

Paper 155 — Fleeing Through Northern Galilee

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

Sources for Paper 155, in the order in which they appear

- (1) George Adam Smith, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D., *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915)

Note: This source is coded **Atlas HGHL**.
- (2) Harry Emerson **Fosdick**, *Adventurous Religion and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1926)
- (3) Rev. Alfred **Edersheim**, M.A.Oxon, D.D., Ph.D., *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Volume Two) (New York: Longman, Green, & Co., Eighth Edition, Revised, 1899)
- (4) Ernest Fremont **Tittle**, *The Religion of the Spirit: Studies in Faith and Life* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1928).

Key

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

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PAPER 155 — FLEEING THROUGH NORTHERN GALILEE

[See 152:2.1.]

155:0.1 Soon after landing near Kheresa on this eventful Sunday, Jesus and the twenty-four went a little way to the north, where they spent the night in a beautiful park south of Bethsaida-Julias. They were familiar with this camping place, having stopped there in days gone by. Before retiring for the night, the Master called his followers around him and discussed with them the plans for their projected tour through Batanea and northern Galilee to the Phoenician coast.

1. WHY DO THE HEATHEN RAGE?¹

155:1.1 Said Jesus: “You should all recall how the Psalmist spoke of these times, saying,

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? (Ps. 2:1)

‘Why do the heathen rage and the peoples plot in vain?²

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, (Ps. 2:2)

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers of the people take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us (Ps. 2:3).

Let us break the bonds of mercy asunder and let us cast away the cords of love.’

155:1.2 “Today you see this fulfilled before your eyes. But you shall not see the remainder of the Psalmist’s prophecy fulfilled, for he entertained erroneous ideas about the Son of Man and his mission on earth. My kingdom is founded on love, proclaimed in mercy, and established by unselfish service.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision (Ps. 2:4).

My Father does not sit in heaven laughing in derision at the heathen.

Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure (Ps. 2:5).

He is not wrathful in his great displeasure.

.

True is the promise that

Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance,

the Son shall have these so-called heathen (in reality his ignorant and untaught brethren) for an inheritance.

and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession (Ps. 2:8).

And I will receive these gentiles with open arms of mercy and affection. All this loving-kindness shall be shown the so-called heathen, notwithstanding the unfortunate declaration of the record which intimates that the triumphant Son

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel (Ps. 2:9).

‘shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’

Serve the LORD with fear,

The Psalmist exhorted you to ‘serve the Lord with fear’—

I bid you enter into the exalted privileges of divine sonship by faith;

and rejoice with trembling (Ps. 2:11).

he commands you to rejoice with trembling;

I bid you rejoice with assurance.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish
from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

He says, ‘Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
and you perish when his wrath is
kindled.’

But you who have lived with me well
know that anger and wrath are not a part
of the establishment of the kingdom of
heaven in the hearts of men.

But the Psalmist did glimpse the true light
when, in finishing this exhortation, he
said:

Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him (Ps.
2:12).

‘Blessed are they who put their trust in
this Son.’”

[See endnote.]

155:1.3 Jesus continued to teach the
twenty-four, saying: “The heathen are not
without excuse when they rage at us.
Because their outlook is small and
narrow, they are able to concentrate their
energies enthusiastically.³ Their goal is
near and more or less visible; wherefore
do they strive with valiant and effective
execution. You who have professed
entrance into the kingdom of heaven are
altogether too vacillating and indefinite in
your teaching conduct. The heathen strike
directly for their objectives; you are
guilty of too much chronic yearning. If
you desire to enter the kingdom, why do
you not take it by spiritual assault even as
the heathen take a city they lay siege to?
You are hardly worthy of the kingdom
when your service consists so largely in
an attitude of regretting the past, whining
over the present, and vainly hoping for
the future. Why do the heathen rage?
Because they know not the truth. Why do
you languish in futile yearning? Because
you *obey* not the truth. Cease your useless
yearning and go forth bravely doing that
which concerns the establishment of the
kingdom.

155:1.4 “In all that you do, become not one-sided and overspecialized. The Pharisees who seek our destruction verily think they are doing God’s service. They have become so narrowed by tradition that they are blinded by prejudice and hardened by fear. Consider the Greeks, who have a science without religion, while the Jews have a religion without science. And when men become thus misled into accepting a narrow and confused disintegration of truth, their only hope of salvation is to become truth-co-ordinated—converted.

[Source?]

