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THE ethical end, or supreme Good in its individual aspect was described as the inner ordering and rectifying of the character in accordance with the divine righteousness as manifested in the mind and life of Jesus Christ. The Christian Ideal of personal character is the Christ-life as increasingly realised in the individual.

Those in whom this assimilation to the type of manhood in Christ takes place, are by that fact brought into a spiritual relationship with each other. They form a community whose vital interests and view of the ultimate meaning and end of life are the same for all. Character and personality are not developed in solitude and isolation; they require the life of fellowship in order to educe their latent potentialities. That type of personality which Christianity presents as the Ethical End of the individual life, requires a social environment, through its relationship

with which alone it can progress towards the full realisation of itself. It finds itself in the life it shares with others. Its social sphere is a realm whose principle of cohesion is not external and political, but inward, ethical and spiritual, in which the rule and righteousness of God are the supreme concern of all alike, and in which their spiritual affinity, and sympathy with each other, form a bond of more vital import than that which is the basis of any of the ordinary and secular associations of men. The Kingdom of God whose advent Christ announced is composed of those citizens, in this or in any world, in whose characters and lives God's righteousness is the formative and regulative power. It is the common and inclusive Good of all persons imbued with its spirit. It is the new and perfect social order, whose members live in an ideal relationship to God of trust and sonship, and in an ideal relationship to each other of brotherhood and love. Entrance into this divine society is for each individual the promise and earnest of the highest good. It is, to them, the first and greatest object of desire, the aim which includes all elements of the truly Good. Christ speaks as if men's association with it was the most eventful circumstance of their lives.¹ In it and because of their participation in its life, they are in the way toward the realisation of their true life and destiny.

¹ E.g. Matt. xiii. 44-46.

It is unnecessary to inquire whether the expression, Kingdom of God, applies chiefly to the rule of God, or to the realm within which that rule is exercised. It has no geographical boundaries or exclusive territory, like the political monarchies of this world. Yet a ruling power implies a sphere within which it is sovereign ; and the Kingdom of God embraces all individuals who belong to the Community, wherever found, in which the will of God is the effective authority, and whose members are associated in a union of obedience to God and love to one another. When this Kingdom of God, which occupied a central place in Christ's teaching, is called an Ideal, it is not meant that it exists only in idea, as a Utopia of which devout souls might dream, or as a celestial fellowship whose home is confined to another world, citizenship in which is reserved for those who have passed out of the mortal coil of this earthly existence. It is the new social Order already inaugurated by Christ, wherein reign righteousness and love, which is destined to cover all the earth, and which will increasingly supplant the old Order in which Mammon, covetousness and hatred have had too great a prevalence. It is an ideal which, under God's benevolent providence, in His time and way, is being attained, and will eventually be realised on earth "even as it is in heaven."

The Kingdom of God or of Heaven, was an expression frequently upon Christ's lips from the beginning of His ministry. He made it the text of

His message when He came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark i. 15). In the Sermon on the Mount He proclaims it to be the first and highest end of man's desires and aims, that in which his supreme Good is included, and realised. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." In these words He used an expression which was familiar to his contemporaries through their acquaintance with the Old Testament Scriptures and other Jewish religious writings. The anticipation of a Realm and Reign of God had its origin in the remote past of the history of Israel. The belief that Israel was chosen by Jehovah to be His peculiar people, dated from Patriarchal times. It was connected with the conviction that He meant to do great things for His people. A magnificent future must be in store for the nation which was the special object of His protection and favour. The race of Abraham would multiply greatly and enter upon the inheritance of an ample territory under His rule and guidance. The people of Jehovah, according to these hopes, were destined to advance towards a condition of unrivalled prosperity, in the enjoyment of material abundance, and in a state of happy security won by victory over all their enemies. The future awaiting them would in its splendour and permanence be one befitting their divine election. These traditional expectations of magnificence and power had received encouragement from the success-

ful wars of David's reign, and from the peaceful achievements of Solomon's time. The subsequent fortunes of the people during the troubled period of the dual monarchy seemed to postpone the realisation of the national ambition. But so far from being extinguished, that hope derived sustenance and vigour even from circumstances which seemed adverse to its realisation. God could not abandon His people or prove unfaithful to His deliberate promise and purpose. It is the frequent theme of the prophets that their disasters and humiliations were divine chastisements, and that through repentance and renewed loyalty to their God, after punitive judgments had their purifying effect, the ancestral hope, believed to be founded on the divine promise, would be fulfilled in a realm whose righteousness and ideal order would be under the rule and supervision of God Himself. This renovated state of things would supervene in consequence of the irresistible providence of God in the affairs of men, as a result of divine interventions and world-wide changes. With its accomplishment is sometimes associated the advent of a Person of extraordinary dignity and influence, standing in an unique relation to Jehovah, and allied with Him as His vice-gerent in effecting the great revolution. This Messianic personage is sometimes represented as participating in divine attributes. He shall be called "Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." "Of the increase of his

