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ESSAYS ON FAITH AND IMMORTALITY

BY

GEORGE TYRRELL

ARRANGED BY M. D. PETRE

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD

1914

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E.V.

INTRODUCTION

THE following essays of Father George Tyrrell are drawn, for the most part, from notebooks and unpublished material. It was his habit, as has been mentioned elsewhere,¹ to keep what he called a "Journal" of spiritual and philosophical jottings—day by day he thus noted down any thoughts that occurred to him; and the result was, sometimes a series of detached reflections, such as we find in *Nova et Vetera*, or *Oil and Wine*, sometimes a consecutive work, such as *Lex Credendi*, which was, to a great extent, drawn from such jottings.

The "Journal," of which a large portion is first published in these pages, was written during the course of the year 1904, while its author was yet a member of the Society of Jesus, but the collection contains also a good deal of matter drawn from a later, and less elaborated notebook, written during the year 1906, in the months succeeding his rupture with the Society, and particularly during the period of his wanderings in France.

The "Journal" of 1904 is undoubtedly the incomplete scheme of a definite work; perhaps one of the most important works that its author ever planned. Part of it had even been typed and arranged, and

¹ *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell.*

various titles had been under consideration ; of which the one that seems to have been finally preferred was that given to the first chapter of this volume, namely *The Doctrinal Authority of Conscience*. It was all designed in the attempt at reaching a fundamental philosophy of belief ; yet, as it was still in the making, the material was not rigorously co-ordinated, and any stray thoughts that presented themselves were put down as they came, regardless of their exact relation to the whole.

The readers of these essays will probably have some acquaintance with the life of their author, and will know how the religious crisis of the day forced him to deal with immediate and pressing problems, which diverted him temporarily from tasks that could be abandoned and resumed. Not that the works brought forth in those years of stress were without relation to the deepest problems of faith ; but they had necessarily a more direct bearing on difficulties of the day than a work planned in leisure and tranquillity. Furthermore, the "Journal" also provided material for the works of the moment, and was exploited for that purpose ; large portions, for instance, being used, as I have said, in the composition of *Lex Credendi*.

Hence it could not be said that the work was in any sense ready for publication as a systematic whole, and it seemed, therefore, better to arrange it in fresh order, so that place might be found for everything worth preserving. It was also desirable to take advantage of the occasion to publish anything of interest from the later, unconsecutive "Journal" of 1906 ; and a new scheme lent itself to this purpose.

It is here, then, that the present editor must take a share of responsibility. Wherever thought logically succeeds to thought, the original order of the "Journal" has been preserved; but, for the most part, the chapter headings and the sectional titles have been adopted as a means of classification, and the material arranged under those headings, regardless of its place in the MS.

Two great subjects stand out prominent, which give their names to the book and to its two parts—Faith and Immortality. The writer of the "Journal" of 1904 had undoubtedly set out chiefly to consider the fundamental problem of faith; but day by day, as he put down his thoughts, the question of personality, and of personal survival, seems to have appeared and reappeared, till quite a series of the essays were occupied, almost exclusively, with this subject.

Now this is a matter which interests many who care little for religious philosophy in general; hence my original plan was to publish separately the essays dealing with it. Eventually the question was compromised by the division of the work into two parts, whereof the second is devoted to the subject of immortality. To the essays hitherto unpublished have been added two others concerned with the same problem. One of these—"The Parusia and Socialism"—was published in Italy, but never in England; the second, "Divine Fecundity," was delivered as a lecture to the Quest Society in the last year of Father Tyrrell's life, and published, in part only, in the *Quest Magazine*. It is well fitted to form the concluding essay of the series.

so large a part in the life of its author¹; and which also presents many of his very best characteristics. This essay was unprocurable, and yet many who had read the *Life of Tyrrell* were anxious to read it in its entirety; it has therefore been placed at the end of Part I.

With regard to the character of these essays it must be noted that, even had they been arranged by their author, they would not have been finished explanations of the themes with which they deal, nor even final expressions of their writer's views; while there are also a certain number which their author might have rejected in a last revision, and which have been inserted by the editor in the desire to save rather too much than too little.

There are minds that not only condemn obscurity *qua* obscurity, but even reject a truth which is ever so little obscure. They cannot resist the suspicion that an hypothesis is the result of wilful vagueness; and that it is only a case of opening the shutters which somebody has capriciously closed.

These essays will be, many of them, of little use to such minds, who had far better pass them by. For they often express a guess rather than a conviction; they are gropings and not treatises. But as there is an ever recurring stage, even in physical science, when a new question is an advance on an old answer, when an hypothesis is more precious than a solution, so, *a fortiori*, is there an analogous stage in spiritual philosophy. Confused and muddled thought is always objectionable, but the touch is often in advance of the sight in its apprehension of reality.

¹ See vol. ii. chap. v. of *Autobiography*, &c.

Hence I have not feared to put in fragments, in spite of their lack of finish, for the sake of some flash of insight which they convey; and they will serve their purpose if they do what their author was always satisfied to do, namely to give the lead to some other mind which can carry the search a little further.

It must also be remembered that unfinished work may leave its author exposed to certain charges which further elaboration would have checked. Hence it is necessary, in some cases, to compare these essays with the author's published works for the completion of their understanding. Thus, in particular, on the question of pragmatism, which was less defined then than now, it is well to consult the essay on that subject in *Through Scylla and Charybdis*.

I will end with a word of thanks to Archdeacon Lilley, who has once more helped me in the accomplishment of a task which was not without its difficulties.

M. D. PETRE.

January 13, 1914.

CONTENTS

PART I

ESSAYS ON FAITH

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY OF CONSCIENCE .	3
II.	GOD AND MAN	28
	1. Does Holiness Enlighten?	
	2. "Unprofitable Servants."	
	3. The Prayer of Quiet.	
	4. Conformity with the Will of God.	
	5. Disinterested Love.	
	6. "Show Us the Father."	
III.	CHRIST	43
	1. The Inerrancy of Christ.	
	2. The Optimism of Christ.	
	3. The Failure of Christ.	
	4. The Law of Failure.	
	5. The Resurrection Appearances.	
	6. Faith and Sentiment.	
IV.	THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY	64
V.	GOD AND NATURE	89
	1. Determinism.	
	2. Eucken's <i>Geistesleben</i> .	
	3. Man and Nature.	
	4. Conscience in Nature.	
	5. God in Nature.	
	6. The Unseen World.	
	7. Man's Destiny.	

CHAP.	PAGE
VI. THE CHURCH	103
1. Domus Dei.	
2. The Clergy.	
3. Limits of Authority.	
4. The Faithful.	
5. Prophecy and Superstition.	
6. Sanctity.	
7. Heresy.	
8. The Faith of Consensus.	
9. Public Religion.	
10. The Spiritual Church.	
VII. DOGMA	119
1. Lex Orandi.	
2. Organic Continuity.	
3. Spiritual and Physiological Development.	
VIII. RELIGION AND TRUTH	128
1. What is Illusion?	
2. Faith and Illusion.	
3. Factual and Ideal Truth.	
4. Truth for its Own Sake.	
5. Religio Depopulata.	
6. Religious Revival.	
IX. A PERVERTED DEVOTION	158

PART II

ESSAYS ON IMMORTALITY

I. PERSONALITY AND ITS SURVIVAL	175
II. INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY	196
III. OUR SENSE OF PAST INNOCENCE	200

CONTENTS

XV

CHAP.	PAGE
IV. THE SELF AND THE WHOLE	203
1. The Return to Self.	
2. Separateness.	
V. SIN	207
VI. ONE SPIRIT AND ONE BODY	212
VII. THE SLEEP OF DEATH	214
VIII. BEFORE BIRTH AND AFTER DEATH	218
IX. THE DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY	222
X. THE SOUL'S CENTRE	228
XI. PROPHETIC VISION OF EXTERNAL ORDER	231
XII. SAVING FAITH	235
XIII. THE PARUSIA AND SOCIALISM	239
XIV. DIVINE FECUNDITY	245

PART I
ESSAYS ON FAITH

CHAPTER I
THE DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY OF
CONSCIENCE

THE "intellectualist" notion of Faith as an assent to mental puzzles on the strength of divine testimony is answerable for much unreality in religion. For Faith is the foundation of the spiritual life, and the vice of the foundation affects the whole superstructure. All this fiction, pretence, make-believe must be purged away; if necessary, by a sort of Cartesian criticism, which cuts away everything questionable till it comes to a positive something that cannot be questioned, and on which the whole edifice may be more solidly constructed. This rock of irresistible reality is Conscience—the sense of the Right and of its absolute claims. No analysis, no explaining away can permanently destroy this faith or lay the ghost—*Furca expellas, tamen usque recurret*. Yet faith it is, and not understanding or inference, nor experience in the narrower external sense. And it is faith *in God*. For (as Euclid would say) let it be supposed that the will of a God who is other than Conscience were revealed to us, should we not, before obeying, submit his will to the verdict of conscience, as to something higher and more absolutely imperative? Only Conscience, therefore, can say, "Thou shalt have none

other Gods but me ; thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them ; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

Yet I cannot say that "my Conscience" and "my God" are synonyms; and before the difficulty of giving distinct expression to the above truth, that "Conscience is God," I must for ever be helpless, because I can never define either term, or put into form what is given only as feeling and experience. Besides, "My Conscience" seems to be part of me, to be a "faculty" of my soul, or a department of my judgment, or the higher impulse of my will, and "Conscience" in general, like Right in general, seems quite impersonal, an abstraction, a principle, like Beauty or Truth or Wisdom. But "God," on the other hand, at once suggests a person, a spirit, an other-than-self, above, outside, beyond self.

Hence my understanding can never frame one concept to unite the two in which it has presented to itself different aspects of one and the same experience, calling the one God and the other Conscience.

The very term "God," as meaning at least a person and a spirit, is already a "graven image" of the ineffable, nor can the Divine be presented to our understanding without being *ipso facto* limited and misrepresented; we cannot possibly *express*, what nevertheless we feel and touch and resist and yield to, except in "the likeness of something in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth." We are not idolaters, however, unless we affirm an existence and reality exactly correspondent

to this image, and give it Divine honours. This is the beginning of evil, of unreality, fiction and pretence; of belief in conceptions and inferences, rather than faith in facts, persons, and experiences. "Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

Hence Faith in that directive Power which my understanding figures to me, now as Conscience or as my Conscience, now as God or as my God, is for me the one immutable foundation stone of the life of religion; or it is the germ, the nucleus, of which every fruitful growth of that life must be the legitimate and natural expansion. As the object of that Faith (*sc.* God or Conscience) is elusive and difficult, or impossible, to formulate mentally, so is Faith itself; and yet we must try to say what we mean by it, though the most vigorous Faith, like the deepest compunction, may be least capable of self-definition, nor do men live, think, and love any the less for being unable to agree as to the nature and definition of life, thought, and love. A collapse of theory leaves things and facts standing unimpaired.

By Faith, then, I mean, not my assent to any statement about Conscience, or to any definition or conception of its nature, but my deliberately approved or fostered affection and practical attitude and disposition in regard to its felt checks or impulses. I may explain this attitude in my mind as a sense of the absolute claims of Right; I may speak of Conscience as the voice of God; I may (and even must) try to construct a scheme of things that will find room for and explain this inward experience; but the mental assent I give

to all these hypotheses and conceptions is not Faith, it is at best the nucleus of a theology, of an orthodoxy or heterodoxy.

To hold such a theology or orthodoxy merely by tradition or imitation or inference, and not as a provisional and faulty expression of a real experience, is religious "intellectualism," not faith. It is "idealism," not "realism"; that is to say, one's life is, in such case, controlled, not by reality, but by a symbol or formula of reality; or if by experience at all, by the experience of others accepted on testimony.

Faith implies vision and obscurity, light and shadow, but in no contradictory sense. The shadow and obscurity of Faith is only in the understanding, in its endeavour to formulate the implications of faith, to harmonise them with its formulation of experience in general, to bring the psychic and spiritual, the natural and supernatural, the visible and invisible into the unity of one system of categories and common measures; an endeavour antecedently doomed to perpetual failure as long as our mind works under its present conditions and borrows its language from physics—from things common, external, and communicable. The light and vision of Faith is that of direct evidence of touch and taste, of pleasure and pain, of attraction and repulsion. The "vision" to which "faith" is to give place in the ideal order, which is not Faith but abolishes Faith, is that of the intelligence or understanding made adequate to reality, and reaching a true expression of what we now symbolise as God or Conscience. At present the discord between the light and shadow of Faith

is inevitable, and constitutes a "temptation against Faith" for the intellectualist who will not believe in a felt value which he cannot explain or account for; or who believes in it, yet lives by his account of the thing rather than by the thing itself, thus leading a theoretical, unsubstantial, make-believe life that is not in contact with reality.

A worse faithlessness is that of a self-induced insensibility to the impulses and checks of conscience, and a hardening of the heart, a stiffening of the neck, brought about by a blind acceptance of illusory good; by a refusal to look forward to the end, to see change and decay and death all around us, or to learn by one's own or others' experience the vanity, bitterness, nothingness of any creature out of relation to and connection with the Creator. Hence, shadows become solid and substantial for us; and the only abiding reality grows ever more dreamy, fantastic and far away, and may be lost to sight for ever. Then, suddenly, men wake from dreams of wealth to find their hands empty; they call on God and He will not hear; the bartered heritage is gone for ever. They have put out their own eyes. Short of such an extreme, faith abides so long as man sins open-eyed and with a bad conscience; so long as he plays with illusions knowing them to be such, and prefers them to what he still feels to be the only realities; so long as he lives, even as a rebel, in the world of faith, and does not construct another world in which the shadows of the present take the place of God and Conscience.

What is more real to me than myself? Is it not because I interpret other things by myself that I attribute to them a certain reality and selfhood? The first impulse of the wakening mind is to assume that everything is like itself; unlikenesses are taught only by slow experience; at first everything is alive, sentient, free, and even to the last everything is at least "real"; for to think of it at all is to liken it to ourselves, and reality is the least degree of such likeness that we can predicate. And yet, when I meditate on it, this reality, that I seem to find so surely in myself, melts away and vanishes into thin air, and I want something far more real than myself. Do I not want explaining? I am not ultimate, self-explanatory, necessary. What was I a few years since? What shall I be a few years hence? What am I for? What does my being, my action, my life mean or matter? And of all my action and thought and speech and effort is there anything that is absolutely worth doing, and not merely relatively to some end that is itself of like relative value; and so on for ever?