155:1.5 “Let me emphatically state this eternal truth: If you, by truth co-ordination, learn to exemplify in your lives this beautiful wholeness of righteousness, your fellow men will then seek after you that they may gain what you have so acquired. The measure wherewith truth seekers are drawn to you represents the measure of your truth endowment, your righteousness. The extent to which you have to go with your message to the people is, in a way, the measure of your failure to live the whole or righteous life, the truth-co-ordinated life.”

155:1.6 And many other things the Master taught his apostles and the evangelists before they bade him good night and sought rest upon their pillows.

2. THE EVANGELISTS IN CHORAZIN

155:2.1 On Monday morning, May 23, Jesus directed Peter to go over to Chorazin with the twelve evangelists while he, with the eleven, departed for Caesarea Philippi,

MAP 11 (*Atlas HGHL*)

going by way of the Jordan to the Damascus-Capernaum road, thence northeast to the junction with the road to Caesarea Philippi, and then on into that city,

where they tarried and taught for two weeks. They arrived during the afternoon of Tuesday, May 24.

155:2.2 Peter and the evangelists sojourned in Chorazin for two weeks, preaching the gospel of the kingdom to a small but earnest company of believers. But they were not able to win many new converts.

[See 146:4.6.]

No city of all Galilee yielded so few souls for the kingdom as Chorazin.

In accordance with Peter's instructions the twelve evangelists had less to say about healing—things physical—while they preached and taught with increased vigor the spiritual truths of the heavenly kingdom. These two weeks at Chorazin constituted a veritable baptism of adversity for the twelve evangelists in that it was the most difficult and unproductive period in their careers up to this time. Being thus deprived of the satisfaction of winning souls for the kingdom, each of them the more earnestly and honestly took stock of his own soul and its progress in the spiritual paths of the new life.

155:2.3 When it appeared that no more people were minded to seek entrance into the kingdom, Peter, on Tuesday, June 7, called his associates together and departed for Caesarea Philippi to join Jesus and the apostles. They arrived about noontime on Wednesday and spent the entire evening in rehearsing their experiences among the unbelievers of Chorazin. During the discussions of this evening Jesus made further reference to the parable of the sower and taught them much about the meaning of the apparent failure of life undertakings.

3. AT CAESAREA PHILIPPI

155:3.1 Although Jesus did no public work during this two weeks' sojourn near Caesarea Philippi, the apostles held numerous quiet evening meetings in the city, and many of the believers came out to the camp to talk with the Master. Very few were added to the group of believers as a result of this visit. Jesus talked with the apostles each day, and they more clearly discerned that a new phase of the work of preaching the kingdom of heaven was now beginning. They were commencing to comprehend that

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink;

but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17).

the "kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink

but the realization of the spiritual joy of the acceptance of divine sonship."

155:3.2 The sojourn at Caesarea Philippi was a real test to the eleven apostles; it was a difficult two weeks for them to live through. They were well-nigh depressed, and they missed the periodic stimulation of Peter's enthusiastic personality. In these times it was truly a great and testing adventure to believe in Jesus and go forth to follow after him. Though they made few converts during these two weeks, they did learn much that was highly profitable from their daily conferences with the Master.

ADVENTUROUS RELIGION (Fosdick
1)

155:3.3 The apostles learned that the Jews were spiritually stagnant and dying because they had crystallized truth into a creed;

The spiritual life of man in its relationship with the Eternal is an unescapable human interest and religion is indestructible. But it is an adventure both of life and thought. All its formulas, summarizing experience up to date, are sign-posts, not boundary-lines; and when Christianity forgets that,

that when truth becomes formulated as a boundary line of self-righteous exclusiveness instead of serving as signposts of spiritual guidance and progress,

becomes preservative instead of creative,

such teachings lose their creative and life-giving power and ultimately become merely preservative and fossilizing.

... it not only is false to its historic origin in Christ, who did the very opposite, but by psychological necessity it dooms itself to stagnation and decay (F 6-7).

I BELIEVE IN MAN (Fosdick 30)

Jesus' attitude toward human personality can be briefly described as always seeing people **in terms of their possibilities**. He habitually looked at men in terms of what they might become (F 34).

Shall we say that a man first loves God and then will spontaneously love his neighbor well? But the New Testament reverses the order. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot **love God whom he hath not seen**" (F 39).

Shall we say that a right attitude toward Christ is the precedent condition of a right attitude toward men? But the New Testament says that it is impossible to take a right attitude toward Christ without taking an unselfish attitude toward men. "**Inasmuch as ye did it** unto one of these my brethren, even these least, **ye did it unto me**" (F 40).

