

THE DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE *

PROFESSOR DAVID FOSTER ESTES, D.D.

HAMILTON, NEW YORK

[The paradoxes of science are matched by the paradoxes of theology. Freedom and certainty, immanence and transcendence, have always perplexed systematic theologians. Their harmonization seems about as difficult as the squaring of the circle. Nevertheless, there is an ultimate harmony.

In accordance with the policy of *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA* to present both sides of important doctrines which are in dispute (illustrated by the articles upon Millenarianism in the July No.), we are glad to present the accompanying paper as a counterpart to the one, by the same eminent theologian, on Divine Immanence which we published last year (July, 1918, pp. 399-428).

These two papers state both sides of the subject in a manner to merit universal attention, and should do much to justify faith in both aspects of God's inscrutable but inspiring attributes here brought to view.—EDITOR.]

In these days it is as important to assert and to guard the doctrine of the Divine Transcendence as to emphasize the Divine Immanence. Over against the many who deny or ignore, the doctrine must be asserted as an important, an essential part of the truth of God; while over against the many who exaggerate or misapprehend, it must be stated with clearness and accuracy, in order that these errors, which presumably are as perennial as multiform, may yet be minimized so far as possible. In the progress of human thought these two ideas of immanence and transcendence have too often stood over against each other as if challenging the world to choose between them. In the intellectual and spiritual experiences of individual thinkers the emphasis on the one or the other has too often led to what has been practically Pantheism or practically Deism. Those who have come to combine the two ideas

* Copyright, 1919, D. F. Estes.

have perhaps more often made the pilgrimage from transcendence to immanence than from immanence to transcendence; yet such is the vogue and ascendancy of the idea of immanence to-day, at least in popular literature and common speech, that it may be better in this discussion to take the hitherto less traveled road, and, assuming the fact of the Divine Immanence, to consider the grounds for holding also to the Divine Transcendence and the significance and importance of this truth.

To those who accept the truth of immanence it often seems in itself sufficient and satisfying. But, however vital monogamy may be to the welfare of society, intellectual monogamy is no virtue; and they greatly err who act as if the Mosaic prohibition, "Thou shalt not take a woman to her sister, to be a rival to her," should be extended to the realm of ideas. Let it be assumed with all the positiveness you will, that in all the phenomena, force, and progress of nature God is and acts; that in all the universe which we see with the eye, the telescope, the microscope, and in all its extension so far as thought can wing its way into space or the scientific imagination can trace the infinitesimal, everywhere, whatever else we find or miss, everywhere we may always certainly find God immanent in all. But is this all? Is this truth the whole truth about God? Does the fact of immanence exhaust the Divine reality? In the minds of many, to be sure, by use of the mental faculties or because they are not used—all this matters not—immanence is the sole idea, the sun of truth which shines so solitary and sufficient that not even a moon is needed. But such narrowness of intellectual processes and limitation of consequent results is baneful as well as unnecessary. We get on fairly well in our system with a single sun plus the occasional help of moon and stars; we must do so, for it is all we can have. But how much richer, more beautiful, more efficient, must be the case of those who live in a system of binary stars as we call them, binary suns as they must see them, each supplementing and reinforcing the other! So all twin truths

helpfully supplement and reënforce each other and markedly the pair of complementary truths we now note.

But perhaps, in entering on this discussion, it should first be inquired, What is the nature of this idea which is complementary to immanence? What is properly meant by the word "transcendence" as applied to the Deity? Of the definition in the general dictionaries, certainly none is better than that of "The Century," which defines "transcendent" as "transcending the universe of matter; not essentially connected with the universe; not cosmic: as, a transcendent deity." If this is read as complementary, not as alternative, to immanence, it will prove helpful and quite satisfactory; otherwise it will prove misleading. Much better is Professor Ormond's, in Baldwin's "Dictionary of Philosophy," which says that transcendence is "the doctrine that God, in his proper being and essential nature, is prior to and above the world; or that he has reality in himself apart from his works." But even these statements are not beyond criticism; as the ideas suggested by "prior," "above," and "reality" are not an essential part of the doctrine of transcendence, even though it may practically be presumed that they are always found in connection with it. To the mind of the writer the primary idea of transcendence is, that God is not wholly and solely in the universe which he has created; but that, on the contrary, in nature, in character, and in activity, his relation to the universe does not exhaust him or, indeed, fully express him; that (using the words in no quantitative or spatial sense) God, who is actively in the universe, is also beyond it; that it does not measure him, but that he is more than can find scope and play in his immanent relation to his universe.¹

