III

THE HUMAN RESPONSE

THERE are two great principles of Christianity that may be taken as the major premises of a Divine philosophy. The first is that God alone is the author of salvation. Man's deliverance is not a human achievement, but of the grace of God. The Divine purpose is revealed in its highest form in the person and mission of Jesus Christ. If man can believe that the purpose is manifested in the Christian proposal, it will follow that response to it will associate him with its fulfillment. Herein lies the significance of the second principle, that while God alone is the author of our salvation, He is always willing to bestow it upon men of a certain eagerness of mind. When Jesus said that "No man can know the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him," He followed it with the gracious words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." These are among the most precious words in the Gospels, and they bring assurance at the very moment when the mystery and aloofness of God are felt to be absolute. If God alone is the author of salvation, it means that man can neither earn it nor deserve it. Access can come only through a Divine invitation. But God is always willing to meet a man on the pathway of his highest endeavor. No matter how far he goes astray, such words will bring him back to the right pathway. This is the eager disposition required to understand the Divine proposal, and we may rightly call it the human response.
These great principles must never be separated. If either is made the basis of our thinking to the exclusion of the other, we shall be led into extremes, and the appeal will be weakened. The most significant movement in Protestant theology since the Reformation is that under the leadership of Karl Barth. Its influence is due chiefly to the fact that it confronts us with the objective authority of God at the very time when we feel the need of it. But Barth, in his zeal to safeguard Christian truth from the all too human trends of the recent past, founds his system on the principle of "an endless qualitative difference between man and God." The logic of this position is to make God unknowable and to degrade the human image. It will not permit us to attach any meaning to ideas of God derived from nature or human nature. It limits knowledge of God's attitude to us to revelation alone, and man is capable of religion only when eternity breaks in on the temporal world in the form of a series of crises. Only when God directly acts can man have any assurance of communion with Him. Such an interpretation of revelation seems to limit it to a kind of fiat-super-naturalism manifest in episodic invasions of time-sequences, in which human thought, desire, and intention could have no meaning at all. I am wholly in sympathy with an absolute conception of Divine sovereignty that allows God to select the plane on which He is to be known, but we must be guided by the definite teaching of Jesus, rather than by formal logic. Religion is no doubt a mystery, but it need not become a mystification. Now, that which has made the Christian Gospel is that in all its proposals it assumes that man can understand and respond to its appeal. Jesus guards the first principle by the enunciation of the second. God is the giver of salvation, but always offers it to men of a certain willingness to respond. But how can man come to Jesus unless he be-
lieve in the validity of his highest thought about Him? Everywhere the New Testament shows that God expects us to think about Him and choose His will. Hence, the first intimate feeling about the Divine proposal is a sense of being invited to believe in God. The Christian proposal is an invitation, not a compulsion. It is always a personal appeal, never the confrontation of man with a body of abstract principles. Man can and must make a diagnosis of his need. His experience will always furnish the materials for that, but God alone has the remedy. This is the most precious element in the Gospel. God breaks the silence of eternity in words of invitation and of love. The mission of Jesus makes this so definite that we are justified in using all the natural knowledge at our disposal, if only to realize the unique character of that revelation upon which the peace of the soul depends. Readiness to believe in Divine revelation will enable us the better to appreciate the legitimacy of the human response.

The most important truths of religion are to be found on the common level of experience, for religion is as broad as life and we come upon its needs and appeals in the ordinary routine of living, although we do not always recognize them in their rational aspect. For many important attitudes and actions are initiated not by reasoning processes, but by urges and impulses that often rise from a non-rational region. The deep emotions are the primary energies of the soul. In that crepuscular domain lie the driving powers of personality. Rationality is essential to right direction of these energies. But we must not forget that in religion and morals, as indeed in most of the elements that bind humanity together, we are influenced more than we are willing to confess by an interplay of impulse and emotion. Our major premises are often chosen under the authority of emotion, and the raw materials of conviction are found there.
There is an incalculable element in our authentic convictions that goes beyond deliberate reasoning processes. A feeling of regard for an object is often the inspiration to think about it. It is of importance that we recognize in these contrasted attitudes two valid ways of knowing. Cardinal Newman expressed it thus: "Certitude is a mental state: certainty is a quality of propositions." Some propositions carry conviction in their very statement, others do not. Yet most of the beliefs that influence our attitude towards God or man are felt to be valid because we have formed an attitude of mind about them. We have verified them in experience, and act as if they were true, apart from any feeling that validity must wait upon rational justification. It is indeed paradoxical that a man may be under the influence of this non-rational element at the very time that he imagines he is governed by rational considerations. On the other hand, a man may respond freely to the incalculable element yet escape the bias of subjectivity. Jesus teaches us to believe that the clean heart makes the clear mind. If our eye be single, the whole body is full of light. And he who most spontaneously responds to the deepest urges of his nature will often find himself in communion with the eternal verities. This does not mean that we should hand over our life to the guidance of irrational mysticism, or that man can gain the vision of God without strenuous effort. Truth is an uneasy companion for a lazy mind, and no light is vouchsafed to a sluggish spirit. But it does mean that in the provisional fashioning of our religious beliefs we are going to be influenced by impressions and attitudes that have formed within the depths of the soul which suggest and initiate reasoning processes and determine their goal quite apart from our self-conscious mental states. And if knowledge of the purpose of God be the highest end of life, that knowledge must
definitely center upon a personal relationship, and here the inner quality of man's desires is of the most serious import. This truth is well put by a Scottish philosopher:

There is only one thing that can purge human nature thoroughly of the disease of subjectivity, and that is the discovery of an object, not of interest merely, not of scientific preoccupation, but of reverence. Reverence is the supreme objectifier of human experience; and the only possible object of reverence is a person.

We know, then, some things because we are certain of them; we know other things because we are persuaded of them, and both are valid ways of knowing.

The acceptance of this distinction will simplify the problem of response to the purpose of God. We have inherited a prejudice against the latter way of knowing from nineteenth-century scientific trends. In the light of more recent developments that feeling is no longer justified. Physical science tells us now that its ultimate knowledge is symbolic only. It does not reach the reality of things.

The same is true of philosophical knowledge, and in so concluding we are far from falling in with the anti-intellectual trends of the more recent past. We are only saying that knowledge of the soul's status before God must be more concrete than this. The intellect, if left to the devices of logic, will often slay the object that it loves in order to understand it. It deprives ideas of content, and offers in exchange a collection of abstractions that are too remote from reality to have any influence. The knowledge that unites the soul to God must be, like the tragic elements of life that make religion a necessity, intimate knowledge. It must touch us where we live. Intimate knowledge is the knowledge of an experience of something working within the soul, yet pointing beyond that experience to the central authority of life. Where this feeling is most effective it prompts us to think about it, until we are moved to act as
though it were true. Spiritual awareness enables us, when confronted with the facts of religion, to believe them, and so finally to develop a definite faith in the reality of the object to which we surrender the guidance of life.

I have said that, while God alone is the giver of salvation, He is always ready to bestow it upon men of a certain eagerness of soul. For religion develops, not from man's curiosity about the mysterious universe, but from the definitely felt experience of dependence upon something that determines his destiny. As Balfour says: "Scratch an argument and you find a cause." If man argues about God, it is because he feels the need for God. On this account religion can mean nothing to an unawakened soul. Unless we are concerned about our life, we shall hardly understand what we need at all. Man needs something at the first, he knows not what; he seeks something, he knows not how; yet Augustine expressed the human desire when he said: "Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee."

The uncritical urges of the soul often defy rational justification, yet on that account they are not to be ignored. The first step in response lies in following the highest that we know, for in these primary impulses we have the raw materials for building a rational faith. If we desire more light, we must follow the light we have. William Blake expressed this truth in a vivid way:

I give you the end of a golden string,
Only wind it into a ball.
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall.

The Biblical word for the human response is faith, and the word is used in different senses. When the prophet Habakkuk says that the just shall live by faith, he means that the
good man will triumph over the world by remaining steadfastly faithful to his religious principles. Faith in this sense means loyalty and persistence in a certain way of life. In the epistle of Jude, we are told to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, which probably means the same thing. When the Roman Church speaks of “the faith” it refers to a body of dogma that must be accepted by the faithful. It is sometimes applied in the same manner to the Protestant theological symbols. But such uses are secondary only to the main idea.

The primary use of the word appears where Paul associates it with hope and love, the three cardinal virtues, which endure because they are rooted and grounded in the eternal world. These are the great cables that pass beyond the veil and unite man to the life of God. But they begin in this life, although their perfection belongs to the future. In this sense, faith is Blake’s golden string, and experience is the way we wind it into a ball. In its essence, faith is that supreme act of the soul by which man surrenders his life to the guidance of God. Hence, we can never think too much about it, nor cease to inquire into its meaning as long as we live. For faith is that rational adjustment of our life to the purpose of God which gives us beyond all misgiving the victory over the world.