155:3.4 Increasingly they learned from Jesus to

look upon human personalities **in terms of their possibilities** in time and in eternity.

They learned that many souls can best be led to

love the unseen God by being first taught to love their brethren whom they can see.

And it was in this connection that new meaning became attached to the Master's pronouncement concerning unselfish service for one's fellows:

"Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, **you did it to me."**

SCIENCE AND RELIGION (Fosdick 91)

[Fundamentalists] have let their sense of sacredness run away with them. Their feeling of sanctity has unintelligently attached itself to all sorts of things that are not integral parts of vital religion (F 102).

WILL SCIENCE DISPLACE GOD?
(Fosdick 135)

Religion, as Professor Royce of Harvard kept insisting, is at heart loyalty—loyalty to the highest that we know (F 144).

[Compare F 138, 144-45.]

SCIENCE AND MYSTERY (Fosdick 152)

Now, a wholesome religion is simply that form of faith which alone has succeeded in making life worth while;

which fills it with purpose,

155:3.5 One of the great lessons of this sojourn at Caesarea had to do with the origin of religious traditions, with the grave danger of

allowing a sense of sacredness to become attached to non-sacred things, common ideas, or everyday events.

From one conference they emerged with the teaching that

true religion was man's heartfelt loyalty to his highest and truest convictions.

155:3.6 Jesus warned his believers that, if their religious longings were only material, increasing knowledge of nature would, by progressive displacement of the supposed supernatural origin of things, ultimately deprive them of their faith in God. But that, if their religion were spiritual, never could the progress of physical science disturb their faith in eternal realities and divine values.

155:3.7 They learned that, when religion is wholly spiritual in motive,

it makes all life more worth while,

filling it with high purposes,

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

dignifies it with value,
inspires it with motive,
and comforts it with hope (F 177).

THE DANGERS OF MODERNISM
(Fosdick 258)

[Compare F 263-64.]

Religion's central and unique property is power to release faith and courage for living,

to produce spiritual vitality and fruitfulness; and by that it ultimately stands and falls (F 264).

THE NEED OF MODERN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP (Fosdick 275)

[contd] One of our American philosophers has recently written that "no great civilization has ever outlasted the demise of its religious faith" (F 275).

THE NEW RELIGIOUS REFORMATION (Fosdick 301)

[As Christianity developed,] a danger, little present at the first, grew imminent and menacing. Folk could now ... take the secondary and derived expressions of Christian experience without partaking of the experience itself. They could substitute the outward symbol for the inward life, the formula for the fact (F 301-02).

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dignifying it with transcendent values,
inspiring it with superb motives,
all the while comforting the human soul with a sublime and sustaining hope.

True religion is designed to lessen the strain of existence;

it releases faith and courage for daily living and unselfish serving.

Faith promotes spiritual vitality and righteous fruitfulness.

155:3.8 Jesus repeatedly taught his apostles that

no civilization could long survive the loss of the best in its religion.

And he never grew weary of pointing out to the twelve

the great danger of accepting religious symbols and ceremonies in the place of religious experience.

His whole earth life was consistently devoted to the mission of

This perennial necessity of recovering **liberty** and movement in religion, of **thawing out its frozen forms,**

thawing out the frozen forms of religion into the liquid **liberties** of enlightened sonship.

restoring spontaneity and creativeness again and so replacing static rigidity, which is death, by freedom and progress, which are life, is the clear lesson of all religious history whether in Christendom or without it (F 304).

4. ON THE WAY TO PHOENICIA

155:4.1 On Thursday morning, June 9, after receiving word regarding the progress of the kingdom brought by the messengers of David from Bethsaida, this group of twenty-five teachers of truth left Caesarea Philippi to begin their journey to the Phoenician coast.

[It is scarcely likely, that Jesus and His disciples skirted the almost impenetrable **marsh** and jungle by Lake Merom (**Edersheim2** 73).]

They passed around the **marsh** country,

MAP 11 (**Atlas HGHL**)

by way of **Luz**, to the point of **junction with the Magdala-Mount Lebanon trail road**, thence to the **crossing with the road leading to Sidon**, arriving there Friday afternoon.

