

II

THE DIVINE PURPOSE

IT HAS been suggested that the new element in the modern temper is the longing for rejuvenation. The desire for another chance; the passionate search for something to believe in and love and follow, in the pursuit of which man shall find himself in a friendly and spontaneous atmosphere, is undeniably a representative feature of the best thought of our time. A wedge of misgiving has been driven into the fabric of man's security, occasioned not as some suppose by the rapid alteration of the outward aspect of things, but by the fear that the universe has no rational meaning. The struggle for existence, the sufferings and hardships incident to human experience, are too readily accepted as final registers of meaning. This attitude hardens into a feeling of self-distrust, and is responsible for the growing sense of futility that is spreading through all classes of society. This disenchanting feeling about life, made up of exhausted emotions, disappointed hopes, of fading and failing aims, finds fitting expression in the words of Job: "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt, and is there any taste in the white of an egg?" This feeling not only affects individual estimates, but lessens confidence in man's institutions and social habits. It may have disastrous consequences, but it may also have definite religious value. The doubt as to the efficacy of the familiar aspects of human endeavor is, as Lawrence of Arabia has said, our modern crown of thorns.

One broad aspect of this modern mood is that the desire for rejuvenation may take a direction that falls below the human norm. Many imagine that all their troubles come from the abuse of individual liberty, and relief is sought through renunciation of this great but dangerous endowment. Having ruined himself by the abuse of his liberty, man seems inclined to part with it for the sake of animal security. Thus he is willing to attach himself to any authority that will give him personal comfort, in the spirit of the prodigal who was ready to confess that he was no longer worthy of being a son, and asked that he be made a hired servant. Such a desire, deeply felt under sharp stresses of the world, is unworthy of human nature. Man cannot unmake himself, and the belief that he can permanently renounce his personal responsibility will prove a delusion in the end.

The desire to renounce personal liberty in exchange for animal security is the ruling principle of certain novel political experiments of the present time.

The Marxian scheme rejects belief in God and the human soul and confines its objects to this world alone. But Marx did not repudiate the conception of order. He realized that man will not continue to struggle for any ends without the assurance of durable value. Belief in some kind of order is essential if man is to attain happiness in this world. As William James has said:

If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it *feels* like a real fight—as if there was something really wild in the universe which we with all our idealities and faithfulnesses are needed to redeem.

There is a wildness in the universe which is a perpetual challenge of human endeavor, but if our efforts have no

relation to some kind of order, we will not for long continue the struggle against manifest destiny. But is there such an order? Can we believe in order without purpose—without God? The Marxian scheme, while rejecting religion in all its forms, puts forth the doctrine of cosmic rhythm. If man would search for this rhythm and obey it, it would fulfill his hopes. This is the essence of dialectical materialism, and is an example of the tendency of social reformers to reinforce their schemes by appealing to man's religious impulses. If one believed in a cosmic rhythm it was easy to show that devotion to the communistic state justified the individual in renunciation of his personal liberty.

The same tendency is evident in the Nazi conception of the state. Under this scheme the individual attaches himself to a folk ideal—a belief in a dominant race, zeal for which develops a mystical enthusiasm that really becomes a new religion.

These novel tendencies indicate the potency of what Benjamin Kidd called "the emotion of the ideal." Enthusiasm for them concentrates the pent-up emotions of the multitude upon definite and visible movements. Amid the stir and splendor of mass formations, the individual forgets the price he is paying for the benefits they bestow.

These movements reveal the passionate desire for rejuvenation that is a characteristic phase of the modern temper. In their present form they are dangerous and disturbing, but we must not fail to recognize that they reveal the human spirit blindly groping for something that can give stability to life. It is the religious spirit gone astray. In them we see humanity's quest for security:

their half-reasons, faint aspirations,
Dim struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudices and fears and cares and doubts;
All with a touch of nobleness upward tending.

Man will not for long renounce the principle of self-determination. Only within the framework of liberty can he find his way to durable satisfactions. But he has never been able to use this dangerous endowment apart from faith in God. In a world where the passion for rejuvenation is potent, yet rarely directed towards the religious vision, an unusual opportunity arises for making a design for living, in harmony with it.