There is a remarkable description of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen.” Man is a creature of hope. He partly is, and wholly hopes to be, and is ever looking toward some unrealized expectation. Life at its highest is lived in hope; yet we must believe in what we hope for, else it will shame us in the hour of need. Hence, faith gives substance to our hope, and under all the stresses of existence we know that we shall not fail. But the goal of
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our hopes lies far out in the unseen world. It does not accept visible events as a final register of meanings. Hence, faith is the act of the soul by which through intelligent surrender we gain confidence and assurance of the reality of all that has to do with our peace of mind and spiritual security.

How does faith begin, and into what does it develop? Let me put it this way: Faith begins as an experiment and ends in an experience. There is an unavoidable element of risk that we must face. It is better to be over-bold, than over-cautious; for "he that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." Knowledge cannot be obtained unless the investigator is willing to live dangerously. The progress of science depends at first upon shrewd guesses, and its experiments are initiated by faith in certain possibilities. This principle is true also of religious knowledge. A man must be willing to stake his life on a possibility, if he is to know God at all. For faith is the test not of our skill in reasoning, but of the soundness of our hearts. As Martineau puts it: "Faith is belief in another's goodness on the inspiration of your own."

This principle is important because faith in Jesus Christ must begin with a willingness to act upon His word, without prior evidence that what we undertake is going to be successful. The generous invitations to believe often come with demands for attitudes and actions that appear contrary to ordinary experience. The Gospel story is full of such appeals. Jesus said on one occasion to a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years: "Take up thy bed and walk." On another occasion, He urged His discouraged disciples who had toiled all night and taken nothing: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Both these proposals were contrary to experience, yet, when acted upon, led to new and transforming experiences. The invitations of
Jesus are always away from familiar estimates of life, towards the boundless deeps of possible attainments. His word is a challenge to adventure, to stake life on a possibility; and he who begins with the experiment turns faith into an experience that may well be called intimate or ultimate knowledge. This is the normal course of faith, and he who follows Jesus with joyous abandon and in the spirit of high adventure will always reach a point where the ideas of faith will appear as rational elements of a great philosophy of living.

What are the essential elements of faith? There are three that seem to me to be fundamental to all the rest.

1. Faith is assent to certain proposals on the testimony of others. No man hath seen God at any time, neither have we ever seen Jesus after the flesh. All that we know at first of the Christian proposal must be told us by others. The function of the disciple is that of a reliable witness. He testifies to the truth of what has been certified to him in his own experience. We know something of Jesus, and all have felt His power. Our moral and religious ideas are vitally influenced by an idea-system which is the product of Christianity. Call it the influence of tradition if you like, but do not on that account imagine that we can get along without tradition. Most of the beliefs that govern human relations have come by way of hearsay evidence. We cannot, save at our peril, be indifferent to this. A young man once said to me: "I never accept anything on hearsay evidence." I asked him who his father was, and where and when he was born. He told me, and I then asked: "How do you know that?" We can no more avoid the influence of hearsay evidence than we can escape our shadow. The atmosphere is charged with Christian ideas and influences; and the first necessity for a closer experience of the purpose of God is to assimilate
the essential elements of this environment, and, in view of the urgency of living, act upon this provisional knowledge. Willingness to walk by the light we have will lead us into more light. The will to obey the God whom we now know will bring us into the experience of the greater teaching. But, so soon as we take a serious attitude towards what we know, we become aware of a second element in faith, the need for finding some place or some person on which we may base our hope, and where we may lay up our inner life. We cannot find this in principles, however true or well thought out; the mind seeks ideas, but the heart seeks a person. Hence, there grows from a disposition to believe in the tradition a concentration of attention upon the personality of Christ, and thus faith passes into its second element.

