

# MAKING CHRISTIANITY SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY

## VI. THE TASK OF THE CHURCH IN A DEMOCRATIC AGE

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In the preceding articles of this series we have called attention to certain ideas in our inherited conception of Christianity which were wrought out in connection with the religious interpretation of an autocratic civilization. We have seen that the exigencies of a democratic culture demand certain important modifications of these ideas. In this concluding article we desire to point out some of the important aspects of the religious task of a church which consciously undertakes to furnish religious inspiration for democratic development.

### **I. The Spiritual Significance of Democracy**

Democracy means self-government in contrast to control by an alien power. If democracy is to succeed, there must be the power of inner self-control on the part of citizens. If this maturity of character is not present, democracy is headed for sure disaster. No matter how idealistic our philosophy is, the plain fact confronts us that certain peoples are not fit for self-government. If there be lacking intelligence, social loyalty, and respect for the "rules of the game" of political action, the adoption of a mere form of democracy will not bring good government and

social stability. It is a truism in our country to say that an adequate system of education and training in citizenship must go hand in hand with the forms of democratic government.

The most important factors in the training of a citizen in a democracy are a sense of social responsibility and a genuine respect for the personal welfare of one's fellow-men. The selfish individual who is intent on exploiting others is the greatest menace to democracy. Such selfishness appears in the cheap politician, who is more concerned to strengthen his own machine than to promote statesman-like projects of government. It is omnipresent in the industrial exploiter, who seeks to bend the forces of society in the direction of special privilege and unfair advantage. It is found potentially in every person who feels no strong "public spirit," and who thinks more of what he may get out of a government than he does of strengthening it in its defense of justice and its promotion of universal welfare.

Now these qualities of moral responsibility and of interest in the welfare of our fellow-men are essential aspects of Christianity. No man is really a Christian unless he possess these traits. The efforts of preachers throughout the ages

have been devoted to securing personal morality and social generosity as marks of a genuinely religious life. If the church shall induce these virtues in men, it will be contributing an indispensable force in the making of a sound democracy.

But attention should be called to one aspect of the matter which is often overlooked. It is a principle of sound pedagogy that training cannot be transferred from one field to another. The boy who has mastered mathematics is not thereby equipped to translate a foreign language. The inner appreciation of a problem and the power to attempt a solution must be developed in connection with the field where the problem really is. The futility of expecting general discipline, as such, to be transferred ready-made from one field to another is now generally recognized.

Moral attitudes, then, must be developed in direct connection with the realm in which morality is to be exerted. A striking illustration of this fact was seen in the autumn of 1918 in the colleges where large bodies of young men were taking training to fit them for military service. So long as the war was a stern fact, the morale of the training was a comparatively simple problem. The virtues of a military régime could be made self-evidently valuable. But when the war so suddenly and unexpectedly ended, and there was no longer the prospect of military service ahead, the exactions and restrictions of military training became irksome. The virtues of a time of war simply could not be transferred ready-made to a world at peace. So, too, we are at present suffering a

widespread disorganization of our social life in the transition from a period of war to one of peace. And to the surprise and dismay of many who had been inspired by the marvelous exhibitions of sacrifice and generosity during war time, the special training in social consecration which was stimulated by the special circumstances of the war does not automatically carry over when that stimulus is removed. We shall have to develop the virtues of reconstruction in connection with the tasks of reconstruction, instead of depending on ready-made virtues.

If, then, the Christian church is to furnish spiritual power for a democratic age, religious experience and moral training must be undertaken in direct relation to the problems of a democratic society. Only thus will there be developed genuine moral power. If the church should continue to preach in terms of autocracy, it would indeed develop a certain kind of spiritual devotion; but the difficulty of carrying over autocratically developed enthusiasms to a democratic society would be serious; and much energy might be lost in the process.

