

Ernest Fremont Tittle and

DISCOURSES ON TRUE RELIGION



*The religion of the spirit leaves you free to
follow truth whithersoever it may take you.*
—Ernest Fremont Tittle (1928)

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A FEW MONTHS ago [since September 10, 2010] I began posting a series of new parallel charts for various Urantia papers on Square Circles, and I hope to have at least twenty on the site before the year 2010 is out. I've presented the charts as stand-alone "works in progress," without commentary, since I'm focused now on bringing out as many charts as possible to make up for several years of no releases. In my files are detailed commentaries for each paper, which I hope to share in print and/or at workshops, before long.

Since the current parallel chart involves only two sections of a paper, Saskia and I thought it would be nice to accompany it with this article, which gives an account of the source find, and other relevant materials.

On June 24 of this year, I discovered that Jesus' discourses on true religion in Paper 155—"The Discourse on True Religion" (155:5) and "The Second Discourse on Religion" (155:6)—were derived, in large part, from a fine book of sermons published in 1928, called *The Religion of the Spirit: Studies in Faith and Life*. I hit upon this book after a five-minute search for parallels on books.google.com, and was able to finish tracing the parallelisms a couple weeks later, after buying a used copy from an internet bookseller.

Through further googling I learned that the book's author, Ernest Fremont Tittle (1885-1949), was pastor of the First Methodist Church in Evanston, Illinois, and professor at the Garrett Biblical Institute, also in Evanston. A blurb from a later volume of his describes him as "frequently in demand as a college preacher throughout the east and middle west," and a book about him pub-

lished in 1996—*Social Gospel Liberalism and the Ministry of Ernest Fremont Tittle*, by Christopher Hodge Evans—indicates by its title the direction of his sympathies. (Glenn Beck fans, be advised—Tittle was a prototypical “social-justice Christian.”)

If I had noticed *The Religion of the Spirit* in any library or used book store in the past thirty years, I certainly would have picked it up and leafed through it, hoping to find similarities with the Urantia Book, particularly with the two discourses. But thanks to books.google.com, which became fully functional in the spring of 2007, one is no longer restricted to such chance encounters. In the past three years I’ve found about as many UB sources as I’d found in the fifteen previous years, without straying from my computer. In fact, the month of June 2010 alone saw the discovery of three other Part IV sources.

The sharp increase of recently found books containing row after row of parallels with material in the Urantia Book has led me to sharpen my criteria for what constitutes a “source.” I can no longer confidently identify a text as a source if it contains conceptual similarities with the Urantia Book without also clear and consecutive linguistic parallelisms.

Long before becoming more selective, I named Auguste Sabatier’s 1904 book, *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, a “human source” for part of 155:5. In my first list of supposed sources, published in 1992, I wrote:

The sections in the Urantia Book on the discourses on true religion, which distinguish the religions of authority from the religion of the spirit, are an amplification of Sabatier’s thesis. The Urantia Book’s listing of the “three manifestations of the religious urge” on p. 1728 corresponds to Sabatier’s “Three Degrees of Religious Evolution.” Sabatier’s book was quite influential; both Rufus Jones and Walter Bundy, among others, refer to the religions of authority and the religion of the spirit, attributing the origin of the latter to Jesus, as does Sabatier.

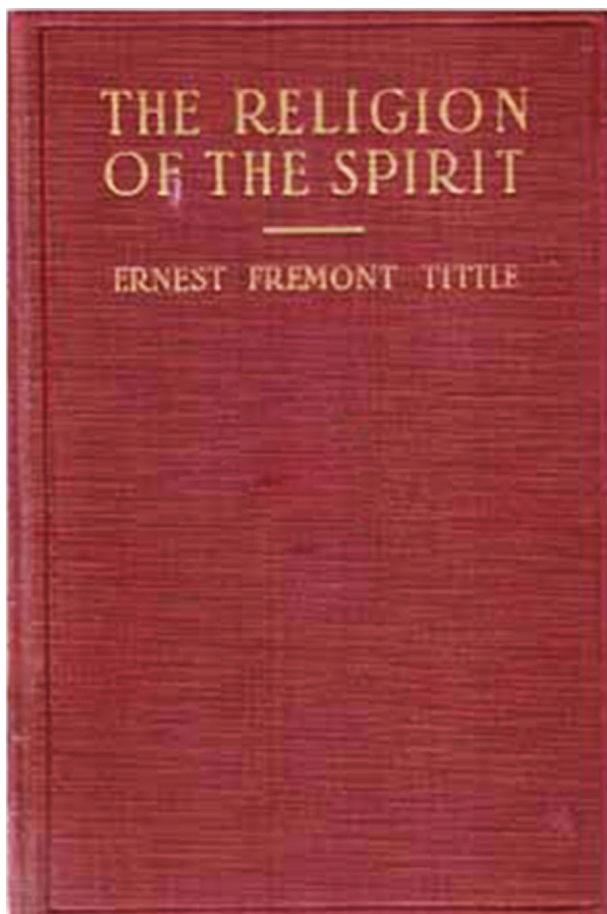
Yesterday I reread Sabatier’s “Three Degrees of Religious Evolution,” and find the parallels with 155:5 to be nothing more than vaguely suggestive. (You, the reader, may judge for yourself. [Click here to read Sabatier.](#)) It may be that the writer of 155:5 and 155:6 used Sabatier’s formulation as a springboard for his or her own three-fold formulation. In any case, I’ve found no clear parallels in Tittle’s book or anywhere else for the UB’s rendition.

Nevertheless, the Sabatier link is not consigned to dubious obscurity. In the first paragraph of his opening sermon, “The Religion of the Spirit,” Tittle credits his inspiration:

AUGUSTE SABATIER made the world his debtor when he published his great book, *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*. It has been a long time since I read it, and I am obliged to acknowledge that all I can distinctly recall of it is the title. But that alone is enough to call forth a hymn of praise if only one were able to compose it. The mere recognition of the fact that there are religions of authority and the religion of the spirit is one of those flashes of spiritual insight for which we can never be sufficiently grateful.