government and of peace under him there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his Kingdom, to establish it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever." It was not until a later period that a Messianic reference was recognised in forecasts of a different strain, which speak of the "Servant of the Lord," despised and rejected, bearing the iniquities of the people, the personification of the True Israel which suffers for the unfaithful nation. It is, however, with the Messianic age and realm that we are here concerned, rather than with the person of the Messiah himself. Whether through victory, or vicarious suffering, or apparent and temporary defeat, the end is the establishment of a realm in which righteousness and its accompaniment of complete felicity shall eventually prevail. In some cases the expectation takes the patriotic and mundane form of a realm in which the Hebrew national aspirations would be fully realised. The honour and glory of the future are to belong to Israel, and other nations are to be subject and tributary to the people of the promise. The Kings of the earth shall bring their gifts to the restored Jerusalem as the centre of a world-wide dominion. Yet from time to time the ethical and universal aspects of the Messianic Kingdom come into view. It will receive the homage of all nations and witness the subjugation of its enemies. But Righteousness is the distinctive characteristic of the Kingdom. Its dominion will be exercised in

the interests of righteousness. "The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills, by righteousness." In those days "the righteous shall flourish." The rule of God to be at length received over the earth will abolish the moral evils that bring confusion and misery into human life. "Thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever. The little one shall become a thousand and the small one a strong nation," and "the work of righteousness shall be peace, and effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."¹ As opposed to national and exclusive views of the benefits of the coming age, Jeremiah is the exponent of the wider hope of the participation of all in the future consummations. This universalism is connected with the increasing perception of the inwardness and spirituality of the Kingdom, and of man's qualifications for it, which marks the utterances of Jeremiah. He represents the tendency to view the individual, and not the nation, as the unit in relation to the divine purpose and regard. It is recognised that the Kingdom of God will belong to those in whose heart God's law is written, the inwardly righteous; and thus men's minds were prepared for the conviction that the Kingdom of God was *within* man, and that the moral and spiritual transformation of individuals, was the condition and preparation for its extension over the world. Of this extension Israel is destined

¹ Isaiah lx. 21; xxxii. 17.

to be the instrument. "God will be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord and His name one" (Zech. xiv. 9); and Israel's mission is to bring others to share in that Supreme Good in which all nations of the earth shall be blessed, and to be the intermediary in a universal reconciliation. "Israel shall be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth" (Is. xix. 24).

After the cessation of prophecy, and in the periods preceding and contemporaneous with Christ, the expectation of the Kingdom was associated in the minds of many with the political hope of national deliverance from the Syrian and later from the Roman domination. It also persisted in a more spiritual form in those circles of the godly by whom a deeper interpretation was given to the prophetic utterances, and who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem." At the same time, the period preceding the Christian era produced an apocalyptic literature in whose figurative and symbolical visions the Messianic consummation was envisaged as the fast-approaching deliverance from all the evils of the present.¹ The end of all things was believed to be at hand. The Apocalyptists were pessimistic regarding the present world, viewing it as too deeply sunk in unrighteousness and corruption to be capable of reformation. No process of purification could transform it into the proper environment for

¹ See Canon R. H. Charles, "Between the Old and New Testaments," Chaps. II. and III.

the reign of the saints. That consummation behoved to be ushered in by the catastrophic destruction of nature and human society as they were, and by the inauguration of new heavens and a new earth which would be the fitting habitation of righteousness.

This apocalyptic prospect of the end of the world in the immediate future offered no incentive to an active virtue and benevolence which would strenuously and hopefully endeavour to make God's righteousness prevail over the abounding evils of the present world. Those who believed that a total abolition of all existing conditions of life and of society was imminent, would naturally consider it to be the whole duty of men to endure present ills with patience, and to cultivate those qualities of innocence and detachment from the world, which would fit them for life in the impending new era of untroubled peace in which every want would be supplied and every hope fulfilled.

In the time of Christ and among the people who heard His words, the idea of the Kingdom was part of the popular religion. Now it has been maintained that Christ's doctrine as to the Kingdom of God, was essentially and throughout apocalyptic in its character. This interpretation of it, if true, must vitally affect our estimate of the ethical meaning and value of His moral teaching, and raises the question as to the present applicability of its principles, and of their validity for all time in the progressive social conditions of an enduring world of human relation-

ships. The apocalyptic anticipation of a speedy end of the world was proved by the course of events to be erroneous. That Christ inculcated moral truths and principles is certain. But if it were shown that Jesus Himself believed in no future for this world and the human race, if in His view there were to be no time or place to speak of for the exercise of most of those virtues understood to constitute the Christian character, the conclusion could scarcely be avoided that His morality must fail to meet the requirements of man's individual and social life in its increasing complexity, and that it must forfeit its claim to establish a moral standard for all times, and in the new situations that should emerge in the long course of human history. In other words, it would, as some writers have termed it, be an "interim ethic," setting a high value on such dispositions and conduct as would be morally fitting in the last days of an expiring world, and would afford no adequate ethical guidance for subsequent generations of the human race. Support has been sought for this view of the scope of Christ's teaching in such sayings as the discourse on His Coming in St. Mark xiii. and St. Matt. xxiv., in the parables of the Advent, in references to His Return in the clouds, and to the gathering together of the elect, and in allusions to the end as at hand.¹

¹ Cf. Schweitzer, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus." Weiss, "The Teaching of Jesus on The Kingdom of God." Schwartzkopff, "The Prophecies of Jesus Christ."