¹A colleague has suggested, as a possibly helpful parallel (so far as the physical may illustrate the spiritual), the various relations of electricity in the household. Its most common use is for light, and it is conceivable that some might unconsciously assume that the lamp exhausts the possibilities of electricity. But cer-

For the logical purposes of definition this may be held to be sufficient, but another element is so much a part of the facts in the case, and so implied in the derivation of the word, that it finds a place in many definitions; and consequently it is to be presumed that it is a part of the conception of transcendence as ordinarily held. To transcend is frequently thought of as to be not only more but also superior, and so the definition in the Webster Dictionary includes the statement that God "is exalted above" creation. It is this element of superiority which Dr. Clarke, in his discussion of transcendence,¹ dwells upon to the practical exclusion of everything else, such a sentence as this giving the keynote to his treatment of the subject: "The universe stands over against him but not as his equal: he stands over against the universe, but as one who surpasses it: and there are qualities in which we can distinctly understand that his superiority consists." But, unless on the ground that common thought has permanently combined the ideas of more and better (or shall we rather say that lack of thought has inextricably confused them?), there is no good reason for making the element of superiority an essential part of the definition of transcendence. Perhaps, however, it is actually there; and if so it will not essentially modify the relations of the present discussion, although, at first at least, it will not be emphasized.

Now on what ground may we who are believers in the Divine Immanence believe also in the Divine Transcendence, assert it, and, still more, rest and build on it? In considering these grounds it may be well, first, to note the familiar fact, that, on the whole subject of the existence, nature, character, and works of God, we do not have positive and conclusive proofs.² Our faith is faith, not uncertainly most know that the same current can also give heat, power, and therapeutic effects. No one of these, nor the sum of them, exhausts the electric potency: it is more than they: so to speak, it transcends them all.

¹ *The Christian Doctrine of God*, pp. 310-330.

² The case has been well stated by Professor Ladd (*Bib. Sac.*, vol.

reasonable, to be sure, but not based directly on logical demonstration. If it were thus based, it would not be faith but knowledge, and would wholly lack the moral value which we rightly attach to faith. It is often overlooked that there would be no more ethical significance in the acceptance of positive knowledge even as to God himself than there is in acceptance of the multiplication table or of the annual calendar. On the other hand, it is no more to be felt that Christian theism is counter to reason or without reasons.

We shall not begin this discussion with what may be called the cosmological argument, even though it is to be acknowledged that in certain relations there is great force in the course of argument which ends with the recognition of a mysterious power which Herbert Spencer found beyond phenomena, Fiske's "infinite Power that makes for righteousness." A better place to begin the present discussion, the first foundation stone to be laid, is a development of the argument from analogy by which the Divine Immanence is to the mind of the writer rendered most plausible. If we should think of all the energy of the universe as the forthputting of the power of the resident spirit, on the ground that all the force which we know is due to our own personal spirit, we shall be justified, is it not better to say, we are constrained, to carry the analogy further, and from our own conscious experience to infer the Divine Transcendence as much as the Divine Immanence. We ourselves act on and through matter, if not originating force, at any rate controlling and directing it; and, nevertheless, these activities, the changed conditions, the modifications of matter, while at their best our spirits may find more or less adequate expression in them, do not exhaust our possibilities. The man is always more than his deeds

xxxiv. p. 18): "The concept of God, then, is not one, the objective validity of which can be tested solely by the success or failure of any number of arguments, considered merely as arguments, along their different lines. It is rather a centre upon which converge many lines, not only of argument, but also of intuition, feeling, and purpose."

at their largest; he is always more than his work in the world. Perhaps in no way can a man make fuller expression of what is in him than does the skilled violinist in the use of his violin. It will quiver with his doubts and fears: it will wail out his sorrow: it will sing his joy, until we are justified in saying, as we do, that in hearing the tones of this marvelous instrument we have heard the man. Yet in how much is he greater than the expression which he has found, more than his music, the man quite as much beyond and above as in his violin! If any needs to learn the truth of transcendence, let him learn from this analogy. The apt pupil will find in himself his first lesson. If the master is always more than his music, Shakespeare than his dramas, Michelangelo than his "Moses," the man ever greater than his every work and all his works, we should be dull indeed if we held that the Great Artificer had exhausted himself in the universe in which he continually works, and that he had no character or activity beyond it.