The parallels with 155:5 begin immediately after that paragraph. Tittle’s first sermon threads subtly through Jesus’ first discourse, and then the thread picks up more and more beads as the second discourse progresses. Towards the end of the latter, material from Tittle’s third, fifth, sixth and seventh sermons come successively into play.

The narrator of Paper 155 describes the first discourse—given in response to Thomas’s questioning as to “just what is wrong with the religion of our enemies at Jerusalem. What is the real difference between their religion and ours?”—as “one of the most remarkable addresses which his apostles ever listened to throughout all their years of association with him” (155:4.2). The second discourse is hardly less remarkable in its inspirational power. But by carefully studying the parallel chart - and ideally by also



reading the five drawn-upon sermons in Tittle's book, the first sermon of which can be read here (click on book above right) - you, the reader, will be able to see the equally remarkable way in which the sermons were incorporated into Jesus' discourses, discourses which were, according to the writer of Paper 155, "summarized and restated in modern phraseology."

Naturally, the parallel chart is a work in progress. Constructive criticism is always appreciated.

* * *

Here are a few pointers which may help those of you who are new to the parallel charts, as well as a few questions for in-depth study:

(1) Skim through the whole chart first, to get a sense of the course of the parallels. See how far the source is used in consecutive page order. See how many chapters are used, whether some chapters are used more heavily than others, etc.

(2) Read the left column all the way through first, to get a sense of the source author's (in this case Tittle's) message and style of expression.

(3) Specific to this parallel chart: Notice how 155:5 is more complex than 155:6. It begins with the restated discourse (5:2-5:5) and adds two paragraphs of commentary (5:6-7) before resuming the discourse (5:8-5:11). It then directly quotes Jesus, who assesses the religious situation in Jerusalem in the light of the discourse teaching and then appeals to the apostles and disciples to courageously embrace the religion of the spirit, which they unanimously commit to doing (5:12-16). See where and how the Tittle parallels come in and leave off as discourse shifts to action.

(4) Observe that 155:6 consists exclusively of restated discourse, apart from the opening and closing paragraphs. Notice that, unlike in 155:5, Jesus addresses the apostles and disciples as "you" and frames his comments in the light of their new conviction. See how the Tittle parallels begin to cluster and concentrate. See, later in the section, where the culling from Tittle's first sermon ends and other ones are used. Has the UB author succeeded in maintaining continuity while turning to Tittle's later sermons?

(5) Reread the parallel chart, this time concentrating on how the UB author "tweaked" Tittle's meaning, language and context. Notice, for instance, how Tittle's words and word clusters were retained while his 20th-century references were removed. What added resonance is given to Tittle's statements after they've been transposed and adapted from the pages of his book to become the substance of discourses from Jesus himself?

(6) Then, if you feel like it, reflect on how your new knowledge of Tittle's influence on the discourses affects your larger understanding of Part IV. What questions does it raise for you, if any?

[Parallel chart follows]

**155:5 (“The Discourse on True Religion”)
and 155:6 (“The Second Discourse on Religion”)**

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This chart is a revision of the one published August 31, 2010.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable; the highlights are tentative.)

Source for 155:5 and 155:6

- (1) **Titlle**, Ernest Fremont, *The Religion of the Spirit: Studies in Faith and Life* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1928).

Matthew Block
9 December 2011

Work-in-progress Version 31 aug. 2010
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Revised 9 December 2011

PAPER 155 — FLEEING THROUGH NORTHERN GALILEE

5. THE DISCOURSE ON TRUE RELIGION

155:5.1 This memorable discourse on religion, summarized and restated in modern phraseology, gave expression to the following truths:

155:5.2 While the religions of the world have a double origin—**natural and revelatory**—at any one time and among any one people there are to be found **three distinct forms of religious devotion**. And these three manifestations of the religious urge are:¹

[Compare with “The **Three Degrees of Religious Evolution**” (pp. 369-374) in Auguste Sabatier’s *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit* (1904).]

155:5.3 1. *Primitive religion*. The seminatural and instinctive urge to fear mysterious energies and worship superior forces, chiefly a religion of the physical nature, the religion of fear.

155:5.4 2. *The religion of civilization*. The advancing religious concepts and practices of the civilizing races—the religion of the mind—the intellectual theology of the authority of established religious tradition.

155:5.5 3. *True religion—the religion of revelation*. The revelation of supernatural values, a partial insight into eternal realities, a glimpse of the goodness and beauty of the infinite character of the Father in heaven—the religion of the spirit as demonstrated in human experience.

155:5.6 The religion of the physical senses and the superstitious fears of natural man, the Master refused to belittle, though he deplored the fact that so much of this primitive form of worship should persist in the religious forms of the more intelligent races of mankind.

I: THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT
(Tittle 11)

Jesus made it clear that the great difference between the religion of the mind and the religion of the spirit is that,

The religion of the spirit is rooted, not in authority, but in experience (T 14).

while the former is upheld by ecclesiastical authority, the latter is wholly based on human experience.

155:5.7 And then the Master, in his hour of teaching, went on to make clear these truths:

155:5.8 Until the races become highly intelligent and more fully civilized, there will persist many of those childlike and superstitious ceremonies which are so characteristic of the evolutionary religious practices of primitive and backward peoples. Until the human race progresses to the level of a higher and more general recognition of the realities of spiritual experience,

There are in the world religions of authority because there are in the world people who feel the need of authority (T 11).

large numbers of men and women will continue to show a personal preference for those religions of authority

which require only intellectual assent, in contrast to the religion of the spirit, which entails active participation of mind and soul in the faith adventure of grappling with the rigorous realities of progressive human experience.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

THE URANTIA BOOK

155:5.9 The acceptance of the traditional religions of authority presents the easy way out for man's urge to seek satisfaction for the longings of his spiritual nature.

Many another human soul, beaten upon by the storms of life, weary of doubt and bitter questioning, has sought refuge in the comfortable sacerdotalism of the Roman Church.

The settled, crystallized, and established religions of authority afford a ready refuge to which the distracted and distraught soul of man may flee when harassed by fear and tormented by uncertainty.

