

Paper 196 — The Faith of Jesus

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Most endnotes and Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

Key

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

Sources for Paper 196, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Walter E. Bundy, *The Religion of Jesus* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1928) [Coded as **Bundy1**.]
- (2) Walter E. Bundy, *Our Recovery of Jesus* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1929) [Coded as **Bundy 2.**]
- (3) Edwin **Lewis**, *God and Ourselves: A Plea for the Reality, Adequacy and Availability of God* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1931)
- (4) Rees **Griffiths**, *God in Idea and Experience or The A Priori Elements of the Religious Consciousness* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1931)
- (5) H. A. **Overstreet**, *The Enduring Quest: A Search for a Philosophy of Life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1931)

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II: THE RELIGIOUS FAITH OF JESUS (Bundy1 62)

JESUS' FAITH IN GOD (Bundy1 67)

A **doubt** concerning the existence of God seems never to have crossed Jesus' mind (B1 69).

There is nothing of abstract **intellectualism** in his thought of God (B1 70).

Thus God in the experience of Jesus becomes **purely personal**, and it is just for this reason that he made his great religious contribution (B1 71).

[See B1 71 and 84.]

In Jesus' experience of God we meet two paradoxical elements: on the one hand, his experience of God as **Holy**; on the other hand, his experience of God as **Father** (B1 72).

[God, **the living and loving Father**, is the heart of the religious experience of Jesus...

... The faith in God that came to Jesus by social inheritance he makes his very own in that **the Holy One of Israel** lays hold on the deepest sources of his personal life and in the crucible of his religious experience becomes the Heavenly Father (B1 84-85).]

196:0.1 Jesus enjoyed a sublime and wholehearted **faith in God**.

He experienced the ordinary ups and downs of mortal existence, but he never religiously **doubted** the certainty of God's watchcare and guidance.

His faith was the outgrowth of the insight born of the activity of the divine presence, his indwelling Adjuster.

His faith was neither traditional nor merely **intellectual**;

it was **wholly personal** and purely spiritual.

196:0.2 The human Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful, and good. All these attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as the "will of the Father in heaven."

Jesus' God was at one and the same time **"The Holy One of Israel"** and **"The living and loving Father** in heaven."

God the Father was not wholly original with Jesus, but any casual reader of the Old Testament and the Gospels can see that God the Father in the experience of Jesus is something quite different from anything that we find in the Old Testament.... The high peaks of Old Testament piety that now and again reached up into the experience of God as Father are the constant unbroken level on which Jesus lives and moves and has his religious being (B1 79-80).

Jesus did not resort to faith in God as a man at bay in the world; he did not trudge along under the strain of existence as a man who makes the best of things.

In spite of all the facts to the contrary, Jesus felt the thrill of living life in the uninterrupted presence of the Heavenly Father, and he lived his life as an experiment in faith, not as a compromise with fact (B1 84).

Jesus' faith is triumphant, an unfailing source of personal power that carried him to the conquest of the cross (B1 84).

The concept of God as a Father was not original with Jesus, but he exalted and elevated the idea into a sublime experience

by achieving a new revelation of God and by proclaiming that every mortal creature is a child of this Father of love, a son of God.

196:0.3 Jesus did not cling to faith in God as would a struggling soul at war with the universe and at death grips with a hostile and sinful world; he did not resort to faith merely as a consolation in the midst of difficulties or as a comfort in threatened despair;

faith was not just an illusory compensation for the unpleasant realities and the sorrows of living.

In the very face of all the natural difficulties and the temporal contradictions of mortal existence, he experienced the tranquillity of supreme and unquestioned trust in God and felt the tremendous thrill of living, by faith, in the very presence of the heavenly Father.

And this triumphant faith was a living experience of actual spirit attainment.

Jesus' contribution is not in new thoughts and new teachings about God; it comes rather in the form of his own fresh experience of God.

As Bousset writes, "Never in the life of any one man was God such a living reality as in the life of Jesus" (B1 84-85).

The meaning of God in personal experience is for him the supreme source of religious authority. A faith in God must validate itself in individual experience (B1 90-91).

Religious faith for Jesus was more than rational reflection, more than mystical meditation (B1 91).

In its historical forms the Christian faith becomes fixed and formulated, systematically stated and logically defined. Calm confidence and implicit trust, both purely personal, are supplemented, even supplanted, by doctrine and dogma, creed and confession. In short, faith becomes belief, and the outstanding feature of the faith that followed Jesus is its intellectualism (B1 91).

[Jesus'] faith in God is as unsystematic and spontaneous, as unformulated and organic as the unquestioning attitude of the child toward its father (B1 92).

Jesus' great contribution to the values of human experience was not that he revealed so many new ideas about the Father in heaven, but rather that he so magnificently and humanly demonstrated a new and higher type of *living faith in God*.

Never on all the worlds of this universe, in the life of any one mortal, did God ever become such a *living reality* as in the human experience of Jesus of Nazareth.

196:0.4 In the Master's life on Urantia, this and all other worlds of the local creation discover a new and higher type of religion,

religion based on personal spiritual relations with the Universal Father and wholly validated by the supreme authority of genuine personal experience.

This living faith of Jesus was more than an intellectual reflection, and it was not a mystic meditation.

196:0.5 Theology may fix, formulate, define, and dogmatize faith,

but in the human life of Jesus faith was personal, living, original, spontaneous, and purely spiritual.

Jesus' faith in God was not something that **he held**, but something that **held him** (B1 98).

It is the grip that his experience of God has on the whole of his life that gives his faith a flash and a flare that **sweeps** everything before it (B1 98).

Disappointment, despair, distress, unanswered prayer could not **tear him from his faith**.

He confronts his God with a faith that is absolutely **unflinching**, unreservedly **loyal**.

It is a faith that knows no defeat; it has about it a deliberate and dazzling daring that even **death** can not **daunt** (B1 99).

The fervent faith of the religious genius has often led to a **fanaticism** that has hindered the accomplishment of the very thing that it points out to be accomplished (B1 99).

His faith is to be understood only as the **spontaneous expression of his own personal experience of God** (B1 103).

This faith was not reverence for tradition nor a mere intellectual belief which **he held** as a sacred creed, but rather a sublime experience and a profound conviction which *securely held him*.

His faith was so real and all-encompassing that it absolutely **swept** away any spiritual doubts and effectively destroyed every conflicting desire.

Nothing was able to **tear him away from the spiritual anchorage of this fervent, sublime, and undaunted faith**.

Even in the face of apparent defeat or in the throes of **disappointment** and threatening **despair**, he calmly stood in the divine presence free from fear and fully conscious of spiritual invincibility.

Jesus enjoyed the invigorating assurance of the possession of **unflinching** faith, and in each of life's trying situations he unflinchingly exhibited an unquestioning **loyalty** to the Father's will.

And this superb faith was **undaunted** even by the cruel and crushing threat of an ignominious **death**.

196:0.6 In a religious genius, strong spiritual faith so many times leads directly to disastrous **fanaticism**, to exaggeration of the religious ego,

but it was not so with Jesus.

He was not unfavorably affected in his practical life by his extraordinary faith and spirit attainment because this spiritual exaltation was a wholly unconscious and **spontaneous soul expression of his personal experience with God**.

The faith of Jesus is a fire that consumes, but it is absolutely free from fanaticism (B1 99).

196:0.7 The all-consuming and indomitable spiritual faith of Jesus never became fanatical,

for it never attempted to run away with his well-balanced intellectual judgments concerning the proportional values of practical and commonplace social, economic, and moral life situations. The Son of Man was a splendidly unified human personality; he was a perfectly endowed divine being; he was also magnificently co-ordinated as a combined human and divine being functioning on earth as a single personality. Always did the Master co-ordinate the faith of the soul with the wisdom-appraisals of seasoned experience. Personal faith, spiritual hope, and moral devotion were always correlated in a matchless religious unity of harmonious association with the keen realization of the reality and sacredness of all human loyalties—personal honor, family love, religious obligation, social duty, and economic necessity.

JESUS' FAITH IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Bundy1 104)

196:0.8 The faith of Jesus visualized all spirit values as being found in the kingdom of God;

The Kingdom of God as the Religious Message of Jesus (Bundy1 105)

[contd] The historical message of Jesus may be stated in a single sentence,

therefore he said, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven."

"The kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye." (Mark 1,15.) (B1 105)

The kingdom of God in the message of Jesus is not just a social scheme or system; it is an actual society of God and men, the perfect performance and presence of the divine will on earth as in heaven (B1 110).