If we attend to the whole scope and tendency of that teaching, it seems evident that this account of Christ's view of the Kingdom and of His attitude towards the future unduly exaggerates one aspect of it, and does not take account of many statements calling for a different interpretation.¹ There are elements in it, as it has come down to us, which are eschatological in their import. Christ was a prophet, the greatest of the prophets. And as in the prophetic visions the future time is often represented as fore-shortened, so that the Day of the Lord seemed near at hand, so it is sometimes contemplated by Him. That Day which the prophets had fore-told was in His predictions either a decisive moment in the coming of the Kingdom, or its consummation. There is no evidence to prove that Jesus possessed a detailed foresight of the course and events of human history in the ages to come. He disclaimed a knowledge of the day and the hour of its culmination in the Kingdom of God, with whom a 1000 years are as one day, and one day as a 1000 years. The thoughts of Jesus may have frequently dwelt on those apocalyptic views of the future, which were familiar to Him and to those who heard Him; and His language would at times be affected by them. But the supposition that the world was sunk beyond

¹ Principal D. S. Cairns, "Christianity in the Modern World," p. 173 ff. Canon Streeter, "The Historic Christ," in "Foundations." Dean Rashdall, "Conscience and Christ," p. 42 ff.

redemption, and that God seemed to have withdrawn from active intervention in its affairs, was far from being the mind of Christ as to its condition and prospects. The utterances of Christ which have been claimed to be apocalyptic must be taken along with much else in His teaching which goes to prove that His conception of the Kingdom and its conditions was essentially ethical in character, and that it embraced all those whose motives and habits of life were in accordance with its ideal of Righteousness. Those who transmitted His words were themselves acquainted with, possibly possessed by, current ideas, and might be apt to give more of an apocalyptic colouring to some of His utterances than they actually bore. The very earnestness and urgency of His appeal may have sometimes assumed a form borrowed from the apocalyptic language familiar to His hearers, as that which was best fitted to bring home to them the extreme gravity of the decision required of them. If Jesus clothed His thoughts in parabolic form to arrest those who were dull of hearing, He may also have used apocalyptic language, that through that mode of expression also His essential Message might reach some minds which might otherwise have been unimpressed. But to suppose that Christ's deepest thoughts with regard to the world and the future were those of an apocalyptic visionary is to overlook many utterances of His which are inconsistent with such an assertion. "He lifts his mind to the great future, when the

will of God can be fully realised." ¹ He believed in a time when that Will would be done on earth. He bids His followers look and pray for that day. It is noticeable that for Apocalyptists, as for the disciples who reported Christ's words, the precise time when these things would happen was a subject of anxious speculation. Christ discourages on the part of His hearers such enquiries as to the day and the hour, which are known to God alone. The teaching of our Lord, especially on themes which aroused strong emotion, was often expressed in a figurative and oriental style. He conveyed His message in the terms and manner best calculated to find access to the uninstructed minds around Him, and to awaken them to its immediate urgency and importance. When He said "The Kingdom of God is at hand," or, in connection with His power over the demoniacs, "The Kingdom of God is come upon you," ² the words may well bear a very different meaning from that which sees in them a speedy, catastrophical end of the world. A declaration of an end they might indeed be, for the coming of Christ marked the close of the former world-age and inaugurated the new. A premonition of revolutionary changes to come they might well be, for the history of the Kingdom on earth has not flowed in a uniformly smooth current. It has been accompanied with sudden and violent upheavals, by changes in which

¹ E. F. Scott, "Eth. Teach. of Jesus," p. 46.

² Luke xi. 20.

old things rapidly passed away, and new things in the political, social and religious condition of mankind were ushered in. When Christ spoke of the Powers of the Heavens being shaken, or of the darkening of the sun and the moon, He employed figures of speech familiar from Old Testament usage, and having a recognised significance as betokening national commotions and a change in the times. The impression made by His words is that of the uncertainty of the time of the end, rather than of its immediateness. Their purport is to be always ready to welcome the Kingdom, whether in its partial realisations or in its final dénouement in God's time. In putting His disciples on their guard against the many pretenders to His name that were to arise, He seems to indicate that time must elapse before the end. A similar prolongation of the time is implied in the preaching of the Gospel "unto all the nations." When He represents the final prevalence of the Kingdom as due to the interposition of divine Power, that is in accordance with the anticipation that the realisation of the Christian end, whether in its individual or social aspect, is not to be effected by man's merit or unaided efforts, but by the aid of the power of God, whose is the Kingdom and in whose own appointed time it will come.

While allusions to the Kingdom of God, occur frequently in the Synoptic teaching, there are two groups of sayings in which it is brought into special

prominence, the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of the Kingdom in Matthew xiii. Christ there expounds and amplifies the announcement made by Him at the beginning of His ministry. In the Sermon, as we have seen, the Kingdom is set forth as the reign of God over all who inwardly are subject to it and live according to its requirements. Its citizens are those whose character and conduct manifest their spiritual affinity with it. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." It consists of all who bear in their natures the impress of its character. They are the "poor in spirit," and those who have been so faithful to its principles as to suffer persecution for the sake of that righteousness which is its essential characteristic. Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. They are of it and it is in them. It is in them as inward righteousness, or rightness, of mind and spirit; it is without them as comprehending all others who have the same mind, and are animated by the same motives.