The desire for regeneration looks towards some definite authority, and it must be evident that belief in order is not the same thing as belief in purpose, for purpose implies personal agency. There is a tendency manifest in nature, but it is by no means constant. Sometimes it is efflorescent and helpful to man; at other times it is catastrophic and depressing. When the rhythm changes, the hopes based on it change also. The seeker for God will not be content with an impersonal force; what is desired is to find within the texture of this most confusing universe an order that manifests itself as personal interest in man. Without this belief man perishes, because he is incapable of restraining the downward tendencies of human nature. What is meant by purpose? A purpose is a personal intention to do something. It involves the selection of an end and the means for attainment. Any purpose that is to influence human life must be worked out within the time sequences in which man lives. Its final objective may be the world to come, but it must originate and grow within the temporal world. Its validity will also depend on whether it takes account of man's freedom. An arbitrary imposition of the Divine will upon man's will that left no room for spontaneity would make experience an illusion. Whatever else the idea of purpose in God may mean, it must have these qualities if it is to have any meaning for man's life.

Where is knowledge of such a purpose to be found? Inasmuch as many of our most important conceptions of the universe have been given by science, we must first reckon with it. Can science help us? It certainly can. It has taught us to reject superstition, it has refined our notion of what human life should be, and it has inspired us with a love of truth. But science can do more than this; for it cannot be denied that its present progress has shown that the objects of religious belief must be attained by other means than those used to determine the truth of a physical theory, and a little consideration will make this clear. If it be true, as it undoubtedly is, that we cannot have a reliable knowledge of anything until we have formulated a theory of ignorance, then it were wise to ask what service our present awareness of ignorance can render to an adequate philosophy of living. For that we are aware of our ignorance concerning many high matters goes without saying. A half-century ago it seemed altogether likely that physical science would establish two positions unfavorable to a spiritual view of the world. One was materialism; and the other, mechanical determinism. Neither of these positions has any standing in present-day science. Matter has lost its substantiality and vanished into radiations and waves, while indeterminism in the realm of small-scale events, though contributing nothing to a positive doctrine of free will, has at least removed the formidable notion of rigid determinism from the metaphysical consideration of the problem.

Where, then, does this leave us? Do we know more or less than before of man's relation to the universe? Plainly, the great questions: what is real? what abides amid nature's teeming turmoil? what, if anything, controls events in the vast complex of the universe known to science? still remain to be considered. The present state of science throws no

direct light on these subjects, but it does confront the inquiring mind with fundamental problems. I believe it can be said that science justifies our belief in a directing intelligence operating at the heart of the mysterious universe, but the question remains: Is this universal mind personal, and has it given any indication of interest in human life? Suppose the universe should turn out to be a manifestation of impersonal energy, where does that leave us? We are obliged to inquire into the possibility of guidance and ends; for surely if we have to choose between determinism and indeterminism in the raw, I do not think many would hesitate. It were better to believe that the universe has some meaning and some definite goal, even though it should disappoint our expectations, than to think of it as having no meaning at all. A universe blindly stumbling into futurity—a thing of shreds and patches—is an intolerable conception.

Such reflections lead us to ask: On what plane can God be known? By this I am not asking if God exists, but for enough knowledge of the Divine intention as shall satisfy the spiritual needs of those that desire to believe in and obey Him. I am thinking of the kind of information that shall fulfill our desires, when the emergencies of earthly experience make rejuvenation the supreme passion of the soul. Such knowledge should have redemptive value. It should be the disclosure of something that can match the tragic needs of human nature with something more tragic still, and in that meeting of the deep in God's life with the deep in man's life, heal us of our mortal wounds.

Can such knowledge be obtained from science? It was the custom until recently to act on the assumption that unless religious belief obtained the sanction of this high discipline, we could not accept its validity. I am confident that the present state of our knowledge—and especially of our ig-

norance—has weakened this contention. No matter what alteration of outlook may take place in the future, I feel that science will always exercise a wise restraint, in respect to pronouncements concerning the truth or falsity of theories that lie beyond its rightful domain.

The best information science gives us is of nature's processes and modes of behavior. It can tell us nothing of purpose or Providence. With this, the religious mind should be content. The charge often brought against science that it tries to make nature teach too little of God, might easily be turned against the theologian who often endeavors to make nature teach too much. Science, strictly speaking, has nothing to do with the idea of a first, or final, cause of things. These problems lie beyond its jurisdiction. But the present positions of science present a negative value towards the problem of religion that is worthy of further consideration. Science cannot answer the demands of the religious spirit, but it definitely knows how to put the question to the philosopher and theologian. And this comes about in this way:

We may think of the domain of science as represented by a series of long galleries opening into a common room. The galleries are the special departments; the common room, the unsuspected goal of scientific progress. Until recently, the results have been so satisfactory, that the specialists did not like to leave their long galleries, but developments of such radical significance have occurred as to bring them all into this common room. Some, however, are timid and, professing to find the room a stuffy place, have retreated into their several departments and declined to speculate at all on the outcome. But the bolder spirits find the common room—a room with a view! Standing at the window looking abroad over the spreading landscape, they realize

they have reached the frontier, beyond which they cannot pass by the use of scientific method. But they feel—if there be ultimate reality, if there be guiding principles, if there be at the heart of the mysterious universe a directing intelligence—all these must be found by exploring the distant landscape. But that is not the function of science, and the ultimate question is thus handed over to philosophy.