155:4.2 While pausing for lunch under the shadow of an overhanging ledge of rock, near Luz, Jesus delivered one of the most remarkable addresses which his apostles ever listened to throughout all their years of association with him. No sooner had they seated themselves to break bread than Simon Peter asked Jesus: "Master, since the Father in heaven knows all things, and since his spirit is our support in the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth, why is it that we flee from the threats of our enemies? Why do we refuse to confront the foes of truth?" But before Jesus had begun to answer Peter's question, Thomas broke in, asking: "Master, I should really like to know just what is wrong with the religion of our enemies at Jerusalem. What is the real difference between their religion and ours? Why is it we are at such diversity of belief when we all profess to serve the same God?" And when Thomas had finished, Jesus said: "While I would not ignore Peter's question, knowing full well how easy it would be to misunderstand my reasons for avoiding an open clash with the rulers of the Jews at just this time, still it will prove more helpful to all of you if I choose rather to answer Thomas's question. And that I will proceed to do when you have finished your lunch."

5. THE DISCOURSE ON TRUE RELIGION

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

155:5.2 While the religions of the world have a double origin—natural and revelatory—at any one time and among any one people there are to be found **three distinct forms of religious devotion**. And these three manifestations of the religious urge are:⁴

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

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

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

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

[Compare “The **Three Degrees of Religious Evolution**” (pp. 369-74) in Auguste Sabatier’s *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit* (1904).]

I: THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT
(Title 11)

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

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

Jesus made it clear that the great difference between the religion of the mind and the religion of the spirit is that, while the former is upheld by ecclesiastical authority,

the latter is wholly based on human experience.

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

155:5.8 Until the races become highly intelligent and more fully civilized, there will persist many of those childlike and superstitious ceremonies which are so characteristic of the evolutionary religious practices of primitive and backward peoples.

Until the human race progresses to the level of a higher and more general recognition of the realities of spiritual experience,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the exhilaration of facing the **perils of intellectual discovery**,

the determination to explore the realities of personal religious experience, the supreme satisfaction of experiencing the personal triumph of the actual realization of the victory of spiritual faith over intellectual doubt as it is honestly won in

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

the supreme **adventure** of all human existence—

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

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

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

those faith voyages of daring adventure out upon the **high seas** of unexplored truth

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

155:5.12 And Jesus went on to say: “At Jerusalem the religious leaders have formulated the various doctrines of their traditional teachers and the prophets of other days into an established system of intellectual beliefs, a religion of authority. The appeal of all such religions is largely to the mind. And now are we about to enter upon a deadly conflict with such a religion since we will so shortly begin the bold proclamation of a new religion—a religion which is not a religion in the present-day meaning of that word, a religion that makes its chief appeal to the **divine spirit of my Father which resides in the mind of man;**

a religion which shall derive its authority from the fruits of its acceptance that will so certainly appear in the personal experience of all who really and truly become believers in the truths of this higher spiritual communion.”

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

155:5.14 All twenty-four of his hearers rose to their feet, intending to signify their united and loyal response to this, one of the few emotional appeals which Jesus ever made to them, but he raised his hand and stopped them, saying:

“Go now apart by yourselves, each man alone with the Father, and there find the unemotional answer to my question, and having found such a true and sincere attitude of soul, speak that answer freely and boldly to my Father and your Father, whose infinite life of love is the very spirit of the religion we proclaim.”

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

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

6. THE SECOND DISCOURSE ON RELIGION

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

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

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

who crave security and prefer conformity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

So it comes to pass that this student, who supposed that religion was the least of his concerns, makes the discovery that it is, on the contrary, the greatest of all his concerns.... Then, one day, he makes for himself that greatest of all discoveries which the human spirit has ever made.

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

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

from authority to experience,

from a faith inherited to a faith achieved,

from a theology handed down

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

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

the supernal experience of finding God

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

And so may you pass

from death to life,

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

thus will you pass from darkness to light,

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

and thereby will you progress

from a theology of mind handed down by your ancestors

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

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

One of the obvious disadvantages of any religion of authority is that it ties you, hand and foot, to the past (T 18).

The religion of the spirit admits of a progressive revelation (T 18).

Religions of authority give you a sense of security,

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

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

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

The religion of the mind ties you hopelessly to the past;

the religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation

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

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

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

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

It is not required of you that your own sense of mercy, justice, and truth should be outraged

by submission to an outworn system of religious forms and ceremonies.

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

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

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

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

distrustful of truth (T 20).

The man who wrote, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee,"

was not an ecclesiastical politician (T 21).

The men who have discovered God have done something more than talk about God (T 21).

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

And who can judge—

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

155:6.6 Shame on those false religious teachers who would

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

And so are these unfortunate persons doomed to become

frightened by every new discovery,

while they are discomfited by every new revelation of truth.