The second group of sayings on this subject (in Matt. xiii., cf. Mark iv. and Luke viii.) illustrates in various ways the nature of the Kingdom, its progressive history, and its influence in human society. It does not advance by methods of compulsion, such as have at times been resorted to in the history of Christianity through a mistaken understanding of the injunction to "compel them to come in." Its

adherents are won in virtue of a receptivity in themselves for its living truth which comes to them like good seed to a suitable soil, and fructifies abundantly in their lives and conduct according to the capacity of each. In the parable of the Tares, its members are represented as living side by side, for the present inextricably associated in temporal relationships with, those who are alien to it, and whose distinction in character from it time increasingly reveals. It is only at last, "in the time of the harvest," when the consummation of the Kingdom's time of growth has arrived, that the final separation will take place. Its progress from small beginnings to ultimate supremacy is likened to the growth of the mustard seed, and to the leaven which acts inwardly and in unseen ways upon the mass "till the whole is leavened." By some it is found as the result of diligent search, as in the case of the merchant seeking pearls: by those who thus effectually find it, it is seen to be the highest good for whose possession all other things, as intrinsically of inferior and relative worth, are voluntarily sacrificed. By some it is found who do not consciously seek it (Matt. xiii. 44), but, recognising its supreme value, make it their end at all costs to obtain it.

The frequency with which Christ alluded to the Kingdom justifies the importance attributed to it by those who see in it the all-inclusive social End in His teaching. These allusions are often of a more incidental kind than those which occur in such

passages as we have referred to, where the Kingdom is the explicit theme. In Christ's utterances to individuals, the ethical and spiritual view of the Kingdom comes into special prominence. In the tradition of the visit of Nicodemus, repentance and conversion are stated to be indispensable in those having an interest in it. Apart from such a radical spiritual change and renewal, the individual has not the insight to become fully aware of the existence of the Kingdom, much less the inward qualifications of actual membership in it. The commendation given to the Scribe's "discreet answer," "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God," referred to an inward state of mind and heart in the man, which wanted but a little of being that in which the spirit of the Kingdom consists (Mark xii. 33). In that answer a universal and active love is said to sum up the whole duty of man. The ethical nature of the conception is expressly affirmed, when it is said of children with their open and trustful disposition, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." And so in its inwardness "it cometh not with observation," but by the adhesion to it of those whose motives and habits of character and life are in accordance with its ideal of righteousness. "The Kingdom of God is *within you*" (Luke xvii. 21). The meaning may be "in your souls." But even if (as in the R.V. margin) the rendering is "in the midst of you," i.e. in the person of Christ and His disciples, the saying referred to the actual, spiritual presence of

the Kingdom as a fact, however little those out of sympathy with it were aware of it. While therefore account is taken of reported sayings of Christ which seem to explain the expectation in the early Church of the speedy end of the present world, it may be maintained that "in the main the moral teaching is not influenced in any way by the eschatology."¹ No limited apocalyptic outlook in that teaching interferes with the acceptance of the ethical principles of Christ as forming the basis of a morality both for His own age and for a world with a long eventful history before it,—for the races and generations of mankind whose prolonged course is in God's time and way to issue in the full triumph of the Kingdom of Righteousness.

The further teaching of the New Testament on this subject is a continuation of that of Christ. St. Paul, acquainted no doubt with many of the sayings attributed to the Master, was convinced of the speedy consummation of the Kingdom, though the expectation of the still cherished hope of the Parousia is less prominent in his later writings. Yet those ethical precepts which in their detailed applications he abundantly inculcates, are suited to the circumstances of those whose lot is to live and labour in the present condition of things, whether its end is at hand or remote. Whensoever and howsoever that "coming" and consummation may take

¹ Seth, "Essays in Ethics and Religion," p. 70.

place, it will eventuate in an absolute supremacy of God in which the Kingly attributes which have secured the victory over all evil will blend with those of the Father. The Kingdom will be delivered up "to God even the Father," that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 24-28). It is thus suggested that the form of the ideal social order of the Kingdom as fully realised will be that of a universal brotherhood under the Paternal rule of God. But even in present circumstances the inward and ethical nature of the Kingdom in actual experience is announced in Paul's description of it as consisting in "Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The Kingdom of God which is thus the comprehensive and inclusive End in the ethical programme of Christianity, though often very vaguely apprehended, has been a persistent ideal of unique influence and power during the Christian centuries. It has been variously understood, sometimes misunderstood; but the truth in it which has given it permanence is that which Christ Himself announced concerning it, while the conception of it has been enriched and expanded, as its true significance and importance in Christ's teaching have increasingly appeared.

(1) It is the rule and realm of God, *de jure*, over all men; *de facto*, in the lives of those who are subject to that rule, those whose characters are being renewed in accordance with it, and whose conduct is consistent with its requirements. It is the realm

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whose subjects' lives are transformed by trust and obedience towards God and by love and beneficence towards men.