That there *are* actions of this absolute value, nay, that my every action may be of such value, is the affirmation, the assurance of Conscience—an affirmation that Faith only can accept, since the understanding can never justify it. For the world which the understanding reconstructs and symbolically represents is that of appearances; reality figures there only in terms of appearance, and must be degraded and debased in order to be understood; must be received after the fashion of the receiver. Faith then tells me that my actions may have an absolute

worth and value, which they could not have were they referred solely to myself, considered in my isolation, a mere shadow flitting across the stage of history. The service of a nothing is nothing. My actions are therefore the service of something which is absolutely real, good, worthy, abiding; something whose instrument I am; something, in dynamic union with which, and in the serving of which, I share a certain absoluteness, reality, and eternity; and apart from which I am nothing—not even capable of feeling and deploring my separate unreality, or of aspiring after a greater reality. I am, only because It is; and my being is merely dependence on Its being.

It is Faith then, Faith in Conscience, in God, in the Right, that puts me in touch with reality, and delivers me from the sense of vacuity and *ennui* that mere understanding rather fosters than mitigates; for the understanding can offer me but notions and signs, not things; nor can it, by its analyses and dialectical processes, justify or explain the absolute values that are revealed to me in Conscience.

The attempt to formulate these primary religious experiences, to find a place for them in the schemata of the understanding, to attain orthodoxy in thought as well as Faith in affection, is not only inevitable, but profitable. It is inevitable, since the understanding is restless till it has brought all experiences, of what kind soever, into the unity of one rational system, so as to be able to control and utilise them all, and direct them to a common end. It is profitable, somewhat as natural science is profitable to the

fulness of our life in reference to external nature, in so far as it registers our experiences symbolically, classifies their groupings and sequences, observes their uniformities, rises from lower to higher laws, and thus enables us more and more to divine what is distant, to predict what is future, to regulate our action by a fuller and wider light than that offered by immediate perception, or even by remembered personal experiences. Within somewhat narrower limits the understanding can be similarly serviceable and instrumental to the mystical life. An experience remembered and understood is thereby made fertile of other and fuller experiences; and these, in their turn, of others still more full. To despise orthodoxy is to despise all knowledge; it is to live from hand to mouth like savages; it is to be stupidly and literally dependent on Providence, where we should be actively self-provident, self-cultivating, progressive, independent. In no way are we more bound to be co-operant in the development of our inward life than in our endeavour to understand it in order to regulate it.

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But if for any reason orthodoxy becomes petrified and permanently canonised, so as to be unable to accommodate itself to new kinds of experience, or to explain more of the new than can be explained in terms of the old, it becomes as a bar set across the road of spiritual progress. New experiences are wasted; they cannot be registered or fertilised. The old channels simply overflow, but can hold no more than they did before. This happens whenever the honours of faith are given to orthodoxy; whenever

any temporary explanation of experience is made final, exhaustive, infallible, binding for all possible contingencies.

As in natural, so too in religious science, every explanatory system and hypothesis is relative to the data, the amount and kind of experience to hand. It will possess a certain degree of flexibility, and be capable of a sort of dialectical development, so as to accommodate new facts up to a certain point. But a day comes when our library must be pulled down and catalogued on an entirely new system; when, in other words, we must look out for new categories, and new methods of development. The development of doctrine is a familiar conception, but that of Faith, of Conscience, of spiritual life, is less easy to grasp, especially when it is allowed that the former but shadows the latter, and, *as a whole*, is dependent on it, in the way that science is dependent on experience more than experience is dependent on science.

Let us return then to the primary *datum* of religion. Faith is not a blind, unrelated love or loyalty or devotion, yet neither is it evoked in the first instance by any *idea* of God, or of Goodness, or of Right and Duty; these are but attempted after-expressions of its object. What I really encounter is a certain ideal of conduct, that seeks to impose itself on me and to assume the control of my action in each particular case. Of several courses open to me there is one that inclines me unaccountably to a sort of unqualified reverence, subjection, self-abandonment; which does not take any account of my private separate interests as such; which uses me as an

instrument of some end beyond and above my own outlook. What is revealed to me in each such suggestion, and in the whole collection of them, is a Will, a Character, a Spirit that would live my life and use my powers and opportunities very differently from the way in which I do, and that is struggling with me to get its own way in the matter. It is through and in this ideal of conduct, through the sum-total of these experienced suggestions and inspirations, that the divine is directly revealed to me, even as my fellow-man is revealed to me by his life and conduct. It is to the Power so revealed that the loyalty of faith, hope and love are related, prior to any attempt to understand that Power, or to formulate it as Power, or Will, or Spirit, or God. Apart, then, from the assistance rendered by the understanding we can see how, in the measure that one yields oneself to the guidance of Conscience, its direction (and therefore its self-revelation) becomes more abundant, more clear, more delicately discerning; how the ideal unfolds and reveals itself and becomes more and more imperative and all-dominating; and how, consequently, the answering affections of faith, reverence, trust and love are deepened, enriched and refined.

But is revelation concerned only with the moral character of the Deity viewed as the archetype of human character? Directly, this undoubtedly is the substance and central value of revelation, which was given us in no way in the interests of intellectual curiosity, physical or metaphysical, but only "that we might have life and have it more abundantly"; that we might possess it rather than know about it. Yet

conduct has reference to society, to our whole environment, to our nature, our origin, our destiny; and therefore, precisely so far as the ideal is determined by the truth as to these things, that truth is implicit in the ideal and can be inferred from it. It is the task of the theological understanding to try to unravel, express, and set in order these implications; to ask: Why is this right? What hypothesis would explain its rightness? How should we have to arrange and explain the world to account for it; in a word: What are the postulates and implications of the moral and religious sense?

What right have I to suppose that metaphysical, physical and even historical truth must be fundamentally in harmony with the affirmations of Conscience? or to suppose that Right and Wrong can be lawfully used as criteria of truths outside the moral order? or that "authority" can dictate to science and override its findings?—for, in principle, it amounts to that.

This right is itself based on faith—faith in the unity and rationality of all that is, faith in the supremacy of Right as the goal towards which all is working, as the guiding and formative principle of all development; faith in the spirit of the "Just Man made perfect" as the final resultant of the workings of God in history and Nature. This is the faith we express when at last we make Conscience the depository of that notion of Deity which we first ascribed to the source and author of physical power, next, to the primal intelligence and wisdom and beauty; when we speak of Conscience or Righteousness as the Creator, the

Alpha and Omega of the physical and metaphysical orders of being, including such lower godship in, and subjecting it to, the only true godship of spiritual goodness; or when we bid earth and heaven and all who dwell therein to worship and fall down before that which is their Maker, "for whose sake they are, and were created"; who is the *raison d'être*, the governing principle of all.

According to this faith the best action is that which is most harmonious with reality, which fits in most truly with the sequence of history, which most effectually furthers and carries out the Divine Will that is revealing itself in the secular process.

The value of this moral and religious sense as a criterion of philosophical and historical truth is no doubt limited, like the blind judgments of instinct; yet, *in default of clearly contradictory evidence*, its guidance may be accepted. Sentiments of loyalty and affection, as involving certain implications concerning his character, are somewhat similarly allowed in cases of doubt to determine my belief as to what my friend did or is likely to do—to determine, that is, my reading of his history by a non-historical criterion. So too the appetite and digestive power of an animal exercise a certain chemical discrimination by a method other than chemical. It is not more inconceivable that the moral and religious appetite should, within limits, act as a virtual criterion of false and true. Aquinas tells us that his doctrine of Predestination should not be preached to the crowds, as it would be morally mischievous and decadent. Here, in default surely of convincing evidence, he might justly have regarded this as a *reductio ad absurdum*; he

might have said: What is religiously and morally hurtful cannot be true; or: A conception of Nature which is fatal to life must be false.

Still, the criterion is very vague and negative. We can more easily say: "This is a morally intolerable belief and therefore false," than, "This is tolerable, congenial, therefore true"—for a thousand inconsistent beliefs may be equally congenial. "Immortality" satisfies a moral demand; but we should rather say, "Immortality *or some equivalent*"; we should find out just what are the common elements of all these equivalent beliefs, and should affirm them and no others. If it is a mere adjustment of temporal inequalities of lot that we demand, a temporary survival would be sufficient. And so in other matters.

In fine, we may say that, *just so far* as a belief is congenial or uncongenial to the normal moral sense it *contains elements* of truth or falsehood; it is approximately true or false.

Religion is not, like the poetic sense, content with framing for itself an arbitrary system of symbols and metaphors incapable of any collision with the philosophical and historical affirmations of the understanding; it is not content to weave for its clothing an avowedly legendary mythology. This might suffice for its service were its experience out of all practical relation to those other experiences about which our understanding busies itself. But it is over our whole life that this interfering spirit seeks to exert its control. The religious process in the world is as real as the ethical or physical process, with which, moreover, it is inextricably bound up. Religion is not pure

theory, but a theory explanatory of facts of life, and will direct that life successfully so far only as it is true to facts, to history. It seems, moreover, to read the world and the meaning of life and the course of history differently from ourselves, and to affirm that difference with the same authority wherewith it imposes its will. It is implicitly dogmatic, however inextricable its implications may be. Hence it interferes indirectly with our philosophical and historical constructions, and postulates the truth of sundry conceptions and facts. Its implicit affirmations are always struggling to come to light ; it is ever seeking to understand and formulate them, to find history and philosophy in agreement with them—ever seeking and never quite finding.

In the Old Testament, finally edited and revised in the interests of the "Conscience-God," the God of Righteousness, we can see how the Guardian Spirit of Israel took over and adapted to his own expression the polytheistic theology and mythology of the former *elohim*, shaping it all to the glory of Israel and of Jahveh the god of Israel. Later, this modified theology is again appropriated and modified in the interests of the sole universal God of all men, and of Israel only in particular ; a God to be worshipped for His righteousness as well as for His power and wisdom, as origin of the moral order as well as of the physical and of its shadow or ghost, the metaphysical order ; a God revealed in Conscience, in moral goodness and love, no less than in thought or in physical Nature. As men grew better, more spiritual and moral, they realised that fist-power and

brain-power were not really worthy of their deepest reverence ; they felt that the commands of a Nature-God or of a Philosophy-God were subject to and conditioned by the approval of conscience ; that God's absolute claim to obedience and adoration could rest only on His Righteousness. It was left for Christ to subject the physical and metaphysical to the moral, and to purify the conception of God from the last alloy of materialism and idolatry.

Aristotle (and Aquinas follows suit) makes religion (*i.e.* the cultus of the Gods) a part or subdivision of Justice or Duty ; we are to serve and obey God because it is right to do so, because our Conscience tells us to do so. He who speaks thus puts Conscience above God, he worships something lower than Conscience ; else he would say : Justice is a part of religion. In truth, neither is a part of the other.

As soon therefore as men wake up to the existence of this interfering Spirit of Righteousness, which is trying to take possession of them and drive them into fire and water for its own ends and against their will ; as soon as they turn in upon themselves and ask themselves : What is it ? What does it mean and imply ? the understanding seeks at once to explain the phenomenon in terms of things known and allowed, and with as little alteration as possible of its system of the world and history. It has already some sort of theology that can be cut to shape, though many of its expressions and assertions must now bear an altered, and more spiritual, less literal, sense. Still, on the whole, theology and sacred history, thus modified

and rearranged, do profess to be truth and not mere symbolism; truth, moreover, affirmed by divine authority, by the authority of Conscience:—to be, in some sense, a revelation.

Revelation is conceived sensuously in the ruder religion of the Nature-God; it is addressed to the senses, like the apocalyptic visions, which we now charitably interpret as merely symbolic of spiritual values, not as a literal opening of the heavens. Yet there is little doubt as to what it meant for him who wrote of God's self-revelation to Moses in visible form. Revelation is conceived rationally or rationalistically (as delivered in suggested speech or concepts) by the religion that worships God as Wisdom, as mental truth and light, as the *Logos* or *Verbum Mentis*. For such religion the apocalypses, the images and materialisations of the earlier form are accepted as merely symbolic of thought-values. The mental truth spontaneously selects its own clothing from the storehouse of the imagination on its way into, or out from, the mind of the recipient. But, in the religion of Conscience, revelation is not given in a mental *representation* of an experience, but once more in an experience, only this time in an inward spiritual experience; in every suggestion of conscience and in the sum-total of such suggestions as manifesting the character, the nature, the will to which we are invited to surrender ourselves to be directed and controlled. For such a revelation the theological conceptions of the mind, as well as the symbols of the imagination, become a vehicle of expression. It, as it were, takes over the properties

of the former claimant and turns them to its own use.

Thus, revelation is a thing revealed; the object of my faith is not primarily a doctrine or formulation, but a concrete fact, event, manifestation; it is the Power that reveals itself in the workings of my Conscience, or in the life, words and actions of Jesus Christ, or of the Church of His servants and saints. It is a Word *made flesh*, a life lived. Faith is therefore a loyalty, a trust directed towards my own Conscience, towards Jesus Christ, towards the Church: evoked by the spirit (one and the same) that reveals itself in them all.

In all cases the Word is limited by the conditions of its incarnation and struggles against its limitations; most of all when it would translate itself into the algebra of speech and understanding, or incorporate itself in a certain reading of philosophy and history. Assent to such attempted self-formulations must not be confounded with Faith in that which so formulates itself, be it my own Conscience, or Christ, or the Church—with Faith which feels and admits the duty of that absolute obedience which love renders.

Yet such formulations are as potent an aid to Faith as Knowledge is to life. And the little knowledge we might gather unassisted were of small avail as compared with that which we inherit and receive, by communication, from the society in which we are born, and by virtue of which we are hurried through the stages of semi-beasthood and savagery, and started in life at the goal of all past development. In virtue

of the religious teaching which we inherit our conscience is wakened, stimulated, corrected and guided by the formulated spiritual experience of all those whose lives have contributed to the shaping of our creed. For in the art of holiness, as in other arts, there are depraved and morbid tastes and subjective errors, to be corrected by the *sensus communis* of proficient and experts ; and the eccentricity which results from a failure to reach the normal and universal must not be confounded with the originality which reaches and improves upon it, and thus restores with usury what it has received. So far, our creed comes to us only with the same authority as any other inherited knowledge ; we take it on testimony, provisionally ; we assume its truth for practical purposes, and even for our mental processes and reasonings. And, as time goes on, we find that it is verified here and falsified there, and we consequently appropriate or reject it. As long as it (or any part of it) is accepted *merely* on testimony, and in no way verified or worked into the body of our personal experiences and convictions, it is so much *pabulum* or unassimilated material, lying on the surface of our mind. It is not properly knowledge, but a substitute for knowledge during our mental minority. And, again like food, it can become an obstruction to growth and nutrition when it is held to in such wise that, instead of a servant, it becomes a tyrant ; when, instead of waiting patiently for verification, we falsify our reasoning and experience into a forced agreement with external testimony, persuading ourselves that we know and see what we only believe and hear. It is this sort of mental dishonesty that brings "belief on testimony" into discredit ; this

reverberation which simulates true utterance. The value of testimony depends on our recognising and confessing that it is but testimony, however trustworthy. So too the Catholic and Christian tradition is given us on the Church's testimony as her authorised expression (however inadequate) of what she has experienced; of what has been revealed to her in Christ and in the prophets and Saints of the Old and New Law. But it does not thereby become an expression of my experience; of what *I* know and have seen. It is but an instrument, a standard of my spiritual self-education, whose value and meaning becomes real for me in the measure that my own experience is developed by its aid on the same lines. If I start with a certain blind assent to it all, it is because I have faith in the felt living reality of the Church, a faith that makes me trust my soul to her formation. In the measure that this blind assent, this *foi de charbonnier*, gives place to experimental verification my faith deepens more and more.