Jesus saw in the advanced and ideal fellowship of the kingdom the achievement and fulfillment of the "will of God."

The Kingdom of God as the Religious Outlook of Jesus (Bundy1 116)

“Thy kingdom come,” is the very heart of the *Lord’s Prayer*; all the other petitions are simply elaborations and implications of this one thought (B1 121).

The Kingdom of God as the Religious Cause of Jesus (Bundy1 129)

Jesus devoted himself with an exclusiveness and exhaustiveness to the cause of God in human life and history, to all that religion at its highest and best stands for, that is without parallel in our human history.

Yet he did this without the fury of the fanatic, without the effervescent enthusiasm of the extremist (B1 135).

In keeping with the psychology of religious genius, Jesus trusted his own experience of God as true; upon the basis of this experience he lived his life and performed his work.

In the light of it he believed and felt, thought and taught, preached and prayed.

His personal faith in God and His kingdom gave the whole of his life a unique quality (B1 139).

The very heart of the prayer which he taught his disciples was, “Your kingdom come; your will be done.”

Having thus conceived of the kingdom as comprising the will of God, he devoted himself to the cause of its realization with amazing self-forgetfulness and unbounded enthusiasm.

But in all his intense mission and throughout his extraordinary life there never appeared the fury of the fanatic nor the superficial frothiness of the religious egotist.

196:0.9 The Master’s entire life was consistently conditioned by this living faith, this sublime religious experience.

This spiritual attitude wholly dominated his thinking and feeling, his believing and praying, his teaching and preaching.

This personal faith of a son in the certainty and security of the guidance and protection of the heavenly Father imparted to his unique life a profound endowment of spiritual reality.

III: THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS (Bundy1 141)

THE RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES OF JESUS (Bundy1 146)

Jesus was **conscious of close personal relationship** with the Father; he was on the most intimate terms with the Infinite, but this relationship is always religious. In his experience God remains a religious object because he himself is an experient of God, a religious subject (B1 147).

[Jesus was **God's Galilean** (B1 ix).]

[PREAMBLE] (Bundy1 141)

When the rich young ruler came to him with the question,

“**Good teacher**, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10,17)

his reply is as quick as a flash, an instinctive revolt:

“**Why callest thou me good?** none is good save one, *even* God.” (Mark 10,18.)

This is one of the most **splendid** of all of Jesus' words (B1 145).

THE RELIGIOUS ASPIRATIONS OF JESUS (Bundy1 155)

As Professor Heiler writes, “**The greatest of all offerings** that the religious man brings to his God is the surrender of **his own will** in complete obedience” (B1 157).

And yet, despite this very deep **consciousness of close relationship** with divinity,

this Galilean, **God's Galilean**,

when addressed as **Good Teacher**, instantly replied, “**Why do you call me good?**”

When we stand confronted by such **splendid** self-forgetfulness, **we begin to understand how the Universal Father found it possible so fully to manifest himself to him and reveal himself through him to the mortals of the realms.**

196:0.10 Jesus brought to God, as a man of the realm, **the greatest of all offerings**: the consecration and dedication of **his own will** to the majestic service of doing the divine will.

[contd] In turning to Jesus we find that he interpreted religious living wholly in terms of the divine will (B1 157).

THE RELIGIOUS ACTS OF JESUS (Bundy1 163)

Extracts from Jesus' Prayer-Experience (Bundy1 183)

His teaching on prayer is not the finest flower of his prayer-life. This we shall find in his own prayed prayers.... It is only as we press back beyond teaching to practise and beyond his practise of prayer to his actual prayers that we realize fully what prayer meant for Jesus (B1 188-89).

The Prayers of Jesus (Bundy1 195)

We have no instances of prosaic prayers from Jesus, prayers that were prayed in response to the general conviction that prayer is a religious duty, a practise that should be observed faithfully (B1 201).

On the whole, we may say that prayer for Jesus meant an expression of need, a release of soul,

a relief of inner pressure, conquest over severe subjective struggle, an elevation and enrichment of mind,

a reinforcement and refreshment of spirit,

a clarifying of vision, a freshened functioning of faith, a whetting of will,

discovery and illumination,

Jesus always and consistently interpreted religion wholly in terms of the Father's will.

When you study the career of the Master, as concerns prayer or any other feature of the religious life, look not so much for what he taught as for what he did.

Jesus never prayed as a religious duty.

To him prayer was a sincere expression of spiritual attitude, a declaration of soul loyalty,

a recital of personal devotion, an expression of thanksgiving,

an avoidance of emotional tension, a prevention of conflict, an exaltation of intellection,

an ennoblement of desire, a vindication of moral decision, an enrichment of thought,

an invigoration of higher inclinations,

a consecration of impulse,

a clarification of viewpoint, a declaration of faith, a transcendental surrender of will,

restoration of confidence and courage,

increased consecration and devotion, adjustment and orientation,

a mobilization of personal powers to perform, in short, the energy and power by which to live and work.

Even with an increase of clearness and certainty and of personal power to perform, we do not see a diminishing but an intensification of Jesus' prayer-life. His life ends with an almost awful climax—the cry to God *de profundis* (B1 208).

Not in visions and voices, but in prayer and communion with God—purely religious sources of light and strength—Jesus learned the divine will and found the personal power to perform it (B1 208).

a sublime assertion of confidence, a revelation of courage,

a confession of supreme devotion, the validation of consecration, a technique for the adjustment of difficulties,

and the mighty mobilization of the combined soul powers to withstand all human tendencies toward selfishness, evil, and sin.

He lived just such a life of prayerful consecration to the doing of his Father's will and ended his life triumphantly with just such a prayer.

The secret of his unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God;

and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship—unbroken communion with God—and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices.

IV: THE RELIGIOUS DEMANDS OF JESUS (Bundy1 210)

[PREAMBLE] (Bundy1 210)

Man's religion includes two inseparable elements: reverence and righteousness. These are the two great poles of Jesus' own personal piety; they are the things that matter most in the sight of God and in the lives of men.... This is clearest in that greatest of all words of Jesus, the *Lord's Prayer*, which moves from reverence to righteousness (Matt. 6,9-13.) (B1 217).

THE CHILD MIND (Bundy1 218)

Religion as Elemental Experience (Bundy1 218)

Just what elements in the child constitution appealed to Jesus we are not in a position to say, but to the child mind he promises the highest religious value—the kingdom of God. It is clear that he is not setting up immaturity as a desirable state or virtue (B1 219).

In the child there is an unreserved trust and confidence (B1 223).

His fervent faith in the fundamental goodness of the world bears him over any momentary disturbances and disappointments. The very flood of his faith carries him along. In Jesus we see this same trust and confidence (B1 223).

196:0.11 In the earthly life of Jesus, religion was a living experience,

a direct and personal movement from spiritual reverence to practical righteousness.

The faith of Jesus bore the transcendent fruits of the divine spirit.

His faith was not immature and credulous like that of a child,

but in many ways it did resemble the unsuspecting trust of the child mind.

Jesus trusted God much as the child trusts a parent. He had a profound confidence in the universe—just such a trust as the child has in its parental environment.

Jesus' wholehearted faith in the fundamental goodness of the universe very much resembled the child's trust in the security of its earthly surroundings.

In the child there is a sense of absolute security. There is no **skepticism** that invades his mind and that **inhibits the free flow of his life**. There are no disturbing **doubts**; there are no dogmatic denials that hinder him in the unrestrained living of his life. There are no morbid **fears** that possess him (B1 224).

In the child there is a wholesome and sunny **optimism** (B1 224).

Such are the elemental foundation stones of religious experience: a native and natural simplicity that discovers the **wonder in the world**,

an intense sensitivity and susceptibility to all that experience offers for apprehension and assimilation,

a clear **sense of dependence on the divine**, an unreserved trust and **confidence**, a sense of **absolute security**, a wholesome optimism,

a lack of **pretense** and self-consciousness (B1 237).

He depended on the heavenly Father as a child leans upon its earthly parent, and his fervent faith never for one moment doubted the certainty of the heavenly Father's overcare.

He was not disturbed seriously by **fears, doubts, and skepticism**. Unbelief did not **inhibit the free and original expression of his life**.

He combined the stalwart and intelligent courage of a full-grown man with the sincere and trusting **optimism** of a believing child.

His faith grew to such heights of trust that it was devoid of fear.

196:0.12 The faith of Jesus attained the purity of a child's trust.

His faith was so absolute and undoubting that it responded to the charm of the contact of fellow beings and to the **wonders of the universe**.

His **sense of dependence on the divine** was so complete and so **confident** that it yielded the joy and the assurance of **absolute personal security**.