Further, conscience here reënforces consciousness. It is not safe to say, with Platt, that the conception of transcendence is due to the notion that "Holiness has always spelled separation"; and that "transcendence applied to God has become identical with His separation from men."¹ This is true neither of the meaning of the word nor of the history of the conception. But it is true that the conscience of man has felt a sense of responsibility to one who is more than the world of relation; and thus, it may be repeated, conscience reënforces consciousness.

The view which has just been stated as a legitimate, not to say necessary, inference from the facts of our own consciousness, has been reached as if by intuition by countless thousands of souls in every age. If it may be asserted, as men of late are in the habit of repeating, that "man is incurably religious," it may be similarly asserted that the object of his religion is invariably transcendent.² To be

¹ Immanence and Christian Thought, p. 51.

² As Warschauer says in his book, which was written by one who emphasizes immanence in order to guard against extravagant mis-

sure, it is not to be overlooked that certain religious systems are at heart pantheistic philosophies, and so exclude transcendence; but at the same time it is to be remembered that in all the ancient religions, wherever the religious element was dominant, from the crassest animism to the most spiritual Judaism, transcendence was the controlling conception. As Samuel Browne puts it in his remarkable book, "God the Known and the Unknown": "The vast majority for a long time past have been possessed with an idea that there is somewhere a Living God who is the Spirit and Life of all that is, and who is a true Person with an individuality and self-consciousness of his own. . . . the persistence of the main idea in spite of the incoherency of its details, points strongly in the direction of believing that it rests upon a foundation in fact."¹ Of course the fact of the prevalence of this idea is not adduced as in any positive sense demonstrative, yet it should be carefully weighed. It may well be insisted that as the incurable religiousness of man, to repeat again the trite phrase, cannot reasonably be ignored or set aside without consideration, so the conception of transcendence which is inextricably interwoven with the idea of a God to be worshiped gains a certain degree of probability from the very fact of its prevalence, for, as Fiske says, "No ingenuity of argument can bring us to believe that the Infinite Sustainer of the universe will 'put us to permanent intellectual confusion.'"²

Still another argument may be drawn, in part at least, from the sphere of our own consciousness. In ourselves we find the elusive, thus far absolutely undefinable, element or sum of elements which is commonly and recognizably designated as personality. Whatever may be said

use of that truth: "It is, in short, the transcendent God with whom we are concerned in the exercise of religion, for as Mr. Chesterton puts it in his own manner 'that Jones shall worship the god within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones'" (Problems of Immanence, p. 29).

¹ God the Known and the Unknown, pp. 49, 51.

² The Idea of God, p. 138.

about it, we know that we are persons, that is, that we are more than machines however complicated and perfect, that we are able to see the good and desire it, and that we are responsible for moral choices. Now the stream can never rise higher than the fountain, nor the result exceed the cause. It will then be absurd if we do not assert the ethical personality of God, his love of good, and his constantly free choice of this good. If so, we must, as of course has been till of late the universal way of Christian thinkers, correspondingly assert the Divine transcendence; for, in his immanent relation to the universe, personality finds little room for its ethical side, if indeed any at all. In the universe as it exists, subject to its physical laws, there is force but not freedom: it is mighty but not in itself moral. For all spiritual and ethical ends, — for love, for mercy, for justice, even for intelligence in its fullest sense, — we must posit the Divine Transcendence.

Now thus far the argument has been mainly logical and analogical. Can we find any historical facts which to some extent verify, and in so far justify, the psychological analysis and logical inferences which have been suggested? For other purposes an illustration has repeatedly been drawn from the cosmic ether, of which Fiske says: "The fathomless abysses of space . . . are filled with a wonderful substance, unlike any of the forms of matter which we can weigh and measure. A cosmic jelly almost infinitely hard and elastic, it offers at the same time no appreciable resistance to the movements of the heavenly bodies,"¹ and yet, as Dr. Eells has forcibly said: "If we cannot weigh or test or measure this medium, how do we know that it exists? What is the proof of it? 'Because things happen just as if there were such a medium, and there is no other way to account for their happening.' That is the reason which Science gives. Nothing more of proof than that."² Now what may we see which similarly demands and confirms the conception of the Divine Transcendence? Of

¹ *The Idea of God*, pp. 145, 146.