There is, however, a practical influence of scientific knowledge upon the problem of human life that further stresses the necessity of knowing something of the purpose of the universe, and that is the light it casts upon man's moral necessities. The widespread feeling of self-distrust that lies at the roots of our modern temper is due to self-condemnation. And in face of the feeling of need for moral rejuvenation, the impartial attitude of nature known to science is very depressing. If man is living in a lawful universe, what can he do to safeguard himself from the consequences of lawless behavior? At this vital point nature will not help him, for she has no priestly ministries. She makes no allowance for ignorance or perversity, neither does she understand the language of penitence or regret. There is no such thing as a religion of nature. She is not a school of the moral virtues, but a dangerous and deadly antagonist prepared to dispute man's progress at every stage of its unfolding. Science can tell the number of the stars—but it cannot heal the broken heart. That is why Paulsen once remarked that "whatever temple we may build for science, there must be hard by somewhere a Gothic chapel for wounded souls." Science successfully decodes nature's message, but answers to those ultimate questions on which man's happiness depends must be sought for in another region entirely.

Thus man turns to the greatest of his endowments—the

guidance of the rational spirit. Reason is that attribute of the mind through which we apprehend and commune with the ultimate meaning of things. It is the ability to hear and understand that deep voice that tells us of the order and beauty and consistency of the universe, and urges us to respond to it. If we follow that voice, we shall fulfill our life. This truth man cannot afford to ignore. And yet he has often done so, for a curious chapter in mental eccentricity is the paradoxical attitude man has taken towards it. Sometimes he worships at the shrine of reason; at others, he rejects and despises it.

A common source of error is the tendency to identify reason with reasoning processes, and to limit its power to logical conceptions. We know intuitively that reason is broader in scope than reasoning processes. We feel at times that personality can fulfill itself only when we include in reason intuition, imagination, and insight. This is freely admitted when we impose the idea of beauty and harmony on the universe; but when we forget this, we are apt to fall into the error of supposing that only what can be proved by logical processes can be taken as rational. Zeal often makes us careless in the selection of our premises. But if through prejudice or carelessness we choose false premises, no quality of logic can safeguard us from losing our way.

The tendency to confuse reason with reasoning processes is responsible for many of the persistent difficulties that arise in philosophy and theology when we consider the idea of purpose applied to God. We must begin our thinking by remembering that a finite mind can only partially comprehend the infinite. All human knowledge is relative, not only to infinity, but also to human frailty. If we start with the first principle, that God must be a perfect and self-contained being, we are likely to assume that perfection of being makes

it impossible to apply the idea of purpose to God. How can changes or alterations take place in the Divine mind? A purpose is an intention to do something, that must be realized within time sequences. It implies movement, contingency, progress, and culmination. Although such a purpose fulfills itself in the world to come, it must take shape within this world, and work out its meaning within time. But how can we think of God as being subjected to these limitations? Is not purpose inconsistent with perfection of being? Besides, if the only idea of Divine purpose that can have any bearing on man's life must have regard for his freedom, how can we attach importance to a purpose of this nature, when Divine fore-knowledge of future events makes them so certain that human freedom must be a delusion? It is here that one of the standing themes of controversy emerges: the inability to reconcile Divine purpose with human freedom. We are often told that we must solve this problem before we can get any idea at all of purpose in the universe. The answer we should make to such demands is that these two propositions cannot be reconciled by the methods of logical reasoning, simply because they are unavoidable antinomies that result from following reasoning processes too far. We all know that if we follow logic far enough, it leads us into a dead end, where we are faced with several propositions which are of equal logical consistency, but self-contradictory. Are we, then, to conclude that reasoning is a false method of knowing? By no manner of means. What we should do is frankly to confess to the relativity of reasoning processes, and the danger of treating abstractions as though they rested on real, or final, knowledge. Abstractions are used by two kinds of minds: by the wise to confess their ignorance, and by the foolish to conceal ignorance. Science is proving with telling effect that its final knowledge of