There was no hesitating **pretense** in his religious experience.

In this giant intellect of the full-grown man the faith of the child reigned supreme in all matters relating to the religious consciousness.

“Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18, 3.) (B1 218)

It is not strange that he once said, “Except you become as a little child, you shall not enter the kingdom.”

[The modern mind is convinced of its maturity; it is clearly conscious of having outgrown the naive, the *childish* and the primitive. Can it become as a little child in its attitude and feel that to it belongs the kingdom of heaven? (B1 229)]

Notwithstanding that Jesus’ faith was *childlike*, it was in no sense *childish*.

DISCIPLESHIP (Bundy1 253)

Religion as Participative Experience (Bundy1 253)

Jesus did not demand that his followers believe *in* him or *on* him, but that they believe *with* him (B1 264).

196:0.13 Jesus does not require his disciples to believe in him but rather to believe *with* him, believe in the reality of the love of God and in full confidence accept the security of the assurance of sonship with the heavenly Father.

The great prophet of religion has but one thing in mind in delivering his great message: That his hearers may share the faith that possesses him (B1 264).

The Master desires that all his followers should fully share his transcendent faith.

Jesus not only challenged his followers to believe *what* he believed but to believe *as* he believed (B1 265).

Jesus most touchingly challenged his followers, not only to believe *what* he believed, but also to believe *as* he believed.

There is just one great demand of Jesus: “Follow me.” It is the only command he ever gave a disciple. This simple command springs from a depth of religious conviction and certainty that is amazing (B1 266).

This is the full significance of his one supreme requirement, “Follow me.”

V: THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY OF JESUS (Bundy1 271)

JESUS—THE AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH (Bundy1 314)

Jesus' contribution to the religion of the race is purely personal. To our human history he gives a **human life religiously lived**, a human experience religiously exalted, enriched and enhanced (B1 316).

Jesus faced decisions and he made them in the most resolute manner. His work demanded deepest determination in the **face of disappointment**, and he was capable of it. His choice of the divine cause required constancy, **unfailing confidence**, **unflinching** fidelity.

It required a will, a wealth of will, to believe what Jesus believed (B1 322).

[The *Apostles' Creed* is easily repeated, but to believe *what* he believed and *as* he believed is a different matter (B1 266).]

The thing that characterizes Jesus from the volitional point of view is the depth of his personal devotion. **Devotion is more than decision and determination.** Decision may be clear-cut, extremely self-exacting. Determination may be undivided, even desperate. But in devotion there is a warmth, a glow, a burst, a fervor that make self-denying decision and determination possible.

196:0.14 Jesus' earthly life was devoted to one great purpose—doing the Father's will, **living the human life religiously** and by faith.

The faith of Jesus was trusting, like that of a child, but it was wholly free from presumption.

He made robust and manly decisions, **courageously faced manifold disappointments**, resolutely surmounted extraordinary difficulties, and **unflinchingly** confronted the stern requirements of duty.

It required a strong will and an **unfailing confidence to believe what Jesus believed and as he believed.**

1. JESUS—THE MAN

196:1.1 Jesus' **devotion** to the Father's will and the service of man was even **more than mortal decision and human determination;**

Devotion as it appears in the religious experience of Jesus means the **enlistment of the whole self**—will, emotion, thought, faith—in the service of something beyond and above self (B1 322-23).

There are very definite religious dangers in deification—dangers destructive of Christianity and the chief cause of the church itself. Absolute deification withdraws Jesus and his religious experience from the ranks of men who most need religion.... The great majority of modern men who feel that religion is practical and who are convinced that religious living is a hard task claiming their all, will never consent to the **removal of Jesus from their ranks**, for their only hope is the conviction and certainty that he is on their side.

We may **take Jesus from the ranks of men** of true and deep religiousness and ascribe to him all possible predicates, but the sense of being led and the courage to follow has departed from men and leaves religiously stranded those who are most in need of religious leadership and command (B1 324).

The modern question concerning Jesus is not whether we may or may not speak of him in the terms of deity and **divinity**. The great question is: How valid is Jesus' religious experience? (B1 327)

it was a **wholehearted consecration of himself** to such an unreserved bestowal of love.

No matter how great the fact of the sovereignty of Michael, you must not take the human Jesus away from men.

The Master has ascended on high as a man, as well as God; he belongs to men; men belong to him.

How unfortunate that religion itself should be so misinterpreted as to **take the human Jesus away from struggling mortals!**

Let not the discussions of the humanity or the **divinity** of the Christ

obscure the saving truth that Jesus of Nazareth was a religious man who, by faith, achieved the knowing and the doing of the will of God;

Who was Jesus? This study has sought to show on the basis of the New Testament, the history and psychology of religion, that Jesus was a religious subject, an experient of religion, **the most religious personality**, the possessor of the richest and most resourceful religious experience of our human history (B1 330).

INTRODUCTION—THE WILL TO RECOVER JESUS (Bundy2 1)

It is now a certainty that we must come to a more intimate, a truer acquaintance with Jesus simply as a human historical figure because of the direct relation he bears to our organized religion and to our personal and practical piety. **Jesus must really live for the church** and the churchman, if he is to make a real contribution to the life of either (B2 6).

he was **the most truly religious man** who has ever lived on Urantia.

196:1.2 The time is ripe to witness the figurative resurrection of the human Jesus from his burial tomb amidst the theological traditions and the religious dogmas of nineteen centuries. Jesus of Nazareth must not be longer sacrificed to even the splendid concept of the glorified Christ.

What a transcendent service if, through this revelation, the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and be presented as the living Jesus to the church that bears his name, and to all other religions!

JESUS AND CHRISTIANITY (Bundy2 6)

The Christian world has seemed possessed of a fear of studying the life of Jesus closely and carefully—a fear for itself... A careful and conscientious study of the life of Jesus may demand **readjustments** in our conception of Christianity and its task in the world; it may require **revisions in our religious thinking**, shifts in our centers of emphasis; it may necessitate a complete reorientation of the church's thought of and for itself; it may make fresh and more difficult demands upon the whole of human life.

If we come to know Jesus intimately, it may mean that our conventional and confessional Christianity—a religion of **respectability**—will be **unmasked** for the empty form that it has become,

and we shall see what it must become—a religion with power to recover, redeem and reconstruct the whole of our human life on the scale and scope of the kingdom of God (B2 11).

JESUS AND THE CHRISTIAN (Bundy2 13)

The following of Jesus means the sharing of his faith (B2 14).

Surely the Christian fellowship of believers will not hesitate to make such **adjustments** of faith and of practices of living as will enable it to “follow after” the Master in the demonstration of his real life of religious devotion to the doing of his Father's will and of consecration to the unselfish service of man.

Do professed Christians fear the **exposure** of a self-sufficient and unconsecrated fellowship of social **respectability** and selfish economic maladjustment?

Does institutional Christianity fear the possible jeopardy, or even the overthrow, of traditional ecclesiastical authority if the Jesus of Galilee is reinstated in the minds and souls of mortal men as the ideal of personal religious living?

Indeed, the social readjustments, the economic transformations, the moral rejuvenations, and the **religious revisions** of Christian civilization would be drastic and revolutionary if the living religion of Jesus should suddenly supplant the theologic religion about Jesus.

196:1.3 **To “follow Jesus” means to personally share his religious faith** and to enter into the spirit of the Master's life of unselfish service for man.

The faithful follower of Jesus must ask and seek to answer for himself in the light of a careful and conscientious study of the New Testament account such questions as these. What were the great religious values to which Jesus committed himself? What were the great religious truths that he lived by? **What were the religious beliefs of Jesus?** ... May we live the religion of Jesus after him? Are we able, if we may?

The answers to these questions are of **paramount importance** to every Christian, but they are questions that demand an intimate acquaintance with his **life** as it is preserved to us in the first three Gospels (B2 14-15).

“The common people heard him gladly.” (Mark 12, 37b.) And to-day they will not hesitate to trust themselves to the religious truths that Jesus lived by (B2 16).

He was one of them, a **layman** called of God from their own ranks (B2 16).

[Jesus lived a life which is a revelation of man submitted to the Father’s will, not an example for any man literally to attempt to follow (194:2.8).]

One of the **most important** things in human living is to find out **what Jesus believed,** to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose.

Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious **life** of Jesus and how he lived it.

196:1.4 **The common people heard Jesus gladly,** and they will again respond to the presentation of his sincere human life of consecrated religious motivation if such truths shall again be proclaimed to the world.

The people heard him gladly because **he was one of them,** an unpretentious **layman;** the world’s greatest religious teacher was indeed a layman.