## **II. The Tests of Religion in a Democracy**

An autocracy puts foremost the divine rights of an absolute head to legislate for his subjects. The sanctity of the ruler must be protected, for if this is gone, law and order ceases. Therefore autocracies inevitably put a check upon free criticism. *Lèse majesté* is a serious offense. In a democracy, on the other hand, criticism is essential. Since the governor

occupies his position only because he is elected to represent the people in securing their welfare, the righteousness of his conduct can be judged only as the people shall critically scan his conduct while in office. Freedom of discussion and freedom of criticism are essential to the morality of a democracy.

But such criticism is really valuable only as citizens shall be inwardly fit to pass intelligent judgments. And, as we have said, such fitness can be developed only in relation to the actual exigencies of the social life which men must share. An imperative task of the church today, then, is the training of moral judgment in such a way that Christian ideals may readily find expression in the democratic discussion of political questions.

It must be admitted that here we have too largely taken it for granted that convictions induced by the logic of autocracy could be transferred ready-made to a realm of democracy. What is the test of truth in religion which the church teaches men to apply? Does it not still employ a canon adapted to autocracy? Criticism is too often identified with a kind of *lèse majesté*. Throughout the length and breadth of the land there are ardent preachers who constantly stir up in Christian people an attitude of distrust of criticism. They use the Bible as an autocratic authority. The outcome of their moral training is dogmatism and denunciation. Instead of cultivating in men the capacity to listen to both sides of a disputed question, such a training in dogmatism tends to make one a blind partisan.

It is time for us to realize the full significance of that action of democracy

which is part and parcel of our organic law—the separation of church and state. Such a separation means that the church has no legal *authority* to impose its decisions on people. The church in a democracy has no “divine rights.” Catholicism sees this clearly, and, as we have shown, vigorously denounces the secularization of government. Protestant churches are quick to resent any attempts of Catholicism to gain a religious control of government. But at the same time Protestantism to a large extent preserves a conception of religion comparable to that of Catholicism rather than a conception suited to the character of democratic ideals. Are not loyalties too generally cultivated in our churches by suggesting submissive obedience to divinely authoritative commands rather than by developing a critical discernment of values? But in a democracy we cannot carry over into politics or into industry an ethics of submissive obedience. We cannot suppress discussion. The development of the power of careful criticism is essential to the life of a democracy. If this be wanting, our public life will become simply a warfare between demagogues and their adherents.

If Christianity is to become an inspiring force in modern democracy it must cease to denounce and distrust criticism in the realm of religion. As a matter of fact, critical methods have won their way, in spite of the attitude of distrust, until they are frankly adopted in virtually all schools where theology is studied in scholarly fashion. What is supremely needed is a removal of the attempts at autocratic control, and the development of a hearty belief

in the positive moral and religious significance of critical methods. When there shall be added to the existing scholarship a hearty and eager employment of the critical method in the work of the preacher and the religious teacher, we shall be training men religiously to be active citizens of a democracy, instead of leaving them perplexed by a religious equipment derived from autocratic ethics. An autocracy compels men to submit to a government provided from above. A democracy invites men to co-operate in the making of the best government possible. Shall a Christian be one who has been taught to submit unquestioningly to a religious system authoritatively imposed from above? Or shall a Christian be one who learns to co-operate with his fellows in the organization of the best religion possible?

An amazing opportunity for service to democracy is here open. And the literature of religious education is rapidly seizing the opportunity. In many churches one may now discover courses of instruction in the Sunday school and sermons from the pulpit which furnish men with the power to criticize existing conditions in such a way as to bring the dynamic of Christian ideals to bear upon our collective life, not by the autocratic pathway of religious dogmatism, but by the democratic method of free discussion. The further development of this kind of religious training is an imperative need.