2. The disposition to trust life to the personal authority of Jesus Christ. Discipleship really begins here. On one occasion, Jesus told certain Jews who believed He was speaking the truth about God: “If you abide in my word, and truly become my disciples, ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” It is at this point that many misapprehensions of the Christian proposal are to be found. The idea that Christ’s mission is that of a teacher is very popular today; and indeed we may give full force to this notion, but must not overlook the fact that His mission is not that of a teacher merely, but of a Saviour and Redeemer. He came not to tell us something about God, but to do something for us. Jesus did not come to teach us a new morality, nor to suggest a new ideal of humanity, but to deliver us from this present evil world and unite us to the Divine purpose. This is the unique character of Christianity. It is not the religion of a book nor of a way of life, but of a person. What makes a Christian is the surrender of the soul to Jesus as Lord and Master. We may believe all the principles of
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the Bible and yet come short of the grace of God. Christianity is the religion of invitations, but if we accept the proposal of Jesus we must commit the whole life to Him. This, I believe, is the most difficult of human tasks. It is easy to believe in the existence of God. Such a belief is intuitive and spontaneous, yet of itself has no essential moral value. It does not always transform life or influence conduct. The devils believe and tremble. The assent to the existence of a Supreme Being, although we give Him the highest predicates, makes no man a Christian. What makes one a disciple is the definite and whole-hearted surrender of the soul to the authority of Christ. Such a decision is never easy. It is hard to make, and at the first more difficult to live by. It is never a spontaneous expression of religious need, and that which makes it valid is that it thoroughly transforms life and changes both its direction and its allegiance. That is why one must believe that Jesus is the supreme disclosure of the Divine purpose. If we can believe this, it will enable us the more thoroughly to understand the implications of our faith. For the element of trust, guided by reason, lifts the standard above traditional conceptions into the region of a life-changing experience. Thus our symbolic knowledge is turned into intimate knowledge, the knowledge of actual experience. The certitudes of faith grow from habits of mind, and the focus is sharpened until it centers reasonably upon the will of Christ as Lord and Master; and from this grows a third and final element of faith at its maturity.

3. Faith becomes the consent of the will to another Master, even Jesus Christ, as the most rational and considered expression of life. We learn to put on Christ in the moral habit and disposition of mind, and make no provision for the lawless desires of the flesh. By dying unto ourselves, we
live in Christ; and as we proceed towards maturity our devotion to the will of Jesus greatly enlarges our experience of the purpose of God. The degree in which we respond to that purpose is the measure of the depth and range of personality, and culminates in an experience in which appear the qualities of a fully rejuvenated soul.

Faith is the direct response of the whole nature of man to the whole nature of God, as that is revealed in the Christian proposal. The invitation to believe has a double aspect. On the one hand, we are invited to reason about certain propositions; on the other, to participate in certain Divine energies. For the end of belief is not right thinking about God, but right relation to God. Failure to recognize this double aspect of belief often leads to grave error. It is essential to a living faith that we should thoroughly consider its propositions, arrange them so far as possible in a logical sequence, and develop them into a system of thought. We cannot mature our faith without some kind of theology. Now theology is not religion, but, as Brunner reminds us, "it is the science of food values." A living religion must be a contemporary religion. Its power must be thought of and felt in actual experience. But its origin and significance are embedded in the past tradition of the Church. Each generation must do its own thinking, but it ought not to be indifferent to its background. As Kierkegaard says: "The ancient dogmatic terminology of the Church is like an enchanted castle where the most beautiful princes and princesses repose in profound slumber—they need only to be awakened to stand up in their glory." The right way to bring to life the rich inheritance of the past is to think about it. No one can afford to ignore the search for rational conviction, and the broader the foundation on which we build, the greater will be our power to stand up to life with courage and hope.
As Sir Henry Jones reminds us: "The Church as teacher must learn to represent its beliefs, not as dogmas but as truths which it challenges the unbelieving world to put to the test, and to the hardest test it can find even amongst the worst intricacies of the pathetic tragedies of human life."

But we must always keep in mind the double aspect of our beliefs. On the one hand, as Balfour reminds us, they belong to a cognitive series; and on the other, to a causal series. Valid ideas of religion have to do with the functions of power. If one place all the emphasis on right thinking about religion, the system of thought derived from it will become static and too much dependent on tradition. We must give equal authority to the functional significance of truth, in order that our faith may be both dynamic and contemporary, and both aspects ought to be kept together. Over-emphasis on either to the exclusion of the other leads to error. Some may put all the stress on the historical basis of religion and insist that its validity is disclosed in the traditional symbols of the Church. Others, disregarding history, may put all the stress on mystical experiences, and separate religion entirely from its historic base. A Christianity limited to history will always seem remote from present life and need; while mysticism, separated from history, will appear as an emotional vagary. The union of the cognitive and functional aspects develops into a valid faith, although it usually begins by responding to the functional appeal. If man is willing to act upon a possibility, if he cast his vote for the purpose of God, he will realize that he is in communion with the power that will fulfill his expectations. Only when we are willing to follow the highest that we know can we hope to understand the implications of the Divine proposal. We think most seriously about what affects us, and only when we become aware of the functional aspects of belief do we try to
rationalize them. This is not the same thing as pragmatism. Pragmatism claims to originate its values through action. But the disciple of Jesus knows that he originates nothing. He discovers in experience the operation of something beyond his experience, and as he endeavors to conform his life to the Divine will he comes upon the activity of God in the depths of the soul. By working out his salvation in fear and trembling, he realizes that it is God who wills and works in him according to His own good pleasure. Such is the genuine mysticism that makes religion a contemporary experience. It has its roots in history, but the domain of its operation is the present life.