"Faith with us," writes a modern Catholic, "means acceptance of divine truth on the authority of God, who has revealed it to us."

Such a religion requires of its devotees, as the price to be paid for its satisfactions and assurances, only a passive and purely intellectual assent.

155:5.10 And for a long time there will live on earth those timid, fearful, and hesitant individuals who will prefer thus to secure their religious consolations, even though, in so casting their lot with the religions of authority, they compromise the sovereignty of personality, debase the dignity of self-respect, and utterly surrender the right to participate in that most thrilling and inspiring of all possible human experiences: the personal quest for truth,

No uncertainty there, no need of the toils and perils of intellectual discovery.

the exhilaration of facing the perils of intellectual discovery,

the determination to explore the realities of personal religious experience, the supreme satisfaction of experiencing the personal triumph of the actual realization of the victory of spiritual faith over intellectual doubt

Faith in this case is not a going out, but a staying in. It is not an adventure, it is merely a recitation.

as it is honestly won in the supreme adventure of all human existence—

man seeking God, for himself and as himself, and finding him.

155:5.11 The religion of the spirit means effort, struggle, conflict, faith, determination, love, loyalty, and progress. The religion of the mind—the theology of authority—requires little or none of these exertions from its formal believers. Tradition is a safe refuge and an easy path for those fearful and halfhearted souls who instinctively shun the spirit struggles and mental uncertainties associated with those faith voyages of daring adventure

And in spite of the fulminations of rabid anti-Catholics, the Roman Church will stand unmoved so long as there are people in the world who prefer the haven of authority to the **high seas** of spiritual quest (T 12).

out upon the **high seas** of unexplored truth

in search for the farther shores of spiritual realities as they may be discovered by the progressive human mind and experienced by the evolving human soul.

155:5.12 And Jesus went on to say: “At Jerusalem the religious leaders have formulated the various doctrines of their traditional teachers and the prophets of other days into an established system of intellectual beliefs, a religion of authority. The appeal of all such religions is largely to the mind.

And now are we about to enter upon a deadly conflict with such a religion since we will so shortly begin the bold proclamation of a new religion—a religion which is not a religion in the present-day meaning of that word, a religion that makes its chief appeal to the divine spirit of my Father which resides in the mind of man; a religion which shall derive its authority from the fruits of its acceptance that will so certainly appear in the personal experience of all who really and truly become believers in the truths of this higher spiritual communion.”

155:5.13 Pointing out each of the twenty-four and calling them by name, Jesus said: “And now, which one of you would prefer to take this easy path of conformity to an established and fossilized religion, as defended by the Pharisees at Jerusalem, rather than to suffer the difficulties and persecutions attendant upon the mission of proclaiming a better way of salvation to men while you realize the satisfaction of discovering for yourselves the beauties of the realities of a living and personal experience in the eternal truths and supreme grandeurs of the kingdom of heaven? Are you fearful, soft, and ease-seeking? Are you afraid to trust your future in the hands of the God of truth, whose sons you are? Are you distrustful of the Father, whose children you are? Will you go back to the easy path of the certainty and intellectual settledness of the religion of traditional authority, or will you gird yourselves to go forward with me into that uncertain and troublous future of proclaiming the new truths of the religion of the spirit, the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men?”

155:5.14 All twenty-four of his hearers rose to their feet, intending to signify their united and loyal response to this, one of the few emotional appeals which Jesus ever made to them, but he raised his hand and stopped them, saying: "Go now apart by yourselves, each man alone with the Father, and there find the unemotional answer to my question, and having found such a true and sincere attitude of soul, speak that answer freely and boldly to my Father and your Father, whose infinite life of love is the very spirit of the religion we proclaim."

155:5.15 The evangelists and apostles went apart by themselves for a short time. Their spirits were uplifted, their minds were inspired, and their emotions mightily stirred by what Jesus had said. But when Andrew called them together, the Master said only: "Let us resume our journey. We go into Phoenicia to tarry for a season, and all of you should pray the Father to transform your emotions of mind and body into the higher loyalties of mind and the more satisfying experiences of the spirit."

155:5.16 As they journeyed on down the road, the twenty-four were silent, but presently they began to talk one with another, and by three o'clock that afternoon they could not go farther; they came to a halt, and Peter, going up to Jesus, said: "Master, you have spoken to us the words of life and truth. We would hear more; we beseech you to speak to us further concerning these matters."

6. THE SECOND DISCOURSE ON RELIGION

155:6.1 And so, while they paused in the shade of the hillside, Jesus continued to teach them regarding the religion of the spirit, in substance saying:

155:6.2 You have come out from among those of your fellows who choose to remain satisfied with a religion of mind,

Religions of authority there always have been, are now, and always will be, because they meet the needs of a certain type of human mind—the mind that craves certainty, enjoys conformity, and loves to “stay put” (T 13).

who crave security and prefer conformity.

You have elected to exchange your feelings of authoritative certainty for the assurances of the spirit of adventurous and progressive faith. You have dared to protest against the grueling bondage of institutional religion and to reject the authority of the traditions of record which are now regarded as the word of God.

Our Father did indeed speak through Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea,

The Westminster Confession explicitly states that God’s former ways of revealing himself have ceased (T 18).

but he did not cease to minister words of truth to the world when these prophets of old made an end of their utterances.

My Father is no respecter of races or generations in that the word of truth is vouchsafed one age and withheld from another. Commit not the folly of calling that divine which is wholly human, and fail not to discern the words of truth which come not through the traditional oracles of supposed inspiration.

155:6.3 I have called upon you to be born again, to be born of the spirit. I have called you out of the darkness of authority and the lethargy of tradition into the transcendent light of the realization of the possibility of

So it comes to pass that this student, who supposed that religion was the least of his concerns, makes the discovery that it is, on the contrary, the greatest of all his concerns. He enters into the experience of another student, Edward Rowland Sill, who came out of Yale with a great question mark in his life and confided in a letter to a friend, "People think that a man's speculations about religion interfere with his daily life very little—but how certain conclusions do take the shine out of one's existence!" Then, one day, he makes for himself that greatest of all discoveries which the human spirit has ever made.