The prophet who said, "He will be kept in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on God,"

was not a mere intellectual believer in authoritative theology.

This truth-knowing human had discovered God; he was not merely talking about God.

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

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

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

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

155:6.7 I admonish you to give up the practice of always quoting the prophets of old

and praising the heroes of Israel,

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

To honor the God-knowing leaders of the past may indeed be worth while, but why, in so doing, should you

sacrifice the supreme experience of human existence:

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

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

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

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

[contd] Religions of authority inevitably divide men.

155:6.9 The religions of authority can only divide men

and set them in conscientious array against each other;

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

They insist upon uniformity of belief,

The religions of authority require of men uniformity in belief,

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

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

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

What the religion of the spirit is seeking is not uniformity,

The religion of the spirit does not demand uniformity of intellectual views,

but unity. And on the basis of unity, unity of spirit, of passion, and of purpose, the world slowly but surely is being united (T 25).

only unity of spirit feeling.

Religions of authority harden into creeds, and creeds divide us. The religion of the spirit bursts into song, and song unites us (T 25).

The religions of authority crystallize into lifeless creeds;

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

III: IF GOD IS LIKE CHRIST (Tittle 40)

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

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

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

and they found him as no other whole race of men have ever known him since the times of Adam, who knew much of this as he was himself a Son of God.

My Father has not failed to mark the long and untiring struggle of Israel, ever since the days of Moses, to find God and to know God.

For weary generations the Jews have not ceased to toil,

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

sweat, groan, travail, and endure the sufferings

and experience the sorrows of a misunderstood and despised people, all in order that they might come a little nearer

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

the discovery of the truth about God.

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

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

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

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

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

V: THE WILL OF GOD (Tittle 80)

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

the **attempt to do it** (T 85).

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

picture of the eternal God.

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

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

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

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

Some callings are not holy and others secular.

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

VI: THE WORD OF GOD (Tittle 98)

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

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

but also the spirit of idealistic beauty.

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

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

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

VII: THE DISCOVERY OF GOD (Tittle 116)

Many of your brethren have minds which accept the theory of God while they spiritually fail to realize the presence of God. And that is just the reason why I have so often taught you that the kingdom of heaven can best be realized by acquiring

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

the spiritual attitude of a sincere **child**.

He is **not** suggesting that we should close our eyes, take a long breath and try to believe the unbelievable. When he says that a child is able to turn pumpkins into coaches, mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, nothing into everything, does he not mean to suggest that to the mind of a child nothing appears too good to be true? (T 118)

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

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

It is not so important that you should know about

Many people whose minds accept the **fact of God**

the **fact of God**

as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to

bewail their inability to **feel the presence of God** (T 120).

feel the presence of God.

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

What chance does God have to appear in our consciousness

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

155:6.14 But do not make the mistake of

trying to prove to other men that you have found God;

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

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

155:6.16 2. The fact that your entire life plan furnishes positive proof that

When men dare to risk everything in the name of some worthy ideal, they become aware of life's supreme and eternal realities.

you have unreservedly risked everything you are and have

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

They feel as if they were in the very presence of God (T 132).

whose presence you have foretasted in time.

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

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

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

1. *Note:* See Fosdick, p. 101 ("Why this rage?")

2. *Note:* The English Standard Version of the Old Testament was published in 1946, the New Testament in 1952. This version translates Ps. 2:1 thus:

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain?

3. *Compare 155:3.4-5:* That [intolerance] has driving power, supplies to its possessor persistence, obstinacy, doggedness and fortitude is clear. Intolerant folk who have believed so singly in their own opinions that they have hated all others and have thought the holders of them damned have done some of the most momentous business ever prosecuted on this planet and, in comparison with them, the mild expositors of tolerance, willing to lend an ear to every opinion under heaven, have often seemed feebly to lack moral sinews and thighs. There is virtue as well as vice in narrowness.... [A] certain exclusive, highly specialized, intolerant narrowness has characterized some of the greatest pioneers in thought and achievement. They were not, in any ordinary sense, open-minded. They were terrific believers in some one thing which they saw clearly, and they often labored under the impression that any one who did not share their thought deserved perdition.

Tolerance would better beware, therefore, lest in calling itself a virtue and lording it over its opposite vice, it slip to a lower level even than intolerance and become a feeble indifferentism. There is more hope in the Athanasian Creed, with its damnatory clauses against all who disagree, than in the futile sophism of neutrals to whom all ideas look alike (Fosdick 217-19).

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