And if one ask what is the master word in the Christian proposal, what is the truth that most effectively makes us aware of the functional aspect of belief, I should say without hesitation the preaching of the cross. The cross of Jesus is an historical fact; the atonement wrought out on the cross is its eternal meaning. There the revelation of God comes to its ultimate manifestation. In the atoning act God has joined issue with sin, and matched the tragic element in man's life with something more tragic still. Therein God has shown the immense value of human beings, and by making the conscience rather than the emotions the target of the atonement, has laid a firm foundation for man's moral hopes in the eternal righteousness of the universe. The desire for right adjustment to the moral demands of the conscience is fully satisfied, for the cross proclaims the great truth that when God comes into man's life He comes to stay, that what God has suffered for, He means to have. The transforming power of this revelation is gloriously revealed in the life of the first Christians, and what they had we may have too, but only through a proper response to the Divine invitation. Their experience proved that a surrendered soul
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could face the hard facts of earthly trials with quiet assurance of victory. Having a standing-ground beyond time, they stood firmly in time, persuaded that nothing could separate them from the love of God, which was in Christ Jesus, their Lord.

There is a passage in Paul's epistle to the Romans that carries us into the depths of this truth: "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." There is comfort in great ideas; and in those hours when necessity prompts us to search the Scriptures for something to encourage and strengthen, we can do no better than turn to such a passage and find what we desire.

Such teaching touches our life more intimately than we at first realize. It confronts the familiar paradox that just at those times when we are seriously trying to live the Christian life, we find ourselves incapable of overcoming the things in ourselves that we feel to be contrary to it. Our purpose is good, but power to fulfill it is felt to be lacking; and so in spite of our best efforts we still find ourselves in the sight of conscience unprofitable servants.

This state of mind was familiar to the New Testament writers, and to none quite so much as Paul; for he more than others knew the sorrow and the pain of a futile effort to lead a good life, in spite of earnestness and sincerity. The more he labored the more was he involved in paradox and contradiction, until the light broke on his mind by the discovery of the meaning of his Master. Then the burden rolled from his back, and he knew himself a free man. The real commentary on this passage is found in the seventh chapter, where Paul tells us how the grace of Christ ended the strife between the law in the mind and the law in the members; and I desire to explore this important aspect of our experience in the light of this passage.
In the opening verses Paul speaks of an experience that we all desire. Knowledge of the love of God at once gives a status of peace, strength, and power that none can dispute. In the midst of life's dangers and stresses, the experience is both constant and growing. In fact, it develops best in face of pressure, until the believer is aware of a great tidal river of Divine love flowing through the depths of the soul; and from that river all strength and joy are derived. Who of us does not wish for this experience now? This peace of mind, this strong patience and endurance, this quiet joy of the spirit amid the tumults of the world? We puzzle ourselves by wondering why, if we believe in Christ, we are so little aware of the presence of Christ. To increase knowledge of the possibilities that even now reside in our faith, is the reason Paul writes. His essential teaching is this: if we understand the love of God as manifested in Christ, such knowledge will become the motive power within the soul to carry it without any outside aid, into the power and joy that are herein described.

1. Let us begin with an important truth: although we speak of the love of God as though we fully understood it, this is the quality in God that we cannot take for granted. Of course, if we think of love as benevolence, a good feeling and kindly attitude towards mankind, then, perhaps, we can understand it. But that is not what Paul means by God's love for us. That love is not something we can understand just by reasoning about it. In fact, when we look directly at the way the love of God is presented in the Gospel, we see at once that this is not something that can be likened to human love. It is something different; and Paul frankly desires to make us realize this by suggesting that a love like this is a very unreasonable kind of love. No man, he tells us, would willingly die for a merely just man. There is noth-
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ing in justness or honesty to appeal to the affections. That is why abstract moralities leave us cold; why codes of law, even when right, fail to move the heart. We might on a rare occasion be willing to die for a good man, who is generous, unselfish, and loving. But we are face to face with a love greater than this: a love that is peculiar to God Himself, and that love is revealed in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Before Christ came this unique quality in God was veiled; man looked upon God through the law of Moses and was terrified by His commandment face. Whenever man approached God, he trembled, and was afraid. But now God had lifted the veil, and men saw the love, not as the revelation of a beautiful quality in the Divine nature, but as an active power that has come into human life, and joined issue with sin; and the only way this love could reach man's essential need was through the death of Christ on the cross.