nature is symbolic only. It does not probe the depths of reality. The same ought to be said of our philosophical concepts, that, being abstractions, they treat only of symbolic knowledge. They give us no intimate knowledge of reality itself. We must, of necessity, speak of God as the Infinite, the Eternal, the Absolute. Such great words stimulate reverence and inspire worship; but we should never forget that the power of these words is derived not from their content, but from an intimate experience long associated with them. By themselves, abstractions of all kinds are inventories of ignorance, and nothing more. In saying this, I do not think I am falling into the error of despising reason. On the contrary, I am wondering if the unavoidable antinomies that develop when we follow logic too far do not prove that logic itself travels in curves, rather than in straight lines. It seems to lead us into the house of mystery, where we wander about and about, and then come out of the door by which we entered, no wiser than before. If space be curved, why not logical processes?

I venture upon these highly debatable remarks in the hope that we shall govern ourselves by the same wise restraints that science has imposed upon itself when it tells us that its abstractions stop with symbols that do not deal with reality. If this be true of science, why not also of philosophy? If faith in purpose is so important, were it not wise to use all available sources of information in order to understand it, especially the region of intimate experience that so vitally concerns our growth and happiness?

In what I have said, I have no desire whatever to fall into the pit of pragmatism, nor associate myself with the anti-intellectualistic movement that has had such an unfavorable influence on modern thought. Our age has been inclined to put the major emphasis on action, rather than

on thought. Outside the domain of science a tendency to disparage reason has been taken as a proof of superior intelligence, especially among that large class of impressionists who prefer to put their thinking out with the family wash, rather than do it at home. As a recent Gifford lecturer expresses it: "St. Thomas and Dante, following Jesus in the Gospel, had staked their all on Mary; modern thought puts its money on Martha." The followers of Martha are much given to the use and abuse of abstractions. Only the other day, one such suggested that the time had come to identify God with the fourth-dimension. What the time needs is not less rationality, but more of it. But we must have regard to the first principle of the love of truth: a sharp distinction between the broad quality of reason itself, and the restricted use of it in logical process. Furthermore, we must exercise the greatest possible restraint in the selection of our premises, for it is certain that if reason is furnished with the right sort of premises it will carry on.

The problem that we must solve for ourselves is whether we are going to limit our choice of premises to science or natural philosophy, or whether the necessities of life do not suggest that we search for a firmer basis of confidence in another and more intimate region. I believe that a reasonable understanding of the deepest desires of our time suggests a fresh opportunity for seeking that basis of faith in the Christian religion. If God has shown a purpose for human life at its most tragical and profoundly spiritual depths, then beyond question such a revelation has appeared in the advent of Jesus Christ. We know how Aquinas developed a synthesis between reason and revelation that gave a God-centered idea-system to the Middle Ages. Looking back upon it through the mists of time, we feel, somehow, that the thinker and the saint had approached closer to the

heart of spiritual reality in that synthesis than we have since. We cannot relocate ourselves in that scholastic scheme, but, to my mind, the wistful feeling that those who know that system experience, intimates that our modern world is looking for something like it. The life and death struggle between the soul and the machine makes man desire union with a spiritual authority that can deliver him from the prison-house of his fears. It is unlikely that we shall complete that synthesis in our time, but I am confident that the highest trends are all pointing towards it. Life is too urgent in its immediate demands to wait while we perfect our philosophy. We must live first, and then take on as much intellectual cargo as shall give balance and direction to its growth. Above all, the most important aspect has to do with our direction. Were it not wise, then, to choose the highest possible end in living, in the light of all the information available? It surely is a limited view to seek guidance alone from science or natural philosophy, when we find embedded in history the tremendous regenerating power of the Christian faith. There, in my humble judgment, we shall find a true unfolding of the Divine purpose. There, too, are revealed the major premises for building a rational philosophy of religion.

There was a time when reason and revelation stood apart, as though they were mutually antagonistic. That time is passing. An interesting evidence of this appears in trends in the Gifford lectures, a foundation that is limited to natural religion, where some of the most important of recent lecturers have not refrained from enriching their teaching from sources outside the natural domain. This is a distinct stage of growth in the direction of great philosophy. Just as the scientist, when thinking of the intimate phases of experience, is learning to appreciate knowledge that is vali-

dated by methods other than his own, so the philosopher, often in spite of himself, is becoming a theologian. The need for faith in the final cause of things is becoming more and more a rational principle of research. The light of revelation in history is breaking upon the tortured mentality of our time, and promising deliverance from maladies that are felt to be spiritual. It is the professed purpose of Jesus Christ to reveal the Divine intention to mankind. A rational surrender to His authority would inspire us to form a design for living that will not only meet the necessities of this life, but of that which is to come. In Christian discipleship man will find adjustment to the Divine will that is the promise of victory over the world.