Over the growth and formation of our living mind we have as little direct control as over that of our body. At most we can supply it with food, and train it in certain directions. Nor does the Church pretend to make us see what we do not see, or think what we do not think. Her control is only over the storehouse of testimony from which the mind is fed. Here we are free to accept or reject what is good and nutritious; and she bids us accept what her world-wide world-old experience has proved to be the food of the Divine Word, milk for babes, meat for strong men.

But her guidance is not merely that given by a passed-master to his apprentices, or by a finished musician to a beginner. There is no moral obligation to proficiency in music ; but there is an obligation of "saving one's soul" and using the appointed means thereto, of which means the first is the social tradition of our people. That tradition imposes itself on us with the authority of *conscience*, not necessarily to be accepted as finally and absolutely true, but to be examined, used, tested experimentally, adapted to our individual need.

I can neglect the advice or example of a business man and not feel guilty, but the word and example of a good man is more than directive, it is to some extent preceptive ; it is re-echoed and imposed by my own conscience ; it is an utterance of the same spirit that dwells in him and in myself. Though he has no jurisdiction over me yet he possesses a spiritual and moral authority and compulsiveness, nay, in a sense he is my judge, and I fear his censure and desire his approval much as I do that of my own Conscience. Such too in kind, though indefinitely greater in degree, is the authority of the Church, that is, of the Saints and of all good men gathered round and organised into one society under Christ, the Incarnation of Conscience. It is as the formulation of their collective experience that Catholic teaching commends itself to my reverence and assiduous meditation.

If in the life, the words, the writings of every good man I can study the workings of Conscience, and of the Holy Spirit, under new conditions and in relation to new difficulties and restrictions, if these

lessons impose themselves on me with a certain authority, yet far greater is the authority of the Sacred Scriptures, which are approved as Sacred, not by my isolated and unformed conscience, but by that of the whole Christian people—"sacred," namely, as exhibiting the workings of God's Spirit in the process of the Church's genesis, the gradual transition by which a chosen people were led from the childish religious fancies of semi-savagery and barbarism up to the pure religion of Spirit and Truth, from the worship of God in Nature to the worship of God in Conscience.

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But the Scriptures only stereotype the self-consciousness of the Church up to the sub-apostolic age ; they are but a part, however central and important, of her present self-utterance. They are wrapped round with copious exegesis, with a highly developed dogmatic system, with a body of moral and ascetical teaching, with disciplinary enactments and institutions, with all that is meant by Catholic tradition. Yet of all this the educative value is the same in kind as that of the Scriptures. It formulates for our understanding that revelation of Himself which God has given in the collective life of the Church ; it shows us his Holy Spirit striving with the limitations, the resistances, the ignorances of human nature, and leading men gradually from error to truth, or to ever greater approximations to the truth. Thus, like the Scriptures, the whole of Catholic teaching is a sort of "word of God" ; something to be kept and pondered in the heart, to be gradually realised

and understood according to the growth and need of our spiritual life, to be "digested," discriminated, fed upon.

Yet, all said and done, our faith is in the living Church directly, and only indirectly in that tentative formulation of her life, which she gives us as an instrument of self-education whereby we may shape our spirit in conformity with hers. It is she herself who is the true, the living word of God, the concrete real object of our faith and loyalty, to whom we are drawn as we are drawn to Christ and to every good and Christlike man—the Spirit in us answering the appeal of that same Spirit in them. She, as including Christ and His Saints, is but the extension, the complement, the development of that revelation of Himself which God makes in our own individual conscience. All taken together make up the object of our affection of faith and loyalty and reverence and adoration; the Word made flesh, the Divine Life mingling with the human and progressively transfiguring it to its own likeness.

The explanation, the philosophy, the history of this revelation is but the Church's attempt to satisfy the understanding as well as the heart, to express in the algebra of words what she is felt to *be* by moral and religious sense. Because God's Spirit lives and works in man, and therefore in the world, philosophy and history must make room for those workings under pain of inadequacy and falsehood. Hence Conscience, as developed into Catholic Christianity, postulates that the structure of the world and the course of history shall in certain respects be

so and not otherwise ; Right and Wrong have, within certain limits, their say as to True and False.

When the term faith is given to mere orthodoxy, to a mental assent to the authorised formulation of Faith's object ; or, in other words, when that formulation is substituted for the reality which it symbolises, a like unreality is imparted into our devotion and love. These affections are then directed, not to a God who is given us in immediate experience, not to a Spirit in felt conflict with our own, but to the fictitious, absent and distant original of the representations of our mind. We look for Him abroad or above, anywhere but within ; we wonder if He really is as we conceive Him, or if He is at all. He is something we have been told of, but were the witnesses credible, infallible ? He is something we have inferred, but was our inference warranted ? do not many repudiate it ? We know Him, it seems, only as we know a person of whom we have heard, or whose sayings and doings have come to us but indirectly.

This would not be so had we been left to ourselves to construct a mental symbolism of the experiences of conscience. Poor as the construction would have been, we should not have mistaken its value any more than the poet gives realistic representative value to the creations of his emotion. But as the prosaic mind may receive poetic effusions literally as so much dull fact, so too the religious conceptions and symbolisations of internal experience, which we receive from others by way of tradition, are easily mistaken for representations of external

experience. Thus to have Faith in God is much the same as to have faith in the antipodes; it is to regard the traditional conception as representative of a possible external experience whose possibility is proved in various ways, by arguments and by testimony. And this is the Being we are to love with our whole heart and soul—on the strength of a description! The profoundly philosophico-poetical mind can no doubt rise to a sort of intellectual ecstasy over the divine attributes; and the more warmly human and imaginative soul can fall in love with a fragmentary idealisation of humanity. But, for most, little success of the kind is possible except in the seclusion and artificial conditions of cloistered contemplatives, where the intellect and imagination and heart are emptied of all competing interests. Hence the anomaly that the vast majority of men are mentally, morally, and externally incapable of that love in which their eternal salvation is supposed to consist; or if they are saved it is “so as by fire.”

Yet all this difficulty vanishes together with the intellectualist view of Faith, as soon as we recognise these Gods of the mind, these metaphysical and imaginative constructions, as mere symbols of that inward Reality, of that living Spirit struggling with our own, which is the only true object and recipient of our faith, trust, love, and adoration. Conscientiousness is the sum and substance of the love of God; such affections of philosophic ecstasy or emotional tenderness as we bestow on the symbols of conscience are but the spiritual luxuries of a favoured aristocracy; helpful perhaps if subjected to the one

thing needful, if not misunderstood and confounded with it, but otherwise dangerous, and indeed idolatrous, as offered to the creatures of our own brain : "Thou shalt have none other God but me ; thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image or likeness of anything in Heaven above ; thou shalt not bow down to it or worship it."

Who then is incapable of the essential love of God? of devoted self-sacrificing conscientiousness? Of what class is it the privilege? Is it not as the sunshine which penetrates everywhere impartially, and without respect of persons, of social rank, of education, of creed, of mentality? *Non est qui se abscondat a calore ejus.* Here even men who murder one another for conscience' sake are at one, and perish at one another's hand in the same cause.

April 1904.

CHAPTER II

GOD AND MAN

I. DOES HOLINESS ENLIGHTEN ?

WE say, more or less *a priori* and as what *ought* to be, that life is the way to light; that he who keeps the commandments shall know of the doctrine; that fidelity to conscience is the surest path to enlightenment of conscience, and to ethical insight. But experience shows us, not merely men of lax life possessed of pure and noble conceptions of conduct—this would be no real difficulty—but, also, men of strict and scrupulous conscientiousness almost invariably narrow and unprogressive in their moral judgments. It would almost seem as if experience of sin were a necessity of true moral insight; as if it were the returned prodigal, and not the dutiful stay-at-home, who best knew the will of his father. We cannot question that, not the publicans and sinners, but the Pharisees of all ages, the observant, the regular, the rigorous, have been the worst enemies of Christ, the least open to progressive moral conceptions. We can even see how if to some extent their narrowness, their unimaginativeness, their dog-in-a-mill determinism and routine is the cause of their propriety, yet their conservative fidelity to law, to authority, to tradition

is the very reason of their narrowness. To criticise, to look abroad, to admit the possibility of a better way, is a sin ; it is disloyalty, it is trifling with conscience. And authorities do all they can to foster this notion ; to extol humility, deference, blind obedience, as the sovereign virtues. But, on closer examination, it will be apparent that the guidance which the Pharisee follows is not that of conscience at all, but that of a rule, a law, a dead letter, a substitute for conscience. True it is that conscience can bind us to obey laws and rules, but their authority derives from and is subject to that of conscience ; nor can conscience delegate or transfer its inalienable sovereignty to another. A rule of action or conduct is necessarily universal, the same for all cases, it abstracts from and neglects the individualities of the concrete. But no two "cases of conduct" are ever alike, or can be adequately brought under the same rule, without some adjustment, which needs thought and choice and personal action. The rule is helpful as dealing with the common or general aspects of the problem ; but to give it the final word is treason against conscience. An act determined purely by rule and habit is mechanical, non-human. There must be at least a vital, intelligent, free adjustment of rule and habit to the individuality of the case in point, to make it truly human or spiritual. The Pharisee mind is essentially lazy, mechanical, unspiritual, running along in the deep-worn ruts of rule and law and habit—and suffering conscience to fall asleep for want of adequate occupation. If it is also scrupulous and casuistic, yet this is merely intellectual scrupulosity concerning the deductive consequences of various rules. It is no love of right, of God's will, that fights over rubrical

niceties, or over the problems of the Lenten Indult.¹ Liberty is more difficult, more expensive than slavery; it is easier to follow a rule than to judge for oneself; easier to legislate for classes of men, or of actions, than for individuals; easier to pretend things are the same, than to discuss their all-pervading differences.

Rules and laws, like other universal or class-notions, belong to the understanding, to the system of numbered and labelled divisions and shelves and pigeon-holes in which our experience is sorted and stored away for future use and reference, which bears the same relation to that experience as a merchant's ledgers do to his property. Rules are related to the judicial and apprehensive powers just as habits and uniformities of action are related to the impulsive and executive powers; that is, they belong to the mechanical, non-progressive part of the soul; they are the "formed," as distinct from the soft and growing, parts of the structure. These latter are the true seat of life, of active self-formation. The mechanism of rule and habit is but the self-fashioned instrument of life—*i.e.* of intelligent judgment, of free choice, of conscience.

To make the instrument sovereign, to subject conscience to rule, is to sterilise the spirit; it is to induce habituality and mechanism instead of life, slavery instead of liberty; it is to stereotype a certain form or phase of spiritual activity and forbid all further progress and development; it is to make the past dominant over the present and future.

¹ The "Lenten Indult," so-called, is a list of rules and dispensations for the Lenten fast, drawn up by each bishop for his own diocese, and read out in the churches at the beginning of Lent. These "Indults" are frequently rather complicated documents, and the occasion of much discussion in households where they are observed.—M. D. P.

And yet is it not plain that these rigorous rule-worshippers are convinced that rule and right are identical? And, if so, are they not following their conscience? And is it not contended that even to follow a *false* conscience (for every conscience is relatively false) is the surest path to moral enlightenment?

No, they are not following their conscience. Conscience cannot abdicate, cannot give the last say to a rule or law, irrespective of its applicability to the particular and uniquely individual case in point. It is not to conscience they are listening, but to the rule, the law, the law-givers, on whom they would throw their own inalienable responsibility of judgment and choice; preferring to be moved passively by another spirit rather than actively by their own.

To follow rule blindly is useful and needful for us all so far as we are always children and moral "minors" in many matters; just as to accept testimony is needful so far as our own experience and reasoning from experiences leave our mind unfurnished. But as this is not properly *knowledge*, so neither is that *action* in the full sense of the word. Mere belief in the testimony of others, mere uniformity to rule and law, will never further the growth of the soul; there must be also a continual effort to vitalise and assimilate this food that is offered to us, to realise what is merely notional, to use the judgments of others, not as substitutes for our own, but as means to form judgments that are truly our own.

Conscience, in its directness and immediacy, is a spiritual sense of what is right—a feeling, a taste, a touch, an intuition. Like all senses it is sharpened

by practice, dulled by disuse, destroyed by violation and abuse; nay more, if habitually "indulged" it becomes a blessed tyranny, a moral passion, sharp-sighted as love itself, stronger than life or death. It can often no more formulate its reasons than a child can prove his own conscious identity; it knows nothing of definitions, classifications, casuistry. Its development is not that of ethical science, but of a living faculty, of a spiritual sentiency. If, however, instead of stifling conscience by giving away its sovereignty to the generalisations, rules and inferences of the ethical understanding, we correct this understanding continually in conformity with the living experiences of conscience (as we correct science by the experience of sense), then conscientiousness will result in a development, not only of our spiritual intuition (*i.e.* of conscience), but also of our ethical understanding; it will necessitate periodic revolutions of our fundamental ethical conceptions and categories, according as these are found from time to time to be incapable, by any mere dialectical expansion and adjustment, of accommodating themselves to the new data of moral experience; we shall need to throw away our complicated cycles and epicycles, and take refuge in some more comprehensively explanatory simplification—to find new bottles for the new wine of the new Kingdom of God.

2. "UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS"

Martineau's¹ conception of Conscience as the sense of the better alternative, and of sin as the choice, not only of what is bad, but of what is less good

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory.*

relatively to the judgment of the doer, is as harmonious with dynamic and evolutionary thought as it is discordant with those static forms of Greco-Roman thought so long appropriated by Catholic theology. To the Catholic a choice is open between what is good and what is better or more perfect, between what is commanded and what is of counsel ; he can, without sin, deliberately choose the less good. A merely negative imperfection, a non-perfection, is not a sin ; and since no free act is "indifferent" in the concrete, the non-perfect, deliberately less-good act is, as far as it goes, good and "meritorious." I have often illustrated this by saying : "If you give a beggar sixpence, whereas you might have given him a shilling, you do well, though you might have done better."