(2) It is the rule or realm which Christ has rendered actual and progressive in the world. It existed in those around Him who were imbued with His Spirit and in sympathy with His purpose. It is true that in previous days and in other lands God had not left Himself without witness, and that witness had been received by responsive spirits in every age. Yet it was Christ's mission to establish the Kingdom with an altogether new authority, effectiveness and promise, so that the least in it of His followers was greater than John His forerunner, or than the prophets and sages of former times. As thus inaugurated by Christ, it is a rule or realm now in part in being; it is a present and living fact, and no longer only an object of hope and aspiration. It then took its place as a factor in the life of mankind; but it had before it a future altogether incommensurable with those beginnings. In His day it existed in the transformed lives of the humble few. But those who stood by and heard Christ's words would in their own lifetime see the Kingdom coming with increasing power. And it was their part as it has been that of those coming after them to watch and pray and strive on its behalf, that it might progress from strength to strength and at last come in its fullness and victorious ubiquity. We can trace the manner in which during

Christ's personal ministry, He allowed this universalism of His outlook to appear with increasing clearness to those who heard Him. Abruptly stated at first, it would have been incomprehensible at that time and to that people. He therefore ostensibly limited the activities of His emissaries in its interests to Israel, forbidding them to go into the way of the Gentiles or even into the cities of the Samaritans. Yet again and again His utterances prove that this was but a temporary restriction, and that His own view already embraced an extension of the Kingdom which should be world-wide. This universalism was suggested in the statement that "the field is the world." He did not repel the centurion who was a foreigner, but commended his faith as superior to any He had found in Israel, predicting that the privileges of the Kingdom would be accorded to those coming from East and West. In His parable He made choice of a Samaritan to act the part of a benefactor, and illustrate the true meaning of neighbourhood. It has been said that "the Parable of the Good Samaritan marks an epoch in the history of morals."¹ At a very early period some of His followers realised that their commission extended not only to Jerusalem and Judea, but to Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts i. 8). The increasing comprehension by Christians of the universality of their religion as

¹ D'Arcy, "Christian Ethics and Modern Thought," p. 54.

providing a faith and a morality for all times and peoples was the inevitable result of Christ's own words and acts.

(3) It is thus that an explanation is given of the apparent contradiction between statements which speak of the Kingdom as actually present and those which refer to it as still in the future. "The Kingdom of God is come upon you" (Matt. xii. 28), "is in the midst of you" (Luke xvii. 21 marg.); but again it is said to some that they *shall see* the Kingdom come with power; and again, "When the Son of Man cometh in His Kingdom." There is no opposition between these expressions, when it is understood that the Kingdom which has come is that which exists in those who are already imbued with its spirit, while that which is to come is the same Kingdom in its ideal power and universal righteousness. The central petition in the Prayer is "Thy Kingdom come," in which its consummation is desired as a future event. But the Prayer ends with the ascription, "Thine *is* the Kingdom," in which God's rule, though still but partially obeyed, is declared to be an actual and present fact. Its complete manifestation remains an ideal of the future, when the old evil things shall have passed away, and the new age and order shall have fully come in God's righteous purpose; and it therefore has still to be sought by its members as the full realisation of the supreme end, and as the inclusive Good.

(4) While men must pray for, and actively further (2 Pet. iii. 12) its coming by their conduct and influence, its accomplishment will not be due to their unaided efforts. Its attainment is not a problem to be solved by their wisdom or a task committed to their unassisted strength. The Kingdom to which they even now belong was introduced as a divine gift mediated through Christ. Through Him it obtained practical reality, and was brought down to earth from the region of vision and aspiration in which it had long hovered before men's hopes. Entrance into it is not the reward of personal merit, but the gracious privilege of those who shall be chosen for it. Citizenship in it is conferred by God's appointment, as the Roman franchise was bestowed upon a community or individual selected for that coveted status. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give unto you the Kingdom." And as with its inauguration, so will it be with its culmination. The will and efforts of men may co-operate with the Supreme Moral Power of the Universe; men may be fellow-workers with God in effecting this issue; yet it remains His gift, who, in ethical achievements as in the products of Nature, "giveth the increase." As the social and inclusive ethical end, the Kingdom, is that state of society towards which the world is moving under the rule and control of God over all issues and events, and in which eventually that rule will be completely manifest. "The Kingdom of God was a name for something conceived by Christ

as being alike the climax of the working of Divine Providence and the goal of human effort." ¹ In the attainment of the end whether personal or inclusive, there is a part assigned to men in the working out of their own salvation, while yet it is God that worketh in them both to will and to work on behalf of His good pleasure.

(5) It may be further observed that no complete and final conception is possible to us of what the state of things designated by the Kingdom of God will be in its full realisation.² We can only think in terms of the relative and comparative, and are unable to visualise the absolute. The ideal which can be clearly defined and seen in all its aspects ceases to be an ideal. Professor Green emphasises this inability adequately to analyse in thought the ideal contents of the ethical end. He says "It must be admitted that our view of what the life would be, in which ultimate good was actually attained, can never be an adequate view. It consists of the idea that such a life must be possible, filled up as regards particulars, in some inadequate measure, by reflection on the habits and activities, on the modes of life and character which through the influence of that idea have been brought into being."³ Similarly, all that the Kingdom implies can never be known until it is

¹ Canon B. H. Streeter, "Reality," p. 187.

² Cf. p. 76 *supra*, for our similar inability in regard to the End in its individual aspect.

³ "Prolegomena to Ethics," p. 341.

revealed by the actual event. Men's thoughts of it have been enlarged and enriched in the course of time by the recognition of elements not previously seen to belong to it. But "if our idea of it at any time could carry with it a full consciousness of what its final realisation would be, the distinction between anticipation and realisation would be at an end." Dr. Moore argues (in "Principia Ethica") that the term "Good" in its supreme moral sense is indefinable. Definition of a logical kind cannot be given to an ultimate conception which cannot be brought under a higher category.