² *Theology at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*, p. 64.

course what is seen always depends much on the eye. There are always those that seeing see and in no wise perceive, be it a sunset, a painting, a virtue, a truth. There are three questions which the writer often insists every man is bound to answer for himself: "Why is the Bible unlike every other book?" "Why was Jesus unlike every other man?" and "How can we explain the passing of the soul from sin to holiness?" Now when these three questions are rationally answered we have found the transcendent divine activities which sufficiently betoken the transcendent God whom we would fain trace. Or, to indicate another sphere where we may find ground for a similar conclusion, we have only to dwell on the significance of the poet's saying that "the history of the world is its judgment," to which the profoundest students of the philosophy of history probably agree. But what must follow from that conviction? Nothing less than the further conviction that there is One on high who in some sense and measure transcends his changeless immanent activities to bring to pass his great ends for the race.

As a last ground of confidence in this truth to be adduced at the present time, it may be remembered that we find God or he finds us and we relate ourselves to him spiritually, for, as Illingworth fairly states the case, "We do not start with a mere conception of God, but with what may practically be called a perception of him,"¹ and if so, then he must be transcendent. Nor is this an appeal to the mystic only. It matters not what intermediaries there may have been in condition fulfilled and blessing bestowed. The extremest sacramentarian who allows only the most distant and indirect approach to God, the extremest Ritschlian, to choose an example of quite another sort, to whose mind the divine blessings are mediated only through the Church, just as much as the extremest mystic, believes that there is one whose presence and power are not limited to the processes of the universe as a whole,

¹ *Divine Transcendence*, p. 38.

but may be as really traced outside them as in them.¹ Whoever cries in faith, "Oh! that I knew where I might find him!", every believer that prayer is answered, every loyal confessor of Jesus as Saviour and Lord, every one who repeats the universal Christian Credo, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," each one, every one, thereby acknowledges his faith, which is our faith too, in the transcendence of him who is also the immanent God. The instincts of the race are confirmed by the experiences of the soul² as by the events of history. If we are ourselves such believers and confessors, we need no further confirmation, for we have known the fellowship of the transcendent God, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

There may well be noted further some of the great facts and truths which are made possible by the Divine Transcendence, but which in turn, grow dim or disappear when

¹The nature of the communion with God when attained is described by H. G. Wells in words that are better worth quoting because he fails to hold so much other truth; and thus his testimony to this truth, if anything, gains weight: "God comes. This cardinal experience is an undoubting, immediate sense of God. It is the attainment of an absolute certainty that one is not alone in oneself. It is as if one was touched at every point by a being akin to oneself, sympathetic, beyond measure wiser, steadfast and pure in aim. It is completer and more intimate, but it is like standing side by side with and touching some one that we love and trust completely" (*God the Invisible King*, p. 29).

²The trustworthiness of this experience is most helpfully confirmed by Illingworth's appeal to "the best and noblest of our race, men and women, who in every age and in every rank and station, and endowed with every degree and kind of intellectual capacity, have lived the lives of saints and heroes, or died the death of martyrs, and furthered by their action and passion, and, as they trusted, by their prayers, the material, moral, social, spiritual welfare of mankind, solely in reliance on their personal intercourse with God, . . . strictly a multitude 'whom no man can number': — competent, capable, sane, of no one type or temperament, as old as authentic history, as numerous as ever in the world to-day; a far more searchingly sifted and universally extended body of observers than can be quoted in behalf of any single scientific fact" (*Personality Human and Divine*, pp. 133, 134).