### **III. The Worship of God in a Democracy**

When the rulers of the earth were autocrats, it was natural and appropriate to think of God as the Supreme

Autocrat. But such a conception tends to put God far away from man. Religion then consists in bridging this gulf by such intermediaries as God approves. The worshiper can hope to secure God's favor only by making use of the prescribed intermediaries. Thus Judaism made religion center in the law which the transcendent God had communicated to men. Thus Catholicism has its church and sacraments which have been authorized by God as the sole rightful way of receiving divine grace. So, too, Protestantism has often laid chief stress on the Bible as law, or on some prescribed "plan of salvation." The consequence of such a conception of God is seen in the inevitable separation of religion from life as a whole. The scribe could be painfully conscientious about tithing mint, anise, and cummin, while at the same time he was hopelessly unconcerned about those human values which to Jesus were of foremost religious importance. Catholicism is so obsessed with the exclusive religious validity of its system that it is profoundly distrustful of anything that does not bear the church label. And one has only to overhear the uncensored remarks of the "man on the street" to learn that Protestantism has an unfortunate reputation for a narrow concern with a religious system isolated from much of real life.

The worship of God means the enlistment of one's emotions in adoration of the highest and broadest righteousness conceivable. Whenever the current conception of God is too narrow to include all the moral values of human experience, worship suffers. It may,

indeed, attempt to make up in intensity what it lacks in breadth and thus conceal for a time its religious inadequacy. But the movement of history is sure to disclose sooner or later the possibilities of a richer ideal of God. The early prophets of Israel denounced a worship which was excluding from religious thinking serious contemplation of the great national crisis which was impending. By their unwavering loyalty to the actual spiritual needs of their time they were instrumental in transforming worship. In the place of a contented performance of religious routine supposed to please a tribal deity, they put profound reverence for the God who cares more for righteousness than he does for the political supremacy of any particular people. Jesus and the apostle Paul led men's religious thoughts far beyond the conventional borders of current Jewish worship. Athanasius and others of like spirit Christianized the abstract theology of Greek philosophy, and thus opened the way for a significant humanizing of worship. Martin Luther broke down the walls which held Christianity in its "Babylonish captivity," and revealed possibilities of worship in humble human activities which brought God very near to men. The Wesleyan revival made personal worship a reality for thousands to whom the formal services of the Church of England meant nothing. It might almost be said that the periods of Christian history to which we turn most frequently for inspiration are periods when the worship of God was transformed by releasing men's thoughts from a conventional theology which set limits to God's active presence in the world.

If the church is to exert its rightful influence in a democratic age, it must enable men to worship God in such a way as to give sanctity to the great ideals of democracy. But these ideals are concerned with very practical problems of human need and injustice, and with the possibilities of a richer life here and now. The theology of our creeds and to a large extent the content of our rituals reflect a conception of God drawn from the analogies of an autocratic régime. To worship is taken to mean acknowledgment of the sublimity of rules and laws imposed upon us from above. Such worship inevitably leads to an exaltation of standards and ideals exactly formulated and transferred authoritatively to us. But since such finished standards can be found only in the past (for the past alone is finished), there is the constant tendency to picture some past period or some past literature as representing a closer and more real experience of God than is to be hoped for in the present.

Autocracy naturally emphasized the transcendence of God. Democracy, if it is to be religious at all, must emphasize the immanence of God. And this immanence means something far more radical than the too common practice of taking the transcendent God with his attributes unchanged and simply picturing him *in* the world instead of above it. You cannot take a king with all his royal prerogatives and retain these unchanged in a democracy. Either the king changes his attributes, as has occurred in England, or he disappears, as has occurred in France. The worship of God in a democracy means a new discovery of some things about God

not hitherto recognized, not simply a formal readjustment of the conventional theology.

It is too soon to declare just what the content of a democratic theology will be. Not until democracy is "finished" can we have a "finished" doctrine. But a general line of emphasis may be discerned in the religious strivings of our day.