In the beauty of the world, in the nobility of noble lives, in the silent depths of his own life, he discovers God.

And note, now, what has happened. He has passed

from authority to experience,

from a faith inherited to a faith achieved,

making for yourselves the greatest discovery possible for the human soul to make—

the supernal experience of finding God

for yourself, in yourself, and of yourself, and of doing all this as a fact in your own personal experience.

And so may you pass

from death to life,

from the authority of tradition to the experience of knowing God;

thus will you pass from darkness to light,

from a racial faith inherited to a personal faith achieved by actual experience;

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

from a **theology handed down**

to a **religion built up in his own soul** (T 16).

The **religion of the spirit admits of a progressive revelation**. One of the obvious disadvantages of any religion of authority is that it **ties you, hand and foot, to the past** (T 18).

Religions of authority give you a **sense of security**,

but take away from you a sense of **freedom** (T 19).

Scientific theories which were exploded centuries ago, ethical standards which the enlightened conscience of the world has long since repudiated, religious conceptions which no longer satisfy the aspiring heart of the race—all these you are **required** to accept (T 19).

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and thereby will you progress from a **theology of mind handed down** by your ancestors

to a true **religion of spirit** which shall be **built up in your souls** as an eternal endowment.

155:6.4 Your religion shall change from the mere intellectual belief in traditional authority to the actual experience of that living faith which is able to grasp the reality of God and all that relates to the divine spirit of the Father.

The religion of the mind **ties you hopelessly to the past**; the **religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation**

and ever beckons you on toward higher and holier achievements in spiritual ideals and eternal realities.

155:6.5 While the religion of authority may impart a present **feeling of settled security**,

you pay for such a transient satisfaction the price of the loss of your spiritual **freedom** and religious liberty.

My Father does **not require** of you as the price of entering the kingdom of heaven that you should force yourself to subscribe to a belief in things which are spiritually repugnant, unholy, and untruthful.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

In order to retain your sense of security you must be prepared to **outrage your sense of truth**. A big price to pay (T 19).

[contd] **The religion of the spirit leaves you free to follow truth whithersoever it may take you** (T 19).

It leads you into the presence of a God who is still speaking and who **may, perchance, have something to say to your generation which other generations were unable to hear** (T 20).

And what a relief it is to discover that a sense of security may be had without cost to one's sense of truth! It may be had without recourse to those religions of authority which **take a man back to the past and leave him there,**

cowering in the presence of every new discovery, afraid of science,

distrustful of **truth** (T 20).

The men who have discovered God have done something more than **talk about God**. **The man who wrote, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee,"** was not an ecclesiastical politician (T 21).

THE URANTIA BOOK

It is not required of you that **your own sense of mercy, justice, and truth should be outraged** by submission to an outworn system of religious forms and ceremonies.

The religion of the spirit leaves you forever free to follow the truth wherever the leadings of the spirit may take you.

And who can judge—

perhaps this spirit may have something to impart to this generation which other generations have refused to hear?

155:6.6 Shame on those false religious teachers who would

drag hungry souls back into the dim and distant past and there leave them!

And so are these unfortunate persons doomed to become **frightened by every new discovery,**

while they are discomfited by every new revelation of **truth**.

The prophet who said, "He will be kept in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on God," was not a mere intellectual believer in authoritative theology. This truth-knowing human had discovered God; he was not merely **talking about God**.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

To **praise a hero**—that is easy. Praise, like many another form of talk, is proverbially cheap.

But to **be a hero** whose praise we have sung—that is another matter, an immeasurably more difficult matter.

But merely to praise a hero and never to be one is to **miss the supreme experiences of life** (T 23).

The last thing which I would like to suggest about the religion of the spirit is that it is the **only** kind of religion which can ever **unite** the world (T 23).

[contd] **Religions of authority inevitably divide men.**

THE URANTIA BOOK

155:6.7 I admonish you to give up the practice of always quoting the prophets of old and **praising the heroes** of Israel,

and instead aspire to **become** living prophets of the Most High and spiritual **heroes** of the coming kingdom.

To honor the God-knowing leaders of the past may indeed be worth while, but why, in so doing, should you **sacrifice the supreme experience of human existence:**

finding God for yourselves and knowing him in your own souls?

155:6.8 Every race of mankind has its own mental outlook upon human existence; therefore must the religion of the mind ever run true to these various racial viewpoints. Never can the religions of authority come to unification.

Human **unity** and mortal brotherhood can be achieved **only** by and through the superendowment of the religion of the spirit.

Racial minds may differ, but **all mankind is indwelt by the same divine and eternal spirit.** The hope of human brotherhood can only be realized when, and as, the divergent mind religions of authority become impregnated with, and overshadowed by, the unifying and ennobling religion of the spirit—the religion of personal spiritual experience.

155:6.9 The **religions of authority can only divide men** and set them in conscientious array against each other;

the religion of the spirit will progressively draw men together and cause them to become understandingly sympathetic with one another.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

THE URANTIA BOOK

They insist upon **uniformity of belief,**

The religions of authority require of men **uniformity in belief,**

and when it comes to those supreme concerns which lie beyond the reach of scientific investigation, uniformity of belief is **impossible** (T 24).

but this is **impossible** of realization in the present state of the world.

The religion of the spirit requires only unity of experience—uniformity of destiny—making full allowance for diversity of belief. The religion of the spirit requires only uniformity of insight, not uniformity of viewpoint and outlook.

What the religion of the spirit is seeking is not uniformity, but unity. And on the basis of unity, **unity of spirit,** of passion, and of purpose, the world slowly but surely is being united (T 25).

The religion of the spirit does not demand uniformity of intellectual views, only **unity of spirit** feeling.

Religions of authority harden into creeds, and creeds divide us.

The religions of authority crystallize into lifeless creeds;

The **religion of the spirit** bursts into song, and song unites us (T 25).

the **religion of the spirit** grows into the increasing joy and liberty of ennobling deeds of loving service and merciful ministrations.

III: IF GOD IS LIKE CHRIST (Tittle 40)

155:6.10 But watch, lest any of you look with disdain upon the children of Abraham because they have fallen on these evil days of traditional barrenness.

