviceableness.

As indicative of the uniqueness and exaltation of his position: "One is your master, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8, 10). If "all *ye*," then all men; if "*your* master," then the master of all other masters.

He rejects the hollow homage of those who seek to flatter him with "Lord, Lord," not, however, because he declines the title, but because of the falseness of their motive. Elsewhere he frankly claims that distinction: "Ye call me master and lord, . . . and so I am" (John xiii. 13).

He constantly claims for his words and acts the authority of God Himself, who operates through him. Not in his own strength but in God's he challenges the world. "My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me" (John vii. 16). "Neither came I of myself but He sent me" (John viii. 42). "The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do" (John v. 19). "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father" (John v. 23). "He that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me" (Luke x. 16). "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father" (John x. 15). "No man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him" (Luke x. 22).

Thus intimately related to the Father, he is identified also with the fortunes of men. He himself must share their sympathies and mingle with their destinies. He asserts a perpetual claim upon their remembrance (Luke xxii. 19). Belief in him is a condition of salvation (John iii. 36). Apparently a certain assimilation of the very substance of his personality is requisite (John vi. 53). The church is to be *his* church (Matt. xvi. 18). He must be *confessed* before men (Matt. x. 32). For *his sake* disciples should be

ready to sacrifice life itself (Mark viii. 35). Discipleship consists in *following him* (John xii. 26). And, finally, *before him* shall the nations be gathered for judgment, and *he* is to pronounce the penalty and assign the reward, according to men's actual or implied treatment of *him* (Matt. xxv. 31-46), where, although it is clear that he means to accent principles rather than mere personal loyalty to himself, it is not less clear that he assumes for himself not only a conspicuous, but the capital and commanding function in the great assize.

Without pausing to compute the precise range of each of these extraordinary claims we cannot evade their general and consistent impression. Of all great teachers Jesus was assuredly the most egoistic. He made his personality an integral part of his system. He did not trust the truth to its own merits merely, but came to bear witness to it (John xviii. 37). The tone of "authority" which was marked in the Sermon on the Mount was present in all his acts and utterances. His manner, without being arrogant, was strongly assertative; and we may say of his whole style and assumption that "never man spake like this man."

The proof, then, is ample: there is here no chance of mistake. Jesus did unquestionably claim to be the Saviour of the world. Assuming the validity of the Gospel narratives candid exegesis can yield no other conclusion. We cannot say that the conclusion rests upon slavish adherence to the letter of a few texts, for the texts are not few, and the interpretation is not founded on uncertain words alone, but upon the total effect and tendency of the record. We cannot say, These claims are metaphorical, or they are instances of oriental over-statement, and therefore of slight significance, without employing canons which evaporate the whole narrative into mere speculative mist. We cannot, by repudiating the Fourth Gospel as merely a piece of fond theorizing by some visionary and sentimental convert of a post-apostolic period, clear the way for a strictly "naturalistic" conception of Christ, for the essential claim above developed remains in the other evangelists.

A single alternative is presented: either to cast overboard the whole story as incredible, — the Rationalistic verdict; or, accepting it as historically valid, to attempt to make it intelli-

gible to ourselves, by tracing its philosophy and its practical applications, — the rational procedure.

III. — THE CLAIM ADMISSIBLE.

It is natural that this claim by one member of the human family of precedence and pre-eminence over all the others should not pass without challenge. It seems at first an immodest and exorbitant pretension. We are better pleased with the self-effacement of Confucius, the silence of Buddha, the semi-pessimism of Socrates. Nevertheless we cannot decline to inspect the credentials which accompany the claim, or to suspend judgment till the evidence is in.

There are two influences before which the reluctance of mere prepossession must give way in favor of the claim of Jesus.

First of these is the impregnable testimony of the records. As criticism has not been able to confute the authenticity and genuineness of these records as, on the whole, trustworthy eyewitness accounts of real occurrences; as exegesis cannot explain out of those records the

unmistakable attitude of dominance and authority which Jesus assumed; so the character and career of Jesus make it insupposable that he was romancing in these professions, or that he was temporarily "beside himself," or was otherwise misleading or misled in his self-representation. The mind of Jesus was too calm and quick to leave him the prey of weak illusions. The candor, the integrity of Jesus are pledges that he would not utter what, unless it were sublimely true, could only be pitiful and suicidal bombast. Where the alternative of faith in seemingly unlikely doctrines is such a rejection of historical data as proclaims a far more irrational confidence in the *a priori* assumptions of the intellect, — where refusal to be bound by adequate testimony amounts to saying, "If the facts do not agree with my opinions, then so much the worse for the facts," — truly reasonable minds cannot long waver in doubt. The kernel of the matter is this: It is far more probable that Jesus was justified in his claim, than that he should deceive or be deceived about it.

But, secondly, it must be granted that this claim of Jesus seems much less absurd and

incredible in our day than it might have seemed when he announced it, a mere youth, in Palestine. Nineteen centuries have done a great deal for the reputation of that youth. The figure of Jesus has not been obscured by the mighty growths of the ages. We have often found him right, against the world. His literal words have not seldom brought us closer to truth than all the attempted accommodations of them to the taste or convenience of men. After so many futile experiments and efforts to "climb up some other way," the discovery that the Gospel is actually the "power of God unto salvation" is reflecting back a deeper and wider authority upon the man of Nazareth. The tide which swelled from the foot of the Cross has rolled down the centuries, and now laps with its skirmish waves the shores of every land, without symptom of ebb or exhaustion. The pentecostal Word, addressing at this moment nearly five hundred peoples and tribes "each in their own tongue," and the spirit of the Master re-embodied in thousands of evangelists who are yielding up their lives to "preach the Gospel to every creature" in his name, prove that he was not an ephemeral incident but a permanent

factor in the world's regeneration, as he claimed to be. And while human benefactors are multiplying in every nation, and a countless host find their hearts burning with desire like Jesus to "go about doing good," these happy omens are everywhere being accompanied with a stronger emphasis, a more intelligent, more dignified, more vital emphasis upon allegiance to Jesus as the true captain of our salvation. At a hopeless disadvantage are those who wish to limit the function of Jesus to that of a Name, a Memory, a one-time Fact, and fail to recognize his vital connection with his disciples as Lord and Saviour. And where history has already done so much to justify his claims, faith can readily do the rest. It would seem that only those who know nothing or care nothing for this splendid vindication can now refuse to "crown him lord of all."

This Manual is written in simple fidelity to the claim of Jesus to be the world's Saviour. It is written, also, in the confidence that, since God has chosen that plan, there must be profound reasons for His selection of one man to be the guide and helper of all his brethren. An attempt is here made to indicate some of those

reasons, by a study of the nature of man, the problem of his evolution, and the fitness of Jesus to meet an actual need. A full treatment of so fundamental a theme would, of course, far exceed the limits of these brief pages, as well as the capacity of their author. Such outline suggestions as may here properly be offered, will be grouped under these several heads. WHY A SAVIOUR? HOW A SAVIOUR? WHAT A SAVIOUR!

IV. — WHY A SAVIOUR?

A clear and rational answer to this question is specially incumbent upon those who profess liberal or "advanced" theological opinions.

We know the philosophy by which Evangelical dogmatics vindicate the necessity for a Saviour. If we grant their premises we must admit the argument is very clear-cut and logical. By sin, they say, man has gotten himself into a hopeless predicament. He has created a debt which it is impossible for him ever to discharge by liquidation, and the proper penalty is endless imprisonment and torture. He cannot recover himself because the fatal effect of his

wrong-doing has been both to pervert the judgment and to paralyze the will, so that he cannot if he would, and would not if he could, turn about and serve God. But even if he were able at once to eschew all evil and practice all righteousness, that would not wipe out the record of the past; nor can he accumulate any stock of merit to stand off as a sinking-fund against the old debts, for it is no more than his duty to do each moment all that God requires, and there is no surplusage after each day's payment of service is met. Thus, on one hand, he is beset by the blight and pressure of infinite Justice, which demands full satisfaction, under penalty of final doom for every affront to the majesty of Divine Law. On the other hand, he is a slave to his sins, and a hopeless debtor to his past, without power or right to effect the smallest mitigation of his sentence.

In this dilemma, it is obvious that salvation can come only through a Saviour. It is not clear, indeed, what any Saviour can do for him under such conditions without abrogating somehow the supposed claims of Justice. But it is clear that the sinner himself is helpless; and as the conception of the divine government is

mechanical, it becomes easy to imagine a mechanical remedy applied in ceremonious deference to the scheme. Thus a Divine Being, even the Eternal Deity, intervenes to quench the claims of justice by himself sustaining the penalty which guilty men have incurred, and to clothe them with his own infinite merits so as to expunge their guilt and make them "whiter than snow."

If we repudiate this theory as irrational and childish we are bound to supplant it with a better one. In fact, however, the natural revolt against a presentation so discouraging to man and so discreditable to God has accentuated two sentiments which tend to disincline not a few to the whole New Testament suggestion of salvation through a Saviour sent from God.

a. First, resenting the dogma which describes them as vitiated through sin in their essential nature, so that they have become "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body," "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil" (Westminster Confession, chap. vi. 2, 4), men have come to lay splendid but exorbitant stress upon the dignity, independence, suffi-

ciency of the individual life. In that mood they are apt to bridle at any offer of outside aid as impertinent and intrusive. Especially have the growing spirit of liberty and the achievements of the human mind under the spur and privilege of freedom kindled self-confidence and made men unwilling to accept benefits as babes and weaklings. In the pride of his power and his performance a strong man may well exclaim, What need have I of a Saviour? Am I not capable of self-direction? Do I not know what is right? I will not surrender my will to another. I will be the architect of my own spiritual fortune as I have been of my material success.