this truth is overlooked or set aside. For example, it is one of the commonplaces of discussion in the last few years that "the modern man" has been caring little about sin, sin in general, his own sin in particular. If proof is needed, a few possibly familiar quotations will serve. Sir Oliver Lodge said in 1904: "As a matter of fact, the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all,"¹ while still earlier Gladstone is reported to have answered in reply to a question as to what he considered the greatest need of the age, "A sense of sin."² Principal Forsyth has said: "Our talk of sin is palpably ceasing to be the talk of broken and contrite men"; and again, "Our speech of sin has not behind it the note of 'my sin, my sin!'"³ It may equally be said that the appreciation of sin has passed out of the message of the pulpit as well as out of the study of the philosopher, the talk of the street and, as Forsyth implies, the closet of the believer. Paul told the Athenian sages of his time, God "commands men that they should all every where repent"; but how widely or how loudly has that assertion been echoed in the last generation? It is scarcely necessary to add that the idea of penalty has gone of late even more completely than that of sin. It has been most interesting to note the positively hostile attitude, which has been widespread as well, toward anything in any degree resembling punishment. God cannot possibly inflict, the writer has often been assured, any penalty at all beyond the usual, not to say invariable, consequences of sin.

If it were possible to argue conclusively from a single example, it might be worth while to attempt to settle how far Emerson's tendency toward pantheism occasioned or intensified the indifference to sin with which even Morley charged him. How could he who wrote

"If the red slayer think he slays, . . .
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep,"

¹Hibbert Journal, 1904, p. 466. ²Orchard, *Modern Theories of Sin*, p. 10. ³Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 51, 52.

appreciate duly human responsibility and the personal guilt of personal sin before a just God? To consider how far in general, as may have been true in this case, a one-sided emphasis on the Divine Immanence has been responsible for the slackening of the sense of sin, lies somewhat outside the present discussion; but it may safely be asserted that it has been influential, especially when reënforced by another idea, in this case wholly false, namely, that we may infer from the evolutionary process that so-called sin is not morally evil but is merely an inevitable residuum inherited from our beasts of ancestors and in course of elimination. Another aspect of this relation of false theology to bad ethics was suggested during an interview with a justly respected German Professor of Theology in the year 1910. Referring to the widespread controversy of that date as to the historicity of Jesus, he expressed his positive conviction that that campaign, as we may well call it since it corresponded closely in many ways to a well-fought political campaign in this country, was financed by the "Monismus Bund," in order to break down among the people at large the sense of the sanctions of morality. Of course we may not tarry to investigate at all the influence which the monistic philosophy, with its denial of any Divine Transcendence, has exercised on the sense, and consequently on the practice, of sin. It may be that the conspicuous flowering and fruitage of sinfulness which we have witnessed in the war of these terrible years will bring back to the nations a sense of sin and of its exceeding sinfulness.¹

¹A striking example of failure to appreciate the difference between the moral and the immoral is found in the conclusion of Mr. Wells's "First and Last Things" (p. 307): "In the last resort I do not care whether I am seated on a throne or drunk or dying in a kitchen. I follow my leading. In the ultimate I know, though I cannot prove my knowledge in any way whatever, that every thing is right and all things mine." Doubtless this view was intimately related to his failure at that time to recognize the existence of any transcendent God to whom we are responsible. We cannot but wonder whether the author of "Mr. Britling" and

But for the sense of sin to be effective, the idea of a transcendent God must again take its place in the thoughts of men. If immanence be the last and only word of philosophical speculation and religious conviction, then there can be no real sense of sin, for there can be no moral law and no personal responsibility. It cannot plausibly be asserted that hedonism, or even pragmatic eudæmonism, would be a sufficient foundation for ethics; that men would see advantage enough arising from doing duty to make them do it, however unpleasant and difficult. That we should then have only determinism, with utter indifference morally as to whether red slayer or slain, Hun and Turk or Belgian victim and Armenian martyr, is practically demonstrated by the very vogue of that notion, at least in theory. But if as responsible persons we have to do with a God who is in the highest sense personal, beyond and above the phenomena which are bound fast in the net of antecedent and consequent, who has established right and is himself just and righteous to reward or punish, then we have what not only justifies but inexorably demands a sense of sin and the duty of repenting of all sin and forsaking it.

This may suggest, in passing, how little the science and ordinary teaching of ethics have been Christianized. It is often asserted that we can properly have no Christian sciences. Of course sciences which deal only with phenomena cannot be something peculiar which we may call Christian. If Haeckel had kept his atheism out of his biology, it would have been the same as that of the most devout believer. But this is not true of ethics, for it should be insisted that ethics without the positive introduction of ideas which are specifically Christian is "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out. For example, there is needed for ethics the conception of a transcendent God who gave and administers the moral law, to whom we are responsible, against whom and whom only we sin. And let it be added that "God the Invisible King" has learned anything yet on the subject of ethics and sin.

we need also teaching as to the standard and the power and the promise of Christian holiness. To the mind of the writer ethical teaching which is merely philosophical and not also Christian, that is, including the Christian facts and the Christian motives, is sadly ineffective because it tries to mount to the skies using but a single wing.