Other social ideals which are influential in the world at the present day, are also but partially apprehended by those who devote their energies to their service. The enthusiastic socialist has usually but a vague and imperfect idea of what life would be in the completely socialised state. He would find it difficult to describe it in all its particulars under conditions so radically different from those which have obtained in the past. Few communists could coherently delineate the features of the Communist Society when the transition between it and the preliminary stage of revolution is supposed to have been effected, and the State, according to Engels' expression, shall "wither away,"¹—that time which Lenin forecasts, when the present productive powers of labour shall have been transformed and when, to quote his own words, the path of progress

¹ See Prof. Laski, "Communism," p. 145

will no longer be impeded by "the present unthinking man in the street, capable of spoiling without reflection the stores of social wealth, and of demanding the impossible."¹ All ideals are more or less indistinct, until realised. The vision of the end in the closing chapters of Revelation is addressed to the emotions rather than to the intellect. Negatively, it sets forth a condition of life in which there shall be "nothing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Positively, it forecasts a social state delivered from all causes of evil and suffering, and pervaded in all its members by righteousness, in which life will attain to its full measure of well-being and happiness. A social order is adumbrated which will fulfil the aspirations of those who seek, whether by reformation or revolution, a new and better world.

The Christian ethical End is the noblest of the social ideals which in various forms have enlisted the devotion and enthusiasm of those who have believed in a regenerated society. In the effete pagan world men's thoughts wistfully reverted to an imagined golden age in the past. Under the influence of the religious belief in a divine purpose in the world, expectation has turned to a bright and happy future in contrast with the hardships and injustice of the present. Apocalyptic hopes have had a fascination for many, and at times have been

¹ Prof. Laski, "Communism," p. 163.

widely cherished. Millenarianism, or Chiliasm, in its forms of both pre- and post-Millennialism, is an article of belief in several bodies of earnest Christians. It, too, has promised a future in which injustice and oppression will be redressed under the reign of Righteousness. St. Augustine saw in the Christian Church "the City of God," which according to his interpretation of the signs of his age, was then replacing the doomed and collapsing world-power of Rome. Hence there was the tendency in mediæval times to regard the visible Catholic Church, embracing the nations in its fold, as itself the Kingdom of God, advancing through all the changes of time to its divine and heavenly consummation. The identification of the Church with the spiritual City of the Revelation was possible only while it preserved the outward semblance of unity, catholicity and sanctity of an earlier time. The too patent shortcomings of the Catholic Church, and the increasing symptoms it exhibited of internal disintegration, put an end to such a claim for it as an external and visible institution. The attributes of the Kingdom seemed rather to belong to the "invisible Church," consisting of "the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof."¹ A mere external membership of the Church by profession does not constitute citizenship in the Kingdom that is spiritual and

¹ "Conf. of Faith," Chap. 25.

ethical,—a citizenship which depends upon the possession of an inner life. The actual Church in its various branches is the imperfect instrument by which men are brought into, and confirmed in, the life of the Kingdom. It may be likened to the drag-net which incloses a multitude in which there are the good and the bad. As there was no Temple in the New Jerusalem, so the present forms in which the Church exists are provisional organisations, seeking with more or less zeal and success to meet the ethical and spiritual wants of society, and to perform their mission of service on behalf of the Kingdom. It has been truly said that the latter is “as much grander than the Church as an ideal is grander than the actual; as much wider as social life is wider than any one institution; as much more Catholic as Christianity is more catholic than ecclesiasticism.”¹ The furtherance of the Kingdom as the supreme ethical End is the purpose of the Church, whose vocation it is to bear a continuous witness to the Kingdom’s righteousness and purity and love, and to “those things which accompany salvation.”

The State also, and civil and municipal authorities, have their part in work which directly or indirectly is conducive to moral and spiritual progress. It has been alleged that the Ethics of Christianity has not given an adequate place to civic virtues and duties, that it has not sufficiently asserted the obligation

¹ Shailer Matthews, “Soc. Teaching of Jesus,” p. 77.

to take a practical interest in civil and political affairs. If there has been backwardness in its recognition of responsibility in these respects, the fault is to be traced to a deficiency, not in the principles of that Ethics, but in their application. Christ Himself lived as a law-abiding subject of the State. He took the State for granted as a natural and beneficial institution. He vindicated its right to levy taxes for the purposes of government. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." St. Paul expands the injunction. "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due: custom to whom custom: fear to whom fear: honour to whom honour." Co-operation with the State in its task of maintaining order, of repressing crime, of being the divinely ordained "minister for good" to its subjects in the ways pertaining to its province, is clearly a Christian duty. Support of efforts, both local and national, to reform abuses, to effect improvements, to make life better, is in accordance with the Spirit of the Kingdom of God. That in these ways much can be effected in the highest interests of society, is itself a summons to fulfil the duties of a Christian citizenship, and to participate, according to one's ability and opportunity, in the affairs of public life. It is a most unchristian indifference which is shown in the notorious failure of many to put themselves to the trouble even of recording their votes, when matters of much moment to the community fall to be decided by them.