The Bible is the record of a race in its **passionate, persistent quest of God.**

Our forefathers gave themselves up to the **persistent and passionate search for God,**

Behold a race in travail—sweating, groaning, questioning, despairing, beseeching, blaspheming, sinning, repenting, suffering, striving,

until at last it gives to the world that odyssey of the human soul, that matchless record of moral and spiritual discovery which we call the Bible (T 43).

The Bible does not speak with but a single voice. By no sort of torturing exegesis can it be made to appear that the God who is pictured in certain portions of the Old Testament is the same God who is pictured in the New.

It does not follow that the Old Testament is of no value to the modern world.

“Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul.”

Is that of no value to weary moderns? “What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Is that of no value to twentieth-century Americans? (T 43)

and they found him as no other whole race of men have ever known him since the times of Adam, who knew much of this as he was himself a Son of God. My Father has not failed to mark the long and untiring struggle of Israel, ever since the days of Moses, to find God and to know God.

For weary generations the Jews have not ceased to toil, sweat, groan, travail, and endure the sufferings and experience the sorrows of a misunderstood and despised people,

all in order that they might come a little nearer the discovery of the truth about God.

And, notwithstanding all the failures and falterings of Israel, our fathers progressively, from Moses to the times of Amos and Hosea, did reveal increasingly to the whole world

an ever clearer and more truthful picture of the eternal God.

And so was the way prepared for the still greater revelation of the Father which you have been called to share.

V: THE WILL OF GOD (Tittle 80)

The attempt to discover the will of God ought to become for me that most thrilling of all adventures save one—

the attempt to do it (T 85).

One of the most terribly mistaken notions that has ever crept into human thinking is the notion that a few occupations are sacred and all others secular (T 88).

VI: THE WORD OF GOD (Tittle 98)

Beauty, beauty, everywhere! Is not this also a “word of God”? If a poet may say of a beautiful woman, “her temple-face was chiseled from within,” is it not possible for intelligent faith to insist that a beautiful world is the revelation of a beautiful Spirit; that it is, indeed, a sacrament, the visible form of an invisible grace? (T 105)

155:6.11 Never forget there is only one adventure which is more satisfying and thrilling than the attempt to discover the will of the living God,

and that is the supreme experience of honestly trying to do that divine will.

And fail not to remember that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation.

Some callings are not holy and others secular.

All things are sacred in the lives of those who are spirit led; that is, subordinated to truth, ennobled by love, dominated by mercy, and restrained by fairness—justice.

The spirit which my Father and I shall send into the world is not only the Spirit of Truth

but also the spirit of idealistic beauty.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

But is it only in the Bible that one may hope to discover any authentic “word of God”? How very embarrassing it would be if one felt obliged to answer “Yes”! (T 100)

VII: THE DISCOVERY OF GOD (Tittle 116)

In order to discover God, one needs to develop what Francis Thompson called “the child heart” (T 117).

He is not suggesting that we should close our eyes, take a long breath and try to believe the unbelievable.

When he says that a child is able to turn pumpkins into coaches, mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, nothing into everything, does he not mean to suggest that to the mind of a child nothing appears too good to be true? (T 118)

Many people whose minds accept the fact of God bewail their inability to feel the presence of God (T 120).

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155:6.12 You must cease to seek for the word of God only on the pages of the olden records of theologic authority.

Those who are born of the spirit of God shall henceforth discern the word of God regardless of whence it appears to take origin. Divine truth must not be discounted because the channel of its bestowal is apparently human.

Many of your brethren have minds which accept the theory of God while they spiritually fail to realize the presence of God. And that is just the reason why I have so often taught you that

the kingdom of heaven can best be realized by acquiring the spiritual attitude of a sincere child.

It is not the mental immaturity of the child that I commend to you

but rather the *spiritual simplicity* of such an easy-believing and fully-trusting little one.

It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to *feel the presence of God*.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

Not every one discovers God in his own soul. One man—James Russell Lowell—describes an hour when he clearly felt the presence of God in him and round about him; when the whole room seemed full of God. Another man insists that he has never known such an hour. Why this difference? (T 129)

What chance does God have to appear in our consciousness

if we seldom give him a thought? (T 130)

You try to say to some tempted, troubled spirit, “There is One who is able to do for you far more abundantly than you ask or think. God is not the Great Illusion. He is the great Reality in whom you live, if only you were aware of it, and in whom you might find rest for your weariness, strength for your weakness, light for your darkness, and salvation for your sin.” “Prove it!” he pleads. But he alone can “prove” it by launching out into the deep of a great adventure (T 131-32).

THE URANTIA BOOK

155:6.13 When you once begin to find God in your soul,

presently you will begin to discover him in other men’s souls and eventually in all the creatures and creations of a mighty universe.

But what chance does the Father have to appear as a God of supreme loyalties and divine ideals in the souls of men

who give little or no time to the thoughtful contemplation of such eternal realities?

While the mind is not the seat of the spiritual nature, it is indeed the gateway thereto.

155:6.14 But do not make the mistake of trying to prove to other men that you have found God;

you cannot consciously produce such valid proof, albeit there are two positive and powerful demonstrations of the fact that you are God-knowing, and they are:

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

THE URANTIA BOOK

155:6.15 1. The fruits of the spirit of God showing forth in your daily routine life.

When men dare to **risk everything**

155:6.16 2. The fact that your entire life plan furnishes positive proof that you have unreservedly **risked everything** you are and have

in the name of some worthy ideal,

on the adventure of survival after death in the pursuit of the hope of finding the God of eternity,

they become aware of life's supreme and eternal realities. They feel as if they were in the very **presence** of God (T 132).

whose **presence** you have foretasted in time.

155:6.17 Now, mistake not, my Father will ever respond to the faintest flicker of faith. He takes note of the physical and superstitious emotions of the primitive man. And with those honest but fearful souls whose faith is so weak that it amounts to little more than an intellectual conformity to a passive attitude of assent to religions of authority, the Father is ever alert to honor and foster even all such feeble attempts to reach out for him. But you who have been called out of darkness into the light are expected to believe with a whole heart; your faith shall dominate the combined attitudes of body, mind, and spirit.