The approach to this conception can be expressed in a direct way. What is it that we desire in religion? Why are we religious at all? It is because we are influenced by certain feelings that are common to human nature at all levels of experience. I made mention of these feelings in the first lecture. A little more attention to them is needed here.

The first is the sense of dependence on something not ourselves that is the inspiration of all religious desire. What controls our destiny? Why are we here? Where are we going? What is going to happen to us in the future? Such questions prompt the search for knowledge of the Being Whose power is manifest in the universe around us. But this quest develops man's moral nature, and he becomes aware of disharmony between himself and God. The soul is homesick, but afraid to go home. Man's intellectual growth has more than once made this feeling the most distinctive element in the culture of a period. It has been among the inspiring causes of the world's great literature, as witness the dramas of Æschylus, the poetry of Lucretius, and the moral

homilies of Seneca. It is the dominant motive of the *Divine Comedy*. This feeling is one of the most important factors in the growth of religion, because it points directly towards the need for atonement. Man feels if he is to close the breach between himself and God he must suffer for it, and in sacrifice, ritual, and ceremony make his peace with God. Even in the lower stages of his growth, man realizes that there is no such thing as fiat-forgiveness. When this grave feeling is followed into its more refined stages, it brings the soul to a dead end—to a walled-frontier. How can a man be just before God? How can he find refuge from his own self-despisings, and close the breach between himself and the source of his life? It is here that the serious mind confesses it has reached its limit. Without ability to cross the forbidding frontier, man looks to the high Heavens, and waits for God to speak. And as he broods and prays for aid, a revelation of God in human form becomes the definite object of man's desire. We cannot pay tribute to gods that dwell apart from life, far beyond the flaming walls of the world, neither will we for long worship at the shrine of our own abstractions. Only a God revealed to us in the intimate experiences of life can inspire the mind to rational and abiding faith.

This is a fundamental position—the last stage of a purely human quest for God. Yet it is often rejected on the ground that it is an anthropomorphic way of thinking. But how can man think of God at all except within the limits of his own nature? The possibility of knowing anything of the Infinite depends upon God's willingness to manifest Himself within these limits. We cannot have a non-human or a super-human idea of anything. When we view the universe as a creation of God, it is a most reasonable belief to suppose that He made it with particular regard for communicating with the

being who is like Him. God chooses the plane on which man is to know Him, and the imperfection of our ideas about Him suggests the necessity of a revelation at the end that shall most thoroughly validate our beliefs. He that formed the ear, shall He not hear? He that made the mind, shall He not think? What we all desire is precisely what St. John says Jesus Christ is: the Word made flesh. Jesus Christ is the supreme manifestation of the order, rationality, and purpose that gives meaning to the world.

If we keep the common elements of religion in mind—the sense of dependence, the sense of alienation, the effort to make atonement, and the longing for a human life in God—it will become clear that they furnish valid criteria for belief in a Divine revelation. A true religion must appeal to and satisfy these needs, and surely it is wise to believe that the religion that most thoroughly fulfills these requirements is the authentic revelation of God. If there be a purpose of God designed to meet man's greatest necessities, it would be found here.

When we ask what is the mission of Jesus Christ, we find that it meets all the necessary requirements that man, in his most rational experiences, believes must be of the essence of religion. The sense of dependence is fully satisfied by the revelation of the Fatherhood of God, which is based not on the creative act, but upon a definite intention to redeem man from the guilt and consequences of his own wrong doing. This explains why man's quest for God increases the feeling of alienation and urges him to find some way to adjust himself to the moral requirements of life. This essential adjustment is accomplished in the Atonement, wherein man beholds God's love revealed in its redemptive aspect. And all of these revelations are made to us through the Incarnation. Thus it appears historically manifest that God was in

Christ reconciling Himself unto the world. Jesus did not come into the world to give us a new system of ethics, nor to reveal an ideal for human relations. His mission is redemptive throughout, and designed to unite man to the life of God in that adequate adjustment to the moral and spiritual necessities of life. Hence Christianity is a religion of invitations, rather than of commands. Its appeal is affirmative of the Divine purpose in its most intimate relations to man's moral struggles and desires, and its objective is to work out in the texture of human experience an abiding assurance of adjustment to the will of God. When so conceived, the purpose of God becomes the pattern on which man can base a design for living that shall be in harmony with his highest aspirations.