When sin is viewed externally, juridically, as an offence against the rules of a Spiritual Kingdom, to be punished by pains appointed arbitrarily by law and other than those inherent in and resulting from its very nature, all this distinction between "sinful" and "less perfect" is intelligible and desirable. But is the analogy of civil government really valid ? really sufficient ? Is it not the mere impossibility of judging and enforcing the better that redeems the less good from *social* blame ? Does he really and inwardly act as a good citizen who wilfully does what is, in the concrete, and for him, then and there, less good, who does not act up to his best ideal of good citizenship ? It is not enough to say that the service he renders is, so far as it goes, altogether good ; for many bad actions are not positively bad but bad through some defect of fulness—good, as far as they go ; *e.g.* giving short measure, telling half the truth.

As for the above illustration, it may be replied : " In all the circumstances of this concrete case either sixpence is too little, or it is enough, in which case a shilling is too much ; and there is, considering the needs of the beggar and the means of the giver, one right donation and no other. Practically, one cannot deliberate for ever, but must act upon thought sufficient for the occasion."

When we recognise the urgency of conscience as the effort of the Divine to realise itself in us, as the growing-pains of the soul rising above itself, beyond itself ; when we estimate sin, not by its external heterogeneous consequences, but by its inherent evil and its necessary development in the way of spiritual distortion and impoverishment, it is no longer possible to believe in actions wilfully less good that are not thereby in some measure sinful, spiritually hurtful, grievings of the Holy Ghost. Not to advance is to go back ; to go back is back-sliding, is sin. This were a terrible doctrine, fruitful of morbid scrupulosity, were God conceived as furibund and vindictive, and not as the Physician, the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. But the irascible despot-God belongs to the juridical conception of sin as taxed with rewards and punishments. What is sin therefore for one is not sin for another ; what was right for me yesterday is wrong for me to-day, because I have grown older, risen higher, seen more. A child does laudably what is childishness in a man ; and nearly all sin is a sort of childishness, or anachronism. The virtues of the savage are the vices of the civilised. Hence we are all unprofitable servants and can never do more than our bare duty.

3. THE PRAYER OF QUIET

Religion in its infancy is speechless, inactive as is the instinct by which a babe draws life from its mother's breast even in sleep. While the savage is worshipping his fetish or appeasing ancestral ghosts, or while the philosopher is adoring the constructions of his understanding, or the devotee those of his pious imagination, silently there is going on a "give and take," a vital communication between their souls and the unknown God; the only true God, whose worship they are giving to their dumb idols, those false gods who have eyes but see not, ears but hear not. Yet wherever there is any dull sense of the infinite difference between right and wrong, and of the claims of the former to our absolute adoration and self-devotion, there God speaks, and there man answers by refusal or submission; there God gives Himself, and man receives or rejects Him.

On man's part this religion begins to be vocal and articulate as soon, and as far, as the God of his explicit worship is felt to be in some measure a righteous God, the judge, defender and "minister" of justice, the patron and ally of Conscience, enforcing its dictates by pains and rewards. Goodness and Righteousness are thus embodied and incarnated in the God of his former worship, in whom this quality or attribute is progressively intensified till it becomes all-dominating, as it were the very essence of divinity, whereof the remaining concepts are but so much frame-work and setting, giving it subsistence and concrete reality.

It is to this mentally represented Reality, and the supernatural world by which it is environed, that man

addresses himself by prayer and converse and ritual and sacrifice, as to something outside and beyond him, something shaped humanwise after all, and with which he can enter into such relations as exist between slave and master, son and father, subject and monarch, friend and friend—intensified, no doubt, idealised, spiritualised, but in substance the same. Such religion is vocal and articulate; it prays with its understanding, with lips and gesture; it interprets and reasons and carries on converse, inward and outward, with this image of God, as does a child with its dolls, or with the more aerial creations of its fancy. It is, as yet, naïvely unconscious that it is dealing only with the light as thrown back from a confronting image shaped and coloured by its own hands, and not with the pure source of that light—formless, colourless—in the very centre of its own soul. So far as what it worships in the image is the light of Goodness, that worship goes back from the image to the source of illumination—to God in the heart of the image-maker.

Yet the end of the process must in many cases be a recognition of the true nature and meaning of these dogmatic constructions, a sudden turning backward to the source of the reflected light; and, of this, the first effect must be a sort of revulsion against the figures that have so long illuded us with the semblance of reality, and an endeavour, altogether vain and impossible, to establish the like relations of converse with the Indefinable and Unnameable; with that which we can feel and love and obey, but which evades our speech and understanding; with that to which we can offer only such adoration, faith, trust

and love as are implicit in conduct and feeling, but none that can find expression in words or conceptions. And though, on deeper reflection, we recover ourselves, and go back to our dogmatic constructions, and pray articulately as before, and regulate our worship and actions by our formulated creed, yet it is now with the full consciousness of the merely "pragmatical" value of such "religion," and with a certain sense of loss, of separation, from what we once fancied we could hold and clasp in the forms of the understanding. But by way of compensation for this loss we gain a sense of reality, of experimental certainty, that was lacking to our dogmatic constructions more and more as they were further removed from the simplicity and unsuspecting sincerity of our earliest figurings of things divine. Like plausible, but inadequate, hypotheses they grew ever less credible and convincing in the measure that they were stretched and tortured into agreement with gathering experience. The more theology, the less faith in theology.

When, however, we turn our faith back from theology to fix it directly on that which theology but formulates; from the reflector back to the light reflected; the sense of the unreality of the former no longer disturbs us; we can allow for distortions, refractions, dispersions, for all the grotesqueries of the shadow-pantomime. Yet if now there is this consoling sense of nearness, oneness, reality, possession, there is also a tantalising evasiveness and inaccessibility on the part of the possession. In the act by which we attempt to think of it, speak of it, converse with it, we make it an "object," that is, we "image"

it to ourselves, and we deal with this image and not with the Reality itself.

“Truly thou art a hidden God.” Such attempts are vain as the effort to turn round and face myself; I must be content with the mirrored reflection, and what mirror can give me God as He is? This is the soul’s sorrow and discontent; He is so near us, yet ever behind us, turn how we will.

With this realisation, religion in its deepest exercise becomes voiceless and inarticulate once more, as in its infancy, yet how differently! As differently as the dear-bought simplicity and lowliness of spiritual maturity contrasts with the negative simplicity of childhood. Once more the soul lies like a babe in the arms of God, wondering too much at everything to be curious about anything, passive, silent, dependent, saying nothing, asking nothing, understanding nothing; instinctively confident and, in a sense, fatalistic; unconscious of precise relationship of I and Thou, Mine and Thine, and yet, in its whole disposition, affection, life and action, offering an implicit worship of Faith, Hope, Charity and Sacrifice that evades any possible formulation in those words or conceptions that are referred, necessarily, not to God as experienced in Conscience, but to God as imaged in the understanding.

It is of this voiceless, wordless converse, this “Prayer of Quiet,” that À Kempis says: “O God, O Truth, make me one thing with Thyself in uninterrupted love; weary am I of all that I read and hear; in Thee I have all that I need or crave. Let doctors and doctrines hold their peace, and all creatures and finite conceptions keep silence before Thee,

and do thou, thyself alone, speak to me. Let not Moses speak to me nor any of the prophets,* but rather thou, O Lord my God, who dost inspire and enlighten the prophets; for thou alone, without them, canst teach me perfectly, and they, without thee, can do nothing at all."

As a formulated prayer these words are addressed to God as represented by Moses and the Prophets in images and doctrinal conceptions; but they are the words of one who is weary of such prayer, with its inseparable sense of unreality and distance from God, and who longs for the voiceless prayer of inward quiet and repose, of dynamic union with the will and life of God: *Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi.*

4. CONFORMITY WITH THE WILL OF GOD

Fiat voluntas tua is more easily than truly understood to refer to the sort of conformity which may reign between two human wills fixed upon and inherently characterised by the same end or object. Thus viewed, God's Will or Spirit is something external to us, like that of our fellow-man; something hidden away, and to be gauged only by signs and manifestations. But this "two-ness" of God's will and mine must be got rid of in the numerical or materialistic sense. Things of a wholly different order cannot be numbered as one, two, three, &c. The eye and the light by which it sees are not a "pair" in any sense; and yet there is a certain agreement and conformity of adaptation between them. When I will what is good and right, God's will is in mine as the light is in the eye that sees. To

be in conformity with it is to admit it, to lend myself as its instrument, to let it be realised in me. It is in me and with my will that God wills ; the act is His more than mine. It is idle therefore to wonder how I stand with regard to God, as though his Will were an external standard by which my own must be measured. I know nothing better or more certainly than how I stand in regard to good and evil in all their various manifestations. There is just so much of God in me as there is of good in me, *i.e.* in my will.

When I pray : "Thy will be done in earth as in Heaven," I shall do better not to understand "will" so much of the object or end which is willed, as of the Divine Spirit or Will considered subjectively as dwelling and working in the human soul. *Fiat*—let it be, let it become present, as an agency working in and through man as its instrument of operation in the finite order. I pray, in other words, that the will of mankind may be progressively fashioned into a more effectual instrument for the use of the Divine Goodness ; that the Divine may be incarnate on earth in this instrument and have full play within the limits of its nature. "I and the Father are one thing," says Christ.

5. DISINTERESTED LOVE

Conjugal love is a mingling of love and desire, in which love must on both sides exceed desire. If, on either side, self-regarding desire exceeds love, or the desire for the other's happiness, the relationship is doomed. If there is no desire, the love is amical, but not conjugal. If there is no love, the passion is merely brutal.

I think the love of God, on our side at least, is analogously conjugal; it must be selfish and selfless, but predominantly selfless. The selflessness is more often attained when we seek Him in the Good than when we seek Him in the Fair and the True, *i.e.* the Ethical is more widely and fully developed than the Intellectual and Aesthetic Conscience. Moral good is more frequently repugnant, moral evil more frequently alluring, to our psychic selfish nature, than are truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness respectively. A perfectly selfless and self-sacrificing love of Truth, when Truth is hard and repellent of aspect; when she seems to extinguish our fondest faith and bury our dearest hopes, is rare indeed. How few dare then say to her: "I had rather be an exile with thee on earth than possess Heaven without thee: for where thou art is Heaven, and where thou art not a grievous hell." Truth is nearly always interesting, or pleasant, or advantageous, *i.e.* desirable in some form or another, something to be appropriated and used; not often something merely and purely to be worshipped, adored, and suffered for in obedience to a categorical, unconditional "ought." For Pragmatism such an "ought" is pure nonsense. So again the Fair, as such, is always pleasing and desirable. The least heroic and divine of men are often devotees of God as the Beautiful. But of selfless worship of the Fair, of unqualified submission to the æsthetic "ought," there is still less than of Truth-worship. In no strict sense does the artist usually make "a religion" of his art. He too often is a minister of pleasure—his own or others; rarely a stern fighter for the æsthetic "ought." For the Beautiful, being

always desirable, can never so appeal to love alone as to demand the sacrifice of desire to love. We can never give to her without receiving from her.

6. "SHOW US THE FATHER"

What one hears in the Psalter is the voice of the Good Shepherd, as He approaches this desert earth of ours in search of the lost sheep—distant always, yet now clearer, now fainter; now mingled and well-nigh drowned amidst ruder sounds, the noise of anger, the clamour of warfare; now momentarily master of the field, so plain and unmistakable that we could almost lift up our eyes to the mountain and see Him hastening to our aid: *saliens in montibus, transiliens colles*.

Nay, in all the sacred writings of the world we must learn to see that which is best in man, the Godhead that lies deep down at the very root of the human spirit, striving to find utterance through a thousand obstructions; mostly stifled and strangled, but at rare moments breaking forth in prophetic utterances, "whose sound goes forth into all lands and their words to the ends of the earth"; utterances whose value is universal and permanent in proportion to the depth from which they spring.

The Gospel was drawn from a deeper well than the law—a well of living water springing up to Life Everlasting. It was a keener vision that descried the Eternal Father behind the Eternal Judge; a surer ear that detected the accent of mercy on the lips of accusing Conscience.

CHAPTER III

CHRIST

I. THE INERRANCY OF CHRIST

A

Et puer crescebat in sapientia

THERE is a *prima facie* distinction between ignorance and error which cannot be questioned, and which makes even conservative theology willing to admit that Christ *as man* was ignorant because, and so far as, his knowledge was finite. Positive error they exclude as unworthy of the "perfect" man. By "perfect man" they mean man not merely freed from all positive blemishes to which his mortality is heir, but enriched with supernatural perfections of knowledge and grace, and therefore no longer "perfect" in the sense of *mere* man.

This is a legacy of the abandoned Augustinian theology, which viewed such "supernatural" gifts as part of the essence of humanity as created in Adam, and forfeited by Adam's sin. To be "perfect man" Christ must have possessed at least all the gifts belonging essentially to the unspoilt humanity of unfallen Adam.

If theologians still claim these perfections for Christ it can now only be *de congruo*, and not any longer as of necessity. To be "perfect man" means

only to possess what are now allowed to be the essential attributes of humanity. Of these ignorance is one; and inseparable from ignorance is error. It is not merely that to be ignorant of *certain* things implies error about something, but that to be ignorant of anything implies error about everything. To be ignorant of the motion of the earth is to suppose and affirm its stability; and so in all those numberless cases where appearances contradict reality, and where there is nothing to raise a doubt or suggest a suspense of judgment. The error may be innocuous; the truth practically unimportant in itself; still one false judgment is actually or potentially the seed of an infinite multitude of errors, and, while it endures, is a flaw in the mirror of the mind, a source of endless misrepresentation. Unless we are prepared to say that the human mind of Christ was equipped with the results of all subsequent, nay, of all possible, scientific discovery, it must have abounded in errors; and if with errors of one kind, why not with those of another? Error *as such* is not excluded. But to deliver him from such inevitable mortal conditions is to deny his perfect manhood, his likeness to us in all but sin. Still worse, it is to make him the player of a part, a proficient in equivocation.

But, besides all this, we must remember that merely "inadequate" knowledge, however true as far as it goes, by the very fact that it is not the whole truth implies a certain kind of error. For to *know* a thing means not merely to look at it as a whole in itself, and to consider the arrangements of its parts within that whole, but also to look at it as a part, and as related to the whole body of possible knowledge; as an

element of the world. That is its full, its concrete, as opposed to its abstract and hypothetical truth. One might know all about the structure, shape and composition of a dead and severed organ, but its full truth is only revealed when it lives as part of the organism. But suppose now that, by conjecture from partial evidence, one ideally reconstructs and misconstrues this organism, will not his full knowledge of the organ be falsified and erroneous? Now our understanding, the whole body of our knowledge, is just such a reconstruction of the world, *i.e.* of all there is to be known; it is not merely "inadequate," it is necessarily false *all through*, to some considerable degree, though ever getting nearer to truth, ever further from falsehood. And this all-pervading error, inseparable from *the finite mind as such*, affects every particle of our knowledge in its relation to our whole presentment of reality.