155:6.18 You are my apostles, and to you religion shall not become a theologic shelter to which you may flee in fear of facing the rugged realities of spiritual progress and idealistic adventure; but rather shall your religion become the fact of real experience which testifies that God has found you, idealized, ennobled, and spiritualized you, and that you have enlisted in the eternal adventure of finding the God who has thus found and sonshipped you.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

THE URANTIA BOOK

155:6.19 And when Jesus had finished speaking, he beckoned to Andrew and, pointing to the west toward Phoenicia, said: "Let us be on our way."

1. AUGUSTE SABATIER made the world his debtor when he published his great book, *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*. It has been a long time since I read it, and I am obliged to acknowledge that all I can distinctly recall of it is the title. But that alone is enough to call forth a hymn of praise if only one were able to compose it. The mere recognition of the fact that there are religions of authority and the religion of the spirit is one of those flashes of spiritual insight for which we can never be sufficiently grateful (T 11).

BY THE SAME AUTHOR
WHAT MUST THE CHURCH DO TO BE SAVED?

The Religion of the Spirit

Studies in Faith and Life

By
ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE



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THE ABINGDON PRESS

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I

THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

AUGUSTE SABATIER made the world his debtor when he published his great book, *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*. It has been a long time since I read it, and I am obliged to acknowledge that all I can distinctly recall of it is the title. But that alone is enough to call forth a hymn of praise if only one were able to compose it. The mere recognition of the fact that there are religions of authority and the religion of the spirit is one of those flashes of spiritual insight for which we can never be sufficiently grateful.

There are in the world religions of authority because there are in the world people who feel the need of authority. 15715.8

In 1839 John Henry Newman was the greatest preacher in the Church of England. In 1846 he was a humble priest in the Church of Rome. In leaving the Anglican communion for the Roman communion he sacrificed a brilliant career. At the time of his going he himself remarked that he was giving up his home, giving up all who had known him, loved him, valued him, and wished him well. Why, then, did he go? Because he felt the need of an external, infallible authority in which to

anchor the faith of his soul, and believed that there was such an authority in Rome. And when, stung by Charles Kingsley's taunt of intellectual dishonesty, Newman wrote his great spiritual autobiography, he could say with perfect sincerity that from the time he became a Catholic he had no further history of his religious opinions to relate. Both doubt and adventure had come to an end. The spirit's sails were furled, its anchor dropped, and in the haven of hierarchical authority the voyager remained content.

157.5.9
155.15.16
155.5.10

Many another human soul, beaten upon by the storms of life, weary of doubt and bitter questioning, has sought refuge in the comfortable sacerdotalism of the Roman Church. "Faith with us," writes a modern Catholic, "means acceptance of divine truth on the authority of God, who has revealed it to us."¹ No uncertainty there, no need of the toils and perils of intellectual discovery. Faith in this case is not a going out, but a staying in. It is not an adventure, it is merely a recitation. And in spite of the fulminations of rabid anti-Catholics, the Roman Church will stand unmoved so long as there are people in the world who prefer the haven of authority to the high seas of spiritual quest.

Roman Catholicism is not the only religion of authority. Not long ago at Princeton Theological Seminary a revered teacher² told the members of

¹ Bertrand L. Conway in *Best Sermons*, 1926, edited by Joseph Fort Newton, p. 140. Harcourt, Brace and Company, publishers.
² J. Gresham Machen, in *Best Sermons*, 1926, p. 117.

a graduating class that, although all parts of the Bible are not equally valuable, all parts are equally true. The authority which the Catholic finds in his church many a Protestant finds in his Bible. The one feels secure in an infallible institution, the other with an infallible book. In this case the Protestant, no less than the Catholic, is delivered from doubt and from the pain involved in the pursuit of truth. The great questions of life and death are definitely answered. "Faith with us," such an one might say, "is the acceptance of divine truth on the authority of God, who has revealed it to us in the Scriptures." And notwithstanding the findings of scholarship and the discoveries of science, Fundamentalism in some form will not only survive, but flourish so long as there are people in the world who would rather feel certain than find truth.

153.6.2

Religions of authority there always have been, are now, and always will be, because they meet the needs of a certain type of human mind—the mind that craves certainly, enjoys conformity, and loves to "stay put."

153.17.11

But some men appear to be born for a life of adventure. Says Tennyson's "Ulysses":

"Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
. my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die."

He counts the cost:

"It may be that the gulfs will wash us down."

But he does not shrink, for

"It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew."

Here, then, is a very different type of mind. And the mind whose purpose holds to sail beyond the sunset in persistent quest of truth would hardly feel comfortable in the Roman Church. The mind that is so eager to touch the Happy Isles of Reality that it is not deterred by boisterous seas could hardly be content to settle down in the unimaginative literalism, the unadventurous dogmatism of Fundamentalism. For this type of mind the only religion that offers any attraction, any nourishment and comfort, is the religion of the spirit.

I

155: 5.6 The religion of the spirit is rooted, not in authority, but in experience.

The author of a recently published article in the *Atlantic Monthly* reports an imaginary conversation between a bishop and a dean. "It is quite time," says the bishop, "that these disturbing speculations were laid aside and we returned to the recognition of properly constituted authority." To which the dean replies that the present tumult in the religious world is likely to continue, for we are in a period of transition from authority to experience. Many of us undoubtedly are.

Here is a young fellow who leaves home and goes to college. At home on a Sunday morning he went,

as a matter of course, to church. In college, after a month or two, he falls into the habit of certain of his fellow students who try to recover on Sunday morning the sleep they have lost on Saturday night. At times his conscience causes him a little pain, but almost anybody, if he puts his mind to it, can discover a reason for doing what he is doing and wants to do. So presently he makes the discovery that he never did get very much out of churchgoing anyway. The sermon, as often as not, was uninteresting. The anthem suggested, if not "all instincts immature, all purposes unsure," at least a considerable number of notes that were a bit uncertain. The whole service was something of a bore. Why, therefore, shouldn't a student sleep late on Sunday morning, especially if he was out late on Saturday night?