This is good, grand in its royalty of manly self-reliance, but our friend does not mean all he says. Absolute independence, single-handed conquest of the universe, is more than any man dreams of. We profoundly respect his spirited protest against the mendicant, crawling posture of what is sometimes called religion; but we are sure that he too is finite, has his needs and his self-chosen masters, and will not finally shut the door in the face of any genuine friendship which proffers him its support.

b. With a large circle the word "culture" has come to express a competing and superior aspiration to take the place of salvation. But what if salvation and culture, truly defined, are after all identical? Salvation, as merely an escape from the deserved penalties of our misdeeds, is not an ambition that can stir the noblest pulses of our nature. Neither is culture, as mere *belles lettres*, refined speech, and polished manners, an ideal that can fully satisfy our highest yearnings. With sounder definitions, however, it will not be difficult to make the two conceptions match, if indeed they do not melt indistinguishably into one another.

One feature of the culturist philosophy, as commonly affected, stands somewhat in the way of the pretensions of Jesus. It is that which made Matthew Arnold, as its chief apostle, scoff at the personal allegiance which has flushed the hearts of millions of Christians with proud discipleship. It is a reluctance to agree to any standard as fixed, or any ideas as settled, in the presumed interest of open-mindedness and progress. It is a benevolent hospitality towards all truth and all goodness, which fails to discriminate between the good, the better,

and the best, and brands as narrowness and Jacobinism all energetic fealty to a chosen cause. It is a sort of indifferentism, which finds itself equally comfortable and at home in the most opposite schools, and objects to the incisiveness of parties or sects as savoring of pharisaism. With a consistency which adds little merit to its character, it puts no greater value upon life than upon learning, and esteems manners the peer of both. In its estimate the scholar rather outvies the sage, while either overshadows the saint. Especially does it condemn any display of ardor, as the fever or the fanaticism of ill-balanced natures.

Now all this, and much more like it, is not so bad in itself — for it is, on the whole, a rather amiable and innocuous extravagance of moderation — as it is in the resistance it offers to the influence of a personal Saviour. Doubtless with many it is a mere fad, and represents only one of the protean and evanescent forms into which an intrinsically selfish disposition translates itself. So far as it is really serious, however, it will tend to counteract its own theory by the very enthusiasm its pursuit may inspire; and when it discovers itself at last as

a Cause, as perhaps a personal discipleship to some recognized leader, as a crusade thrilled with a very Philistine zeal, it will have prepared the way for a welcome to the mastership of the best developed, most ripened, and most cultivated soul of the ages, Jesus who was called the Christ. There are many schoolmasters that lead men to the Gospel, and in the end culture will be found not the least or worst of them all.

V. — WHAT IS IT TO BE SAVED ?

As the basis of our attempted answer to the question of this chapter, we need first to get in mind precisely what salvation means, what it is that Jesus is supposed to accomplish for men. The subject has been well and amply treated in a previous volume of this series.¹ We offer here only a definition.

Salvation is, of course, *from* something. From what? The prevailing theories say, specifically, from the punishment due to sin, from "hell." With more breadth and thoroughness we might say, generically, from *all* the conse-

¹ No. v. "Salvation." By Orello Cone, D.D.

quences of sin. To this, however, we must add, from sin itself, whether regarded as the act or the impulse.

Our definition is not so different from the usual one as may be fancied. It is similar in principle, but it is more radical and more intelligent. What we equally see is that through his errors and iniquities *man is in trouble*. Salvation is the getting him out of his trouble. To the average thought, that will be adequately effected by securing him entrance after death into a safe and splendid place — heaven; which involves his rescue from a horrible place — hell, into which he was liable to be thrown without remedy. To our thought, the trouble is in the man himself, and can be cured only by bringing him back and out and up to the normal life of a child of God.

In a single word, salvation is a synonym of *perfection*, the full and glorious evolution of human nature into its highest, its divine estate.

Nor need we pause for any petty dispute as to the meaning of perfection. Matthew Arnold's idea of it, from the standpoint of culture, as "an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light,

increased life, increased sympathy," — if by the excessively modest participle "increased" we may understand, as it seems we must, matured, ripened, unalloyed, supreme, — will answer very well also from the standpoint of religion. We should perhaps prefer to say, — in loyalty to our habits of spiritual thought and expression, — that man will be perfect when the Godhood within him is fully formed and sovereign; when all the features of the divine image which constitute him an heir of heaven, a scion of eternity, a child of the Father, are brought out, balanced, and brightened, so that he becomes, according to his scale and calibre, a regnant member of the universal hierarchy, of which God is at once the norm and the everlasting, unapproachable Head. The lines which that development must take we find in Jesus, so that to our Christian type of thinking, perfection or salvation is simply to become like Christ. But this, in different terms, is substantially equivalent to Mr. Arnold's phrases quoted above. In plain words, a saved man is a man at his best, in the completest use and enjoyment of all his powers. He is a man getting the most out of life, because he lives in

harmony with realities, bends gracefully to the inevitable, and utilizes promptly the available. He is a man who has decided that it is better to side with God than to fight against him; better to conform to Nature than to get caught in her remorseless wheels; better to live in light than darkness, in peace than in strife, and who therefore comes early into his inheritance as a prince of the house of God.

We employ here untechnical terms, in order to clarify and emphasize the fact, that salvation in any true view of it is not an unintelligible mystery, nor a mechanical contrivance against which freedom and sanity revolt, nor a fell necessity to be avoided as long as possible and embraced at last only because the alternative is even worse; but is the equivalent of progress, of happiness, of personal power, of that enlargement of capability and of outlook which makes man the true lord of creation; and therefore something to be prized, to be eagerly sought, to be secured at any cost as the pearl of greatest price.

VI. — THE PROBLEM.

Now, understanding salvation to be humanity raised to its highest possible powers, and assuming the Father's benevolent purpose to push men forward to that destiny, how should he proceed? In particular, would he have occasion to employ the offices of such a Saviour as Jesus represented himself to be? In other terms, how can the function claimed by Jesus be fitted into the scheme of universal law and natural development with which recent science and philosophy have acquainted us? This form of inquiry seizes boldly, I think, the inmost pith and point of the prepossession which some feel against such a mission as Jesus sought to achieve.

Does there exist in the nature of things or in the nature of man any necessity for the services of a universal Saviour?

An assumption of wide authority in present-day thinking, which is taken to have intuitive, axiomatic force, is this: We need not expect God to do for man what he has made man capable of doing for himself. The ground of this

canon seems to lie in a prior assumption, that the Creator will not stultify himself, will not retract or violate his own plans. If he has lodged a capacity in man, that can only signify that he intends man to do something with the capacity, the thing for which it is fitted. The ultimate accomplishment of that thing is provided for and guaranteed in the endowment. If afterwards he takes the task off man's hands, the bestowal of useless capacity was without excuse. Not even infinite Resource is entitled to squander itself. The logic applies not only to the event, but to the time and manner of its appearance. If it were desirable that the event should come to pass in any other way or at another time than those in which it would regularly be produced by the interaction of the capacity and its conditions (all supposititiously known to the Bestower) then the capacity or conditions should have been adjusted at the start to that desideratum, or the promise of the outcome have been withheld by withholding the capacity. It is insupposable that God should blunder, or should retreat from any utterance he has put forth.

Therefore, if man has the power (under exist-

ing conditions) of self-salvation, without other outside aid than is involved in the laws and opportunities of growth by culture, then we may be sure no such superfluous aid has been extended. *Per contra*, if a Saviour has been sent, it must be there was a work for him to do, which in his absence would have failed.

Such is a very popular and somewhat magisterial style of reasoning. We must admit that it has certain force and validity. In one direction, however, it needs to be guarded against fallacy. It is not easy to set speculative limits to the expansion of the human powers by mere interior development. Each man's nature seems indefinitely elastic, and, given time enough, capable of all things. The mind of Shakspeare is perhaps the mind of any boor, only in a more advanced state of evolution. We cannot fix upon any generic difference between genius and mediocrity. There is only more *of* one than of the other, more apparently of bulk and more of intensity. The science of our time has been accumulated item by item from the separate labors of a host of delvers and climbers. Largely it is the product of skilled observation, partly of expert judgment in the choice and

origination of hypotheses, and in determining eligible means for testing them. At last we have the amazing mass, not a single peak, but range upon range of Himalayan heights, piled up as it were by teaspoonfuls. With ample leisure and competent faculties the sum of it is more than any mind can master in a mortal life; and it is growing faster than we can follow it. Yet if we ask, Why could not any individual, working up from the very bottom all alone, without guidance or aid of any sort, save what the light within him supplied, make at length for himself all the discoveries which have ever been made, and verify all the data now accepted, only give him time enough, — though we cannot deny the *possibility* of such a performance, we feel that the question is preposterous. Practically, we see that eternity would be too short for the most gifted vision to see for itself everything there is to see.