Hence *humanum est errare* is a profoundly philosophical and necessary truth; nor was he exempt from the necessity who could say with deep significance: *Homo sum, et humani nihil a me alienum puto*. And how could he have been "touched with a feeling for our infirmities," or been "tempted in all points as we are," had he not been subject to the inevitable and blameless limitations of the human mind—to ignorance, and to error, its inseparable consequence; had he never really known uncertainty, doubt, mystery, had he not made blameless mistakes and chosen the wrong lot at many a crisis? Is not faith the sum and substance of the Christian life and conflict? and yet theologians give us a Christ who saw where we have to believe, and who possessed where we

have to hope; a Christ who was crowned without the heavier cross, who calls us to follow him in a path which he never trod. To them, far more than to the critics, one may say: "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." Of the two, better to divest him of his divinity than of his humanity. As mere man we could still have access to the Father through him as through no other; as mock man, one might as well seek to scale Heaven by a rainbow as by such a dream-ladder. We need living bread and not theological paving-stones.

B

The postulation of inerrancy and of practical omniscience in the human mind of Christ is a consequence of the confusion of faith with orthodoxy, and of the assumption that revelation is not of realities, but of ideas about realities. When Philip said, "Show us the Father," and when our Lord said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," it was not a *doctrine* that was sought and revealed, but a *thing*. He who was always "seeing" the Father could make others "see" the Father, not by doctrinal exhibition, but by a communication of his own spirit through the thousand subtle pores by which souls transfuse their influence. What Christ had to communicate was therefore a spirit, not a theology; a spirit evoked by and revealing the experienced presence of God in the soul; a spirit of reverence, trust, love, adoration, devotion, self-sacrifice; not a blind, unintelligent emotion, after the fashion of some half-awakened animal instinct searching as yet for the object that

will explain it to itself; nor yet a sentiment excited by the bare idea or description of an object never given in experience; but one created and characterised by the felt presence and possession of its object; one, therefore, in which the very character and nature of the object is implied and revealed. To us this spirit is communicated fitfully and in various measures through him and from him; in him it dwelt in its fulness and without interruption; he alone was God-possessed in an absolute unresisting fashion.

Aquinas distinguishes the relation of Christ to God, from ours, as that of an *instrumentum conjunctum* from that of an *instrumentum separatum*; as the instrumentality of the workman's hand differs from that of the tool. This may not be very illuminative as metaphysics, but may well be illustrative of the difference in the moral or spiritual order, where *perfect* obedience and love, as distinct from anything less than perfect, may connote attributions as diverse in kind as those which distinguish perfectly parallel lines from lines never so little deflected from that perfection. As this inward love breaks forth and utters itself in a man's whole life and conduct and bearing, so too it will spontaneously seek to embody itself in ideas and language; it will instinctively seize and attract to itself, from the categories of the understanding, from the store-house of memory, from the phantasms of the imagination, just such an embodiment as will best facilitate its communication to others; and this the more surely and skilfully as the sentiment is stronger and purer. In most cases traditional religion furnishes a system of expression far beyond the spiritual needs of its average votary, for whom its ex-

pressions are as the clothes of a giant on the shrunken limbs of a dwarf; but the prophets are those whose spirit has found these garments too narrow and ill-fitting, and who have either enlarged and re-adapted them, or rejected them as outworn and irredeemably inadequate.

"Revelation" has, by a natural metonymy, come to stand for this embodiment and expression, rather than for the spirit and love therein embodied. Hence to the transient, and only relatively and temporarily sufficient, words of our Saviour have come to be accorded those attributes of finality, inerrancy, divinity, which belong only to the Living Spirit which dwelt fully in him, and dwells by communication in his Church. Were his words never so divine, what would their transmission avail without that of the interpreting spirit? And if this spirit is with us, is it not as powerful now as then to find utterance for itself in the minds and tongues of all times and places?

All reason therefore for de-humanising the mind of our Saviour and transforming it into a replica of the Divine Mind, an immutable infallible rule of merely "intellectual" truth (whether about things human or divine matters not) rests on the confusion of Faith with theological orthodoxy. Hence as we have learnt to study the Bible like any other book, while holding it to be the instrument of God in an unique sense, so we must learn to study the human mind of Christ like any other mind, while holding it to be the instrument of a Divine Revelation. In both cases the truth-value lies, not in the embodying letter, but in the embodied spirit; not in the presentment of the

worlds of philosophy, science, and history, but* in that of the inner world, shadowed and symbolised by these.

It is plain that the material out of which this symbolism has to be built may be altogether too poor and narrow for the adequate expression of the selective self-embodying spirit, even as the earliest life-forms are inadequately expressive of the spirit and life as revealed in man. The world as presented in the mortal mind of Christ, in his remembered experiences, in his understanding, in his inherited language and tradition, was of necessity immeasurably too poor a theatre for the full play of that Divine Spirit which strove to utter itself through him, and goes on further revealing itself in Christianity, in the spiritual posterity of Christ. We need not wonder at any unclearness, or want of explicitness, on his part, as to the ultimate consequences and implications of the spirit by which he was controlled; or at the evident progress of unfolding during his life-time and that of the infant Church. Paul was seemingly the first to grasp the essentially "universalistic" character of Christianity; yet even he did not see, as we now see, how *e.g.* the institution of slavery is repugnant to the Gospel-spirit. It was not only because, at the time, his disciples could not bear the "many things" he had yet to say to them that our Lord was silent, but also because he knew not how to say them; because they were, as yet, inexplicably wrapt up in *what he was*. Yet it is he who has said all that has since been said. Else I should have to say that I had mistaken the musings of a Philonist for the words that are "spirit and life";

that I had pinned my faith, not to Christ, but to an anonymous Ephesine Christian of dubious intellectual sincerity. "He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; a *greater* work than these shall he do, because I go to my Father" (John xiv. 12). And does not this hold equally of the words of Christ: "Greater words than these shall he speak, because I go to my Father" ?

In studying the mortal mind of the "Synoptic" or "Historic" (*v.* the "Johannine" or "Mystic") Christ, we need then to distinguish between the original, active spirit and the traditional material which it moulds and weaves to its own ends. Between these factors there is always a fruitful conflict waging, so long as the balance of power between the personal mind and the public mind, the original spirit and the traditional spirit, is fairly preserved. It is only at rare moments of critical tension that the former becomes fully self-conscious and self-expressive in its individuality. Most of a man's utterance in word and conduct is a blended expression of what he has received and what he has given; in much of it the personal element is infinitesimal or absent; he is almost purely "conventional," passively imitative, in what he says or does. If then one had to "formulate" the originality of Christ's mind, one would be inclined to find it in the first and decisive recognition of the true relation between the letter and the spirit; and in the bodily transfer of all the intellectual apparatus and imaginative symbolism of theology to the service and worship of Conscience.

2. THE OPTIMISM OF CHRIST

The illusory character of human life, viewed on its external side, has at all times been felt by those who reflect on the problem of existence. "Vanity of vanities" is the almost universal verdict, whether of those who hold off by some sort of asceticism, or of those who let go and suffer themselves to be entangled in the veil of Maya, to be caught up and whirled round passively in the Wheel of Life. It is the verdict of the Buddha and of Omar alike. The peculiar crime of Judaism, in the eyes of Schopenhauer (the philosopher of neo-Buddhism), is its optimism; its pagan, savage, childish belief in the value and reality of the transitory; its aspirations after a millennial paradise, little less carnal than that of Islam, a land flowing with milk and honey, a mere protraction, extension, and intensification of the conditions of earthly enjoyment, of egoist self-affirmation. So far as this optimism means lack of reflection, lack of experience, lack of sympathy, so far as it is the result of mental and moral narrowness, it deserves the censure. Contentment with the world, as it is, is, moreover, rather aggravated by the belief that it is the work of a God who has pronounced it "very good," and apports to each one his lot therein "according to his works." Between Judaism in that stage, and the religions of savagery, there is little to choose. Such a God is but the magnified shadow, or Brocken-spectre, of his worshipper.

Christ was plainly no optimist of that sort. As a man of the masses, as an opponent of their spiritual oppressors, of the fat self-content, the smug worldli-

ness of the ruling classes, he was as deeply penetrated as the Buddha with the sense of life's sorrow and bitterness, of the hard lot of the vast majority. Optimism is congenial to the successful few, whose interest and attention is turned away from disquieting and unwelcome facts, as in Russia to-day;¹ pessimism to those who are down in the world, and whom reflection has taught to see "iron laws," not only of labour, but of all forms of sorrow and suffering.

That Jesus had any hope of a deliverance in the natural order, of a gradual evolution of better social and political conditions, must be denied. The world had been irretrievably wrecked by sin and Satan. Yet he was a Jew in that he believed in an original goodness of the world, that was to be restored by a victory over sin and Satan, effected through the intervention of Heaven. He did not hold that existence, as such, was evil; Schopenhauer is a poor critic when he reads the oriental asceticism of Christian monasticism into the Gospel of Jesus. Nor was it through a "repudiation of the Will to live," through a studied contempt of existence as illusory, that Jesus promised deliverance; but through faith in a Heavenly Father, full of compassion for human sorrows, revealed and "made flesh" in the compassion of Jesus himself for the multitudes—a Father who could and would destroy the Kingdom of Satan and restore the world to its original goodness, making of it a Kingdom of God.

Except in his judgment that there was no hope for the world, save in a miraculous intervention, Christ was no pessimist. He did not believe that

¹ *February 1905.*

existence was of its very nature evil and illusory; he did believe in a loving Father behind all and over all, and in the eventual prevalence of good over evil; and it is just this belief in the goodness of the net result that distinguishes the optimist from the pessimist. A Jew in his optimism, he differed from contemporary Judaism in his more spiritual conception of the coming Kingdom of God on the one side, and of the radical evil of Satan's domination on the other. It was with sin rather than with its penal consequences, with justice rather than with its rewards, that he was preoccupied. Yet the sharply defined dualism of temporal and eternal, bodily and spiritual, as recognised by later Christianity, is not traceable in his teaching. Body *and* soul are to be cast into Hell-fire, body *and* soul are to sit at meat in the Kingdom of God. He is the redeemer of a fallen humanity, a fallen world, not of a world radically evil. It was from the East, and through the Gnostics, that later Christianity imbibed the conception of a radical antagonism between matter and spirit, and learnt the phrases, while endeavouring to deny the principles, of a philosophy which makes the visible world the creation of the Devil, and not merely, as Christ taught, his usurped dominion.

The strength of Christ's optimism lies in its refusal to admit an eternal and necessary "unreasonableness" in the sum of things, in its faith in an ultimate oneness, goodness, reasonableness, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary. Its weakness is in its attempt to explain those contrary appearances. The explanation was more credible when every physical evil was explained as the effect of diabolic

malice or caprice, and before an understanding of the necessity of natural sequences had begun to found the growing presumption that most of the ills men suffer from are the inevitable result of that same constitution of the visible world to which we owe also the conditions of our life and welfare. If we are to receive good from it we must also be prepared to receive evil; it gives and it takes away, it quickens and it slays. Much that in Christ's day was held as sin is now seen to be necessary limitation. The realm of freedom has been so narrowed, and that of determinism so extended, that the attempt to explain all evil and suffering as the fruit of sin is no longer tolerable.

Hence it was that Jesuit theologians were forced to devise their hypothesis of the "State of Pure Nature" in order to save the language (though not the substance) of Augustine's narrower teaching. The world's sorrow, they say, is indeed the result of sin, but in the sense that sin (of Adam) has been punished by a lapse from supernatural to merely natural conditions. The world is *naturally* as miserable as we behold it now; but God had supernaturally lifted man out of his natural misery to a life of grace and bliss which he had forfeited by sin, so that now his natural condition is also a penal condition. This is to admit all that pessimism asks, and all that reflection or experience teaches us, *sc.* that "man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live and is full of misery"; that life *of itself*, and quite apart from sin, is very evil.

Another fruit of this same reflection on the incurable evil of life has been a complete abandonment of

every sort of millennialism, and a spiritualising of Heaven, which has made a gulf between this world and the next that renders any rational unification of the two very difficult. Schopenhauer's World of Will and World of Idea are hardly more hopelessly opposed. This is because we feel instinctively that perfect blessedness is not compatible with the laws of the natural world. Heaven must be of a totally different texture—like the *Corpora coelestia* of the ancients. The only continuity between this life and the next is that the latter is the reward of the former, the coin in which its labours are paid, rather than the very product, effect, and development of that labour. Moral goodness in our conduct here is, in some utterly unexplained way, a condition of entrance into a generically different kind of existence, where there will be no room for moral effort. Life on earth is a trial, a probation for an absolutely different kind of life.

If, however, we can no longer believe in the diagnosis which attributes all the evils of life to sin and Satan—nor that the remedy is to be looked for from a sudden intervention of the original creative power, whose work has been marred by free agencies; if we find those evils inherent in the very constitution of the world; we are not necessarily cut off from the faith of Christ in the ultimate goodness of the world, but only from a certain mode of reconciling contrary appearances with that belief. More than this. It may well be that Satan on the one side and the Parusia on the other stand for the principles of evil and of its remedy, and embody in this symbolic form a truer solution than has yet been formulated. It

may be that moral and physical evil are generically the same ; that they are both forms of disorganisation ; that the remedy for both is to be sought in the prevalence of that organising Will which works itself out in creation. Thus Christ's teaching in the matter will have "prophetic" rather than literal value ; it will be the spontaneous symbolising (in terms of contemporary beliefs) of a felt truth in the ideal order ; a truth which could not then, and cannot even now, be adequately apprehended or stated.

3. THE FAILURE OF CHRIST

Had we but Mark and Matthew for our guides, it would seem as though Christ's last word had been a cry of despair, a confession of final defeat and failure : "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ?" as if His enthusiastic confidence that He would live to see the Kingdom coming in power, baulked time after time, to revive re-enforced and undaunted, unquenched even when the nails were driven through His hands and feet, were at last failing Him. Was it not then in the very extremity of His need that the angelic legions would burst from the sky, and snatch the Messiah from His cross to His throne in the clouds by the Father's right hand ? But the hours drag on, and His strength ebbs out ; and with His strength His hopes and bright visions fade like stars into the grey dull light of the commonplace ; faith is extinguished in the sense of illusion.