196:1.5 It should not be the aim of kingdom believers literally to imitate the outward life of Jesus in the flesh

but rather to share his faith; to trust God as he trusted God and to believe in men as he believed in men. Jesus never argued about either the fatherhood of God or the brotherhood of men; he was a living illustration of the one and a profound demonstration of the other.

196:1.6 Just as men must progress from the consciousness of the human to the realization of the divine, so did Jesus ascend from the nature of man to the consciousness of the nature of God. And the Master made this great ascent from the human to the divine by the conjoint achievement of the faith of his mortal intellect and the acts of his indwelling Adjuster. The fact-realization of the attainment of totality of divinity (all the while fully conscious of the reality of humanity) was attended by seven stages of faith consciousness of progressive divinization. These stages of progressive self-realization were marked off by the following extraordinary events in the Master's bestowal experience:

1. The arrival of the Thought Adjuster.
2. The messenger of Immanuel who appeared to him at Jerusalem when he was about twelve years old.
3. The manifestations attendant upon his baptism.
4. The experiences on the Mount of Transfiguration.
5. The morontia resurrection.
6. The spirit ascension.
7. The final embrace of the Paradise Father, conferring unlimited sovereignty of his universe.

2. THE RELIGION OF JESUS

Nearly all **reformations** attempt a return to first things, to beginnings and original sources....

In the modern search for religious certainty the growing inclination, in fact, the determination, is to **get back beyond John, Paul and Mark to Jesus himself**, to test the whole of the Christian faith and experience, not by what has always been believed and held as true, but by Jesus' own personal faith and experience (B2 17-18).

The religion of Jesus must be **preached** and **lived** after him, given a chance to prove its authority and sufficiency in modern life (B2 19).

[Peter unwittingly led off in this mistake, and others followed after him on down to Paul, who created a new religion out of the new version of the good news (194:0.3).]

[Compare with B2 21-32.]

I: THE RECOVERY OF JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (Bundy2 20)

[PREAMBLE] (Bundy2 20)

Within the New Testament it is very rarely indeed that a writer calls the attention of his readers to any religious values expressed in the life of the human historical Jesus (B2 20).

196:2.1 Some day a **reformation** in the Christian church may strike deep enough to **get back to the unadulterated religious teachings of Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith.

You may **preach** a religion *about* Jesus, but, perforce, you must **live** the religion *of* Jesus.

In the enthusiasm of Pentecost, Peter unintentionally inaugurated a new religion, the religion of the risen and glorified Christ.

The Apostle Paul later on transformed this new gospel into Christianity, a religion embodying his own theologic views and portraying his own *personal experience* with the Jesus of the Damascus road. The gospel of the kingdom is founded on the personal religious experience of the Jesus of Galilee; Christianity is founded almost exclusively on the personal religious experience of the Apostle Paul.

Almost the whole of the New Testament is devoted, not to the portrayal of the significant and inspiring religious life of Jesus,

[?]

OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS
(Bundy2 32)

There is not an epistle in the New Testament that comes nearer a reliable reproduction of the personal piety of Jesus than the epistle of James. The religious faith of its author is more closely akin to that of Jesus than the faith of any other New Testament writer outside of the first three Gospel writers, whose picture of Jesus is more strongly Christianized than is the thought of James. In fact, the author turns directly to the human historical Jesus for religious values....

There is another epistolary writer of the New Testament who turns to the personal piety of Jesus for religious values, both for himself and his readers, the unknown author of Hebrews (B2 36-37).

Among the other extra-Gospel books of the New Testament we find the same lack of appreciation of the human life of Jesus as a source of religious values, the same insensitiveness to his religious experience, that we found in the letters of Paul.... In but one outstanding passage is he presented as a religious example that is to be copied after, the classic statement in I Peter 2,21-24... (B2 39-40).

[Paul's use of the words of Jesus is very meager in proportion to the use that he might have made of them (B2 23).]

but to a discussion of Paul's religious experience and to a portrayal of his personal religious convictions.

The only notable exceptions to this statement, aside from certain parts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are the Book of Hebrews and the Epistle of James.

Even Peter, in his writing, only once reverted to the personal religious life of his Master.

The New Testament is a superb Christian document, but it is only meagerly Jesusonian.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL (Bundy2 40)

The great gap which the genuinely religious subject feels between himself and his Maker never appears in the experience of the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel. Not a single expression that comes from his lips betrays the religious fear and awe that we found in certain words of his in the first three Gospels (B2 44).

The Fatherhood of God is no longer religious for Jesus personally [in the Fourth Gospel], for he sets himself on a plane and par with Him,

“I and the Father are one.” (10,30.) (B2 45).

When we turn to the Fourth Gospel in quest of the religious consciousness of Jesus, which he never fails to manifest in the first three Gospels, we find that it simply does not exist.... The reason for this is clear enough: The Johannine Jesus is never really human (B2 48).

196:2.2 Jesus' life in the flesh portrays a transcendent religious growth from the early ideas of primitive awe and human reverence up through years of personal spiritual communion

until he finally arrived at that advanced and exalted status of the consciousness of his oneness with the Father.

And thus, in one short life, did Jesus traverse that experience of religious spiritual progression which man begins on earth and ordinarily achieves only at the conclusion of his long sojourn in the spirit training schools of the successive levels of the pre-Paradise career.

Jesus progressed from a purely human consciousness of the faith certainties of personal religious experience

to the sublime spiritual heights of the positive realization of his divine nature and to the consciousness of his close association with the Universal Father in the management of a universe.

In the Synoptic Gospels we found that a sense of limitation of personal worth was one of the finest features in Jesus' personality,

“Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, *even* God.” (Mark 10,18.)

Over against this natural religious recoil stands the Johannine contrast,

“Which of you convicteth me of sin?” (8,46a.) (B2 50-51)

In the Synoptic Gospels we found that the supreme religious aspiration of Jesus was the discovery and performance of the divine will. This he achieves by a terrific struggle and stress of soul that is upon him from the first day to the last. He is not always clear as to the divine will for himself, and he traverses a painful path on his way to religious certainty (B2 51).

But in the Fourth Gospel [Jesus] knows who he is, all that he has ever been and is to be, from the very outset (B2 54).

He progressed from the humble status of mortal dependence which prompted him spontaneously to say to the one who called him Good Teacher, “Why do you call me good? None is good but God,”

to that sublime consciousness of achieved divinity which led him to exclaim, “Which one of you convicts me of sin?”

And this progressing ascent from the human to the divine was an exclusively mortal achievement. And when he had thus attained divinity, he was still the same human Jesus, the Son of Man as well as the Son of God.

196:2.3 Mark, Matthew, and Luke retain something of the picture of the human Jesus as he engaged in the superb struggle to ascertain the divine will and to do that will.

John presents a picture of the triumphant Jesus as he walked on earth in the full consciousness of divinity.

The great mistake that has been made by those who have studied the Master's life is that some have conceived of him as entirely human, while others have thought of him as only divine. Throughout his entire experience he was truly both human and divine, even as he yet is.

Jesus **has a religion** only in the first three Gospels. The Johannine Jesus has no religion and needs none; in fact, in the Fourth Gospel he **becomes a religion**, a new and true object of religious faith (B2 60).

The Johannine Jesus is the completely deified object of the Christian faith. The Jesus of history is gone for ever, save in name (B2 60).

Every follower of Jesus is convinced that he is **the way** and the truth and the life, and with the Fourth Evangelist he confesses it with a ready and full heart.

But this clear crystallization of Christian conviction is the possession of those alone who have seen in Jesus more than a center of confession, who have **found in him those rich religious resources necessary for the living of life** in the uninterrupted presence of God (B2 61).

THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS (Bundy2 62)

The very nature of the great body of New Testament experience conspired against a turning to the human life of Jesus for religious values. As we see in I Thessalonians 4,15-18 and in many other passages, the earliest Christian experience was keyed to the high pitch of **Jesus' imminent and triumph return**. The great New Testament prayer is,

Marana tha, "Our Lord, come!"

196:2.4 But the greatest mistake was made in that, while the human Jesus was recognized as **having a religion**, the divine Jesus (Christ) almost overnight **became a religion**.

Paul's Christianity made sure of the adoration of the divine Christ, but it almost wholly lost sight of the struggling and valiant human Jesus of Galilee,

who, by the valor of his personal religious faith **and the heroism of his indwelling Adjuster**, ascended from the lowly levels of humanity to become one with divinity,

thus becoming **the new and living way** whereby all mortals may so ascend from humanity to divinity.