Yet in this instance who can say what the *capacity* lodged in mind is equal to, so as to decide what supplementary aids Divine power is permitted to afford, to secure a given result? Manifestly time is an element even in His plans to whom a thousand years are as a day. There

is a possibility that an oak might grow from an acorn dropped into a shallow crevice of solid rock, by the slow nourishment of air and moisture, and the accretions of dust about its naked roots, together with the crumbling bit by bit of the boulder. But we could not thence argue that Providence would never furnish more favorable conditions. Precisely so, because there may seem a metaphysical possibility that the soul of a man should evolve "the wisdom that is from above," and the moral muscle which defies temptation, simply from its own study and experience, in the absence of any superior counsellor or exemplar, we cannot insist that the schoolmaster and the hero are an impertinent superfluity. Culture is capable of much, but left to itself would perhaps be too tedious for the patience of average humanity.

Besides, it should be added, there is in man not only a capacity for self-help, but a capacity also for helping others, which, by the very logic we are estimating, must have been intended for use. We are not, therefore, justified on any ground in pretending to entire self-sufficiency, or in sneering at the office of the reformer, the philanthropist, the Saviour who

seeks, in the spirit of a noble altruism, to be in some sense and measure his brother's keeper.

The problem before us, then, is not whether in an absolute way it can be proved that mankind could not possibly have got along without Jesus; but whether his proffer of friendship is not quite analogous to the familiar processes of Providence, and clearly advantageous to a struggling race, whose destiny is thereby exalted and hastened. I think we may satisfy ourselves, without leaving the broad and open path of common experience, that there was room and a demand for precisely the work which Jesus undertook.

VII. — MAN NEEDS SALVATION.

The first and foundation fact to be emphasized in estimating the value of the services of Jesus is this: **MAN IS NOT SAVED**, and it is to his interest, and the interest of "the whole creation," which "groans and labors in pain" on his account, to get saved.

On the threshold of any investigation into the actual state of men we are met with the hideous and appalling fact of sin. The thing may be

variously regarded as error or disease or imperfection, or wanton criminality; in any guise it calls for vigorous corrective treatment.

a. If we diagnose it as *ignorance* merely, we may look upon it with more complacency, and treat it as a very venial offence. In our softness and pity we must not forget, however, that ignorance may itself become crime, and that stupidity is no protection against the penalties of violated law. Wilful ignorance is self-condemnation to darkness and exile. Nature does not force her treasures upon shut eyes, nor clamor her psalms into stopped ears. The mind of some men is like a splendid palace, filled with the glories of art and literature, and the memorials of heroism, of which only the servant's kitchen and the stable are ever opened to view. Imagine an eagle, made to look the sun in the eye, trying to flap about in the dark like a bat; or a nightingale affecting the screech of a peacock, — that is man floundering in the mire of ignorance. Salvation for him in that estate is science. It is the oculist skill which draws the curtain and cleanses the pane, that he may see what light is and what it reveals; it is the aurist art which lifts the

gates and drenches his barren soul with music. Nature is rich, and ready to make any man her protégé and heir-apparent. Ignorance is the fool who mocks at her advances and thinks himself smart in dodging her rescuing hand. "This is the damnation," said Jesus, "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." From that desperate plight does it need any argument to prove that man needs to be reclaimed?

b. If we interpret sin as *disease*, then it comes to us that salvation is a word closely allied in its origin with a word which signifies *health*, — the root of the word salubrity. Say that the sinner is an invalid, suffering, consciously or unconsciously, the pangs and perils of interior corruption. In that state he is a burden to himself and a terror to his fellows, for all sin-sickness is both infectious and contagious. (Thank God that health is also self-propagating!) The sick man is a prisoner, — the prey in his cell of evil germs that find his condition fat and tender to their tooth. This is hell, — not a dungeon where a fierce Tyrant incarcerates those who offend him, but the *hole* into which the self-poisoned sinner has put

himself by his abuse. Well, the way in is the way out! The world is a hospital, and all men are patients. True enough. Then they need medicine, diet, exercise; need to be coddled and stimulated until normal energies can assert themselves. Let the treatment be heroic if necessary. Often pain can only be cured by more pain, as fire draws fire, or a blister on the surface relieves congestion and inflammation within. The torpor of conscience is not unlike the lethargy of morphine, only to be broken by resolute shakings and enforced activities against the sufferer's drowsy protest. Classify the invalid where you will, his sin is morbid, maggoty, and needs a thorough purging. Do not think to secure the sinner immunity from the Saviour's visit on the plea that his distemper needs only the physician's, not the preacher's craft, for is *He* not the great Physician who restores to sanity and perfect soundness those who undergo his treatment?

c. Perhaps you prefer to describe sin as *imperfection* merely; to say that man's blemishes are not those of an ideal fallen, twisted, shattered, but rather the rawness, awkwardness, boniness of a gosling state, an unfledged

but improving and hopeful stage. True again. And we will not be so ungracious as to reflect upon these angularities and disproportions, considering how long a journey up the incline of evolution man has already come. If we find him brutish we will recollect that he was once — at least in his lineage — wholly a brute. But we do not see more clearly the wide difference between what he is and what he was, than between what he is and what he may be. He has made good progress, but we are impatient for still more. As an embryo he needs hatching and nursing that he may come to maturity. Salvation, from this point of view, means food, training, discipline, culture, evolution. It means the perfecting of that which is confessedly imperfect, the filling of emptiness, the refining, tuning, mellowing of the instrument, the polishing of crudities, and lopping off of excrescences, — a natural and rational process, which is by no means completed when the faculties attain a state of equilibrium and self-mastery, — which implies the exit of sinning, — but, keeping pace with the enlarging outlook and infinite possibilities of man, may be prolonged through eternity. Yes, say that man is a

child, a suckling, if you please, and that his falls are nothing more than incidents in the learning to walk, yet it is surely not a final stage, and by as much as it points towards a manlier and maturer future, it emphasizes the fact we are asserting, that salvation — in the sense of full-orbed powers — is what we need but have not yet achieved.

d. But truly none of these views penetrates to the lowest root of sin or suggests its full significance. It is a deeper view which regards sin, not with mild tolerance as ignorance, nor with mere compassion as disease, nor with bustling ministration as a condition of babyhood, but also with abhorrence and loathing as a rebellion against law. Man *is* ignorant, but he has also refused to go to school; he *is* sick, but partly by his own prodigal excesses; he *is* a babe, but that does not justify his imperious preference for being lugged about in nurse's arms, rather than put his own feet to the floor. He is not merely the pathetic victim of the plague, nor an inexpert wayfarer flung down by competitive forces that handle him with robber brutality, violently filching his substance, and leaving him bruised and half dead upon the

ground. He has been *particeps criminis*, tributary to the transaction; he has deliberately swallowed the poison that gripes him, has rushed forewarned into the ambush, has trifled with and squandered his opportunities. The seminal difficulty is with his will, which he has wasted and weakened by wantonness, or rotted by impure indulgence. He is sometimes that prodigal son, who clung to his uncleanness long after he must have learned its criminality; who did not stop short of spending the last remnant of his patrimony in the bestial revel, and who, as poor in spirit as in purse, found courage at last only in starvation to seek a refuge in the outraged clemency of a good father. Here is a case which cannot well tarry for delicate and dilettanti experiments with sugar of milk and other saccharine remedies. To be worth anything to himself or his race this man needs a will renewed, a purified heart, a kindled aspiration. He is a sinner, not wholly by defect, or by disease, but by desire and determination, and he needs pardon and deliverance from his demon, and a commission from on high to newness of life. And as his is the most critical and characteristic

type of human distresses, Jesus did wisely when he offered himself as pre-eminently a Saviour from sin, above all from wilful and deliberate sin.

Is not this a universal description? Who is he to whom its terms do not apply? Whether in ignorance, sickness, imperfectness, or wantonness, all have "sinned and come short of the glory" of the possible and ideal human life. To the entire race, therefore, and not merely to any class, the truth belongs, *Man needs salvation.*

VIII. — MEN CANNOT SAVE THEMSELVES.

I speak here of the individual rather than of the race. The proposition is, that if each man were left, unbefriended, to the mere unfolding of his life from within, wholly denied incentive or assistance from without, the result would be relapse, not progress, for each and all. Progress, that is, salvation, is guaranteed not more by the vital principle within than by a well-adjusted order of helps from without.

This lesson we may read in Nature at large as interpreted by recent evolution concepts.

There development is determined and directed not more by special characteristics of the interior life-force than by the play and pressure upon it of the exterior environment. The law of progress is framed from the interaction of these mutually resilient factors. Conditions alone do not make the creature; neither is the creature independent of conditions; but in the matrix of auspicious conditions the intrinsic active principle grows to more and more. By this law man's upward movement is prescribed. While never the helpless puppet of his situation, he invariably reflects his situation. To damn him it is often enough to thrust him down among hellish agencies; to save him, lift him amid heavenly inspirations. "Evolutionists tell us," says Mr. Drummond, "that by the influence of environment certain aquatic animals have become adapted to a terrestrial mode of life." Even so, "by the influence of environment," by the friendship of Nature (which is the embrace of God) man is to be exalted from the terrestrial to the celestial type. Not in the hermit shell of attempted isolation, but through the social incitements of the fraternity of Nature's phenomena, does man find real liberty and real life.