Let us admit that the personality of Jesus Christ is the most provocative in history. But He is more than an historical personage; He belongs essentially to the cosmic order, and on that very account we can never fully know or understand Him. Yet the aspects of His personality that pass our understanding are likely to become the most persuasive influences that attach us to Him as Lord and Master. A Saviour wholly like ourselves would never meet our needs. If Jesus is to become the central authority of the soul, He must stand above the mutations of life in just those qualities that pass our understanding, but, at the same time, arouse our reverence and inspire our worship. For the act of worship, public or private, when guided by an intelligent understanding of the essential elements of religious need, is a satisfaction of that profoundly serious demand for moral adjustment, and we become aware of our reconciliation to God in an actual communion with Him. We know that He is not a spectator of human life but an active participant. In the act of faith we unite our life with the Divine purpose that guarantees the fulfillment of human expectations.

The major premise of a Divine philosophy is given in the words of Christ in the eleventh chapter of Matthew: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

God alone is the author of our salvation. We obtain knowledge of the Divine purpose sufficient to inspire faith neither in nature nor in human nature. It has come to us in its adequate form in the revelation of God through Jesus Christ. We may, therefore, without misgiving, identify the Divine purpose with the mission of Jesus. It gives an impressive and convincing unity to nature's processes, and suggests the perfection of human beings through the grace of God as the final goal of life. Through this revelation man attains his chief end: to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Man is for God, and the universe is for man, that is the true doctrine of progress; and it is not an abstract theory, but, thanks be to God, a truth that proves its vitality in face of the hard facts of experience.

Bergson expresses the idea in a very fine way. Believing in the omnipotence of the life force, he thus views its culmination:

As the smallest grain of dust is bound up with our entire solar system, drawn along with it in that undivided movement of descent which is materiality itself, so all organized beings, from the humblest to the highest, from the first origins of life to the time in which we are, and in all places as in all times, do but evidence a single impulsion, the inverse of the movement of matter, and in itself indivisible. All the living hold together, and all yield to the same tremendous push. The animal takes its stand on the plant, man bestrides animality, and the whole of humanity, in space and in time, is one immense army galloping beside and before and behind each of us in an overwhelming charge able to beat down every resistance and clear the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death.

St. Paul, who viewed the struggle for existence as the manifestation of Divine purpose, interprets the movement in terms more in accord with human happiness, when he says that "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

Something wonderful is taking shape in the universe; and the more intently we scrutinize its processes, the more impressive is the fact that its final goal is not material. The universe exists for man, and its purpose is to assist him in the attainment of spiritual maturity. It is reasonable, therefore, to interpret its significance in the highest possible terms, and in the light of all available information the ultimate explanation of its meaning is revealed in the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ.

We can believe in the validity of religion only when it matches the tragic elements in man's life with something more tragic still. Time eventually convinces us that man's supreme necessity is moral adjustment to the will of God. This sense of need makes man aware of his relations to eternity and brings him face to face with destiny. In spite of our attachment to the material world, the pilgrim urge is the most representative mood of the soul. We are all going somewhere, and the assurance of guidance is the most rational desire of the human spirit. When we give effect to this solemn mood, we realize that it is the tragic element in Christianity that gives us the confidence that we desire. If God so loved the world as to give His Son to redeem it, it means that God Himself is an active participant in the process. The Incarnation and Atonement definitely indicate on the field of history that God has personally assumed responsibility for man's redemption. By that revelation God is speaking directly to man in the words of an Old Testament prophet: "I have made, and I will bear; therefore show

yourselves men, for I am God and beside me, there is none else." It means, although human hopes may be disappointed, and the stream of history will often move but sluggishly towards desirable culminations, that deep beneath the change and strife of the visible world the tide is coming in. The purpose is there, working out its holy and beneficent ends. That is the final cause of the universe, so far as we need to know it. And when other resources fail, we can always fall back on this profound conviction; for beyond all controversy the revelation of God's redemptive love in Jesus Christ is the basis for faith in the Divine purpose of sufficient concreteness to enable us, in spite of finite limitations, to share in its glorious consummations. This is the best conception of human life and destiny that we have, and can there be a better?