In an autocracy a sharp dividing-line is drawn between king and subject. They belong to different worlds. In a democracy there is no such sharp distinction. The ruling power is integrally one with the citizens. In the theology of autocracy, God was defined to a large extent in such a way as to contrast him with human beings. And the salient objects of religious worship were valued because of their possession of a divinely imparted essence which set them apart from secular objects. The minister of God's Word must be ordained in such a way that he ceased to be a layman. The Bible must be defined so as to make it utterly different in quality from all other literature. The divinity of Jesus was interpreted so as to widen the gulf between him and other men. The bread and wine of the Eucharist must be declared transmuted in order to have religious efficacy.

Now democracy has been steadily making inroads into this essentially autocratic conception of religion. Men care less today for the special ordination of a minister than they do for his spiritual capacity to share religiously their life and to interpret its religious possibilities. The Bible is more and more being used as a source book of great religious experiences, rather than

as a collection of non-human doctrines. During the century of the growth of democratic ideals we have seen the primary attention of Christian scholars devoted to the recovery for us of the picture of Jesus of Nazareth as he lived among men. By this study he has been brought very close to us, whereas the Christologies inherited from an autocratic age made the distinction between Jesus and other men as sharp as possible.

The result of all this has been a significant humanizing of the conception of God. The Calvinistic doctrine of God's unlimited sovereignty is seldom heard now. The philosophical picture of God as an undisturbed "Absolute," reigning in unruffled serenity far above the world of human tragedies, finds short shrift today. In the place of the affirmation of an autocratic cosmic ruler there is coming an as yet unsystematized and often vague mystic craving for an intimate divine companionship in the perplexities and tragedies of life as we know it. Philosophically this finds expression in the unhappy (because religiously irrelevant) idea of a "finite" God. As contrasted with the Omnipotent Sovereign of the older theology, the God who suffers such terrible disasters as the late war and whose righteous purpose is so evidently thwarted and betrayed by the abundant evil in the world may indeed seem finite. But we may ask whether the facts of history give us any warrant for supposing that God's nature and activity have ever been truthfully expressed by the absolutes of finished systems of theology. With the vanishing of kings in the earthly realm *because kings cannot*

*make good* in the actual course of human history, we may perhaps infer that the character of the power which shapes history is not accurately expressed in terms of absolute sovereignty.

The worship of God in a democracy will consist in reverence for those human values which democracy makes supreme. We must discover the reality of God by feeling the compelling reality of justice, brotherhood, progress, enrichment of life, and the like. When the soldiers at the front furnished that stupendous outpouring of life for the sake of a cause, no one felt that it was sacrilege to interpret this sacrifice in terms of spiritual continuity with the sacrifice of Jesus. The cross gained a new and intimate significance because men now came to interpret it through the leadings of their own experience. To try to draw a sharp dividing-line between the heroism of those who lie on Flanders fields and the death of Jesus would be to make both less religiously significant.

We cannot tell where God's activity stops and man's begins. How much of the devoted love of a mother for her child is divine and how much is human? We do not know and we do not care. We worship it all. How much of Abraham Lincoln's epoch-making idealism was his own, and how much was due to the God whose direction he sought? We should belittle its religious significance by trying to draw distinctions. In an autocratic religious system Lincoln (or his equivalent) might well be canonized as a saint. But democracy cannot make use of saints who are set apart from humanity. Its saints are those who are so completely identified with the interests of the men and women

whom they seek to serve that any attempt to set them apart would deprive them of their saintliness. A democratic worship will discover the presence of God in the spiritually uplifting ideals actually operative in the common life of men as we know them, and will seek to redeem our age from its too materialistic strivings by exalting the beauty and the sanctity of the attitudes and consecrations which are to be found so eloquently expressed in paternal love, in filial devotion, in generous neighborliness, in the professional self-abnegating ministry of nurse and physician and teacher, and (it is to be hoped in greater measure in the near future) in the determination of those in industry to build a better social world rather than to increase material gains.