Man cannot, if he would, wholly isolate himself, nor shake off the fellowship of his surroundings. Even the atoms have their likes and dislikes, their traditions, boon companions, and brotherhoods. Man is social by nature, and the bitterest cynicism will not avail to dissolve the bonds of wedlock which by an eternal decree have mated him to his kind and to his lot. His absorbent faculties draw moisture from the very atmosphere; the wind-wafted germs of human custom and human activities, however he may try to put distance between himself and them, will lodge and fructify unwittingly in his bosom. Lay his course as he may the winds and tides will not be ignored, and will deflect him towards their lines. History is deposited within him at birth; the past claims him as its offspring; and current ideas and institutions and modes touch his plastic soul with moulding fingers. The stars fight for him or against him; the Eternal Spirit and the spirit of his times combine to "shape his ends, rough-hew them how he will."

More than this, the influences that beset him are friendly. The waves of natural circum-

stance drift succor to his desert shore. He cannot be alone for the Father is with him. Nature herself is moral and carries a God within. The "Eternal Energy by which all things proceed" pushes along her tracks His purposes of benevolence. The "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" is no far-off, absentee arbiter, but incarnate in her very processes. So Nature in her humblest as in her showiest functions mirrors God. Without a Revelation we must learn some time that it is better to do right than wrong, just from the nature of things. A law of recompense brings home to us the virtue of discovering and conforming to the plan of Nature. There is a way that goes smoothly; there is a way that grates and chafes. There is a way to utilize vital energy to generate more vital energy, and create health, muscle, endurance; there is a way that exhausts the energies and leaves depletion and decrepitude behind. An ethical impulse directs the whole process and inevitably lifts the eyes above the phenomena to the supreme Fact. The universe is a unit, and reflects in every phase and feature the designs of the Creator. Suns and systems, seed-time and harvest, the

law of gravitation, the song of birds, the heart-beat of the tides, the providences of history, the slow unfoldment of the complex from the simple, the specific from the generic, the high from the low, — all facts, all forces, are priests or acolytes in the great cathedral of creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. There is no speech, no language; their voice is not heard. But their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” If there were no other Saviour we must still see in this beauteous and beneficent order a progressive purpose, and feel ourselves encompassed by omnipresent Grace.

Bound thus by universal laws to everlasting purposes, we see how futile is the boast of absolute independence, and the pompous waiver of all sympathy or assistance. Sinful man, ignorant, invalid, fledgling, or rebel, aspiring towards deliverance and striving towards perfection (which is salvation), dare not stand apart, spurning the uplifts and befriendings, which, as a part of Nature, and a member of the human brotherhood, are proffered him. Amid so many willing friends, it is impious

for him to insist on holding himself aloof, and pretending to attain the goal without thanks to any. In fact, let him be never so perverse, he is not left alone, for God is "working in him both to will and to do his good pleasure."

IX. — MAN NEEDS A PERSONAL FRIEND.

What next? Standing at the foot of the slope of his divine destiny, and without ability in himself alone to make the ascent, what staff, what guide, what supporting shoulders shall he secure? If we grant the aspiration to exist in his soul, and an upward gravitation of Nature, what more can he require to assure a prosperous journey?

If we seek the answer in experience, not in mere mystifying speculation, it is near at hand. He needs a friend, a personal sympathizer and auxiliary. And that friend, to exert an upward pull, must stand above him on a summit of larger achievement, must be a bigger and better man than he is himself. True, between equals there may be mutual encouragements, and "two heads are better than one, though one be a blockhead." Nevertheless, the friend on whom

you lean in your weakness, who is to revive your manhood and recrown your faith, must come to you charged with a fuller faith and a higher message than your own heart just then is voicing.

The inequalities of human endowment, and the varieties of human experience render it possible for men to be assistant to one another. The moods of mankind, like the crumpled seas, are never on a dead level of uniformity. We are never all at once in the Slough of Despond. Some Helpfuls always remain upon the banks to extend a hand of rescue. No flood submerges every peak, or if so an ark floats on its tide till the waters abate. When Peter sinks in the waves, there stands Jesus solid, ready, mighty to save. Always there is some one stronger and wiser than ourselves to whom we can make appeal. The Book of Life has its precedent or its example to interpret almost any case you can bring to it, to inspire your quailing heart in any crisis. In the changes and peculiarities of human fortune each man becomes in his turn an object-lesson to others, to warn or to cheer. And out of the fund of his hard-earned wisdom, your neighbor, other-

wise your equal or less than that, may become your monitor, your benefactor, your saviour for the hour. How poorly could we spare our friends!

But this is not all nor most to the purpose. As mountains rise above their foot hills, these foot hills above the plain, the plain itself above the valleys and gorges that intersect it, and a phenomenal Mont Blanc or Everest reaches for the clouds, and lords it over all; so humanity lies at varying levels, the multitude below, the few above, dwindling to thin ranks and occasional pilgrims, as the heights ascend to where, upon far altitudes, clothed with mist but glorious in the rays of the yet invisible sun, Genius walks alone, herald of coming dawns, and general almoner of the Lord Bountiful. God provides for man's saving not merely generic types but special individuals, not merely trends of influence but living exemplars and leaders. In the march of progress the few are pioneers, the many willing followers, and one, it may be, the Pathfinder. An army requires its scouts and skirmishers, but the great body must hang together in their divisions, brigades, regiments, companies. The scout scents the

situation, the skirmisher tests it, the commander-in-chief takes his cue from the experiment, and passes his orders down through proper official stages to the "common soldier," who does the fighting. Everywhere a similar arrangement obtains. You can count the greatest fighters, fictionists, poets, painters, sculptors, orators, philosophers, statesmen, each upon your fingers. These represent so many forms of human genius at present high-water mark. These everybody extols, everybody studies, everybody defers to as authority. Their sway is world-wide; their circle the horizon. Yet they enjoy no monopoly of ability. Below the topmost rank, but still upon dizzy elevations, dominant over narrower but yet wide circles, rules a lesser but yet splendid order of genius, unbearably brilliant in itself, and only shadowed by the intenser lights above. And so on down, in more numerous but ever shrinking circles, the fact of leadership distributes itself through all ranks.

The true leaders are not self-constituted. They are providential men and women, for whose appearance no general evolutionary law can give account, and who certainly are not

mere chance waves that happen to touch a little higher point than their fellows that precede and that chase them. They are appointed pace-makers for the race, select exemplars of vast and thrilling possibilities. Inspired themselves at last, it seems, by the Eternal Spirit himself, they fling down inspiration upon all strivers. They blaze the new paths, they venture upon forbidden heights, they outface the sphinx with her mocking mystery, they snatch up the gauntlet of the "impracticable," and presently show it subdued to triumphant reality. And when they wave their pennons aloft and cry, "Follow," the race answers back with eager shout, and presses after them. No sacrifice of independence is felt in that discipleship, but a greater freedom in the assured hope of victory. To love for the object of endeavor itself, are added love and loyalty to the chosen leader, and, in the faith that man can do what man has done, the columns advance with a solidity impossible were each man to insist upon his own gait and direction.

Leadership, personal prophets and exemplars at the front of the great host and each of its divisions,— that is the ordained plan of human

progress. It is so at home, where parental care points out the path and sustains the toddling steps of the young wayfarer. It is so at school, where the wisdom of sage and scientist and scholar is offered the pupil in digested and authoritative forms from kindergarten to university. It is so at play, where the stronger or more aggressive spirit rules the game by voluntary concession of the more diffident. It is so in business, where proved sagacity is given almost free rein, and the supposed lessons of the past, crystallized into a regnant though unwritten code, constitute the norm of all legitimate transactions, save when some adventurous spirit breaks from the tradition, and, if he succeeds, sets the stakes of new traditions. It is so in politics, where the multitude are only too willing to maintain the beaten paths, and where indeed rampant individualism must come at last to chaos and anarchy. It is so in literature, whose canons and models simply report the practice of those who impress themselves upon the many as the ablest and best. Look where we will, we shall find no realm in which the plan does not assert itself.

We need not therefore be surprised or scan-

dalized to see the same providential method operative in religion. Religion is correct thinking, and the best thinkers are bound to instruct and lead the poorer. Religion is purified conscience, and the living illustrator of it becomes perforce the rebuke and inspiration of the disobedient. Religion is exalted emotion, — a flame that not only fascinates the gaze but fires the emulation of all who believe in its reality. Religion is fellowship with the Father, and he who enjoys it in any marked degree encourages all others to seek it, perhaps along the very ways which admitted him.

And as we should expect from the universal analogy, religion *has* its great Leaders and Exemplars. Each age, each land has produced those “of whom the world was not worthy,” who have “fought a good fight,” and “kept the faith” according to their light, and who therefore were looked up to and followed while living, and being dead yet speak. There have been also a few, a very few, whose lustre was so bright and penetrating that it illumined whole lands, and though centuries have elapsed continues to shine to the comfort and strength of multitudes. It is, perhaps, an amazing fact

that the nearest to us in point of time of these confessedly great Founders of Religions finished his earthly career more than twelve centuries since, and the date of the best of the others, save one, goes back thousands of years. Modern enlightenment and culture, with all their rich benefits, have not produced a name worthy to be named by the side of the Indian or the Chinese sage, much less beside that of the man of Nazareth. The heights to which these masters attained have appeared to others unattainable. They have been teachers of teachers, and saviours of saviours. Their wise words have edified millions, and their gentle spirits have sweetened and softened the temper of the world.