Mortals in all stages of spirituality **and on all worlds** may **find in the personal life of Jesus that which will strengthen and inspire them**

as they progress from the lowest spirit levels up to the highest divine values, from the beginning to the end of all personal religious experience.

196:2.5 At the time of the writing of the New Testament, the authors not only most profoundly believed in the divinity of the risen Christ, but they also devotedly and sincerely believed in **his immediate return** to earth to consummate the heavenly kingdom.

In such an elevated and expectant atmosphere it is really surprising that any real interest in the human historical Jesus survived. How poor indeed was the prosaic story of the prophet of Nazareth in comparison with the glorious future of the Son of God! (B2 63)

This is clear in the superscription which Mark, the earliest of the Synoptists, sets at the head of his work. (1,1.) In this title it is quite clear that Mark is not offering a life of Jesus and that his primary interest in writing his work is not biographical. He does not begin with the title: "The Biography of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." But at the head of his work he sets a statement that indicates its content, character and purpose:

"The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (B2 64-65).

[Compare with B2 59.]

This strong faith in the Lord's immediate return had much to do with the tendency to omit from the record those references which portrayed the purely human experiences and attributes of the Master.

The whole Christian movement tended away from the human picture of Jesus of Nazareth toward the exaltation of the risen Christ, the glorified and soon-returning Lord Jesus Christ.

196:2.6 Jesus founded the religion of personal experience in doing the will of God and serving the human brotherhood; Paul founded a religion in which the glorified Jesus became the object of worship and the brotherhood consisted of fellow believers in the divine Christ.

In the bestowal of Jesus these two concepts were potential in his divine-human life, and it is indeed a pity that his followers failed to create a unified religion which might have given proper recognition to both the human and the divine natures of the Master as they were inseparably bound up in his earth life and so gloriously set forth in the original gospel of the kingdom.

III: THE RECOVERY OF JESUS' SOCIAL MESSAGE (Bundy2 139)

THE MORE DRASTIC DEMANDS OF JESUS (Bundy2 139)

[contd] **Some of Jesus' demands** strike the modern mind as feelingless, unnecessarily unreasonable, a good example of which is his word to the three would-be disciples (Luke 9,57-62.) ...

Others of Jesus' words strike the modern mind as impossible, even fanatical [(Mark 9, 43-47.)] ...

At such words the modern mind has taken unnecessary offense because it has sought to fit them into our modern situation rather than understand them in the light of the situation in which Jesus found himself. These drastic demands are not to be isolated; they must be approached in the light of the total temper of Jesus' mind and his experience of religion. At such a point it is especially clear that we may not separate the teaching from the teacher.

These words of Jesus are primarily autobiographical and in substance they amount to **personal religious confessions** (B2 139-41).

In particular they reflect more of **the demands which he placed upon himself than they do of his requirements of others** (B2 141).

196:2.7 You would be neither shocked nor disturbed by **some of Jesus' strong pronouncements** if you would only remember that he was the world's most wholehearted and devoted religionist.

He was a wholly consecrated mortal, unreservedly dedicated to doing his Father's will.

Many of his apparently hard sayings were more of a **personal confession of faith** and a pledge of devotion than commands to his followers.

And it was this very singleness of purpose and unselfish devotion that enabled him to effect such extraordinary progress in the conquest of the human mind in one short life.

Many of his declarations should be considered as a confession of **what he demanded of himself rather than what he required of all his followers.**

Both passages cited above are clear pictures of Jesus' own complete consecration to the kingdom of God; they reflect his own utter abandonment, the depth of his own personal devotion, to the divine cause which he champions.... Jesus often speaks and acts as one who has burned all bridges behind him, as one for whom there is no turning back (B2 141).

THE "SOCIAL TEACHINGS" OF JESUS
(Bundy2 153)

On the basis of a word like Luke 6,20b we may not conclude that Jesus regarded poverty as a virtue,

"Blessed *are* ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God."

In general, the poor were the pious of Jesus' day.

But in our day poverty has become an even greater source of temptation than wealth.... Jesus' judgment against poverty to-day would be as quick and sharp and decisive as it was against the wealth of his day (B2 155).

The greater and nobler uses of wealth to-day were unknown to Jesus, and he would be as prompt now in his commendation as then in his condemnation (B2 155).

In his devotion to the cause of the kingdom, Jesus burned all bridges behind him; he sacrificed all hindrances to the doing of his Father's will.

196:2.8 Jesus blessed the poor because they were usually sincere and pious;

he condemned the rich because they were usually wanton and irreligious.

He would equally condemn the irreligious pauper

and commend the consecrated and worshipful man of wealth.

THE RELIGIOUS REFERENCE (Bundy2 163)

For the World (Bundy2 163)

Jesus lifts the burden of natural existence from men's shoulders, which is the first step in the solution of all social problems. The world is God's world; nothing in it is naturally or inherently evil.... In the world men may feel that they are at home; in it they are not to lead a timid existence under the constant dread of taboo, but they may face the world and its problems in the clear consciousness that the heavenly Father notes even the fall of the sparrow (B2 167).

This idealistic view of this realistic order of things is the organic issue of Jesus' experience of God (B2 168).

For Humankind (Bundy2 168)

He shared nothing of that Christian pessimism concerning humankind that has run like a strong stream from the thought of Paul down to the present. Such a low estimate of the human condition as Paul holds of his own (Rom. 7,14-25) has no parallel in the thought of Jesus (B2 170).

[See next pg.]

He shares nothing of the moral skepticism that we find in the majority of the New Testament epistles (B2 170).

Jesus' estimate of humankind is positive, not negative (B2 170).

196:2.9 Jesus led men to feel at home in the world; he delivered them from the slavery of taboo and taught them that the world was not fundamentally evil.

He did not long to escape from his earthly life; he mastered a technique of acceptably doing the Father's will while in the flesh.

He attained an idealistic religious life in the very midst of a realistic world.

Jesus did not share Paul's pessimistic view of humankind.

The Master looked upon men as the sons of God and foresaw a magnificent and eternal future for those who chose survival.

He was not a moral skeptic;

he viewed man positively, not negatively.

Jesus worked on the assumption that men are **weak rather than wicked** (B2 171).

Jesus found men distracted and **distraught rather than depraved** and doomed. They are strangers to God rather than deliberate sinners against Him.

They are all His children, some obedient, some disobedient, but it is not the will of the Father than any of them should perish (B2 171).

He gives to men not a low but a **high estimate of themselves**. The sons of men may become the **sons of God** (B2 172).

[contd] It was **this exalted estimate of men** that led Jesus to **consume himself in the service of humankind** (B2 172).

It is this sense of the infinite worth of the finite that is behind Jesus' great social sentence, the **Golden Rule** (B2 172).

Jesus demanded a cultivation of human character that corresponds to that of the Divine, for in his religious outlook men are destined for God's society. Here again Jesus simply staggers us with his **tremendous faith** in our humankind (B2 173).

[Jesus gives us no theory of the state, no international program, no detailed solutions for our racial and economic conflicts.... Jesus simply directs men toward the kingdom of God as the superlative hope of social experience (B2 190-91).]

He saw most men as **weak rather than wicked**,

more distraught than depraved.

But no matter what their status, **they were all God's children** and his brethren.

196:2.10 He taught men to place a **high value upon themselves** in time and in eternity.

Because of **this high estimate which Jesus placed upon men**, he was willing to **spend himself in the unremitting service of humankind.**

And it was **this infinite worth of the finite** that made the golden rule a vital factor in **his religion.**

What mortal can fail to be uplifted by the **extraordinary faith** Jesus has in him?

196:2.11 Jesus offered no rules for social advancement; his was a religious mission, and religion is an exclusively individual experience. The ultimate goal of society's most advanced achievement can never hope to transcend Jesus' brotherhood of men based on the recognition of the fatherhood of God. The ideal of all social attainment can be realized only in the coming of this divine kingdom.

3. THE SUPREMACY OF RELIGION

[Jesus' message, as he preached it and lived it in his day, was an **effective solvent for man's spiritual difficulties** in that day of its statement (194:2.1).]

196:3.1 Personal, spiritual religious experience is an **efficient solvent for most mortal difficulties**; it is an effective sorter, evaluator, and adjuster of all human problems. Religion does not remove or destroy human troubles, but it does dissolve, absorb, illuminate, and transcend them. True religion unifies the personality for effective adjustment to all mortal requirements.

IX: THE JUSTIFICATION OF FAITH (Lewis 265)

THE ARGUMENT (Lewis 266)

The step from the **"It" of logic** to the **"He" of religion** is admittedly a step of faith, but in view of its total concomitants it is every way justifiable (L 266).