Such an ending has been but an archetype of the fate of most of God's prophets and sons, in whom

faith has not yet reached its highest expression; who are patient under a thousand disappointments of their predictions and expectations of divine intervention, because the possibilities are not yet exhausted, but are unable to face the idea of a law-bound love, that works on with the relentless blind regularity of a mechanism, turning neither to the right nor the left, to protect the just or to punish the unjust; a love which to all appearance is indifferent to its own cause, a love which ignores its lovers, disappoints, betrays, and finally forsakes them in the last darkness of death. But Luke omits the cry of despair, and substitutes one of hope: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit."

4. THE LAW OF FAILURE

What we might call the "Christ-phenomena," *i.e.* the sequence of events by which spirit-life develops itself in the ordinary environment of "the world" (*i.e.* of the majority of "psychic" men), are perfectly natural and regular. Given the same spiritual sincerity, purity, and strength on the one side, and on the other the same sort of worldliness, mediocrity, and animalism, the result will always be the same *in substance*. Hence the honest men and the prophets of all times, places, and religion have in some measure reproduced the Christ-phenomena. God's son has always been crucified by the world "from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same." Psychic men adore Truth in the abstract; when it takes flesh and comes to them in the concrete they crown it with thorns and spit

in its face, and this by the law of their being; the same law that in the individual makes the flesh lust against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. It is no sign of a miraculous and special destiny to find one's fingers burnt when one thrusts them in the fire. It is the sign of an Eternal Will and a universal law.

5. THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

As regards the supernatural or supernormal phenomena connected with the recent Welsh Revival, assuming that they are well attested (a more liberal assumption perhaps than the historical criticism of crowd-phenomena will justify), it may be conceded that they are not merely an index, but also a true cause, of the spiritual fruits and effects of the Revival. In them the inward storm of popular excitement flashes out to the eye, and is, at the same time, augmented by being made thus self-conscious. They are not all untruly an evidence of the presence of that Spirit which is troubling the waters, an evidence which carries reinforced conviction to the multitudes whose craving for symbolism must be satisfied: "Unless I see, I will not believe."

May we not say the same of the Resurrection phenomena? Without them, Christianity could not have been; its success and endurance is their best proof. And yet they were but the symbols and indications of the spiritual movement of which it is the continuation, and upon which it more truly rests, as upon its deepest basis. They were not merely the index of the Apostles' kindled faith in

the victory of the Crucified over death, but, as its seal and pledge, they were the cause of its liberation from slumber, and of its reinforcement.

They believed and therefore they saw; they saw and therefore they believed; faith and vision were organically one and correlative, as the real object and its mirrored reflex or shadow.

6. FAITH AND SENTIMENT

“It is the Spirit which giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing”; it is in the love of Christ according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh, that Eternal Life is found. “The visions of S. Gertrude are true, are they not?” a devout Catholic lady recently asked a priest. “I do not know,” was the reply. “But Catholics believe them, don’t they?” “I cannot say.” “I heard some one say that they were not binding, and it did me harm.” “I am sorry,” said the priest. “Does not the Pope believe in them and in the revelations of Blessed M. Mary Alacoque?” “For all I know he may.” “The Church accepts them, does she not?” “I do not know.” “*You* believe them, do you not?” “I do not know them.” “They tell us all about our Lord, and without them one would know nothing of Him.” “Do you ever read the Gospels?” “Oh no, they are so dry!”

This instinctive sense of a specific difference between the Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of the visionaries is deeply significant. It may be questioned whether there be anything in common but the name. Doubtless the latter is, in some sense, a development of the mystical Pauline or Johannine Christ; but in

no sense of the Synoptic Christ. In the phrase, "according to the Spirit," S. Paul understands "spirit" metaphysically rather than ethically. He is thinking of the risen "pneumatic" Christ of his own vision, and asserting his claims as an Apostle ("Have I not seen the Lord?") against those who challenged them because he had not known Christ "according to the flesh" like the twelve. Absorbed in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, S. Paul is singularly silent as to the life, works, and teaching of his Master; and shows but a slight enthusiasm for His "Spirit" in the ethical sense, if we except such points as universalism and anti-legality. Yet though this advance from "flesh" to "spirit" does not take us out of the ontological order, and insists merely on the greater worth of the diviner and more immaterial constituent of our being, it is both symbolic of and connected with a corresponding advance from a more carnal to a more spiritual knowledge and love of Christ's personality. It is the divine, the eternal, that lends all its life-giving power to the human in Christ; it is as manifesting and drawing us to the Father, to the Source of all Truth, Goodness, and Love, that Jesus is our Saviour and Mediator.

It is plainly not to the *ethical* Spirit of Christ that those women are drawn, who find the Gospel dry and the prayers of S. Gertrude luscious. Rather it is to a joint production of metaphysical theology and female sentiment. The former contributes that congenial element of vagueness and mysticism which so naturally blends with and fertilises the latter. To the starved affections of the cloistered nun the virile

truthfulness of the Synoptic Christ, the reformer of a corrupt religion, the sworn opponent of ecclesiasticism, formality, sham, and pretentiousness, could offer little satisfaction. As such he is a man's man far more than a woman's man. The Christ of S. Gertrude is a nun's Spouse—the ideal man both of her piety and of her womanhood. The Gospels contribute certain features of tenderness and sweetness, and the Canticles still more. The Passion, taken carnally and apart from its spiritual and ethical significance as an act of moral heroism, offers to their pity a bleeding and wounded Thammuz or Adonis, to be wept over, anointed, embalmed. Such, no doubt, or as fleshly and unintelligent in other ways, was the love of many of his followers, both men and women, during his life on earth. Is it, we may ask, a love of Christ *as Christ*, as manifesting the Father? is it a love of Christianity? or is it merely a love of the sacred flesh and blood, to which is linked a truth divine? If this latter, then the religious value is at best indirect and may be nothing. It may be that the abounding love of Christ's cause, and of Himself precisely as the embodiment and exponent of that cause, superabounds in a love of the very vessel of earth which holds the heavenly treasure—of all that he was over and above his Christhood; or it may be that the love begins and ends with these religiously and morally indifferent attractions. If the latter, then indeed it "profiteth nothing"; it is little better than a refined *delectatio morosa*, a feeding of the emotions by aid of the imagination.

And, in like manner, the "union with Christ" can be understood and sought in a more or less

corrupt and carnal sense, subtly concealed under a semblance of mysticism and spirituality. True union with Christ is union of will and aim and enthusiasm: "Not everyone that saith to me, Lord! Lord! but he that *doeth the will* of my Father"; these are closer to Him than mother or sister or brother; related to Him by identity, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

When, therefore, we distinguish between the historical Christ of the Synoptics and the Eternal Christ, and speak of the latter as a developed understanding of the former, wrought in the collective mind of the Church by the Holy Spirit, we must not confound this Eternal Christ with the aforesaid progeny of sentimentality and metaphysics.

That which we worship and love in Jesus is not a human but a Divine Person and Spirit; it is God Himself, considered precisely as manifesting Himself in the moral strength and beauty of Jesus. When we say that Christ dwells in us, we mean that God dwells in us, reproducing in us the pattern of the sacred humanity, which was, in a pre-eminent manner, his own. God is the Eternal Christ, and, as such, he is incarnate in that mystical body, made up of all those in whom the Spirit of Christ, its head, is progressively manifested and revealed in its infinite variety of kind and measure. In that its members, spiritually united, are scattered through all ages and nations, the very embodiment of this Eternal Spirit is gifted with a sort of eternity, or independence of time and place, and, as such, is to be distinguished from the sacred humanity of the historical Christ. If, then, our worship and love is directed to this

latter, it must be "in spirit and in truth," as to the incarnation of the Spirit of the Gospel, of the God who dwells and works in the hearts of the multitudinous members of the Eternal or Mystical Christ.

1904-1906.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY

A

CRITICISM, by pushing the origin of the Catholicising process further and further back towards the Apostolic age, adds emphasis to Newman's point, when he says that, if the Apostolic religion was evangelical Protestantism, its abrupt, complete, utterly noiseless and unrecorded transformation into its opposite is a most astounding mystery. "It has been clean swept away as if by a deluge, suddenly, silently, and without memorial . . . the deluge has done its work ; yes, and has in turn disappeared itself," &c.¹ On the other hand, in spite of Paulinism (which is Jewish rather than Catholic ecclesiasticism), and in spite of occasional traces of Catholicising tendency, conspicuous by their contrast to the prevalent tone, the Christianity of the New Testament is as little Catholic as it is Protestant. How and when was the religion of St. Mark's Gospel transubstantiated into the ecclesiasticism of the third, or even second, century ?

This, I think, will remain a mystery till we frankly admit that Jesus himself never dreamt of founding a new religion, or of seceding from Judaism. He was a Jew, and he intended his apostles to remain Jews till

¹ Ch. of Fathers, *Hist. Sk.*, vol. i. p. 418.

the speedily expected consummation of the world by the Advent of the Kingdom. It was in that Kingdom of the hereafter, and in other-world conditions, that the Old was to be transfigured into the New. But, till then, his work lay within the limits of the earthly Israel. What he taught was not a new religion, but a secret, a method, a spirit; a return to inwardness; a return to the end and intention of the Law and the Divine Legislator, whom he revealed as a Father, not as a despot—as looking solely to the good of man, not as, in any way, finite or self-seeking. Apostolic Christianity was a movement analogous to Franciscanism in the Catholic Church. As Jesus took over the language, traditions, and mentality, so also he took over the religion of his people—and therewith the Messianic expectations of his day. It was in his treatment, his interpretation of those expectations, that his spirit and originality were revealed, in the purifying and spiritualising of the materialistic understanding of religion.

Christianity was, therefore, not a religion, but a spirit, mode or quality of religion, which might be found in various religions, but never apart, by itself, as it were a “subsistent quality.” No doubt it is a quality or spirit that tends to unify religions, because their diversity is chiefly rooted in a gross, materialistic understanding of their symbolism and embodiment; the more they hark back to the one thing needful, the more uniformly Christian do they become. To speak of a “pure unadulterated Christianity” is really nonsense. The religion of Christ was Christianised Judaism. That religion, with its eschatological illusions, came to an end, practically, with the fall of Jerusalem. A little sect of Christianised Jews lingered

on by the banks of Jordan, buoyed up by such Messianic "hodings against hope" as those of the second Epistle of Peter; but, eventually, it became extinct and, with it, the religion of the Gospel of S. Mark. Catholicism did not grow out of that religion in any true sense. What, then, is the connection between them?

Religions have it in common to adjust men's lives in relation to the other world and to raise them above this one; they strive to explain God and man, this world and the next, but with varying degrees of ethical and spiritual insight. They have also diseases and corruptions in common, rooted in the mental and moral infirmities of man. Such are sacerdotalism, legalism, formalism, superstition, idolatry, materialism. Christianity is the antidote of these diseases. Its interest in theological constructions, in ethical systems, in ecclesiastical politics and institutions, is altogether indirect and at times partly hostile, namely, when these hamper rather than foster the soul's liberty. Though Jesus was a Jew he held the religious differences of Jew and Samaritan, or of Jew and Gentile, as of no account compared with "the weightier matters of the law," the common dictates of Conscience and the Holy Spirit: "None was found to return and give thanks to God save this stranger": "I have not found such faith, no, not in Israel." A schism, a new religion, a new theological system and ecclesiastical polity, was far from his thoughts or interests. It was not in such oft-tried remedies that he had hope: "Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem," but "in spirit and in truth."

Hence the Pauline extension of Christianity to the Gentiles was entirely true to the spirit of Christ. But

the Judaisers could only understand it in the sense that the Gentiles were to accept Christianised Judaism, *i.e.* not merely Christianity as a quality or mode of religion, but also that Jewish religion to which it was first applied; not merely the original spirit of Jesus, but the traditional religion of Jesus. Nor even did Paul perhaps clearly realise, however instinctively he felt and acted on, the distinction between the two. Not only did he require his Gentile converts to accept monotheism, and other elements of Judaism inseparable from worship "in spirit and in truth," but, while delivering them from the more intolerable burdens of the law, he strove to impose upon them a Christian theology, woven largely out of Rabbinical materials, and governed by categories unfamiliar to the pagan mind.

And, so far, his work had no root and withered away, especially when the Judaisers, against whom it was so much directed, and by whom it was so largely shaped, became extinct. What he succeeded, however, in communicating to them was just the Christian spirit, the antidote to those diseases from which their own religion was suffering. Gentile Christianity, or Catholicism, is paganism Christianised by a certain infusion of elements from the Jewish religion, as reinterpreted by Paul. But the basis of its theology, ritual, polity, hierarchy is to be found in the religion of the Empire, in which it worked as leaven, leavening the whole lump.

That that religion was itself a synthesis or syncretism of all that the world till that day had learnt about God and man, heaven and earth; that *the religion of Rome was a true Catholicism, or empire*

or world religion; is well established. The Gospel of Mark had now to be fitted into the forms and categories of that Catholicism. The "Son of God" changed its ethical for a metaphysical meaning; the "little flock" became an ecclesiastical polity; its elders, or presbyters, priests; its overseers were pontiffs; its spiritual, a juridical government; its chief bishop, an Emperor and Pontifex Maximus; its love-feast, an elaborate liturgical sacrifice; its simple decencies, mysterious sacraments.

To talk of all this as a corruption or perversion of Christianity, without discrimination, is to suppose that "pure Christianity" is a religion, and not merely a quality or factor of religion; it is to suppose that the Jewish religion of Jesus is of the substance and essence of Christianity. No theology or ethical code is of its substance, but only the truth. So far as Judaism holds truths, like monotheism and the spirituality of God, it is of the essence of Christianity. But so far as the empire religion held other elements of spiritual religion, it was equally Christian. Its sacerdotalism, legalism, and superstition were not, and are not, more alien to Christianity than those of Judaism. Against these diseases the Spirit of Christ struggles equally in one and the other, and in the little measure that it struggles successfully that religion approximates to the unattainable ideal, not of "pure Christianity," but of a purely Christian religion.

B

We must therefore invert the ordinary explanation of surviving pagan institutions and traditions in the

Christian Church. It is not that there was first a Church which deliberately adopted a policy of accommodation, and took into itself all that was harmless or reformable in the religion of Rome. Rather it was that the Roman religion assimilated certain elements of Christianised Judaism, and notably its Christian spirit. But, while nutriment is converted simply into the nature of the body which is fed, what is received into and assimilated by a system of forms and categories reacts more freely upon that framework, and alters its character in many ways. In accepting the Old Testament, (and, later, the New), as a book of Divine oracles, the Roman religion necessarily assimilated, though in its own form, a great deal of the Judæo-Christian theology and ethics. Jove was soon swallowed up by Jahve; Olympus, Hades, and Tartarus by Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell. The pagan calendar of feasts and processions was slowly Christianised. The Saints filled the Pantheon; Christian justifications, meanings and expressions were found for the rites and mysteries, for the asceticism and monasticism, introduced into Rome from the East. The supreme "Being" of Platonic philosophy was identified with the Jewish Father; the Logos with that Christ whose sonship became an incarnation. Here, again, it was not that Christianity clothed itself in the garb of Greek philosophy, but, conversely, it was philosophy that found images for itself in the Gospel. The very name and notion of (*δόγματα*) "dogmata," as of authoritative intellectual principles, comes from that philosophy, and represents the transformation undergone by the purely prophetic and parabolic utterances of Jesus in order to fit them to

the scheme of the Roman religion, which could only receive the Gospel in the form of an oracular theology.