Does it seem now that these results could have been effected in any other way? Can truth ever gain by itself the authority with which a truth-formed life invests it? Can preaching ever have the force of practice? Can mere descriptions of the beauty of goodness move men like the actual goodness of a good man? We can, of course, think of every truth as firmly grasped and clearly stated in a writing which shall be infallible as to accuracy, but

dissociated from any living exemplar. We can suppose men to attain to the *conception* of the most perfect ideals, without the presentation before them of any life embodying those ideals. But in these impersonal forms is it likely that the truth would be so appreciated, or the ideals become springs of motive, as when an actual character bears witness to the truth and illumines the ideal? We may insist that truth *ought* to be its own authority, but we cannot blink the fact that most men settle first the authority, and afterwards sit at his feet to learn the truth. And if this does not prove this method of salvation to be inevitable and necessary, it proves it to be *actual*, which is of far more consequence.

We thus come near to the verification of our thesis. Jesus offered himself as a personal Saviour, in the faith that the world required something more than philosophy or science, more than culture or evolution for its full salvation. And we have now seen that the actual chief saving influences brought to bear upon human life have operated through the genius for religion of a few pre-eminent persons, and through the power of winning personal disciple-

ship, which enlisted in their service, as exponents of their doctrine and products of their ministry, millions upon millions of believers. It is not the pulpit that sways the future, but the personal consecration of the lives that answer to its appeal; and the power of the pulpit itself is not its philosophy nor its eloquence, but the manhood which utters itself through these. Jesus was surely right in offering a personality, not a theory, as Saviour of the world.

X. — ONE PERFECT SAVIOUR NEEDED, AND ONLY ONE.

What we have been saying goes to show that many persons have been saviours in a degree, — that, in fact, all men are saviours, after some fashion, in their turn; but a few have been saviours in a pre-eminent degree. Jesus, however, claims an exclusive prerogative, not denying or depreciating the good influence of others, but stamping it as distinctly inferior to his own. Now, is it rational to suppose that all humanity must be debtor to any *one* person less than God? Should we not rather expect different saviours-in-chief, each illustrating in

superlative degree some function of the manifold office, — a peerage rather than a kingship of saviourhood? As it may never be decided whether Homer or Shakespeare was the supreme poet, whether Hannibal or Napoleon was the abler soldier, why not leave the primacy of Jesus also an open question?

In answer it might suffice to remind ourselves that it is Jesus who makes the claim, and to reflect what verdict history has passed upon his credentials. But we have no wish to silence debate by thus “moving the previous question,” nor to evade the most prying scrutiny of the intrinsic merits of the pretension. We urge instead certain considerations which indicate that *one Saviour is enough*. Of course we mean one *such* Saviour as Jesus professed to be.

For there is nothing perilous in the admission that “there are lords many,” provided we recollect in time that in the highest sense there is only “one Lord, Jesus Christ.” Jesus is *the* Saviour of the world, because he helps men in ways and in a measure which no one else can parallel. But what is peculiar in the method of his ministry is done once for all, and needs not to be duplicated.

We must wait until we have studied the programme of Jesus before we can fully appreciate the essential singleness of his office. But, partly anticipating that inquiry, we may here see: —

1. That *one perfect revelation of truth* is all-sufficient, if it really puts the truth before the world with adequate vouchers; and otherwise it would not be a perfect revelation. Indeed, it is transparent that there could not be a *second revelation* of the same truth in the same way. Especially must this be true if the revelation involve supernatural elements or supernatural methods. For, while man-discovered truth may require to be corroborated over and over by parallel discoveries by other equally competent but independent investigators, it would ill befit the dignity of God to reiterate a disclosure once plainly made, for the sake of winning credit for his words. The attempt, indeed, to raise up other Christs, to illustrate in their personalities under differing conditions the same truths and ideals which Jesus illustrated, must result in confusion, divided allegiance, and factional rivalries. Besides, there would be no natural limit to such a process. If two

Christs are wanted, why not twenty or twenty thousand, — why not one for every nation, every age, every class, every individual? Still further, economy of supernatural visitation is necessary to its prestige, and also to the stability of Nature. There might be supreme reason for intervening once to add elements of salvation not adequately provided for in natural processes, but there could be nothing but self-stultification in making that interference a habit.

Now, Jesus' claim was that he represented a *special* dispensation of divine dealing with men; that he came in the nick of time to do what needed to be done at that juncture, and needed to be done in the way he did it; but that the *sequel* of that particular ministry would so wrap the world in blessing, that no second or successor would be required. The truth once definitely and demonstratively set forth, and vitalized by his embodiment of its practical corollaries in life, would gradually commend itself to the thought and conscience of men, and at last reach and redeem the whole world. Clearly one such revelation was enough because it was all-inclusive.

2. Similarly, *one perfect exemplar*, one true specimen of a *type* answers all the questions which a thousand such specimens could answer. It reveals the type itself, settling all disputes on that score; and it makes a decisive appeal for imitation or discipleship. Jesus' life was a model, available to all alike for study, copying, or admiration. Could a collection of facsimile models serve the purpose any better? Would not the multiplicity distract attention, and tend to cheapen the conception itself?

The example of Jesus was not, I think, offered primarily for inspiration, but for illustration. As a mere spectacle of heroism and high-mindedness it might be duplicated without damage. Still, because of the sovereignty of his endowment, which seemed to render his triumphs a foregone conclusion, the example of a man more like ourselves, winning victories, which we feel we also might win, has perhaps more potency in saying, Go thou and do likewise. But as an *illustration* of the power of spirit, of the nearness to his children which the Father desires to realize, of the joy of self-surrender to truth, the example of Jesus was permanently peerless. And if we believe in the

reality of this illustration no other is needed. A repetition of the proof could only echo this; while standing alone this tells with equal and unabated power upon all the ages.

3. One other function Jesus claimed, that of mediator between the Father and his alienated children; and this not merely as interpreter or peace-maker, but as the hand which distributes the divine bounty, the communicator of life to the world. There is mystery in this claim; we may not be able fully to resolve it. It essentially differentiates the pretensions of Jesus from those of any other great teacher. It suffices to observe here that such an office emphasizes the solitariness of his position, and harmonizes well with his claim to sole competency as a complete Saviour. Where supplies are all drawn from one reservoir, a single great main may carry the full flow to where it is tapped for separate needs. Or, to change the simile, one commissary-in-chief at the head of the bureau of distribution is better than divided responsibility. If the current of the divine life passes through Jesus, as administrator, to humanity, that is surely a function we should not expect to see shared with a second.

There is nothing illogical, nothing visionary, nothing even anomalous in a solar system which has its octette of greater and lesser planets, its hundreds of asteroids, with *one sun* at the centre. If we reject the claims of Jesus on supposed grounds of liberty, equality, divine impartiality, we must by the same reasoning depose Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, Socrates and Seneca, Plato and Aurelius, Luther, Calvin, John Knox, John Wesley, and John Murray. If we may admit the lesser leaderships we may admit the greater, the Greatest of all. For with every due honor to these worthies they were not sufficient and infallible men. The leader needed to be led; the masters must own a Master; the saviours must themselves be saved! All but one, and even he too in the sense of a normal evolution. God alone is the Saviour of all. But Jesus as his Agent saves the world!

The very incomparable greatness of Jesus, the uniqueness of his personality, is argument for the uniqueness of office which he claimed. In the lower courses there must be many stones, but one capstone is ample and best. The glory of humanity tapers as it rises towards God, and

Jesus represents its topmost pinnacle. Resting there in a manner upon all the others he climaxes and completes them, while the electric touch which he catches from the heavens passes downward in generous distribution to the lowliest of all.

Here then is our justification of the claim of Jesus on its own merits: —

1. Salvation, meaning progress or perfection, is the universal desideratum.

2. In achieving it, the individual must look outside himself for such helps as Nature, as humanity, as God may afford.

3. The best of these helps is the personal influence of good men, who have mastered the problems and beaten the enemies which vex us, and are thus qualified to inspire, to edify, and directly to assist us.

4. Of many such saviours, some are better than others, and it is not irrational to conceive of one as the best of all. And if we can admit the revelation of truth and its exemplification in life to have been perfectly discovered in Jesus, then clearly there needs no second performance of this service, which is in its very nature universal in scope and perpetual in authority.

To man needing to be saved; to man who cannot save himself; to man already helped by many great leaders, comes, in the fulness of time, one universal Helper, true Son of God, true Son of Man, Saviour of saviours, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Saviour of the World.

XI. — HOW IS CHRIST A SAVIOUR?

We have attempted to present a rational view of the need of such a divine visitant as Jesus professed to be. It is in human nature itself, and the conditions of its best evolution, that we find occasion for his advent. We wish now to give equally rational treatment to the question, How shall such a predestined Saviour proceed to save? The answer, as before, must harmonize with the attributes of our humanity and with the established moralities of the universe.