2. What did this tremendous historical event signify? It signified that there are elements hidden from man in the Divine nature, elements that belong to the ineffable holiness of God that required just that kind of an atonement effectually to reach the deeps of man's moral nature; and what can we say of those deeps? What is the level of moral realism in human nature? Many would say man's feelings, his affections, in one word his heart; and then would go on to say that God's compassion found a target in man's heart, and moved him to repentance, sorrow, and shame for his misdeeds. Beyond question this is true, but it is not the whole truth; for there is a lower deep in human nature; it is the deep controlled by conscience, and conscience is the Divinest element in man; and a word of love, however pitiful, cannot influence the conscience. For conscience knows nothing of mercy, or forgiveness, but points steadily to the
immutable standard of justice and righteousness. And no religion can be capable of probing the depths of human nature, or supply motive power to life, that does not reach and satisfy the just demands of conscience. That is what we mean by conviction of sin; it is the tremendous sense of being unreconciled to God, of being excluded from God's grace and fellowship by that which lies upon the heart; and a conscience that is fully awakened becomes the eye of the soul to look upon and understand the cross. That is what Paul means by the unveiling of God's love, for this love aims not primarily at our feelings or at our heart, but at the conscience. For man cannot forgive himself by word of mouth, since there is no such thing as fiat-forgiveness. God does not forgive our sins by words, but by the essential deed of atonement and in the cross we behold the wondrous truth of how God harmonizes our restoration with that deepest element in His own nature, His Holiness, and the cross becomes God's consistent way of removing all barriers between man and God. Upon this tremendous and abiding truth man can rest his soul in peace; from this he gains a status that none can dispute. And until you realize this you do not understand the love of God.

But if we understand God's love what ought to follow? This: if God so loved us when sinners, how much more when we are His children, which means that the only authentic response to God's love is to love Him in return, and this union of man's love inspired by God's love becomes the motive power within the soul to carry it on to victory over the world. Mark well this truth; it is not that your doctrine is sound, but that your life is moved and guided and controlled by this power. This is the source of the great tidal river of love flowing through the personality of man that carries him on to maturity. And mark this, too, it is not
occasional, but continuous; the river flows on and on and on, and as it moves it grows and life expands, and man becomes more than ever aware that he is a child of eternity, and hence the master of the world in which he must struggle on to the end.

Here, then, is absolute finality; God's best linked forever to man's best; where holiness unites itself to conscience, the eternal principle that makes all things rational, that defies time and death and trouble, the immutable principle that is of the essence of Divinity, where man may lay up his life with assurance that nothing can ever fail him.

Do we mortals, unconscious children of eternity, realize this at all, and if even a little, how strong, how patient, how passionately it should set our feet on the pathway of righteousness, and give us power to command and defy the world. For beyond this there is nothing else, it is the ultimate of being, of eternal being, the promise and potency of felicity in union with God in life everlasting. The very thought of this is sufficient to humble yet exalt us in our life endeavor.

Faith reaches its maturity when we are persuaded of this truth. If we make our communion with God at the foot of the cross, all other elements of a rich and abiding experience of His grace will follow in due course. But we must remember that God deals with us as sons, not as servants. Christianity is not a religion of rules and regulations. Neither is it a religion of commands or compulsions. It is throughout a religion of invitations that disclose the functions of Divine power that are intended to associate man's life with the purpose of God. In all this man becomes a partner with God. We realize that in this life we can finish nothing. Although our experience of Divine grace begins in time, we know that its culmination belongs to eternity. And the more thoroughly we conform to the demands of our aim, the more
persuaded are we that all things are working together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose.

Man is a prisoner in time, but a creature of eternity. He knows that he cannot break out of prison, but God speaks from the eternal realm and response to that Voice sets the prisoner free. That is the essence of the Divine appeal: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Those who love the truth and seek it with all their hearts, who are aware of ignorance and poverty of spirit, to these Christ is speaking; and that Voice comes not from the remote past, but directly out of the contemporary life. To all such the invitation is given, and those who respond to it will learn in the intimate knowledge of experience the reality and power of the One in whom they believe.

I profoundly believe that the solution of our problems will be found in the rational acceptance of this great appeal; for by it man unites his life to the spiritual purpose of the universe, and finds his way to the central sanctuary of Divine authority, which gives poise, balance, and courage to the human spirit; and the strength and vitality of faith has never appeared to greater advantage, as history shows us, than in unstable times. Not only has it been the rallying point of distressed minds, but the starting place of new and spiritually transforming developments that shape out of the chaotic elements of the immediate present a brave new world of hope and desire.