Presently, also, he begins to question not only the value of the church, but the validity of religion itself. Beliefs which it had never occurred to him to question, which he had never supposed any respectable person did or could question, he does question. But, as Stevenson says in his *Child's Garden of Verses*, "The world is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings." The college world, certainly, is full of a number of things, absorbing things, and for a year or two, maybe longer, he is happier than kings are likely to be under present conditions. He does not worry very much about anything, certainly not about his religious faith. He is so content with

life's present values that he feels no urge to ask whether it has any eternal values.

But this unruffled contentment with life does not last. He begins, after a while, to feel fed up on—a number of things, and to wonder whether transient satisfactions are the only kind of satisfaction which life affords. Is life merely a matter of eating and drinking and making merry? If it is . . .

So it comes to pass that this student, who supposed that religion was the least of his concerns, makes the discovery that it is, on the contrary, the greatest of all his concerns. He enters into the experience of another student, Edward Rowland Sill, who came out of Yale with a great question mark in his life and confided in a letter to a friend, "People think that a man's speculations about religion interfere with his daily life very little—but how certain conclusions do take the shine out of one's existence!" [Then, one day, he makes for himself that greatest of all discoveries which the human spirit has ever made. In the beauty of the world, in the nobility of noble lives, in the silent depths of his own life, he discovers God. And note, now, what has happened. He has passed from authority to experience, from a faith inherited to a faith achieved, from a theology handed down to a religion built up in his own soul.

Is not that what a considerable number of men and women in our generation are doing? At the request of the editor of one of our enterprising magazines, a number of outstanding churchmen have

been telling us why they are Episcopalians, or Methodists, or Baptists, or whatever else they denominationally are. Most of them frankly confess that they belong now to the religious fold in which they were born, and that they belong to it because they were born in it.

Most of the rest of us who belong to any religious fold would probably feel obliged to make a similar acknowledgment. But it does not follow that we are prepared to accept without question everything which our ecclesiastical shepherds hand out to us. Pius IX once remarked that before he became Pope he believed in infallibility; afterward he felt it. Many of us do not even believe in it. We cannot conceive of an infallible Pope, or an infallible board of bishops, or an infallible general assembly. Not now. And those ecclesiastical councils that fashioned the historic creeds—what reason have we to suppose that they were any more free from human limitations than modern ecclesiastical councils have shown themselves to be? And going still further back, what reason have we to suppose that the men who wrote the Old and New Testament Scriptures were in every case and in every respect incapable of error? They themselves did not profess to be.

But enough of this. I fear that I am beginning to argue a case, whereas all that I started out to do was to state a fact, namely, that a very considerable number of men and women in our generation are at least attempting to pass from authority to expe-

155:6.3

155:

155:6.3

155:6.3

rience. For them there is no external, infallible authority. But they, no more than obedient Catholics, no more than unquestioning fundamentalists, can live by bread alone. They too are tempted at times, and lonely, and discouraged, and hard-hit. They too need the power, the comfort, the inspiration, of religious faith—"a belief," as Franklin K. Lane put it in one of his letters, "in something bigger than ourselves and more lasting than the world." But faith for them, if it is to be a vital thing, must be rooted in something more substantial than ecclesiastical or even biblical authority. It must be rooted in an actual experience of the reality of God. It cannot be a religion of authority. It can be only the religion of the spirit.

II

155:6.4
155:6.5
The religion of the spirit admits of a progressive revelation. One of the obvious disadvantages of any religion of authority is that it ties you, hand and foot, to the past. (The Westminster Confession explicitly states that God's former ways of revealing himself have ceased. God has, apparently, nothing more to say. And lest anyone suppose that the Westminster Confession is no longer taken seriously, let me refer again to that address which was delivered a short time ago to the members of a graduating class in Princeton Theological Seminary. The theme chosen for the occasion was, "Prophets, False and True," and, of course, the speaker urged his hearers to be true prophets, not

false. "But," said he, "in one sense I admit you cannot be prophets at all . . . true prophecy in the supernatural, biblical sense does not exist to-day; like other miracles, it has ceased."

By way of contrast, recall those famous lines of James Russell Lowell:

"Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit."

155:6.5
Religions of authority give you a sense of security, but take away from you a sense of freedom. You are not free to believe what may be spoken. You are free to believe only what has been spoken. Nay, you are required to believe it. Scientific theories which were exploded centuries ago, ethical standards which the enlightened conscience of the world has long since repudiated, religious conceptions which no longer satisfy the aspiring heart of the race—all these you are required to accept. Not to accept them would be to undermine that authority which has given you your sense of security. In order to retain your sense of security you must be prepared to outrage your sense of truth. A big price to pay.

155:6.5
The religion of the spirit leaves you free to follow truth whithersoever it may take you. It does not merely lead you back to a God who once spoke.

It does not leave you tied hand and foot to biblical science and mediæval theology. It leads you into the presence of a God who is still speaking and who may, perchance, have something to say to your generation which other generations were unable to hear.

What an inspiring conception it is—this notion of a growing Bible, this frank and joyful recognition of the fact that not only in Scriptures written in the Hebrew tongue and not only in Scriptures written in the Greek tongue, but also in Scriptures written in the English tongue, in the German tongue, in the Russian tongue, and in the tongues of the Orient, many authentic words from God may be found; that not only in the literature produced between the eighth century before Christ and the second century after Christ, but in some part at least of contemporary literature do prophets speak! And what a relief it is to discover that a sense of security may be had without cost to one's sense of truth! It may be had without recourse to those religions of authority which take a man back to the past and leave him there, cowering in the presence of every new discovery, afraid of science, distrustful of truth. An even greater sense of security may be had through actual experience of the living God, for in that event every fresh discovery is hailed as another revelation, and science is seen to be one of the mediums through which the Eternal Mind reveals itself, and truth is recognized as the very tabernacle of the Most High.

III

But the sense of security which is born of spiritual experience can be had on no easy terms.