From the point of view we occupy, it is safe to assume that the method of salvation must be ethical, not magical; that it will not supplant the laws of growth by an arbitrary and miraculous bestowment of sheer gifts; that it will respect the autonomy of the individual soul, and seek to elicit its aptitudes by persua-

sion and education, never by coercion. Each man will be his own judge and jury; but he is not his own legislator; and it is the business of a Saviour, as an expert advocate, to win the court's decision by the inherent justice of his cause. Against his appeals, however, he must expect the force of habit, the power of "the world, the flesh, and the devil," "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," to pull strenuously and long. He will require not only truth but tact, not only tact but patience, and such a sense of the glory and exigency of his enterprise as cannot brook defeat on any terms. No holiday affair, this saving of the whole world. He that undertakes it should look well to his qualifications, and well to his programme, make no mistakes and commit himself to it finally and forever.

But if he be adequately wise and strong, he can afford to be patient. There is time enough, even all eternity, to work in. No vicissitude can abate the operation of moral laws; no probationary period, no death line, limit his opportunity of appeal; no catastrophe destroy the essential beneficence of his endeavor. Religion is native to man; it is reasonable, it

is infinitely attractive. "Holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected." Heaven aims to bless man, not to tyrannize over him. It knows him better than he knows himself, and the destiny it appoints, and to which it ever urges him forward, is precisely the one he is groping obstinately in the dark to secure. Human nature, too, is capable, however perverted, of all that God demands. Who knows this so well as that Saviour who has himself wrestled with and vanquished our temptations, tasted the dregs of this world and the felicities of "the world to come"? Jesus addresses himself to his task in sanguine mood. No dreamer either, but one who has caught sight of the "mountain full of horses and chariots of fire" (2 Kings vi. 17), who knows there are "more than twelve legions of angels" at his call. With God behind him and at his side, with eternal realities under his feet, and imperious love in his heart, he will never consent to be driven from his plea, nor ever let that man go— whoever he is—without his blessing.

How shall he go about it to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judg-

ment"? What resources has he? How get the ear of mankind? How enchain their attention? How certify his claims before them? How win their confidence? How persuade their minds? How arrest their headlong plunge into depravity? How brace their nerveless wills? How thrill their jaded aspirations? How cleanse their foul desires? How outshine the glamour of sense? How arouse the slumbering spirit of sonship? How exorcise the demon of selfishness? All this and more he must do, not by wholesale but with delicate adaptation to each detail, and to all possible varieties. It is a problem which has seemed insuperable to many great and good men. The best and bravest have only dared to trust that God himself would be equal to it. What was Jesus that he found courage to say, "I will draw all men unto me?"

The temple of personal liberty must not be violated. But God has provided for the solution of the problem by making human nature rational and religious. No extent of depravity can ever obliterate these attributes. The logic of salvation is this: Man is mind, therefore he can be made to know; knowledge lets him into

the secret of happiness, which is a godly life, and happiness possesses for him an indomitable fascination; ideals and the exploits of heroes fire him with a spirit of emulation, and the effort to rise increases strength and buoyancy. Finally, the fellowship of electric natures charges his own, replenishes his wasted powers, and fastens his magnetized soul to the infinite battery of creative supply.

These three things a true saviour must be able to achieve:—

1. To inform men as to their real status, to enlighten the world, to declare *the truth*, — all the truth that is needful for moral guidance and spiritual uplift.

2. To supply *motive*, to generate a passion for righteousness, to make men *want* to do what they have been taught they *ought* to do.

3. To increase strength, to restore the spent *vitality*, to recrown the will power, and *enable* a man to do what he wants to do and ought to do.

Nothing short of this threefold cord will draw the whole world to God. Most schemes of redemption are defective in one or the other of these influences. Quite generally it is imagined to be sufficient if we preach correct doctrine. But

not so. Practice always limps far in the rear of professed principles. How to *inspire* men, — that is a problem by itself. The economy of effectual salvation must master the theory of distribution as well as of production; must tell how to create a market where none exists, that the truth may not only come to its own, but also be received and appropriated by them. Jesus rejected, — that is a common spectacle; but Jesus conquering his critics and scorners, Jesus persisting, besieging, winning at last the welcome that was at first denied, — that is the spectacle we wait to see. It is not sufficient to be right. The actual Saviour must make men see that he is right, and arouse them to enthusiastic alliance with him. And even this is not all; for often the flesh is weak though the spirit is willing. Who will energize the decrepit souls? None other can completely save.

Let us see how Jesus operated on all of these lines at once.

1. *Salvation by the Truth.* — “Ye shall know the truth,” said Jesus, “and the truth shall make you free” (John viii. 32). Free from what? Knowledge, of course, saves from ignor-

ance, and truth from error. Did Jesus then come as a schoolmaster to teach truth for its own sake? No, his eye was on the deeper fact, that from ignorance and error comes *sin*. As sunlight is death to certain noxious weeds, which thrive in damp and darkness, so the rays of truth stab the dreams and delusions of unschooled natures. We must say then that he purposed a campaign of enlightenment. He would tear the mask from hypocrisy. He would fling wide the doors, let the bats and vampires scream and flutter as they might. He feared not the day. He trusted facts. He was the prophet of intelligence and the patron of research. To him the scientific temper owes a debt it is too apt to ignore. One less friendly to the invocation of mere tradition or official authority than Jesus of Nazareth the world has never seen.

Yet what he chiefly sought was not science but salvation, salvation through science in part, but as itself the main thing, not an afterthought. He lamented the wickedness of men, but fixed no brand upon their want of culture. He dealt little in learning, and was not himself a scholar nor scholarly. He laid no ban upon

the pursuit of knowledge in general, but his own interest was mainly absorbed in a certain sort of knowledge, in the heavenly wisdom by which the human child knows the divine Father. And while no syllable of his ever depreciated the intellectual powers, he most prized the intuitions of the pure and peaceful heart.

It was not, therefore, all kinds of truth which Jesus came to teach. He gave no reason to suppose, — except the reason of love and confidence in his amazing genius, — that he was competent to teach many kinds of truth. He was a sympathetic observer of natural phenomena, but took note rather of their moral and spiritual suggestions than of their structure or habits, as a naturalist would. This, however, we must believe, was due not to scanty endowments, but to deliberate choice. He was content to know less about some things, that he might know all about the highest things. If he lacked in the lore of the student, he compensated himself with intimacies which no mere student ever acquires. He was a pioneer in unexplored regions, and what he discovered there was of the utmost preciousness in itself,

and of the highest utility to mankind. Upon that knowledge, gained, as he said, by direct eye-witness and audience with God, he relied for the opening of sin-blinded eyes, and the unveiling of the heavens to men who saw nothing in the universe but dirt.

Was this self-limitation a defect in the lordship of Jesus? Would he have gained in authority by living in an age like ours, and going in absorbedly for culture and science as the foremost factors in the world's redemption? Is it a disadvantage to the advocacy of his cause, that we cannot show him at least the peer of the erudite and elegant circles of our time? Would he grow in estimation if we were able to quote learned *dicta* from his lips, solvents of the special problems which confront us in every realm? It would seem that those who propose to supersede his spiritual methods by a campaign of culture, converting the church into a school-house and the pulpit into a lecture-ship, must have decided against the permanent utility of the simple programme of Jesus. It may be wondered whether such do not experience a sense of humiliation over the meagre equipment of Jesus to cope with the "living

questions" of our illustrious period. Be this as it may, we have to confess that there is no evidence that Jesus ever turned his attention to polite studies, that he ever read a line of the classics, or affected music or art, or frequented the *salon* to canvass the movements of the hour. And yet he has been a good deal of a Saviour to many!

It by no means follows that the pursuit of literature or science or art is vicious or unworthy because Jesus neglected such matters. But it does follow that he did not trust to these for the world's salvation. He may well have foreseen that the impulse of nobleness, aspiration, sonship would demand many such fine and rich expressions of mind and imagination. But he knew that selfishness, the master-devil that betrays us, is not expelled by the mere transfer of interest from the material to the mental sphere. He sought to control, to transfigure the very purpose of life. Therefore in his thought the principal thing was to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." This kingdom he set himself to introduce, in its nearness and glory, to the apprehension and aspiration of men.

His teaching, in harmony with this main object, was simplicity itself: "God, the Eternal One, the Holy One, is your 'Father.' He loves you; do you also love him, with every power of your being. This is the supreme thing. There is another thing like it. As all men are God's children, so are they brethren of one another. Love your brother, love him as your own life. And respect yourself. Be a good, true son of your Father in heaven. Trust him absolutely; he will not fail you. Obey him implicitly at any cost; he will take care of the consequences. He knows what is well for you; he is eager to make you great and happy. Do not think to deceive him; do not think to avoid him. He loves you too much to permit you to escape him. He will not force you; he seeks a spontaneous fellowship; he will let you suffer the full effects of your own errors and sins if you insist; but he will be ready for you, whenever you will come home, and will give you heavenly joy in his presence. All that life can yield of peace and power and glory shall be yours, if you will only make him your choice. Then you will grow into all great things. I have tried it, and it is so. And I have his

message to you, inviting you to give him your hearts and to accept his infinite blessing. Come, my brother, my beloved, come with me to our Father."

Such in its essence and inmost principle was the simple, tender Gospel of Jesus. Does it seem a modest, almost a meagre thing beside the elaborate rules of Confucius or the complex analysis and prescription of Buddha? Does it appear to cut no figure in comparison with the large language and bristling information of some of the German or English philosophers? Nevertheless it has certain features calculated to draw attention, and the more we dwell upon them the more the picture rises in power.

First, it is *concrete*; it deals with questions of life rather than of thought.