Many of the social activities of our time aim at the accomplishment of objects which are so to speak parts and instalments of the Christian Ideal. Many forms of philanthropic enterprise, endeavours to remove the evils which impoverish and degrade the life of multitudes of our fellow-creatures, are in keeping with Christ's own example when He illustrated the beneficence of the Kingdom by "going about doing good." Such projects of social amelioration are in accordance with the spirit of His Royal Law. In the administration of charity, the Church in this country has acknowledged its duty to the poor and the aged. It accepted an official responsibility for their care down to the time of the inauguration of elective Parochial Boards. It has ever regarded it as an essential part of Christian righteousness to "remember the poor." It is a genuinely Christian sentiment which provides by voluntary effort for the maintenance of Hospitals and numerous other benevolent institutions which are independent of the Church's control. But while relief of individual cases of suffering, whether by personal assistance or through organised effort, is a natural and inevitable expression of the Christian Law of Love, the totally changed circumstances of our time have rendered necessary an enlarged interpretation of the principles taught and exemplified by Christ in the matter of charity. The beneficence of the past and not a little of the Philanthropy of the present, have been, in intention and effect,

palliative rather than preventive. Their design has been rather to provide help for cases of distress as they happen, than to remove the causes of their occurrence. They are in some cases criticised on the ground that, instead of destroying the roots of the evils they have dealt with, their tendency has been rather to multiply and perpetuate them. Indiscriminate alms-giving has often been charged with encouraging mendicancy. The habit of relying upon charitable assistance undermines diligence, self-reliance and self-respect. The growth of knowledge, increased insight into the actual occasions of the evils by which human life is burdened, make it evident both that prevention is better than cure, and that prevention may be effected to a degree unimagined in former times. The hope which illumines the future for many is the prospect of a great and general advance through the removal of many of the sources of the physical, economic, and moral maladies of human society. It is better to anticipate and avert disease by the precautionary methods of science, than to combat it after it has seized upon its victims. It is better to eradicate the causes of destitution and unemployment than to provide the dole or other forms of relief, which can but superficially meet an emergency which in similar circumstances is bound to recur. This hope of progressive deliverance from many present evils and of the consequent human uplift and happiness through the increase of knowledge and instruction

as to the laws of health and social well-being, points to elements in the vision of that Kingdom of God whose coming will bring to all the complete realisation of life in its fullness. The optimistic forecasts of some of the leaders of science encourage the hope of a progressive emancipation from the present "ills that flesh is heir to." A distinguished biologist speaks of the immense power which physical research has placed in the hands of mankind.¹ He believes that that power rightly used would enable men to control their condition in this world and transform human life. In view of what man has done and can do, he calls for more workers in the cause and more strenuous endeavours, so that man may accomplish his destiny and escape from misery. "Why," he asks, "should we be content to wait long years, even centuries, for this control, when we can have it in a few years."² In such terms does Science preach its Gospel of the Kingdom.

The measure of success hitherto attained along many lines of advance, and founded upon accurate knowledge of the laws of nature and man's constitution, forms a striking commentary upon the words of Christ with which He concludes His parables of the Kingdom. They predict that "scribes who have been made disciples to the Kingdom of heaven," those who are its enlightened and instructed mem-

¹ "The Kingdom of Man," by Sir E. Ray Lankester, p. 28, etc.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

bers, and active in its cause, will reach larger and higher views of its nature and of the laws of its progress, and in its service will "bring forth out of their treasures things *new* and old" (Matt. xiii. 52). Much of the remedial legislation of the last half-century has been due to the awakening of the national conscience to moral issues which were not previously apprehended in their true significance. We have but to recall generally what has been effected for the benefit of the aged poor, and in the interests of child-life and the adolescent, the avenues to a larger life of public service thrown open by increased facilities of education, the improvement in the status of women, amendments effected in the conditions of labour, the methods of temperance reform which have resulted in increasing sobriety, the schemes to promote better material and moral surroundings for those who cannot help themselves, the international efforts to abolish the curse of war. These "new things" are modern applications of Christian ethics, developments of the morality of Christ in its social aspects. It has had a great influence in the formation of that growing "community conscience" which contains far more promise for the future than that "class consciousness" which some seek to foster. So strong is this altruistic impulse in an ever greater number of people, and so insistent are its demands, that it seems to some as if it might eventually become the ruling motive in social life, as well as in the management and

disposal of men's private possessions. The time may come, it is believed, when by the power of suggestion, of example, of the increasing socialising of public opinion and conscience, the sense of the well-being withheld from multitudes in the Community, and of the wrong and preventable misery suffered by them, will become an intolerable burden upon the minds of those having the means of effecting, or assisting in, the redressing of such disabilities in the lot of others. There are optimists who anticipate that the deliverance of the suffering multitudes will become an object of deeper and more general concern than the enjoyment of selfish luxury or the display of superfluous wealth.