But though Christianity, as such, is not a theology or a religion, but rather a spirit or quality, infused first into Judaism then into the Gentile religion, yet, as has been said, it is a secret leaven, which eventually issues in transformations of a certain uniform character and tendency.

Jesus assumed the religious ideas of his people and time ; he had no desire or thought of teaching a new theology, though later he foresaw that the Jews would put his disciples out of their synagogues (John xvi. 1) as heretics, and that he and his would be unjustly excommunicated, though they would never secede by their own act, or merit exclusion. He held all the inevitable errors, as well as the truths, of current Jewish theology ; its dualism of the Kingdoms of God and Satan, its demonology, its angelology, its anthropocentrism, its materialised hell and heaven, and, above all, its then prevalent belief in the near judgment of Satan and triumph of God. But all this explicit theology, this intellectual and imaginative structure, was immeasurably too poor to be an "explicitation," or intellectual basis, of the riches of his own spirit. Directly, what he preached was the love of God, the love of man, the forsaking of self ; and of this preaching his own life and personality, far more than his words or even his explicit thoughts, were the true expression. Every morality, every sort of life and love, necessarily implies a latent, and perhaps inexpressible, metaphysics. However anti-theological, Jesus could not preach his own love and spirit without implicitly preaching a whole view of the nature of

God and of man, and of their relations one to another. To make this view explicit was no part of his care, yet it could not but continually modify his acceptance and expression of the current religious ideas of his people. The "Our Father," on his lips, meant something as different from the "Our Father" of the Jewish liturgy as he himself was different from those who ministered that liturgy. Gradually the leavening of the traditional theology by the leaven of his universal humanitarian spirit bore him, in spite of himself, beyond all possible limits of orthodox deference, and cost him his life and the seeming failure of his cause.

In just the same way his spirit, so far as it has been communicated to the Gentile religion, must of necessity force the forms, conceptions, and institutions of that religion ever more and more into conformity with its own higher and truer implications; the latent theology of the latter contending with, modifying, and slowly overcoming and absorbing the explicit theology of the former. Thus as the parasite ends by consuming its host, so the Christian leaven, received into the bosom of paganism, tends to transform the whole mass into its own nature. But how grievously this tendency has been thwarted, the rampant paganism of Catholic Christianity makes evident.

C

What happened with Christianity, in relation to the religious systems with which it entered into combination, is what happens whenever a new principle or idea is accepted by a well-furnished, vigorous and fully-formed mind. For, if this principle is partially

or wholly out of harmony with such a mind, one of two things must happen, in obedience to the imperative demands of unity and coherence. Either the principle will be distorted or extruded, or else the mind that receives it will be fashioned into agreement with it, more or less rapidly and completely according to the measure of its vigour. The orthodox and clerical Judaism of Christ's day could not receive him, but thrust him forth as alien and irreconcilable. But even that freer Judaism, which his first followers carried with them out of the Synagogue, eventually proved too intractable and inelastic. It was the fluent and unformed condition of the Roman syncretism of the religions of the then known world that made it pliant and malleable under the creative influence of this all-dominating ingredient. Round this nucleus the restless floating elements of the solution crystallised, and ranged themselves in order. As multitudes gathered in some popular cause are helpless till they find a head and leader, so Christianity was the head and leader that gave order, meaning, and force to the scattered *débris* of a hundred religions. In the fourth Gospel we find already an emphasis laid on the contrast between the tolerant catholic spirit of the Romans, as represented by Pilate, and the intolerance of Jewish nationalism: "His own received him not." And in the Acts a like consciousness seems to be dawning on the early communities. *Le Judaïsme, voilà l'ennemi!* it was the "clericalism" of that day. Not merely its national, but its dogmatic, moral, legal, ritual exclusiveness were irreconcilable with that Roman, Catholic and essentially Christian spirit, which sits light by the

letter and looks only to the inward unity underlying the outward diversity of theologies and other religious institutions: "Neither in this mount nor in Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth."

Yet, however pliable to the Christian influence, the empire religion of Rome was too vast and complex, too many-sided and full of conflicting elements, to be quickly moulded to Christ's pattern. Uprooted in one corner, its weeds would spring up in another, and choke the pure wheat of the word. At all times, as to-day, we must distinguish conflicting principles of Christ and Antichrist, Light and Darkness, struggling for pre-eminence in the Church. To speak of the evils of modern Catholicism (as Wernle does) as a recrudescence of Judaism is only partly true. They are a recrudescence of those diseases which afflicted Judaism at the time of Christ, but to which all religions are subject—priestcraft, worldliness, ignorance, materialism. Of Judaism proper the only recrudescence has been Puritanism or Old-Testament Protestantism—an outcome of the confusion of "pure Christianity" with undeveloped or "primitive Christianity," *i.e.* with the Christianised Judaism of Christ and his apostles. For all its paganism, the mediæval Catholicism of S. Francis of Assisi is a far more Christianised religion than Bible Puritanism; it is a better expression or "explicitation" of the hidden implications of the glad, free Gospel Spirit of him who declared the Sabbath to be made for man and not man for the Sabbath. We do not want to be shut up in the Synagogue again. We thank God that we are delivered from Bibliolatry, from the tyranny of the Bible, or of those in whose hands it became a

tyranny. But neither do we believe in Auguste Sabatier's "Religion de l'esprit"—in "subsistent qualities," such as Christianity would be, considered apart from all religious institutions. We believe in Catholicism, *i.e.* in the resultant of two factors: first, the religious process as it works itself out in all the religions of the world, with their various theologies, moralities, rituals and institutions, through the divine spirit of truth and goodness, ever in conflict with man's ignorance and weakness, and striving to bring unity out of chaos; secondly, in the Spirit of Christ, as a principle of synthesis and transformation, as a leaven, first buried and overwhelmed by the mass into which it is thrust, but gradually changing the whole into its own nature, working out its own implications in the measure that it finds fitting vehicles for their expression.

It is the arrest of this process, through the recrudescence of the sectarian and exclusive spirit, that liberal Catholics deplore. Their aim is to set it going again; they want a world-religion, not a sect. Far then from feeling it a reproach that Catholicism should in so many ways be more like the religion of Imperial Rome than the religion of the Bible, it is just what gives it its chief value in their eyes;—its essential Catholicism and breadth. Hence, to speak of Liberal Catholicism as making more slowly for the same goal as Liberal Protestantism is surely to betray a complete ignorance of the *Wesen des Katholicismus*.

D

In his study of Mgr. Bonomelli of Cremona (*Pestis Perniciosissima*) Dr. Marian Zdziechowski remarks the curious split between the Bishop's mentality and his spirit, the one the fruit of education, tradition, environment and outside influences, the other, in which the originality of the man consists, the resultant of inward gifts of heart and temperament. There we have the hard narrow exclusiveness of scholastic theology, the proper product and instrument of the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees; and here, in conflict with it, a large-hearted, Christ-like, all-embracing charity, whose unconscious theological implications are simply heretical as judged by scholastic standards of orthodoxy. Yet, since these implications have not been to any great extent unravelled or brought to clear consciousness, no great intellectual conflict seems to have resulted, but only a curious antagonism between heart and head. Still, such mitigations as have taken place in the severity of Bishop Bonomelli's theology are seen plainly to be due to his spirit of evangelical love and charity, whose theological implications are made explicit to him whenever any point of the scholastic tradition is felt to be counter to, and therefore condemned by, the spirit of charity, or whenever any view counter to scholasticism is felt to be in harmony with that spirit. In his case the spirit of love and of humanity has proved itself a spirit of liberty and enlargement.

Was it not thus, I ask, that Christ was a revealer of truth? We have been taught to consider his revelation as a miraculously discovered theological

system, perfect in all its parts. Yet if he had a theology at all it was that of his people, full of all the errors and limitations which belong to every human effort to bring the Boundless within bounds. What we do find in Him is a liberalising spirit, a bold treatment of tradition in the interests of freedom and humanity. His interest was not primarily theological or intellectual, but his spirit of love could not fail to modify and reconstruct theology in accordance with its own implications touching the nature of man and of God, and of their relations one to another. Such a spirit is rather critical and selective of the materials offered to it than constructive and initiative ; it works negatively and preferentially rather than by way of final affirmation. Thus we need never look for a finished Christian theology. As long as men seek God the spirit of Christ will lead them on nearer and nearer. To say that the spirit of Christ plays the part of a negative and preferential criterion, in this wise, is in no way to impose a fetter on liberty of thought, except so far as every truth and experience may be called a fetter on liberty, that is, on license. As a manifestation of life the spiritual experience of Christ and his Saints must be taken account of by every philosophy that makes the service and furtherance of humanity its practical aim. There may be no such thing attainable as a complete philosophy of Christianity, but philosophies are more or less Christian according as they more or less foster and harmonise with Christ's spirit. In some ways the Jewish categories, in some ways the Greek, were found to be more congenial by the Christian Church ; but at present the limitations of

both are felt severely, and it may well be that a complete revolution of our religious and ethical modes of conception will give us a fuller, deeper and wider understanding of Christ than the world has yet known. It is hardly possible to study the Gospel carefully and not feel that its spirit is "pragmatist" rather than "intellectualist"; that it is nearer to Kant than to Aristotle, experimental rather than *a priori*, however much, in other ways, it may press against the too narrow walls of any of these schools or systems.

A principle does not begin to work itself out in the mind, to spread forth the roots of all its antecedents and the branches of all its consequences, to form a great complex idea or system of thought, unless it is first loved. Love is the warmth that makes it germinate; it must interest us, it must bear on some end that is dear to us, it must explain, control or give us power over some sort of happiness; we must *want* it to be true. But here our judgment may be wholly or partly deceived, we may misunderstand our feeling, and, when the principle we have adopted integrates and expands itself, we may find it in contradiction with the spirit in which it was adopted. Thus a man might adopt the Buddhist benevolence towards animals, and find out later that it belonged to a system of thought entirely contrary to his own spirit.

E

Whatever initial impetus Mohammedanism may have received from that identification of the spiritual and temporal which lent to its wars the character of a divinely inspired and protected enterprise, and which

won for its legal and social institutions the sacredness and sanction of the Divine will, yet, as Guizot¹ points out, eventually this identification was the cause of its stagnation and petrification. For legal, social, political and other institutions of civilisation must either develop with the course of history, or retard it, or perish. The prophetic authority of Mohammed gave divinity, finality, unchangeableness to those institutions suited only for his own place and period, and thus made them a clog on the future, and lent them all the persistency and immunity from criticism peculiar to objects of faith and revelation.

So, too, the criterion of "Apostolicity" or Apostolic origination, applied not merely to the transient religious conceptions and forms in which the spirit of Christ first embodied itself, but also (through ignorance of history) to those pagan forms in which it became "Catholicism," led eventually to sterility and death; to the perversion of the vital idea of Catholicism. To unfreeze (if not too late) this ice-bound megatherium, and set its locked limbs in movement once more, we must revert to the process and principle which first fashioned Catholicism, to ultra-Paulinism, with its complete subordination of the letter to the Spirit, its clear recognition of the distinction between the subject-matter and the leaven—the former being religion, elaborated, under God, by man's collective industry, as science or policy may be elaborated; ever progressing towards unity and agreement, and drawing men spiritually nearer from the four quarters of the globe; the latter being that revelation of the Spirit, given us in the prophets and

¹ *History of European Civilisation.*

above all in Christ, by which the natural diseases of religion are combated and held in check, and its identification with the interests of Conscience kept steadily in sight. The Spirit alone is eternal, unchangeable ; its manifestations, as conditioned by the fluctuations of religion, are necessarily fluctuating and mutable.

F

There is a law of "least resistance" in psychology, which causes us to receive a new idea or a new system of ideas with as little alteration of our mind as possible, so that the values we attach to the terms and symbols of the new are more or less different from those which they possess for our instructor. What he succeeds in building up in our minds is very different from the structure in his own, though we both repeat the same "Credo." If, at times, the individual mind is capable of a radical revolution or new birth, and unravels to the very first stitch a thought-system which years have knit up, in order to find place in its texture for some hitherto irreconcilable element, yet there is no room for such a possibility when we are dealing with conversions *en masse*. The collective mind of a multitude can only receive *ad modum recipientis*. It cannot, by unanimous agreement of its components, suddenly unmake and remake itself. Only in the slow lapse of decades, or even centuries, can it be leavened by and transformed to the nature of the newly imbibed principle.

It was not then psychologically possible that the Greco-Latin peoples should, in the first and second centuries, have taken over the Judaic forms of religious

utterance. At most they could shape the existing materials of their own religious thought, so as to attach very roughly analogous values to the language and rites of the Christianised Judaism of Paul. What they could receive without difficulty and conflict was just the qualifying spirit of Christianity.

That this was, in some sense, of the essence of Judaism is true, not only because Christ was a Jew after the flesh, but also because he was spiritually the son of Abraham and of David ; because he was of the race or spirit of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and the prophets ; because in him, the Son, was the fulness of the Spirit imparted to them, the servants, in measure ; because the Judaism of the Old Testament was already imperfectly Christianised.

Still this Old Testament Christianity supervened on a religion of the same human type and level as those of other Semitic tribes, and transformed it into a divine or revealed religion ; and here too the old story repeated itself, and the divinity and immutability of the quickening spirit was soon attributed to the rude material which it strove to mould into a living and flexible vehicle of self-expression ; so that in Christ's day progress had been long since arrested, and every jot and tittle of the law was taken literally, as the word of God himself.