Secondly, it does answer these questions, intelligibly but not superficially.

Thirdly, it tells us just what above all things we want to know about ourselves, our nature, our duty, our destiny; and it is something sufficient, stimulating, transcendent.

Fourthly, it interprets to us the play of force in Nature, the sweep of events which bears us along, the meaning of the mysteries which

encompass us, and all in two words "Our Father," — not "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord," not the "Stream of Tendency," not the "Absolute," nor even the Omnipotent, or the Omniscient, or the Omnipresent, — but just "Our Father."

Fifthly, it thus furnishes the key to the solution of all problems for whose solution *conduct* is waiting, in two words, "Sonship," "Brotherhood."

Sixthly, it reveals Jesus as permanently consecrated to the service of humanity, and through him it promises that *rest* and *strength* towards which all other religions have aspired in vain.

We do not need to inquire how such a system of truth may be tributary to man's reclamation. Its bearing is obvious, its leverage incalculable. It is possible to urge many claims in behalf of other schemes. It is impossible to hold these doctrines of Jesus for realities and not be transformed by them into nobler manhood. They produced that result first of all in himself. Then they metamorphosed a little circle of Galilean peasants into orators, organizers, historians, apostles of the mightiest religious

movement in history. More prolific than the fabled dragon's teeth, there sprang up wherever their seed was sown, not armed warriors, but heroes, martyrs, confessors, saints, of whom the world was not worthy, whose blood and tears freely spilled in testimony to the salvation wrought in them, have fertilized the soil of humanity. And in quieter and more comfortable times, these truths have still a power to pierce the shell of selfishness and perpetuate the splendid line of those whose light, shining in darkness, reveals the good works which give glory to the Father.

Jesus made no mistake. The truth he told was precisely adapted to his object. It has gone home to the heart of the world; its leaven works there unseen but irresistibly. "Modern improvements" disclose no flaw in his method. The world is richer in truths of many kinds to-day, but his wisdom co-ordinates and interprets them all. Nor can there be any limit to his conquest short of the boundaries of the earth itself. For he spoke to humanity in its essential elements; and his utterance therefore fits into all the changes and developments that occur. Wherever there lives a man, whatever

his class or condition, there stands Jesus saying, "My brother, my beloved, come home with me to our Father."

Was this teaching of Jesus unique and original? Might it not have been discovered in due time without him? Deference to certain prevalent opinions requires us briefly to touch these questions.

It is common to hear that there is nothing new in the Gospel. That its ideas, precepts, sometimes its very words, were anticipated by earlier masters of the farther Orient, by Greek and Roman sages, by the Rabbins. And many maxims and fragments of philosophy are cited in proof. To this it has been replied that while the elements, the atoms of the Gospel may have entered piecemeal the minds of other teachers, their composition into one consistent philosophy, the *ensemble* of their grouping, and the total effect of their presentation by Jesus are distinctly original. This is true, but it is not the whole truth.

Where else, I would ask, in religion or literature shall we find the parallel or prototype of Jesus' doctrine of the Father? Not certainly in the Indian and Persian theologies, from

which it differs, as from other more recent speculations, in the close personal relation it exhibits between the Creator and his creatures. The Gospel does not read like philosophy, but like a chapter of every-day life. The appearance of the Father upon the scene does not change but only emphasizes the (shall I say idyllic?) simplicity and spontaneity of the action of the several factors. God is not so much an object of thought, as the dominant figure in the drama. Some have, indeed, made merry over the shallowness of portraying the Deity as a person, but there can be no doubt that such was Jesus' conception. It is preposterous, however, to suggest that he found his idea of the Father's personality in the Greek or Roman gods, or in the Hebrew Jehovah. Though traces of resemblance can be pointed out, Jesus' thought was not an evolution of antecedent opinions, much less an echo of them. He struck out in a new direction. He found the Godhead not in power, whether physical or mental, but in moral excellence, and especially in love. From that postulate he never wavered. There is an almost total absence in his teaching even of allusion to those features of Deity which had been cata-

logued as wellnigh his sole attributes. He is content to set him forth without reserve or apology as just "the Father," clothed with all moral beauty, and almighty in the spiritual harmonies of his perfect nature. I am not aware that such an idea had ever before entered the brain of man.

The conception of man, as a corollary of the doctrine of God, shared its features of originality. Man is the son of God and therefore himself divine, not in a thaumaturgic but in a moral sense. Essentially godlike, his servitude to sin is tenfold more shameful, but his prospect of deliverance is tenfold more secure. Thus humility and hope co-operate to produce the feminine and masculine aspects of a full-orbed manhood. There is thus a different tone in the precepts of Jesus, — no worship of the past, as in Confucius; no pessimism, no apotheosis of selfishness, as in Buddha; no fatalism, no sensualism, as in Mohammed; no ethical chill as in Cato or Epictetus. Without flattery, but also without cynicism, the spirit of Jesus' address is this, Acquit yourself as a child of God.

For myself, I am convinced that only such a

person as Jesus was could have seen these truths in their verity and completeness. To Natural Theology the problem of evil has seemed to many to offer only the alternative between a theory of impotent Benevolence or of cruel or negligent Almighty in the Deity. Jesus faced the paradox with the words "Our Father," but no other had dared pronounce those words. It may be wondered whether our courage in echoing them is not rather a reflection of the faith of Jesus, than the witness of independent insight of our own. Even after these centuries of discipleship, were the name of Jesus to be erased from history, I should look for the gradual subsidence of our faith from the heights whereon his authority maintains it, to a level of doubts and fears which our twilight understanding would not be able to banish. Jesus said, "The pure in heart shall see God." When our hearts are pure we shall be able to see for ourselves; but that will be when the influence of Jesus shall already have wrought its perfect work within us.

In all this teaching, therefore, if we are right, Jesus appears as a competent, a complete, yes, the only sufficient Saviour of the world.

2. *Salvation by the Character of Jesus.*—Such was Jesus' provision for the enlightenment of man as to his nature and duties. But how did he meet the second requisite, that for inspiration, for motive-power, for getting men actually enlisted in his cause?

Well, first, the very simplicity and plainness of his teaching, the beauty of its ideals, its touching appeals to the heart, its concrete presentation of the Father's care for men (as in the parable of the Prodigal Son) did much to interest men in his words. We cannot well get enthusiastic over a mystery nor over an abstraction. We need to see where we are going, and to feel something vital in the occasion, in order to respond with freest self-surrender. Jesus was most happy and strategic, therefore, in the fitness of his doctrine and the charm of its setting.

But the chief thing was, that he did not isolate himself upon a pedestal as a mere teacher. He came down and walked with the people as a brother-man, and worked out the problem of salvation in his own person before their very eyes.

Jesus was Emmanu-el, God with us: *vice*

versa, if you please, he was Man-with-God. He represented the union of the human with the divine; or, better, since the image of God must itself be divine, he represented the human become conscious of its inherent divinity. If we can rid ourselves of the idle suggestion of a duality of nature under one personality, there is light and power in the expression coined to teach that impossible relation, — Jesus was God-Man, or, from the other side, he was Man-God. That is, he realized in his life the identity of humanity with divinity. Thus he was the best possible revelation of God and also of man. The workings of his benignity, the elevation of his spirit, the marvels of his power give us far truer, deeper, more vivid ideas of the Father than could any mere speculation. On the other hand, he who sees Jesus sees man at his best, and knows what he himself can do and ought to do.

The rôle he elected must have been deliberately taken. It is impossible to doubt that he might, had he chosen, have appeared in the character of a savant, a philosopher, a Rabbi like Hillel or Gamaliel, a writer of books, or even a man of affairs, an aspirant after a

throne, a great warrior and conqueror. A different cast, to be sure, would have been given his whole life by any of these choices; but had he been bent towards them from his earliest youth, he might have shone in either capacity. We feel instinctively that he chose the very highest and most commanding function, — that of a good man, master of himself, in touch with God, and thus illustrator, by simple excellence and grandeur of soul, of the possibilities of human nature. The simplicity of his spirit, the singleness of his purpose, divested his person of all mere glamour, and delivered one superlative truth, the most necessary, the most missed of all, — that humanity is divine. To achieve this was enough; to achieve it perfectly he must forego all other glories and fame in this alone.

Such a personality is necessarily more than an interpretation; it is a lodestone. It is an authoritative challenge to low ideals, a thorn in the flesh of self-indulgence. Not only its intrinsic loftiness and loveliness, but also its extrinsic advantages appeal to our sluggish and cowardly hearts. It stands there not to mock, but to invite; it lifts its hand to beckon, not to

repulse. Its word is not Go, but Come, itself leading the van. Its unaccompanied solitariness is an admonition to humility; but its career, its struggles, its servitude to the universal laws by which it has triumphed, inspire us with the hope of imitation, and thrill us with the heroism of endeavor. Its pre-eminent value, however, is in the aspect of reality it gives to the Gospel. Had the ideals of Jesus stood forth only in professions and preachments, they must have seemed overdrawn, and might have seemed purely visionary. He incorporated them in a life, showed them alive and in motion, so to say, in a working-model, and their practicable quality and supreme importance were demonstrated. The world could far better spare even the Sermon on the Mount than the historic Christ.

The character of Jesus was formed upon his own ideals. He was in no respect like those "ungracious pastors" who show others

. . . "the steep and thorny way to heaven,
While they themselves the primrose path of dalliance tread,
And reck not their own rede."