Religious faith—the **positive leading of the indwelling divine presence**—unfailingly enables the God-knowing man to bridge that gulf existing between the intellectual **logic which recognizes the Universal First Cause as *It*** and those positive affirmations of the soul which aver this **First Cause is *He***, the heavenly Father of Jesus' gospel, the personal God of human salvation.

Reality is distinguishable as **Fact, Idea, and Relation**, and there is that in human nature which answers to all three (L 266).

196:3.2 There are just three elements in universal reality: **fact, idea, and relation.**

Fact and Idea ... do not exhaust reality. The picture is complete only as we add what we mean by the word "Relation." Reality is characterized by a certain "togetherness" which has led to the recognition of the fundamental place held by the law of interrelation and interdependence. We speak of the **truth** of things: by it we mean that orderly functioning of the whole which makes the whole dependable (L 273).

The religious consciousness identifies these realities as science, philosophy, and **truth.**

Philosophy would be inclined to view these activities as reason, wisdom, and faith—physical reality, intellectual reality, and spiritual reality.

What for convenience sake we describe as the physical universe and the spiritual universe—Fact and Idea, Thing and Meaning—will be parts of one and the same whole of reality. That oneness—and this is the point we were making—necessarily involves Relation (L 284).

We are in the habit of designating these realities as thing, meaning, and value.

196:3.3 The progressive comprehension of reality is the equivalent of approaching God. The finding of God, the consciousness of identity with reality, is the equivalent of the experiencing of self-completion—self-entirety, self-totality. The experiencing of total reality is the full realization of God, the finality of the God-knowing experience.

“Man *is* what he *eats*,” was at once the brightest and the most stupid saying of a new defunct materialism. Let us, rather, say that man is what he most deeply wants to be. He is justified by faith. What he would fain have true yields his own measure (L 287).

196:3.4 The full summation of human life is the knowledge that man is educated by fact, ennobled by wisdom, and saved—justified—by religious faith.

There is a certainty about the religious experience itself which can never be transferred to its alleged cause.... It is a moral certainty in distinction from a logical certainty, but if we are to put an imposing and crippling interrogation mark after all our other moral certainties, leaving only our logical certainties to be unchallenged, how extensive would the area of our confidence be? (L 290-91)

196:3.5 Physical certainty consists in the logic of science; moral certainty, in the wisdom of philosophy; spiritual certainty, in the truth of genuine religious experience.

VII: EVALUATION AND RELIGION
(Lewis 197)

196:3.6 The mind of man can attain high levels of spiritual insight and corresponding spheres of divinity of values because it is not wholly material. There is a spirit nucleus in the mind of man—the Adjuster of the divine presence.

[THE CHAPTER PROPER] (Lewis 199)

[contd] We have been saying that mind consists in

a power of interpretation and a power of fellowship.

There are three separate evidences of this spirit indwelling of the human mind:

196:3.7 1. Humanitarian fellowship—love.

The purely animal mind may be gregarious for self-protection, but only the spirit-indwelt intellect is unselfishly altruistic and unconditionally loving.

196:3.8 2. Interpretation of the universe—wisdom.

Only the spirit-indwelt mind can comprehend that the universe is friendly to the individual.

To this is now to be added a power of evaluation (L 199).

196:3.9 3. Spiritual evaluation of life—worship.

Only the spirit-indwelt man can realize the divine presence and seek to attain a fuller experience in and with this foretaste of divinity.

There are those who claim that values are a purely human creation, in that they depend wholly upon man and have no meaning, even no existence, apart from him (L 201).

196:3.10 The human mind does not create real values; human experience does not yield universe insight.

On the other hand, Sorley and A. E. Taylor regard values not as human creations but as human discoveries (L 201).

We learn of their existence by the very process and experience of life itself. This, of course, is the way in which all absolutes are learned; but there is an element of freedom and choice respecting [moral absolutes] which does not hold respecting [physical and mental absolutes] (L 202).

The moral order is as real as any other order: as was suggested above, it may even be the fundamental order, and all other orders simply its derivative. Be that as it may, a man knows that in escaping the judgment of his fellows he does not escape self-judgment; and he knows that when he turns a deaf ear to that self-judgment—as he may and does—the judgment still stands (L 204-05).

Values, whether we characterize them as social, or as moral, or as religious, may properly enough be required to have temporal sanctions, but not to have temporal origins. And even the sanctions must eventually be seen to be more than temporal (L 207).

Concerning insight, the recognition of moral values and the discernment of spiritual meanings, all that the human mind can do is to discover, recognize, interpret,

and choose.

196:3.11 The moral values of the universe become intellectual possessions by the exercise of the three basic judgments, or choices, of the mortal mind:

1. Self-judgment—moral choice.
2. Social-judgment—ethical choice.
3. God-judgment—religious choice.

Morals have plainly enough undergone a historical evolution, but the evolution has been only the more complete recognition and operation of the moral principle. If it comes to that, evolution of any sort is not creation but revelation. Such popular phrases as “creative evolution” and “emergent evolution” are, as a matter of fact, philosophically misleading, whatever may have been the original intention of Bergson and Lloyd Morgan.... The theist would better use the phrase “revelational evolution” (L 210).

[The deepest meaning of the universe is revealed in a moral victory, in religious experience. The final revelation of the being and the character of God is in the inner sanctuary of man. There dwells the true Shekinah (L 214).]

196:3.12 Thus it appears that all human progress is effected by a technique of conjoint *revelational evolution*.

196:3.13 Unless a divine lover lived in man, he could not unselfishly and spiritually love. Unless an interpreter lived in the mind, man could not truly realize the unity of the universe. Unless an evaluator dwelt with man, he could not possibly appraise moral values and recognize spiritual meanings. And this lover hails from the very source of infinite love; this interpreter is a part of Universal Unity; this evaluator is the child of the Center and Source of all absolute values of divine and eternal reality.

196:3.14 Moral evaluation with a religious meaning—spiritual insight—connotes the individual’s choice between good and evil, truth and error, material and spiritual, human and divine, time and eternity. Human survival is in great measure dependent on consecrating the human will to the choosing of those values selected by this spirit-value sorter—the indwelling interpreter and unifier.

VIII: RELIGION AND REVELATION (Lewis 229)

THE ARGUMENT (Lewis 230)

Religion is therefore at once discovery and revelation—**discovery from the human side, revelation from the divine side** (L 230).

[THE CHAPTER PROPER] (Lewis 231)

[Religion] sometimes creates conditions so intolerable that eventually men arise in their might and sweep it away—or think they do.

When religion is attacked on the ground of its being tyrannical and obscurant, the attack itself is made in the name of that very spirit which religion is properly intended to produce and foster. Religion, therefore, **can never for long stay** submerged. To say nothing else, the men who think they have disposed of it are succeeded by another **generation** and the new generation finds itself confronted with the same problems, asking the same questions, impelled by the same deep needs, seeking the same satisfactions, which have been among the reasons for religion at any other time.... As between religion and irreligion, it is religion that is “natural” to man, and irreligion that is the result of **oversophistication** (L 239-40).

Personal religious experience consists in two phases: **discovery in the human mind** and **revelation by the indwelling divine spirit**.

Through **oversophistication** or as a result of the irreligious conduct of professed religionists, a man, or even a **generation** of men, may elect to suspend their efforts to discover the God who indwells them; they may fail to progress in and attain the divine revelation.

But such attitudes of spiritual nonprogression cannot long persist because of the presence and influence of the indwelling Thought Adjusters.

[R]eligion involves a venture whose significance lies just in the fact that it is made, and he who makes it is most sure of what it brings to pass. So that religion is empiric after all, only it is a higher empiricism than that which consists in the application of “instruments of precision” for measuring what is obtained.

You cannot put inward peace under a microscope. You cannot weigh a prayer. You cannot measure moral certainty (L 243).

In true Quaker fashion, Eddington the scientist insists on the reality of man’s experience of “the divine indwelling” (L 243).

The Sublimity which Hegel said was the characteristic of the Hebrew religion, the Beauty which he said was the characteristic of Greek religion, the Conformity which he said was the characteristic of Roman religion—did they not mean something for the men who practiced them?

If we add that Sanctity is the characteristic of the Christian religion, will anyone dare to affirm that there have been no saints—saints in the New Testament sense—to demonstrate that sanctity is a possible attainment in this present world of flesh and blood, here

“In the very world which is the world
Of all of us—the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all” (L 247).

196:3.15 This profound experience of the reality of the divine indwelling forever transcends the crude materialistic technique of the physical sciences.