One reason for the absence of religious certainty is the absence of that courageous living on high levels out of which religious certainty has historically come. The men who have written Scriptures have done something more difficult than memorize Scripture. The men who have discovered God^{157, 66} have done something more heroic than talk about God. The man who wrote, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee," was not an ecclesiastical politician. The man who wrote, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth shall be able to separate us from the love of God," was not a safety-first type of missionary, claiming the right of extra-territoriality. The Man who prayed, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" died on a cross for his convictions. If we, to-day, try to enter into such men's experience of divine reality without paying the price which they paid to have such experience, is it to be wondered at that we meet with disappointment?

The man who merely learns by rote what other men have learned in travail and pain, who is content merely to talk about things which other men have bravely attempted, bears much the same relation to a great saint as does the speaker of pieces to a great orator, or the movie hero to the

real thing. And it is simply impossible that life's supreme experiences should ever be his. In the world of finance it may be possible at times to get something for nothing, but not in the world of spirit. There you must pay for what you get.

One of the easiest and deadliest ways for a man to fool himself is to praise a hero instead of trying to become one.

Here, for instance, is Saint Francis of Assisi, whom, seven hundred years after his death, everybody praises, even the militant followers of Mussolini. Francis had no faith in the sword, he cared nothing for wealth; yet militarists applaud him—and clamor for additional cruisers; and millionaires pay homage to him—and labor to increase their pile. Here also is Abraham Lincoln, of whom a multitude to-day are ready to declare that his name is above every name in American history. He lived and died singularly free from spite and bitterness, "with malice toward none, with charity for all." And he is lauded to the skies by persons who still hate Germany as he never hated the South. Here, most strikingly of all, is Jesus, whose name, by almost universal consent, is above every name in all history, and we crown him with many crowns. We crown him the Lord of love. We crown him the Lord of peace. We crown him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time. We bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all. Then we go on laying up treasures on earth and demanding an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

To praise a hero—that is easy. Praise, like many ^{155:6,7} another form of talk, is proverbially cheap. But to be a hero, to be like the hero whose praise we have sung—that is another matter, an immeasurably more difficult matter. But merely to praise a hero and never to be one is to miss the supreme experiences of life.

I was reading the other day that daring saying of Saint Paul, "I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me," and suddenly it occurred to me that that represents an experience which any man might have. I found myself wondering how it would feel to have such an experience, to be able in all humility but in utter truth to say that one's own spirit had become indistinguishable from the spirit of Christ. I recalled that beautiful tribute which Clement of Alexandria paid to Jesus, "He has turned all our sunsets into sunrise." Which set me to wondering still more: What would happen if increasing numbers of men and women should be able in all humility but in sober truth to say, "Christ liveth in me"? Would not the threatened sunset of civilization be turned into sunrise? Instead of fear, faith; instead of despair, hope; instead of hate, love; instead of war, peace.

Could we have the spirit of Christ? Undoubtedly we could if only we were willing to pay the price for it.

IV

The last thing which I should like to suggest ^{155:14} about the religion of the spirit is that it is the only kind of religion which can ever unite the world.

Religions of authority inevitably divide men. They insist upon uniformity of belief, and when it comes to those supreme concerns which lie beyond the reach of scientific investigation, uniformity of belief is impossible. They insist upon uniformity of worship, and when it comes to the means by which the human soul shall strive to realize the presence of the Eternal, uniformity is impossible; to one person the odor of incense is a means of grace, to another person it is merely a nuisance. They insist, likewise, upon uniformity of organization, each claiming divine authority for its own form of government. And is it not expecting entirely too much of human nature to suppose that one group of divinely ordained ecclesiastical politicians will ever consent to step down and out in favor of any other group? On a basis of uniformity the world will never be united.

The religion of the spirit does not demand uniformity. It does not demand uniformity of organization; it is not interested primarily in organization. It is ready to approve any type of institution which will shelter and not suffocate the life of the soul. Nor does it demand uniformity of worship. It says to the Episcopalian, "The beauty of your service is well adapted to you," and to the Quaker, "The simplicity of your service is suited to you." Nor does it demand uniformity of belief. It rejoices in the devout Catholic who exhibits the spirit of Christ; it values the sincere Fundamentalist who bears the image of Christ; it extends the

hand of fellowship to the reverent Unitarian who walks in the way of Christ. What the religion of the spirit is seeking is not uniformity, but unity. And on the basis of unity, unity of spirit, of passion, and of purpose, the world slowly but surely is being united. 155:69

We sing,

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

The religion of the spirit has claimed a hymn written by a devout Roman Catholic. We sing,

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me."

The religion of the spirit has accepted a hymn written by a reverent Unitarian. Religions of authority harden into creeds, and creeds divide us. The religion of the spirit bursts into song, and song unites us. 155:69

Note also what is happening to-day in the case of increasing numbers of men and women who have in them that mind which was also in Christ Jesus. Are they not quietly ignoring differences of creed, peculiarities of worship, denominational divisions, and laboring together to build on earth the city of God? Is it not even true that there is developing in the world a fellowship of souls that transcends all

boundaries of race and nation and color and creed? The religion of the spirit places the hand of Bishop Fisher in the hand of Mahatma Gandhi and pronounces the binding word, "Brother."

II

THE IMAGE OF GOD

MEN have always spoken of Jesus in superlative terms. In their efforts to appraise him they have employed the thought forms of their own age; and thought forms change. But how significant the fact that, in every age, the terms in which men have spoken of Jesus have been the highest terms which they knew how to employ!

To the primitive Jewish Christians he was the *Messiah*. Just what this word meant to them it is difficult at this distance to say. It had, no doubt, different meanings for different individuals. But amid much that is obscure, if not fantastic, at least one fact is clear and arresting: for the first century Jew the word *Messiah* embodied the very highest of hopes. In the person of the *Messiah*, the almighty God would not only reveal himself but assert himself. In some supernatural fashion he would deliver his people from their Roman bondage. He would make crooked ways straight and rough places smooth. He would restore the glory of the days of David; aye, more than that, he would create a new heaven and a new earth in which the most daring dreams of prophetic spirits would be realized. When, therefore, the earliest Jewish Christians applied to Jesus the word *Mes-*