When we study the past aright, we see that the true worship of God consisted in a reverence for the spiritual forces making for a better future, rather than in mere loyalty to established religion. Without the revolutionary teachings of the prophets would not Israel have lost its hold on the living God? To be truly religious in the days of the decline of the kingdom men had to discover the divine meaning of the onward movement of history, which was creating a new world. The development of the Hellenic theology and worship was possible because men of religious zeal like Clement of Alexandria and Origen and Athanasius were able to discern the reality of God in the philosophy and culture which were destined to give shape to all European thinking for centuries. In our day we have an opportunity no less important to find the leading of God as he

shapes the new world which lies before us. True worship must be sensitive to the constructive forces in this new world. It must make men reverently love the things which will make for a better humanity, and so enable them to commune with God in the actual tasks of our age. When once we shall have developed a religious vocabulary suited to democratic ideals, when rituals shall have been worked out embodying our democratic aspirations, we may be surprised to discover how much of real worship we had been neglecting in the days when the forms of autocratic reverence reigned supreme.

#### IV. The Evangelization of Democratic Ideals

Evangelization, as the word is currently used, suggests a procedure belonging to a system of autocracy rather than a democratic experience. The gospel is brought *to* people from an alien source. The "plan of salvation" has been provided authoritatively from above. The sinner has but to "accept" its provisions. The resultant good life is bestowed on him by grace; he must not assert any merits of his own. The connection between this unmerited gift of grace and a socially consecrated life is not self-evident. Good works have somehow to be added to the experience of salvation; and the tragedy of much evangelization is that men stop contented with salvation through the power of God, much as a dependent on aristocratic largess rests content with what he receives, without feeling any call to active service in social transformation.

What sort of an appeal does democracy make to men? We have had an

example of this recently which ought to give us food for thought. When men were asked to enlist in America's armies, they were asked to *give themselves for a cause*. While it was to a certain extent true that the need on man's part for what the nation could give was a real motive, by far the most powerful incentive was the need of the nation for the services of its citizens. Men were not asked to enlist in order to "be saved." The attempts made by some few enthusiasts before America entered the war to persuade us that we ought to declare war in order to save ourselves from possible invasion evoked little response. But the great ideal of helping to save American ideals and to save the world from the brutal onslaught of autocracy united the nation in a spirit of devotion.

The very life of democracy depends on such devotion to a cause. If the prevailing motive is a desire to get all one can from government rather than to give one's best for the common good, democracy is headed for sure disintegration. The church will best serve democracy if it makes its evangelistic appeal such as to reinforce the spirit of devotion to the common cause of humanity.

We have one unfortunate inheritance from an age of autocracy. When men were subjects rather than citizens, when the power to grant benefits lay in the hands of the autocratic ruler, the obvious way in which to get such benefits as one desired was to petition the ruler for them. Thus the rank and file of men have been trained for centuries to an attitude of seeking to *receive* favors from above, rather than to an



attitude of social co-operation for the creation of a better system of distributing goods. Religion very naturally spoke the language of autocracy during these centuries. Men conceived the supreme religious good as that of receiving favors from God in answer to petition. Evangelization has developed its message almost exclusively in terms of this conception derived from an autocratic administration of society. It has pictured man as a helpless dependent on God's favor, rather than as one called to co-operate in the making of a better world. To be sure, the latter ideal has been added to the former, but one's "salvation" has been declared to consist in "accepting" the provision of grace made by God.

What would be the result if evangelization should start with the ideal of moral co-operation in the service of a cause rather than with the appeal to "accept salvation"? What if the evangelist were to feel the reality of God's onward-moving purpose in the great moral causes which emerge out of our human strivings? What if, as in the case of the recent war, men should be made to feel that the welfare of this and subsequent generations depended on their sacrificial loyalty to the cause? What if salvation were to be defined in terms of being used by God in fellowship with all the others who were moved by his Spirit to make a better world? Would evangelization not take on a form better suited to the exigencies of democracy?