You cannot put spiritual joy under a microscope; you cannot weigh love in a balance; you cannot measure moral values; neither can you estimate the quality of spiritual worship.

196:3.16 The Hebrews had a religion of moral sublimity; the Greeks evolved a religion of beauty;

Paul and his conferees founded a religion of faith, hope, and charity.

Jesus revealed and exemplified a religion of love: security in the Father’s love, with joy and satisfaction consequent upon sharing this love in the service of the human brotherhood.

Religion is an invasion from without as well as a felt response to an approach (L 255).

It is all very well for the skeptic to say that religion is purely subjective—a self-contained circle of ideas. What he needs to consider is the fact that again and again men have found themselves mastered by a conviction of which they could give no account, and from which they could not escape, try how they would (L 256).

If there is a “real” sunset, it is obvious that the only way men can know it is by an experience which is essentially subjective (L 257).

196:3.17 Every time man makes a reflective moral choice, he immediately experiences a new divine invasion of his soul.

Moral choosing constitutes religion as the motive of inner response to outer conditions.

But such a real religion is not a purely subjective experience.

It signifies the whole of the subjectivity of the individual engaged in a meaningful and intelligent response to total objectivity—the universe and its Maker.

196:3.18 The exquisite and transcendent experience of loving and being loved is not just a psychic illusion because it is so purely subjective. The one truly divine and objective reality that is associated with mortal beings, the Thought Adjuster, functions to human observation apparently as an exclusively subjective phenomenon.

Man’s contact with the highest objective reality, God, is only through the purely subjective experience of knowing him, of worshipping him, of realizing sonship with him.

We conclude that religious experience, like all other valid experience, is **not a monologue** but a dialogue. It is not only a revelation of something within man: it is also a revelation of something without him (L 259).

[[Religion] is the supreme achievement of the **divinely** conducted dialectic of man's progress (L 259).]

Step by step [man] is led on, by the same law of "reach and grasp," always desiring that which is higher and **better**. But the higher implies a Highest, the better implies a **Best**. At last he sees it. In the heart's desire for the Highest and Best, and in the mind's power to adumbrate it, and in the will's power to pursue it, and in the impulse of his whole nature to respond to it, he sees that Highest and Best self-revealed according to the necessary law of human experience, and knows it for a personal possession (L 260).

I: INTRODUCTORY (**Griffiths 1**)

Religion remains religion still, and no interest in the "values" will ever provide a **substitute** wherein man's whole self can find full and satisfying expression. The **service of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty** does not and cannot bring the Soul to its final rest, though these may help it upon its way (G 7).

III: RELIGION AS **PROJECTION** (Griffiths 37)

196:3.19 True religious worship is **not a futile monologue** of self-deception.

Worship is a personal communion with that which is **divinely** real, with that which is the very source of reality.

Man aspires by worship to be **better** and thereby eventually attains the **best**.

196:3.20 The idealization and attempted **service of truth, beauty, and goodness** is not a **substitute** for genuine religious experience—spiritual reality.

Psychology and idealism are not the equivalent of religious reality.

The **projections** of the human intellect may indeed originate false gods—

[d) A fourth way of explaining religion is to say that the gods were made by man in his own image. The ideas of religion are but man's ideas about himself and his own needs thrown out upon objective reality (G 31).]

gods in man's image—

but the true God-consciousness does not have such an origin. The God-consciousness is resident in the indwelling spirit.

Remember that it is *for the consciousness of the individual that the projected object exists*, and in a form which he believes to be objective.... Were it otherwise, the world would be fuller than it is of phantasies more grotesque and unnatural than all the mythologies of antiquity (G 45).

Many of the religious systems of man come from the formulations of the human intellect, but the God-consciousness is not necessarily a part of these grotesque systems of religious slavery.

IV: RELIGION AS IDEAL CONSTRUCTION (Griffiths 56)

[According to the Idealistic theory,] God was invented to explain things, and to make life a little more tolerable (G 57).

196.3.21 God is not the mere invention of man's idealism;

he is the very source of all such superanimal insights and values.

We are thus driven to conclude that, if God is a mere hypothesis, fashioned to round off, along three separate strands so to speak, the broke arc of secular experience, the God thus conceived is totally inadequate for religion (G 73).

God is not a hypothesis formulated to unify the human concepts of truth, beauty, and goodness;

he is the personality of love from whom all of these universe manifestations are derived.

We may be told that what is meant by attributing the rise of religion to human reflection and the God-hypothesis, is that what at first was no more than a random idea, a mere notion, based on quite irreligious grounds, later became a fact of direct experience.... Man the scientist, the moralist, the artist, contemplating his irreligious world, was suddenly transformed into a mystic. He had made a lucky hit. On the ladder of his knowledge he ascended to the very gates of Paradise and was precipitated into the divine presence (G 73).

The truth, beauty, and goodness of man's world are unified by the increasing spirituality of the experience of mortals ascending toward Paradise realities.

The unity of truth, beauty, and goodness can only be realized in the spiritual experience of the God-knowing personality.

V: FROM MORALITY TO RELIGION (Griffiths 96)

[contd] In order to make good the contention that religion springs from its own root within experience, it is necessary to review the attempts made to derive it from or base it upon other sources within self-consciousness....

... Professor Baillie ... argues very powerfully and eloquently for a philosophy of religion based on moral experience. "What we have to do," he says, "is to trace, in as exact and careful a way as we can, the process by which faith in God comes to birth in the soul of man, and the first point to be firmly established is that the process begins from the awareness of our human values, that is to say, from the moral consciousness as such..." (G 96-97).

196.3.22 Morality is the essential pre-existent soil of personal God-consciousness, the personal realization of the Adjuster's inner presence, but such morality is not the source of religious experience and the resultant spiritual insight.

[See G 103-04.]

The ethical nature of ultimate reality, the fact of a Lawgiver behind the Law, the existence of a Being who takes sides in man's moral struggle, are clearly affirmations of the specifically religious mind (G 102).

Professor Baillie even admits that what religion does is to give a deeper meaning to duty, a deeper significance to our values; but if so, religion must be a more fundamental feature of consciousness than morality and must spring from a supra-moral root in human nature (G 105).

In the words of Professor Galloway, "On two grounds the ethical consciousness requires to be supplemented and completed: it can neither guarantee the persistence of its values, nor can it state the ultimate Good in a finally satisfying form" (G 106).

The moral nature is superanimal but subspiritual. Morality is equivalent to the recognition of duty, the realization of the existence of right and wrong. The moral zone intervenes between the animal and the human types of mind as morontia functions between the material and the spiritual spheres of personality attainment.

196:3.23 The evolutionary mind is able to discover law, morals, and ethics;

but the bestowed spirit, the indwelling Adjuster, reveals to the evolving human mind the lawgiver, the Father-source of all that is true, beautiful, and good;

and such an illuminated man has a religion and is spiritually equipped to begin the long and adventurous search for God.

196:3.24 Morality is not necessarily spiritual; it may be wholly and purely human,

albeit real religion enhances all moral values, makes them more meaningful.

Morality without religion fails to reveal ultimate goodness, and it also fails to provide for the survival of even its own moral values.

Religion provides for the enhancement, glorification, and assured survival of everything morality recognizes and approves.

196:3.25 Religion stands above science, art, philosophy, ethics, and morals, but not independent of them. They are all indissolubly interrelated in human experience, personal and social. Religion is man's supreme experience in the mortal nature, but finite language makes it forever impossible for theology ever adequately to depict real religious experience.

XIII: BEYOND THE NARROWLY HUMAN: THE CORRELATION OF PLANES OF REALITY (Overstreet 173)

Tantalus (Overstreet 179)

On his human plane man is inevitably shut out from the realization of significances that are beyond him. But there is on his plane the teasing reminder of these. They are, on his level, the projection of reality that is beyond that level. Man, then, is apparently at his highest as he responds to this reminder, as he seeks what he never can quite compass. It is in this—everlastingly fraught though it may be with defeat—that the essential drive of his life lies. For despite all the ultimate frustrations, he goes on turning his defeats into new desires and new determinations (O 179-80).

XIV: LOVE AND THE WORLDLY WISE: A MODERN EVALUATION (Overstreet 181)

[contd] Love has come upon dark days. It used to be regarded as the goal of all our questing, the consummate type of human experience (O 181).

196:3.26 Religious insight possesses the power of turning defeat into higher desires and new determinations.

Love is the highest motivation which man may utilize in his universe ascent.

Love as a Disease (Overstreet 181)

[contd] As a disease, love is variously described....