Philosophy so far as it limits itself to the phenomena furnished by the natural sciences (in which is of course to be included modern psychology) may perhaps need to seek no further into the nature and relations of God than to recognize his immanence: ethics, as has been noted, needs to rest rather on the recognition of this transcendence, and it must now be added that religion, above all, Christianity, finds his transcendent activities in every spiritual relation with which it deals. It is nearly exact to say that immanence is the philosophical conception, transcendence the religious conception.¹ It may be added, that, while without immanence philosophy is incurably lamed, without transcendence religion can make no progress at all. Christianity implies the Divine Transcendence in its every demand and every promise.

If the moral law of ethics and the correlated responsibility of the individual involve diverse activities and relations which outrun immanence, it is still plainer that the religious demand for repentance and the promise of forgiveness on that condition necessarily imply the same. The universe of cause and effect knows no forgiveness, and some extravagant devotees of evolution and immanence have told us over and over that there never is or can be

¹ Aubrey Moore puts the case thus: "Religion demands as the very condition of its existence a God who transcends the universe; philosophy as imperiously requires his immanence in nature. . . . But," he adds, "what we find is, that though Philosophy (meaning by that the exercise of the speculative reason in abstraction from morals and religion), the more fully it realizes the immanence of God, the more it tends to deny the transcendence, religion not only has no quarrel with the doctrine of immanence, but the higher the religion, the more unreservedly it asserts immanence as a truth dear to religion itself" (*Lux Mundi*, pp. 77, 78).

place for repentance, that forgiveness is impossible. They would insist that every man must repeat in helplessness what Pilate said in wilfulness, "What I have written, I have written." Lacking the determinism of Fitzgerald's Omar, they would apply to every man in reference to his own action the declaration,

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

Over against this, Christianity sets the fulfillment of the prophet's promise, "I will forgive their iniquities, and their sin will I remember no more."¹

Forgiveness is the mercy of one who loves; and this may well lead us to the broader and deeper thought of infinite love as the most essential attribute of the eternal God. To be sure, some have been ready to say, "Now abide love, justice, holiness, and the greatest of these is holiness," but I feel sure that sooner or later all will be ready for the Johannine judgment, "The greatest is love, God is love." Yet if we let slip the conception of transcendence, we render it impossible helpfully to assert the eternal love of the Divine Father. Personality will have vanished, and who can say of one whom we do not conceive as personal, "He is love"?

When vanishes from the minds of men the transcendent

¹It is only from Christianity that Mr. Wells, however unconscious of his debt, can have learned his present marvellously evangelical message as to the value of penitence. "You may kill and hang for it, you may rob or rape; the moment you truly repent and set yourself to such atonement and reparation as is possible there remains no barrier between you and God. . . . If you but lift up your head for a moment out of a stormy chaos of madness and cry to him, God is there, God will not fall you. A convicted criminal, frankly penitent, and neither obdurate nor abject, whatever the evil of his yesterdays, may still die well and bravely on the gallows to the glory of God. He may step straight from that death into the immortal being of God" (God the Invisible King, pp. 155, 156).

personality who forgives and ever loves, then vanishes also the correlative faith and love which are of the essence of Christianity, but which are impossible save as they reach out to a transcendent God. We may have confidence in the persistence of the processes of the universe, but such confidence is not faith, for faith is always the reaching out of personal spirit toward personal spirit, and is else impossible, as love is else impossible.

One particular effect which results from the dropping of transcendence from the common thought is the distrust of providence and the consequent disuse of prayer. If God cannot be thought of outside the chain of cause and effect, then there is no loving heart; why should we, how can we, pray? What hope for the guidance and help of the Father's hand which used to be called Providence? If, as many are confident, by the distresses of these fateful, sorrowful years many fearful or crushed souls, lonely in the great universe, have been driven to the prayer of faith, surely the intellectual lesson will follow the spiritual, and men will again believe in the ear that hears prayer, the eye that guides his child, the heart which ever loves the world.