What a poignant meaning this point of view would give to the word "sin"! Is not much of the seeming lack of a sense of sin today due to the fact that

the word has been defined in terms drawn from an autocratic régime? The sinner is one who has refused to "accept" the divinely prescribed government. He is a rebel against authority. But democracy has so often made progress by rebellions that much of the sting of the term has disappeared. If now the evangelist, like the prophets of Israel, or like Jesus, were to define one's religious attitude primarily in terms of one's behavior to one's fellow-men, and were then to paint the anti-social individual as deliberately seeking to thwart the purposes of God, the term "sin" would have behind it all the natural indignation of our age at the exploiters of humanity. To be saved from sin, one must become a co-worker with God. And if God is presented as the immanent power working through the efforts of men to shape history so as to make a better world, reconciliation with God is at the same time reconciliation with the righteous cause to which religious men are devoted.

After all, a man is saved only as he has a share in a cause. The outsider is inevitably an exploiter. It was because Germany wished to keep aloof from the rest of the world, preserving intact her *Kultur*, that she could regard other nations and peoples only as fields for the imposition of her ideals. It is because the workers have been excluded from a real share in the organization of industry that their efforts to better their condition so naturally take the form of getting what they can without regard to the wider social consequences. It is because some so-called Christians have been "saved" in such a way as to preserve their isolation from the great

social movements of their environment that they can pursue the comfortable routine of personal worship without any disturbance of conscience at obvious wrongs which they are instrumental in continuing. If a Christian man is pleased at a 30 per cent dividend on an investment in Mexico without any further thought as to the bearing of this return on the industrial exploitation of the natives, just how does his "salvation" affect the problem of a democratic solution of the Mexican problem?

Let the evangelist define sin in terms of a willing aloofness of men from the welfare of his fellow-men, and there will be evidence of sin too unmistakable to escape attention. And this aloofness of a man from human welfare is precisely an attempt to withdraw one's self from the real presence of God, who is working through history for the release of men from the evils which beset them. Salvation can come only through the overcoming of this aloofness. But when this is overcome, the individual is democratized. He is a sharer in the life of humanity. His own welfare can be obtained only as the welfare of all shall be promoted. Enlistment in a genuinely social life of devotion is the very pathway to God. One does not first experience salvation and then add to it a program of good works. One experiences salvation in the very process of enlistment in God's cause. And such salvation means the evangelization of democracy.

#### **V. The Democratic Interpretation of the Missionary Enterprise**

It is not without significance that the century which has brought the

world consciously to the threshold of a democratic development as the future way of organizing humanity should have also transformed men's thoughts as to the place of missions in the Christian program. The dawn of the nineteenth century saw a few eager enthusiasts endeavoring to persuade a reluctant Christendom to undertake the task of carrying the gospel to non-Christian lands. The twentieth century witnesses the beginnings of a determination on the part of the Christian church to provide for this enterprise in really efficient fashion. All the great denominations have launched programs of education and achievement calling for the expenditure of millions of dollars and for the finest type of administrative and organizing ability. The contrast in attitude wrought in the course of a century is one of the amazing chapters in church history.

But even more amazing is the change in the conception of the task which has taken place. Originally it was undertaken quite in accordance with the ideals of autocracy. Christianity, as the sole religion with "divine rights," was to displace the "false" religions. It was to bring doctrines, rituals, and moral precepts, which were to be accepted just as they were brought. There was little or no thought of such a thing as "self-determination" of beliefs or practices. These were already imposed authoritatively from above.

But the impulses of human sympathy which led the missionaries to go at all to foreign lands bore fruit inevitably in a better appreciation of the native ideals. However earnestly a missionary might desire that an oriental should

believe and feel and act exactly according to the Western program, he found that, as a matter of fact, the emotions and the sanctions of orientals persisted in some form, even in a change of faith on their part. Gradually we have come to see that it is religiously desirable that the Christianizing of non-Christian peoples shall mean the strengthening and purification of the best religious and moral traits of their native faith, rather than its complete eradication. We have even come to expect that when Christianity becomes domesticated in foreign lands there will be developed new applications of the gospel and new possibilities of worship which would have remained hidden from us if we had continued in our provincial habits of thought.