... An instance of such a description is found in Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*. One recalls the almost incredible infatuation of Philip for the waitress, Mildred. Even while he is passionately following her about, he hates her and detests her, but he cannot escape from his degrading enslavement.... What is this monstrous compulsion, he asks, that makes wreckage even of the best? What is this insanity in life? He sees **no beauty** in it. He sees in it **only** a form of human bondage (O 181-82).

But love, **divested of truth, beauty,** and goodness, is **only** a sentiment,

Nature the Deceiver (Overstreet 182)

[contd] Again, there is the view that love is one of nature's neat tricks. Nature has important work to do. In order to get it done she must put burdens on us.... They run variously from suffering agonizing pains in childbirth to clipping the wings of ambition and settling down to making provision for home and provender. Nature is apparently too subtle and too wise directly to bid us do these things, so she casts over us a veil of **illusion** (O 182-83).

a philosophic distortion, a psychic **illusion**, a spiritual deception.

The Ladder of Love (Overstreet 191)

[See O 191.]

Love must always be redefined on successive levels of morontia and spirit progression.

XV: HEARTENING FALSEHOODS:
THE REALITY OF POSSIBILITY
(Overstreet 196)

Possibilities as Realities (Overstreet 206)

[contd] All art, is, indeed an escape. It is an escape from immediate, factual, this-minute reality. It is an escape from confinement to a small, literal, present perception of life. It is an escape *from*.

But is it not also an escape *into*? (O 206)

Possibilities, in short, are realities. Perhaps, indeed, they are the most important realities. If so, then the type of mind which disregards possibilities and holds itself rigorously to the present facts is a profoundly untrue kind of mind (O 206).

Commerce with the More Potent (Overstreet 206)

Doubtless it has been this drive toward a kind of suspected greatness in himself that has made man the advancing creature he has been. Was it a lie that urged him on? Or was it the half-conscious perception of the reality of his own inherent possibilities? (O 207)

196:3.27 Art results from man's attempt to escape from the lack of beauty in his material environment;

it is a gesture toward the morontia level.

Science is man's effort to solve the apparent riddles of the material universe. Philosophy is man's attempt at the unification of human experience. Religion is man's supreme gesture, his magnificent reach for final reality, his determination to find God and to be like him.

196:3.28 In the realm of religious experience, spiritual possibility is potential reality.

Man's forward spiritual urge is not a psychic illusion.

The *Truth of Man's Romancing* (Overstreet 208)

[contd] And so with all the rest of man's romancing. It has indeed, been foolish and immature and sentimental and naïve. But all of it, whatever the misconceptions, has revealed his stubborn holding to a basic fact...

Illusion, then, of the kind we have been describing, is man's faith in his unrealized self. It is his faith and his power. Take it from him, and he returns to the brute. Let him refine it and exalt it, and he goes his way toward what is greater than himself (O 208-09).

XVII: THE HEROISM OF UNCOMMON SENSE: A DOUBT ABOUT PESSIMISM (Overstreet 223)

[contd] "They went forth to battle but they always fell.

Their might was not the might of lifted spears.
Over the battle-clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well.
Their wreaths are willows and their tribute,
tears.

Their names are old sad stories in men's ears.
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell" (O 223).

As the contemporary pessimists miss the reality of the type of heroism which our poem describes, so do the contemporary success-philosophers. They seem not to have learned that life may be too great to be successful, that their kind of success can be purchased only shutting the eyes to the distant and grasping what is near. Worldly wisdom would indeed seem to dictate the latter course. No doubt all the above mentioned men were, in this sense, stupid men: Socrates was stupid, so was Christ, and so was Giordano Bruno (O 225).

All of man's universe romancing may not be fact, but much, very much, is truth.

196:3.29 Some men's lives are too great and noble to descend to the low level of being merely successful.

Our highest admirations, then, would seem to indicate that the veritable way of life is not the way of mere **adaptation to environment**. That is a biological description which is quite inadequate for human life (O 230).

The true way is rather one of projecting oneself into a yet unrealized order of values. When that is done, the **present existence** is placed in a larger setting. It achieves the dignity of a more comprehensive understanding (O 230).

XVIII: OUR EMERGING LIFE: THE DIRECTION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (Overstreet 233)

The Logic of It All (Overstreet 244)

The foundation principle of the world, then, would indeed seem to be **love**, if we mean by love the urge to identify oneself with that which is beyond oneself and alluringly greater than oneself. Whether it be in the quest of **the True, or the Beautiful, or the Good**, in the creative passion of personal love, or in those high heroisms in which man yields himself in an utter devotion, the authentic movement is toward a oneness with what is loved.

And whenever that movement is strong in him, there is no sense of deadness; there is a sense, rather, of kinship with what is far more **living**. Thus the most significant movement of man's experience would seem to be away from relative death to that which is more enduringly and veritably alive (O 247).

[Preamble] (Overstreet 233)

[contd] **Evolution**, we believe, is an ongoing process. But if so, then development that is of evolutionary moment must be proceeding within ourselves (O 233).

The animal must **adapt itself to the environment**,

but the religious man transcends his environment and in this way escapes the limitations of the **present material world** through this insight of divine love.

This concept of **love** generates in the soul of man that superanimal effort to find **truth, beauty, and goodness**;

and when he does find them, he is glorified in their embrace; he is consumed with the desire to **live** them, to do righteousness.

196:3.30 Be not discouraged; human **evolution** is still in progress,

and the revelation of God to the world, in and through Jesus, shall not fail.

The Logic of It All (Overstreet 244)

196:3.31 The great challenge to modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Monitor that dwells within the human mind.

Man has already evolved to a plane of life above the inorganic, the plant, and the animal. He has achieved self-consciousness. It is wholly conceivable that he is to advance beyond the limited and inevitably distorting status of mere self-consciousness.

Man's greatest adventure in the flesh consists in the well-balanced and sane effort to advance the borders of self-consciousness

out through the dim realms of embryonic soul-consciousness in a wholehearted effort to reach the borderland of spirit-consciousness—contact with the divine presence.

Such an advance, of course, will not mean the supersession of the previous stages. For even at the self-conscious stage man still retains his earlier powers of perception and simple sensitivity. These, so to speak, have been “lifted up” to the higher level of self-consciousness. So, likewise, we may suppose that eventually, in far greater fulness than is now true among us, man's self-consciousness will be lifted up to the higher level of what Bucke chooses to call “cosmic consciousness” (O 244).

Such an experience constitutes God-consciousness, an experience mightily confirmative of the pre-existent truth of the religious experience of knowing God.

Such spirit-consciousness is the equivalent of the knowledge of the actuality of sonship with God. Otherwise, the assurance of sonship is the experience of faith.

Thus we might say that man is moving toward that kind of consciousness in which there is a greater integration of the self with its world (O 246).

196:3.32 And God-consciousness is equivalent to the integration of the self with the universe, and on its highest levels of spiritual reality.

XIX: THE FATE OF VALUES: THE PROBLEM OF REALITIES THAT VANISH (Overstreet 248)

Is there in some sense an indestructibility of values, or are values paradoxical realities that pass into nullity, leaving no trace behind? (O 249)

“A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness” (O 249).

[If mortal man fails to survive natural death, the real spiritual values of his human experience survive as a part of the continuing experience of the Thought Adjuster (16:9.3).]

XX: GOD AND THE MODERN MAN: CONSIDERING THE PROBLEM AFRESH (Overstreet 254)

Clearing Away Misconceptions (Overstreet 260)

None of [the old religious] beliefs about the deity will any longer adequately serve us. Even the belief with which we have grown familiar, of God as a Heavenly Father, who orders our welfare and expects us from us adoration and obedience, is, from the modern point of view, inadequate (O 259-60).

Two Further Shortcomings (Overstreet 260)

We are convinced naturalists. We believe that we are in and of the world and that the world is in and of us. Whatever God is—if indeed He is—He must be conceived as moving in our members. He must be thought of as the very essential life of ourselves and we as of the very essential life of Him.

Only the spirit content of any value is imperishable.

Even that which is true, beautiful, and good may not perish in human experience.

If man does not choose to survive, then does the surviving Adjuster conserve those realities born of love and nurtured in service.

And all these things are a part of the Universal Father.

The Father is living love, and this life of the Father is in his Sons. And the spirit of the Father is in his Sons' sons—mortal men.

The old externalistic expressions, then, will no longer serve. To call God King, Ruler, even **Father**, puts us in danger of missing the sheer interpenetrativeness of the world in which we live (O 260).

When all is said and done, the **Father** idea is still the highest human concept of God.