The acceptance of the purpose of God as the pattern of a design for living will give dignity and direction to aspirations in harmony with the highest possibilities of human nature. This is the pathway to maturity of the personality, and the stages of its growth may thus be described: the
merging of the response to the will of God into the acceptance of a sacrificial law, that leads to expanding horizons, and culminates in a new order of humanity in which the generations march together.

1. The human response is transformed into the acceptance of a sacrificial law of living. Christianity at the first is the religion of invitations. Jesus compels no man to follow Him, but if we accept His invitation we learn that we have chosen to respond to a totalitarian demand. For the word that follows is this: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." The essence of faith is personal surrender to the will of Christ. That is the very least that can be expected of us. Yet surrender is not of compulsion, but the freest exercise of our human capacities. I have already made reference to the widespread disposition to underrate the individual man. The modern malady of self-distrust proceeds from a feeling that man's troubles have come from abuse of liberty, and is followed by the vain wish to renounce this dangerous endowment in the interests of animal comfort or mere physical existence. This is a degrading desire, and can be overcome only by frankly realizing that God will not bestow His grace on a man who seeks to escape responsibility. The master word comes to each of us: "Son of man, stand on thy feet, and I will speak with thee." God will have no dealings with a man who lies prone upon his face. The essential of union with God is willingness to accept responsibility. The measure of responsibility is the cross of Christ. Inasmuch as Jesus surrendered His life to God in that totalitarian way, the very least that we can do is to follow the sacrificial law. That is the final register of religious values. The rigor and urgency of this demand add power to the appeal and is, I am confident, a point of contact with eager young minds. If the
demands are drastic enough, youth will respond to them. We must take our share in the hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and remember that God has not given us the spirit of a coward, but of love, power, and a sound mind.

In times of trial there will always be some who degrade the religious motive by using it as a way of escape from life and duty. Such a desire fails, as it ought to fail. But to a mind quickened by the spirit of Jesus, such a wish is incomprehensible. What we want is not to escape life but to stand up to it, to meet its demands with courage and dignity. We can do this only when we rationally surrender to the authority of our Divine Master. For the power of religion is best manifested in the midst of the street among the toiling, struggling, doubting masses of the world. Our age must face its responsibilities, and cease the vain attempt to pass them on to governments and institutions. Each of us must endure hardness in the intricate and difficult experiences of the everyday life. Such was the word of Demosthenes in Athens' darkest hour:

Yet, O Athenians, yet is there time! And there is one manner in which you can recover your greatness, or, dying, fall worthy of your past at Marathon and Salamis. Yet, O Athenians, you have it in your power; and the manner of it is this. Cease to hire your armies. Go yourselves, every man of you, and stand in the ranks; and either victory beyond all victories in its glory awaits you, or, falling, you shall fall greatly and worthy of your past.

Our age needs men of this quality, who will go themselves and stand in the ranks; men who, in marketplace or business mart, know how to keep the solitude of great minds in the midst of the crowd, and are capable of leading others towards the unseen goals of heart's desire. Only a perfectly surrendered life can do this; yet union with the Divine purpose will assure its influence in face of all that may contend against it.
The Human Response

2. Such is the disposition needed to apprehend the expanding horizons of the modern world. It is a common complaint of the young that all the great things have been accomplished. The poles have been discovered, the jungles explored and few, if any, high mountains remain unscaled. How can we find fresh adventures when we are the prisoners of mechanical contrivances and regimented modes of living, in the uninspiring regions of an urbanized life? But a right attitude to the Divine purpose will make us aware of new spiritual frontiers. Here is the domain of personal development, of a new type of manhood, capable of arousing and guiding the inchoate desires of the common man. What greater problem exists than the creation of an ordered and stable society? What age more thoroughly exhibits the evil effect of ignorance, prejudice, and moral blindness than ours? So far from being master of his world, man is its slave. Each stage of material progress is another link in the chain of bondage. If our civilization is to escape destruction it must develop a new type of manhood. In this lies the promise and inspiration of the present. I firmly believe we are moving slowly, but surely, towards the frontiers of a brave new world. Our unique opportunity lies in the ability to deal with great problems in their formative stages. These problems can only be solved by men of a spiritual type of mind. Such a type must be intelligent, capable, well-trained for difficult missions, yet have at its roots the authenticity of character. The more thoroughly such a character is founded on the Divine purpose, the more certain will be its power to help. Our age is characterized by irrational impulses, yet is still an age of immense suggestibility and capable of responding to the right sort of leadership. As F. S. Oliver observes: “The fabric of a vision that worketh great marvels, is the experience of common men.” If the masses are
to cease stressing their rights, to assume their responsibilities they must be led by men who know how to teach dim eyes to see clearly and stammering tongues to speak plainly. Only when we feel intensely our responsibility for our world, can we say to ourselves: for their sakes we consecrate ourselves! By such means life becomes a Divine vocation; and even amid trials and stress it is led by visions of a new world lying out there on time's horizon, a world worth striving for and, if need be, dying for. The acceptance of such a vocation is the last stage in the surrender of the soul to the Divine purpose, and carries within it the certainty of victory.