Now this experiment of evangelizing the native ideals is genuine democracy in religion. It is already making its influence felt in our conceptions of Christianity. Returned missionaries are compelling us to overcome our smug provincialism. In particular they put to shame those who define Christianity as a special gift of God's grace to be enjoyed as a particular favor by Christians. They are compelling us to think of our religious experience as something which we are bound to share with the world instead of prizing it as something which gives to us a superior place in God's economy. They are making it clear that nothing less than such a democratization of evangelism as has already been suggested is adequate to the needs of the world.

Moreover, the missionary enterprise is rapidly being conceived as a democratic social program rather than as the

rescue of a few individuals from the divine wrath. To reconstruct the social life of a people in all its phases is the end of the gospel. Education is coming to be a primary means of accomplishing the missionary task. But education is precisely the dynamic of democracy. In this age when God is bringing the nations face to face with the evil consequences of exploitation, the missionaries are the most clear-sighted and statesman-like leaders of democratic policy. The missionary program of education in Mexico is the only existing statesman-like plan for the cure of the ills which all deplore in that land.

The world has come to the point where men must consciously choose between two contrasting policies. Either the Golden Rule must be adopted as the principle of international behavior, or else mankind will perish in the devilish and never-ending attempt to discover which group of men possesses enough brute force and enough organizing ability to kill off the others. The church at home and abroad is now beginning to undertake in earnest that education of men's affections and that broadening of men's sympathies which shall make possible the progressive elimination of warfare. In a word, when the missionary enterprise is seen to be a democratic religious movement, it gives to Christianity a task of supreme importance; and when the appeal of this inspiring task is properly presented, the evangelistic appeal in a democratic world will grow naturally out of the apprehension of the task.

Christian people are perplexed and often discouraged today because the traditional equipment of the church

falls so far short of the demands of our time. If we can once realize that a part of the trouble lies in the fact that we are carrying over into a democratic period an equipment which was organized and perfected in the days of autocracy, we shall be able intelligently to set to work to meet the challenge of our day instead of bemoaning the ungodliness of the age. There are many symptoms which ought to encourage us. Indifference to a theology which emphasizes the virtues of an autocracy is perhaps the negative side of a religious yearning for a democratic interpretation of the unseen power "making for righteousness." The criticism which is so often decried as being "destructive" may be only another name for a democratic freedom of self-determination in religion. If we look at all the facts, we shall see that religion has become more humane, more concerned with man's present needs, more actively inventive in devising ways in which to meet those needs. There is much of the kind of religion which gives the cup of cold water, but not yet enough of the religious interpretation which links the deed with genuine devotion to the gospel of Jesus. There is an astonishing amount of consecration given to the education of children and the aiding of men and women in their efforts to discover how to live as self-respecting citizens of a democracy;

but there is not yet enough recognition of the essentially religious quality of such labor. More and more the "social gospel" is finding its way into our pulpits and into our Sunday schools. It needs only to be freed from the artificial effort to commend it by linking it to some alien religious "authority." Let it stand forth in its own sanctity. Let the vision of a humanity organized to give education, health, wholesome occupation, genuine worship, and social co-operation be presented as the revelation of God's purpose for our age. Then will our theology seek as eagerly to interpret salvation in terms of democratic realities as did the theology of Athanasius seek to evangelize the dominant ideals of his age. Then shall we come afresh to realize how truly Jesus revealed God to men when he discerned the holiness of those humane impulses which are far better expressed in the aspirations of men after a better life than in the formal categories of scribal interpretation. For the democracy of which we dream is nothing but human society made conscious of the divine sublimity of that picture of human brotherhood and justice which can be best realized as men become sharers of the life of Jesus. The evangelization of democracy and the democratizing of Christianity are two aspects of the same movement in which God is working out his purposes for this age.