He "lived the precepts that he taught," and in nothing came short of their full requirement.

This, too, was essential to the full acceptance of his principles; for had he failed in any particular who could have hoped to succeed? Here again we see him differentiated from nearly all other great teachers. Buddha is perhaps the one exception. He did profess to have attained Enlightenment, the goal of endeavor. But as his standards were lower, so his task was less exacting; it is certain that Buddha did not live up to the ideals of Jesus. Besides, Enlightenment is not a mark to which all Buddhists may alike aspire. It is the prerogative of the specially qualified few. For the multitude Nirvana, that is, extinction or absorption, is the highest hope. But in Jesus it is human nature itself that triumphs, the very nature we all bear, which is thus tested and proved to be actually fit for divine things.

It was in order to perpetuate this influence of example, no doubt, that Jesus took pains to identify his Gospel with his own personality, and keep alive his memory in the earth. For this reason the disciples of Jesus feel a sense of companionship with their Lord which is not paralleled in any other cult. Lapse of centuries, varieties of nationality, changes of civili-

zation and of custom do not affect this tender intimacy. They forget that he was a Jew, a youth, a "laboring-man"; that he lived nearly sixty generations ago. To them he is a glorified human-being, a man of to-day, more real than any other great name, the confidant to whom they entrust their secrets, the counsellor whose words have infallible wisdom. They weep over his sorrows as fresh occurrences; they tremble through the recollection of his vicissitudes; they celebrate his two chief anniversaries with unwearied zest; they sing his praises as though to testify their love in his own ears. And because he is thus a present reality not a remote memory, his example is like a chapter of current experience, wielding its perennial power over mankind. No other appeal or argument has like weight. "Jesus said or did so and so," therefore must we emulate the model and obey the truth. Sometimes a slavish compliance with the letter of his precept results from the desire to honor his authority. Sometimes an extravagant material guise is given to the spiritual intent, as in the costly mummerly of high ceremonial days in the church. But anyhow it is Jesus, and not a

mere code, who occupies the throne of admiration and authority.

Christianity thus stands before the world not as an adjuration but as an object lesson. And it is obvious how it becomes in this way a generator of motive. It appeals directly to the will-power through the emotions. Awe, aspiration, shame, ambition, personal devotion are kindlings of the spirit readily translated into purpose and action. The sight of Jesus — and, it may be quite as much, the sight of those whom Jesus has transformed, the Christians whose lives are in contact with our own — arouses the heart's desire for nobler living, and desire is ever the parent of determination. The Gospel is forever being republished in what the apostle called "living epistles." Every saint is a seed, whence springs a harvest. One hero on the battlefield makes heroes of hundreds. The spark of virtue, caught from the Master and transmitted by human fellowships the world over, is putting fire on the cold hearthstones of myriads of lives. The process is slower than our impatience would ask, but it is effectual, irresistible, predestined to override all barriers, consume all oppositions, and

afford to the travailing Redeemer the satisfaction at last of a universal New Birth into his kingdom.

XII. — THE GIFT OF LIFE.

The truth revealed, the inspiration of a perfect exemplar afforded; what more can a Saviour do? Jesus said: "The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and *giveth life* unto the world" (John vi. 33). "As the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself" (John v. 26). "I came that they may have life" (John x. 10).

Few words must suffice upon this somewhat puzzling point. I interpret the word "life" in such passages, not specifically as spiritual excellence, but generically as *vitality*. Emerson wrote: "I would gladly . . . allow the most to the will of man; but . . . I can see nothing at last, in success or failure, than more or less of vital force supplied from the Eternal" (Essay on Experience). We see the need of that life force, but where can we procure it? We are not surprised that the Creator should impart

more or less of it in the birth endowment; but we shrink from the suggestion that its store, if spent, may be replenished by the way. The fact cannot be determined *a priori*. If we feel sure of our interpretation, we may be content with the simple authority of Jesus. If he says he can bestow life, why should we doubt it? But experience also seems competent, after nineteen centuries, to bear witness on the point. What is the explanation of the sudden fullness of energy which at times, under strong religious incitement, seems to come to flagged and enervated natures? It conquers inveterate appetite; it breaks the spell of associations; it clothes the victim of self-debauchment in his right mind. If the word of the beneficiary is worth anything, he gets it from Jesus. We may prefer to call it the gift of God, but it appears to touch Christ on the road; it is Christmas that converts Scrooge; it is the very voice of the Nazarene that transforms Saul into Paul.

No miracle is here assumed, but a divine method. Do we not feel that this is the supreme necessity? We well appreciate the truth of the Gospel, and would fain follow

Jesus, but we are cold, dull, lifeless. We hail the standard from afar, but our feet are stuck in the mire. Who shall deliver us from the body of this death? Could Jesus really replenish the depleted fund of vitality in the sinner, make him tingle with dynamic in every fibre, it would be like the electric spark that unites the elements which, though in contact before, refused to mix; it would make men hunger and thirst for the bread and water of life, and seize upon the proffered banquet with avidity.

Come, holy spirit, heavenly dove,
With all thy quickening powers;
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours.

The human consciousness cannot have been wholly at fault in supposing a visitation of God to be necessary to the torpid soul's recovery. Jesus claimed to be, not the source, but the vehicle of that influx. Just *how* he keeps his promise we may not be able to show; but it is not necessary to postpone our dinner until we have thoroughly mastered agriculture, milling, the railroad system, and the culinary art, nor to understand all about anatomy, physiology, medicine, and pharmacy, before we take our

dose. Let us *live*, whether with or without a theory of life. Let us first accept the gift of God, and explain it afterwards as we can.

Thus Jesus satisfies all requisites. He teaches the truth, as only he knew it or could teach it. He proved it practicable, and made it irresistibly magnetic by a perfect illustration of it in his character. Finally, into jaded humanity he pours creative life. In all this unique, unparalleled divine, he justified his claim to be the Saviour of the World.

XIII. — WHAT A SAVIOUR!

I had intended under this head to discuss the qualifications of Jesus for the stupendous office he came to fill. The preceding argument has, however, seemed to demand for its fair elucidation one after another of the considerations which might have been grouped together here, and has so encroached upon the pages of our little book that only one or two are left for a few reflections of a general nature.

Revert once more to the problem he had to solve. It was not enough that he, a peasant, should press through the abatis of class preju-

dice to the citadel of honor and power. It was not enough that he should win the suffrages of the people or any momentary triumph of authority. It was not even enough that he should conquer the inveteracy of Hebrew tradition, and cope with the disdainful cults of imperial Rome, or with her haughtiness of power, her lassitude of luxury, her ferocity of greed and passion. Incredible as such undertakings might seem, they were scarcely introductory to what he must accomplish. Aiming at nothing less than world-wide dominion, perpetual through the ages, he must forestall the fickleness of human nature; must by one and the same course (for he had only a single brief life to live) conciliate or coerce all varieties of civilization; must commend his message to "all sorts and conditions of men," to the most opposite and fiercely contending interests, to rich and poor, the powerful and the humble, the learned and the illiterate; must anticipate and adapt himself to all discoveries, all evolutions; must, in short, penetrate to the very centre of human need, and nestle there, immovable and regnant, through all time.

Except to secure him a first footing, mere

external advantages could have helped him little in such a timeless task. Native force would be more than royal birth, and mother-wit than school-learning or the patronage of potentate or party. For a performance at once so delicate and so colossal he must trust to himself. First of all, he must be sure of his own ground, sure of God. That certainty being won, the immutable laws which bind human nature under all its diversities of fortune, an intimate and infallible knowledge of the springs of human action, and the co-operations which Nature is ever ready to lend to those who side with her, would provide his Archimedean lever with which to "move the world." Jesus fixed upon two immutable, universal truths. First, he that works with God is bound to win. Second, the pure heart may see God, the willing spirit may understand his ways. Loyal to these truths, he made himself a receptacle of God. That and only that was his secret. Thenceforward his power, his wisdom were as adequate to his undertakings as God's. He was in fact God in the flesh; that is, as much of God as could be incarnated. His qualifications were divine.

Doubtless to some the figure of that Galilean peasant, trudging the dusty paths of Palestine, making himself the menial of every form of human need, seems disappointing, almost insignificant. Art has never been brave or discerning enough to take him as he really was, in all his humility. And doting devotion has imagined him possessed of every attribute of magnificence, of every human talent, unable to accept his own definition of greatness as simply capacity for service. But no adventitious aids supported him in his programme of conquest. He had the truth; he was right; he was able to live as he taught; he was the mightiest moral magnet of the ages, pulling tirelessly, unyieldingly, all men toward himself. This, in meagre words, is the whole story.

But how that story has developed itself in history and in experience! What a tribute to his accuracy of pretension has been the course of human progress under the spur of his leadership! What a tribute to human nature is the proof that truth and goodness are the most potent factors in its evolution, however hard and hellish it may sometimes seem! That Jesus understood himself and knew how to effect his

plans, let the authority of his name in this distant period bear witness; let the softened and fraternal civilizations of the earth bear witness; let the Christian Church, with all its imperfections, but also with all its costly sacrifice and endeavor for his sake, bear witness. He has done all things well, so well that we cannot doubt either his purpose or his power in the things yet to be done. He has justified his claim to be the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

THE END.







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