In addition to the efforts of a Christian Philanthropy and the aims of remedial legislation, there is an extensive demand for a new organisation of society with a view to the establishment of a Social Order through which alone, it is maintained, the evils which have arisen under the present industrial system, can be effectually ended. With the Communism which repudiates religion as "the opium of the people" (Marx), Christian ethics can find no point of contact. Its denial of God and purely materialistic outlook, are the negation of Christianity and of Christian morality. But with Socialism, as understood by many of its most enlightened advocates, the case is otherwise. The Socialism which, while advocating its principles as an economic theory, sets a high value upon the moral results expected

from their prevalence, has among its adherents many members of the Christian Church. We are not here concerned with the methods by which Socialists propose to replace the present order by that which they desiderate. Whatever views may be entertained as to the possibility or desirability of effecting the proposed transition from the present system to one radically different from it, the Socialist ideal as presented by some prominent exponents resembles in several points the Kingdom of God, in its Christian significance. The very language used by its supporters is suggestive of the Christian ethical End. The charge Socialism brings against modern Industrialism is that it leads not only to the poverty, but to the moral degradation, of vast numbers of the population, that the worker has only his labour to sell in order to obtain the means of subsistence, and that under the present conditions he who sells his labour sells his soul. It aims at such a partition of the products of industry as would deliver all who serve the community in useful occupations from the dread of unemployment, from harassing anxieties as to daily bread, and from the want of those things requisite to a true and worthy human life. It seeks to emancipate those whom it regards as the victims of social injustice from conditions which deprive them of the possibility of realising the higher values of life. Thus, according to a leading authority, "Socialism on its moral side is a means to the establishment of true individual liberty: on its

economic side, it is a system under which an end will be put to exploitation."¹ And again, "The Socialist objective is a state wherein labour will meet with an adequate reward, and human life be valued above property."² "The higher spiritual life of freedom can be lived only when human energy and initiative are not absorbed in the production of physical things. The object of all life is more life."³ Every one can appreciate the ethical note in such a statement as the following: "So long as Plato's reading of the human heart remains true, men will take up their abode in the city 'which exists in idea,' and rich and poor alike will labour for the establishment of the state where life alone will be valued as treasure, and the tyranny of the economic machine will no longer hold spiritual things in subjection": and he adds, "That state I call socialism."⁴

The conditions of existence which the social revolution is thus expected to usher in, have obviously much in common with those of the Kingdom of God in which all the true values of human life will be realised. Those who believe that "the object of all life is more life," are in sympathy with the intention of Him who came that "men should have life and have it abundantly." Those who hold that

¹ J. Ramsay MacDonald, "The Socialist Movement," p. 130.

² J. Ramsay MacDonald, "Socialism," p. 109.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

“human life is to be valued above property,” are at one with Him who said that a man’s life consisteth not in the things that he possesses, and that the man who had selfishly amassed a superabundance of property solely for his own enjoyment, was a fool in God’s sight. Christ laid it down as a fundamental truth that human life infinitely surpasses in value all that is outward and material. The Christian view of man is as opposed as any Socialist can be, to conditions which exclude large numbers from a worthy life, and to all forms of a dehumanising exploitation of the many in the interests of the few. Man’s nature has capacities which cannot find full scope or expression, unless he is in a position to participate as a free agent in the work of the world, regarding it as his vocation to do so, understanding that the necessity to work is an evidence, not of his servitude, but of his significance for the well-being and progress of the community and of mankind. Not a few of those who are thus in sympathy with the ethical aims of Socialism, express their doubt as to its ability to supply a sufficient incentive to exertion and diligence, which for average human nature is provided by the desire of individual profit and advancement. Socialists themselves admit that there is need of much education in the direction of socialising the disposition and motives of the worker, that he may give the best that is in him for the good of the community, and not mainly for the sake of personal gain. Here again their views have been

anticipated in the representation of the Christian End. In the Kingdom of God, all "through love serve one another." Its Founder and Example came "not to be ministered unto but to minister." Society in His day was so constituted that the great ones exercised authority over the masses, using their power for the gratification of pride and self-aggrandisement. But it was not to be so among those whose citizenship was in the Kingdom which Christ inaugurated. "Among you whosoever would become great shall be your minister, and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all" (Mark x. 42, 43). His programme of the Kingdom did not prescribe legislative changes and political readjustments; it insisted upon a personal change, a revolution in character in those accounted worthy of it. If the inward and ethical reform were complete and universal, the social End would already be attained. The regeneration of the individual is from within, and a regenerated society can be formed only of such individuals. The Kingdom of Righteousness consists of those whose characters are in harmony with its moral conditions. Theirs is the Kingdom. They are in it, because they are of it.

Thus while the Christian ethical End has both its individual, and its social or collective, aspects, there is no dualism, no opposition between them. The Social End of the Kingdom of God embraces, and is constituted by, the individuals who compose

it. In its comprehensiveness the Kingdom consists of all who possess "the life which is life indeed," all who are the subjects of that Christian reconstruction and reorganisation of the character, of that inward "righteousness," which is the individual End. It includes this world so far as it is regenerated, and the sphere beyond this life which Kant postulates as that in which the ethical progress of man is to go on towards perfection. In view of the Christian belief in a life to come, death does not terminate the membership in the Kingdom which is begun in this world. It is the entrance upon a state in which the life of the Kingdom will be fully realised by those who are unhampered by the imperfections and impediments inseparable from present conditions. The Kingdom is the Eternal realm of the true life, of "whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report," in which the True and the Beautiful blend in perfect unity with the Supreme end of the Good. The prevalence of the Kingdom is "the one far-off, divine event to which the whole creation moves."