

# THY TABLE

BY MARGARET SHERWOOD

I ~~SEEK~~ thy table, Lord,  
To break my bread with thee;  
Yet still afar, past hill and star  
It vanishes from me.

Though folk along the way  
Call it an idle dream,  
By sea and sedge, at earth's faint edge,  
Ever I see it gleam.

There thy beloved are,  
Close gathered, soul to soul;  
And there thy face, in hallowed space,  
Shines as my distant goal.

Late, weary and forspent,  
I near the holy spot,  
Where they are met, thy table set,  
But still I find thee not.

They pledge their fellowship  
In words that are not thine;  
Though here they sup, with sacred cup,  
Not this thy bread and wine.

Ah, Lord, the nations yearn  
To gather at thy feet;  
Thou bidst to feast both great and least  
With simple words and sweet.

Our faith — that love enfold  
The living and the dead;  
Our creed — a prayer that thou be there  
To share the wine and bread.

# RELIGION: A FUNCTION OR A PHASE OF HUMAN LIFE?

BY WILLIAM MILLER GAMBLE

## I

CECIL RHODES, the great Anglo-Saxon imperialist, who founded university scholarships in order to bring into closer touch with one another the possible future leaders of thought and culture in America and Great Britain, is said to have once remarked that the Church of England did not interest him. During the last general convention of a religious body in this country, while a discussion of Unction for the Sick was in progress, one of the deputies, an important man of affairs, arose and left the hall. The incident was at once seized upon by the public press, and commented on as a significant evidence of lay opinion on the subject discussed. The deputy was quoted as having said that such discussion was pure nonsense.

An English bishop lately watched a number of working-men file out of their shops, and stopping one of the more intelligent of them, inquired as to the sentiments of his class toward the Church. 'It don't touch us, sir, no more than the moon,' was the reply. This incident, also, has figured frequently in recent sermons and addresses to religious gatherings.

The accuracy or inaccuracy of these reported incidents does not affect the purpose of my allusion to them. What I wish to illustrate concerns rather the inferences such anecdotes commonly suggest to most modern-minded people, and the significant intention with which they are frequently quoted, and seldom without a sensitive response, especially

in circles where religious problems are discussed. It is characteristic of the mental atmosphere that surrounds present-day religion, to sound notes of warning to organized religion, by quoting the opinions and sentiments of the active men of the world in regard to religious systems, doctrines, and methods. The phrase 'man-in-the-street' has a peculiar religious connotation. It suggests an ominous judicial being whose leisure moments, snatched in the midst of a life of clearly demonstrable productiveness, are sometimes spent in weighing all ecclesiasticism in the balance and finding it wanting as an asset to human society.

It is not that the man-in-the-street is arrogant. On the contrary, he is usually modest — a 'plain business man,' a 'common working-man,' a 'mere layman,' who merely betrays his distaste for various aspects of organized religion. But just for this reason his attitude is given vital importance. His indifference, or his distaste, or his humbly confessed inadequacy to see what it is all for, is urged upon the consideration of religious leaders as the pressing reason for a thorough reconstruction of religious teaching, methods, formularies.

## II

Now Christianity would never have spread beyond Jerusalem, or Mohammedanism beyond Arabia, except by acting upon the assumption that the religious needs of the man-in-the-street were more important than his existing