

Mayville U.S.

Oct 24<sup>th</sup> 1892

Prof. Frank W. Rathun -

Dear Sir: I have yours of the  
22<sup>d</sup> inst. and hardly know  
what to say in reply.

The book was written purely as the  
expression of certain ideas touching Chris-  
tianity, civilization and personal duty which  
have become so plain to my mind that  
even demonstration seems superfluous.  
Yet these ideas seem so strange and  
sometimes almost incomprehensible to  
the very ones whom I expected would  
welcome them most warmly, that  
I sometimes doubt whether it is well  
to even hint at truths which make all  
other social, political and religious  
truths, so much more resplendent than  
they can ever be without them.

Perhaps I ought to make this plainer.  
What then is Christianity? A method of eternal

salvation, do you say?

Why should ~~you~~ be saved in heaven and not on earth? Or, if eternal salvation is the sole object why seek to make Christianity a part of earthly life?

Evidently, there may be two answers to these questions. (1) Christianity is a part of the individual life here on earth in order that the human soul may be somehow fitted and ripened for the better enjoyment of heaven. This is the purely personal view — the view taken by the man who is affected by "the selfishness of salvation".

(2) Another, purely religious or spiritual view, is that as the Gospel is spread by human means, Christianity is made a part of the earthly life in order that men may take note of the Christian life, be won by its beauties and so led to adopt it and avoid eternal consequences. This is the broadest of the accepted orthodox views of the function of Christianity as an earthly institution.

The view of Christianity which

"Mervale Eastman" is intended to present, is not at all in conflict with either of these but is much broader or than both of them limited.

It is simply that the Christ thought is intended not merely for the eternal salvation but for the present uplifting of humanity — that it is the true divine law of human life present as well as future and is the inheritance not of the Church only but of the world. That its mission is to bless, purify, exalt human life — whether sanctified or unsanctified — and that the true Christ work incumbent upon all, is the betterment of human conditions, by every power under human control, in order that the "kingdom of God may come and his will be done on earth as in heaven".

How shall that Kingdom come, for which alone Christ was so anxious and bade us always to pray? Only by universal adoption of its fundamental law as the one rule of human action. And what is that rule? Not a rule of action in any sense. By that is Christ's

pre-eminent above all other teachers  
and philosophers established. He prescribed  
no rules of conduct for his followers  
but only one universal rule of  
motive: "Whatever ye would  
that others should do to you do  
ye even so to them."

The short name for this is justice.  
Be just to all and measure  
your justice by putting yourself  
in the other man's place.

This is Christianity as an earthly  
force — the doing of God's will, the  
exemplification of the divine idea of jus-  
tice between man and man on  
earth. This is the mainspring of civilization —  
the application of the Christ-idea to the human  
and life — individual and collective, by  
every human instrumentality. Marcus  
Caesarius is not concerned with the means or  
methods of salvation — that is eternal salvation —  
but only asks the question "How may men  
do the Father's will on earth," so that His Kingdom  
may come. How may the Golden  
rule be applied — not to mere pur-  
pose but to act as well — to con-

ditions as well as to prayers  
and sympathy.

To my mind society, govern-  
ment, &c., civilization indeed, are  
simply instruments by which the  
divine will may be applied  
to human lives under the  
guidance of the one divine  
rule of motive: — "As ye would,"

Thus far it has been admitted that  
this universal rule applies to these  
relations: Child, parent, husband, wife,  
teacher, worker, trader (so far as good  
measure and payment of debts is concerned),  
and to all relations so far as prayer  
is concerned.

But when it comes to the relation  
of citizen, ruler, employer, owner,  
or the relation individual or corporate  
to the conditions of other lives, we are  
plainly told, sometimes in words and  
often still by acts, that the rule of  
motive — "As ye would," has no applica-  
tion to politics or commerce or so =

city, but is merely a means for  
personal sublimation.

We forget that the words of Eccle-  
sastes: "The bread of the needy is their  
life."

"He that taketh away his  
neighbor's living slayeth him."

Are among the holiest words of  
Holy Writ because they teach the  
lesson of responsibility for neg-  
lecting, in our collective en-  
quity the universal test of  
motive - "As ye would."

Perhaps, I have stumbled  
around with much speaking  
but this is what Moral Law  
means to me and  
what I would that it

Wright seems to show who really is  
pages -

Kindly yours

William D. Long