3. Such a purpose is broad enough to include a new type of humanity in which the generations march together. It would be a pity in such times as these, if the older and younger generations stood aloof and looked at each other with mutual offensiveness. There is far too much of this for our peace of mind. For maturity is conscious of an obligation to those that eventually must carry on the great tradition. The generations must march together, for we need each other to complete our life. Youth has usually been the spearhead of progressive movements. It can take the initiative and act resolutely without regard to consequences.

The young mind is endowed with the rare gift that Keats called "negative capability," the power of not seeing things. Such is the valor of ignorance that has often initiated great movements of worth to mankind. What youth has done, it can do again. There is every reason to believe that this spirit is active in the younger generation. It is acutely aware of the disordered state of society and eager to set it right. But this adventurous spirit must be controlled by the law of averages. While youth can initiate progressive movements, it requires the wisdom and experience of the older generation to complete them. The young go over the top, but
maturity must follow on to consolidate their gains. If we can understand this, the generations can march together. Here, in the family of God, animated by the highest principles of self-dedication to a common task, we shall find the meeting place for understanding and fruition. The best that youth can ask of the older generation is a double portion of their spirit. Grant this, and all other things will follow in due course.

This, then, is my confession of faith. I believe that union with the Divine purpose as it is revealed through Jesus Christ is the only adequate pattern for a design for living. I have found in this faith a foundation of sufficient security to face the world as it is today. Such a faith does not encourage the weakling or the coward, but it arms the mind with principles of such gravity and strength that one may stand up to life at its most difficult point. From such a faith one gains peace of mind; from it come visions which, in spite of the confusions of the immediate present, discern on time’s horizon the shaping of a better world. It helps one to escape from the cramped conditions of a pedestrian existence into the expanding realities of eternity. I know of no philosophy and no other religion that can do this for the soul. And acting upon the assumption that it is one’s highest duty to transmit to others what has proved to be of such value, I offer it to you for your reasonable consideration.

I am aware of an intense interest in the younger generation. Beyond question it is a most difficult time for them, as indeed it is for all of us. But I am a firm believer in the happy outcome of our present troubles, if only enough men and women of the right sort are willing to take the lead, and that army of leaders must be recruited from the younger generation of educated people. We dare not hold ourselves aloof from the common needs. We must try to understand and believe in each other.
In an age when racial strife and religious intolerance have again arisen, there comes to my mind an ancient story: when Alexander the Great was on the point of leaving for the conquest of the East, Aristotle said to him: "You are about to start upon an enterprise which will bring you into many lands and amongst many nations. But this last counsel I give you: whithersoever your victories lead you, never forget that you are a Greek, and everywhere draw hard and fast the line that separates the Greek from the Barbarian." The young soldier replied: "No! I will pursue another policy. The aim of my victories shall be to give all men a Greek mind." What greater task could be undertaken today than that the generations should march together—soldiers of the spirit, whose aim is to give every man a Christian mind!

Often in the silence of the sleep time, when we set our fancies free, I have gone back to that terrible moment when Hamlet learned the cause of his father's death. He is sinking to the ground under the weight of that dread responsibility, muttering to himself:

The time is out of joint;—O cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right!

when he suddenly realized that Horatio and Marcellus stood beside him. Rising to an erect position, he regained his courage, and linking his arms in those of his friends he said: "Come, let us go together!"

So say I to the younger generation of today. There lies the world that we older people have largely made. It is admittedly a difficult and dangerous place. But there is hope and purpose in it. God is working there, as well as men. Are you willing to enlist in a war in which there is no discharge, and go forth under the leadership of Christ to give every man a Christian mind? You cannot face it alone, any more than we can. We must march together, inspired by a
common need and a common faith. We can change that world into something more in accord with God's desire. Come, then, let us go forth to serve that world, let us hold hard by our spiritual philosophy. It is God's world—it is also ours. Come, let us go together!

HARRIS ELLIOTT KIRK.