It has already been asserted that the facts of history and the phenomena of spiritual experience properly interpreted verify the truth of the Divine Transcendence. Especially the Incarnation of the Son and the indwelling of the Spirit, when properly interpreted, substantiate the great truth which we are considering. But it is saddening to note how far and how often these facts have been improperly interpreted. In the almost passionate endeavor to make immanence the master key which should turn every lock in the universe, the Incarnation of the Logos and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the believer have both been reduced to the type and measure of the universal immanence of God in man.¹ As

¹ Even Platt, who in his book on Immanence shows much of the honeymoon ardor of a man who has lately wedded an idea, says of Christ: "He stands in a category by Himself. Immanence in

Illingworth well says: "The creed of the Church is utterly and wholly incompatible with any approach to the notion that Jesus Christ revealed the latent divinity of man; in the sense that He exhibits in Himself what men potentially are and may therefore actually become."¹ It must be added that the parallel view as to the nature of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is equally removed from the consentient, essential, and vital faith of the Church Universal.

It is not necessary to expatiate on the seriousness of the consequences for theology of such views as have just been mentioned: theology is a science, and as such can and must take care of itself, and theological error is only indirectly a vital matter. But it must be remarked that for religion the consequences of these views are serious almost beyond measure. It is certainly to be feared that many a man who claims to bring the Christian message to men, has of late been finding less of God outside the meshes of his universe of physical law, and so less of hope and strength for himself and his hearers, than has Mr. Wells in his message of "The Invisible King," defective as we must recognize that that is. The message which will transform the world cannot be merely the recognition of progressive evolution, even though we see there the constant, intelligent power of the immanent Deity. The theologian Frank built his theology largely on the experience of regeneration, saying, "The Christian . . . who has experienced regeneration, and appropriated it in conversion, is absolutely and without exception conscious of the fact that it is the opposite of natural development"²; and on

Him was unique"; and also says elsewhere: "The immanence of God as stated in the Christian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit is unique" (*Immanence and Christian Thought*, pp. 370, 452). If so, it is certainly most unfortunate that he and so many others should classify these unique facts with others confessedly unlike, under the common category of immanence.

¹ *Divine Transcendence*, p. 74.

² *System of Christian Certainty* (Eng. tr.), pp. 307, 308.

this as a premise he builds up his argument for the transcendent and absolute God. The preacher must bring the same message as to forgiveness, redemption, holiness, and service to be ours, the foreknowledge of the Father, the sprinkling of the blood of the Son, the sanctification of the Spirit. If we would measure the divine power for religious uses, its measure will not be found in the might that moves the stars along, but in the working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him to sit at his right hand, in a word, when the transcendent God took a dead man and set him on the throne of the universe. If we want hope, we shall find it in the assurance that by the power of the Spirit we shall be conformed to the image of his Son. In the dimming of the conception of the Divine Transcendence, these great conceptions, and others as well, have also been too much darkened: when retrimmed it shall again shine forth, then they too may shine again for the enlightenment of the world.

But a single thought further will be added. Lately we have heard little of the "Beatific Vision" and of all that this phrase suggests. Men, even Christian teachers, have scoffed at every aspiration beyond what this world might be made to satisfy. Perhaps now that we have learned that the world is still very evil, even if we do not go on to add that "The times are waxing late," men may learn that the soul has aspirations and needs that even a world made fit for democracy cannot satisfy; and they may think again the otherworldly thoughts that of late have been but a mocking, and will be glad again to sing,

"There grief is turned to pleasure—
Such pleasure as below
No human voice may utter,
No human heart can know,
And after fleshly scandal,
And after this world's night,
And after storm and whirlwind,
Is joy and calm and light."

Yes, all this and more. Beyond every other promise and every other hope is one which we can hold only as we think of our Lord as divinely transcendent; and this promise and this hope beyond every other is that "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is,"—and

"Amidst the happy chorus,
A place, however low,
Shall show Him us, and shewing
Shall satiate evermo."

Where in all the history of truth has there ever been a more perfect exemplification of the old apologue of the shield, on one side silver, on the other gold? Men have wrangled because they saw but one side of the truth. God is both immanent and transcendent, "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."