To impose abruptly the whole, or any considerable part of this material constituent of the Jewish religion, on the heathen mind was psychologically impossible. It simply did not happen. The Hellenic Christians read the Old Testament as an ill-instructed Jew might read the Vedas—finding much of it meaningless, yet here and there seeming to recognise resemblances to

his familiar beliefs. Hence, though to outward seeming the Church Catholic was formed by the accession of heathen multitudes to the "little flock" of Christianised Jews, yet spiritually and inwardly the process was a reverse one. It was the collective mind of the Empire which took into itself the religion of the "little flock," receiving it and interpreting it after its own fashion, with as little self-modification as possible; rejecting wholesale, at first, what was immediately or permanently indigestible, and only gradually, in the course of centuries, yielding to the transforming power of the Spirit of Christ, and shaping its conceptions by the necessary implications of the Spirit. But here, too, the material to be transformed soon won the divine honours due to the transforming Spirit; and many essentially anti-Christian elements of paganism came to be sheltered under the authority of Christ and his apostles. The canonisation and development of these elements has strangled the principle of Catholicism, or rather caused it to be associated with all that is most antagonistic to itself.

G

Those who clamour for a re-statement of dogmas in modern forms implicitly accept the intellectualist view of a dogma as a proposition of scientific value, from which formal deductions can be drawn; and of the Creed as an intellectually coherent body of concepts, whose every part is logically netted with every other part. Grant that a dogma is but a prophetic and literary utterance, whose scientific value cannot be exactly determined, and nothing can be logically

deduced from it, nor can it be combined with other dogmas into a coherent logical whole. In this view the development of doctrine is simply accumulative, and analogous to that of ritual. Round the unchanging nucleus of the Eucharistic rite, which binds all the ages and nations of Christianity together, and which alone is of Apostolic authority, has slowly clustered a large body of accessory observances, varying in different periods and localities, creations of the same spirit of worship in which Christ took bread, broke, and distributed it as the symbol of his crucified flesh. Yet all these creations of the Church's spirit are ruled by and subordinate to the primitive and sacred rite which gives them their unity and meaning. Obviously, there is no necessary and logical bond between the centre and the several parts of this worship-system, but only the unity that belongs to connected manifestations of the same spirit.

In the same way there are certain central, primitive, universal and unchanging "dogmas" of the Christian creed, round which others, of ecclesiastical origin, have gathered. The former alone are classical, and are regulative of the latter. The Spirit of Christ, as we have elsewhere said, is the true revelation or *depositum fidei*. But as a spirit or quality it cannot be communicated in the abstract, or considered otherwise than in operation upon certain determinate matter, just as the spirit of Michael Angelo can only be studied in the works he has left us. Nay, the rudest remnant of his work would have held the full riches of his spirit for a mind sufficiently receptive and sympathetic. So it is as working upon and within the

subject-matter of contemporary Jewish religion that the Spirit of Christ has been preserved for us in the earliest forms of Christian teaching and practice. To keep these as a precious heritage unchanged and unchangeable is to preserve the *depositum fidei*, even as to preserve the works of a great master is to preserve his spirit. Yet we must carefully insist on the distinction between the embodied spirit and the embodiment, recognising no other permanent value in the latter than that of a vehicle. Primitive teaching and practice are classical as exemplifications of the spirit. The truth of subsequent teachings is to be tested, not by logical coherence with apostolic expressions and symbols, but by unity of spirit. We do not lay upon Christians the duty of an exact and material imitation of Christ's mortal life on earth; we do not ask them to be carpenters, or to walk the world as preachers, though we rightly say that his life and way is the supreme rule of our life and way, and preserve the evangelical record of that life as the divine criterion of conduct. It is the centre and unitive principle of the Christian life-system or morality. Yet the unity of this system is not logical or deductive, but a unity of one spirit diversely manifested. In all three departments of our religion—ritual, doctrinal, practical—development, so-called, is of the same accumulative sort. In Christ we have the classic and regulative manifestation of the Spirit by which those of subsequent ages are tested and selected. Of these some acquire a subordinate classic authority, and approve themselves to the Catholic world, and go down side by side with the primitive tradition to posterity. But all alike, primitive or ecclesiastical,

are turned to evil when the subject-matter usurps the honour that belongs only to the Spirit, of which it is merely the vehicle.

H

*Reply to an Imaginary Objicient*¹

(a) Christianity is primarily a life to be lived, inward and outward. It implies or involves a certain theory about man and God and Christ; about the two first because it is a religion, a religious life; about the third, because it is the Christian religion. (b) But this theoretic part is implicit, or involved as is the skeleton in a living animal. The skeleton is not first constructed and then overclothed with flesh. We do not first master the theory of the Christian life and then begin to live it; nay, we do not even begin with its ethical system. (c) At root, and even principally, it is an inward spirit or sentiment, determined and characterised in itself, or objectively, by the truth of things, which enables us to *feel* what is the right thing to do, and, indirectly, what is the right thing to believe. (d) The faults of inference, due to the feebleness and non-purity of the spirit as working in the individual, are corrected by the collective results of its progressive working in great masses of Christians through successive generations; and this collected result acts as an educative and corrective standard for the individual. Herein is the justification of Churches and of social Christianity. (e) The

¹ The "objicient" was suggested by the editor of the *Quarterly* at the time of the publication of the article on "The Rights and Limits of Theology," Oct. 1905.

constant factor of Christianity is this Spirit, which is determined by what God *is*, and man *is*, and Christ *is*; and not by *our notions* of what they are. The *changing* element is the embodiment of this Spirit and its manifestations, according as it guides Christians instinctively and by way of feeling to a more exact and specific determination of the ideal of life and conduct, and indirectly to more faithful symbolic or prophetic construction of the order of things to which such conduct refers, *i.e.* to truer notions of God and man and Christ in their relation to one another. (*f*) Thus the process is from feeling to conduct; from conduct to a conjecture as to the theoretical implications of the feeling. As an illustration: It is feeling and instinct that first drive men to seek the means of life and multiplication. Reflection on this instinctive action reveals the underlying theory of life, which then aids to accelerate and improve the process. (*g*) The hierarchic organisation of the Christian people is the natural and obvious means of collecting, comparing and systematising to public utility the scattered results of individual experience, and providing formulated standards of conduct and belief. (*h*) The fallacy I combat is that of substituting what are called *fundamental theological dogmas* for that *Spirit* which is the only constant and essential element. (*i*) A dogma in this sense (*e.g.* Christ is God) is taken as an asset of the understanding, as part and parcel of our intellectual system; not merely as a prophetic or symbolic statement of a fact in another order of reality than that with which experience deals. (*j*) For this would mean that Christianity was conduct *determined by knowledge*, and perhaps tinged

with emotion. It would be an ethical system, based on a philosophy of existence. (*k*) The progressive explication of the inexhaustible significance of the Christian sentiment or spirit implies a relative truth in all symbolic constructions of the Supernatural, and a greater truth in the later than in the earlier formulations, so far as they have not been sophisticated by theology. (*l*) Life, as a principle manifesting itself in an infinite variety of forms, is the object of Biology. It is not known in itself but, as a spirit, in its manifestations. The Christian Spirit is just such an ever-present object. Fundamental dogmas are no more essentials of Christianity than are biological conceptions essentials of the kingdom of Life; so, dogmas are the foundation of a *theory* of Christianity, not of Christianity, and that theory is progressive and mutable. (*m*) Such "dogmas" are the bases of systematic theology, *i.e.* of the attempt to give the theory of Christianity a scientific form and to bring it into one system with the rest of our knowledge strictly so called. (*n*) A "dogma," so far as it is a revealed premiss or principle of theological deduction, is a belief reached through the spirit (as already explained), but treated as possessing literal and not merely symbolic truth; as a statement of fact, and not merely as an enigma. (*o*) As guided in its collectivity by the Spirit of Christ, it is for the Church to determine with a certain supreme authority the common standards of conduct and belief so far as, in them, the progressive self-revelation of the Spirit is determined. (*p*) We have no right to look for that coherence and consistency in these prophetic-enigmatic constructions of the spiritual order which

we have a right to look for in systematised knowledge ; neither between those beliefs in the sum-total at any given day, nor even between those of one day and another. Here the progress, though real, is not necessarily dialectical. A fuller and better symbol need have nothing in common with what it supplants. The kingdom of Heaven is at once a net, a tree, a pearl, a banquet. The Church's control of belief is on all fours with her control of ritual and worship. Of a variety of rites each may be equally significant ; or one more than the other. (q) So far as there is a continuous development of the Christian spirit in the Christian people there is a continuity and unity in the varying symbolism of successive ages by which that life is interpreted ; comparable to the continuity of the accounts a man of thought would give of himself every decade of his life, *i.e.* not necessarily one with the unity of consistence. (r) "Fundamental Dogmas" belong to theology, *i.e.* to the scientific theory of Christianity ; not to Christianity as a life lived by every Christian. As given by revelation they lack that self-evidence and that unambiguous exactitude which is requisite in the first principles of a Science. We can deduce nothing from a riddle. (s) "Fundamental beliefs" (such as that of Christ's divinity) there are, as a fact, just as there are unchanging elements of ritual, binding the ages and nations together, making a *core* round which variations and additions cluster. If such beliefs were treated as *dogmas*, *i.e.* as literal and not symbolic values, there would be a serious inconvenience in their immutability. (t) There is a growth of rational theology as there is of any other rational discipline ; a vital organic

growth. But "revelation" cannot possibly be reduced to scientific order, either *in se* or in combination with rational non-prophetic propositions; its growth is cumulative, like that of a ritual or of a mythology. (*u*) The Authority of the Church is like that of Conscience; it is not that of a society against the individual, of the right (still less of the might) of the many against the one; it is not juridically or physically coercive. I injure myself, but not the Church, by refusing her teaching. It is the authority of *goodness*, of spiritual, not of intellectual necessity. God does not speak as a "witness" in court. (*v*) The appeal to the primitive Church is partly right, because the Spirit was then at its purest; partly wrong, because the interpretation of the Spirit was in its crudest stage, and plainly in terms suited only to that time and place; yet it possesses a normative value in its principal parts. (*w*) Like much of the Catholicising process, theology is an attempt to substitute rule for spirit; to develop artificially and mechanically what should grow naturally.

1904-1905.

CHAPTER V

GOD AND NATURE

I. DETERMINISM

WHILE that "Nature" which we oppose to spirit, and which we fight against in ourselves, is in some sense a principle of evil, it is also, when opposed, overcome and pressed into the service of spirit, a necessary condition and instrument of good. If our struggle is against the domination of uniformity, law, habit, mechanism, it is only because such laws and habits, once perhaps useful, have become mischievous through changing exigencies and the demands of a fuller and higher life; because the virtues of childhood may be vices in manhood; or because these laws cross and interfere with one another and need an adjustment of their claims. But the whole aim of our struggle is the constitution of a higher and better system of laws; not the destruction, but the reconstruction, of the habit-mechanism. The very inertia and blind persistence, which we have to overcome, is necessary to the perpetuity and stability of the fruits of victory. That old self, which has to be moulded into the new, though blind and deaf has been shaped by life and intelligence and bears their traces, as a mindless mechanism bears the traces of the mind that devised it. So, too, in the physical world, the principle of Death is also a condition of Life. The

determinism of Nature, the system of fixed laws, of uniformities, of grouping and sequence, is itself the work of spirit, the gathered fruit of its past victories; and yet its conservative inertness makes it the foe of spirit, so far as it not merely retains past modifications but, in doing so, resists further developments, yielding only to vigorous and reiterated onslaughts of the will. Hence the complex character of our sentiment towards Nature, as towards something at once blind as Night and intelligent as Divinity; cruel and kind; coarse and tender; forceful and feeble; sublime and ridiculous. In the physical world, taken as a whole, we cannot, without blaspheming, see simply an image either of God or of the Devil. If we would find God we must take man and the world together as one thing, and in this one thing learn to see Spirit and Nature in conflict one with another, working out the image of God, slowly and progressively, in the whole and in every part.

2. EUCKEN'S *GEISTESLEBEN*

Eucken's *Geistesleben* is but an extension of Goethe's artistic "objectivity" to the entire spiritual life. This peculiar "objectivity" is quite unlike that sort of crude realism, which strives (vainly of course) to exclude every sort of subjective contribution from our interpretation and presentment of Nature, in the idle hope of getting at things as they are in themselves and out of all relation to man. Yet it is no less hostile to the subjectivism that would find the only reality in the soul of man, and would value the objective world merely in relation to man and his feelings

and activities. In other words, it repudiates the realism that makes man's soul a part of Nature, and the idealism that makes Nature a creation of man's soul. It sees that neither can create the other, or explain the other, and yet that neither is explicable without the other; that they are essentially opposed, essentially inseparable. The true "objectivity" of attitude and view (which is also the true "subjectivity," for each term is equally applicable and inapplicable where the opposition is swallowed up in synthesis) is attained only when the little-self, the pseudo-subject, is transcended, and we recognise Spirit as one and the same in all men and in all Nature; when thus the Whole, the World, becomes self-conscious and vocal in me its part; when I thus live with a world-life, a Spirit-life, in which the distinction between self and not-self can have no place; when I no longer describe Nature in terms of my separate self, nor this in terms of Nature, but when: *Der Dichter erscheint wie ein Zauberer, der die sonst stummen Wesen zu Sprechen bringt; dem sich die ganze Unermesslichkeit der Welt seelisch eröffnet.*¹

If Goethe continually bathes his soul in every sort of experience it is not in the spirit of the phenomenalist, like Oscar Wilde, who resigns himself passively to all impulses and currents of Nature, and is thereby drawn into the object to the loss of personality and of subjective distinctness: "Rolled round in earth's diurnal course, with rocks and stones and trees." Rather he strives to draw the object into himself, to know himself in it, and with it, "one body and one spirit"; to view it as the unsuspected fulness or complement of his own narrow,

¹ Eucken, *Geistige Strömungen*, 1904.

separate self. To understand, to feel, to love, to construct and utter this world-self of ours and its universal eternal life is the substance of the *Geistesleben* or Spirit-life. It is to make ourselves conscious organs of its process. And yet it is a Life that is not of us, though in us. We can share it, receive it, unite ourselves with it; but we cannot originate it.

3. MAN AND NATURE

It seems strange, at first sight, that, the more man yields himself to Nature passively and becomes subject to the mechanism of her laws, the less sensitively sympathetic does he grow to her æsthetic fascination. Every advance in sensuality is in the direction of brutishness, of insensibility, and, at last, of total unconsciousness. On the whole, in spite of apparent exceptions, none are so awake at once to the loveliness and to the loathsomeness (in other words to the character) of physical Nature, as those who, in their own person, have overcome Nature. To the *homo sylvaticus*, or to the ape, the woods are silent; their secrets are for men of cities, whose ancestors cleared the forests and levelled the valleys.

But we do ill to view the life of Nature as other than an extension of our own life, as part of one Whole with ourselves; the duality (not dualism) that we find in ourselves is to be found also in the world all round us. What we call the material and the spiritual are without us, as well as within. Nowhere can we find, or even imagine, the one except in relation to, in conflict with, the other. They are contrary polar aspects of every experience. We call

things material or spiritual according as one or other combatant prevails and preponderates. Pure matter or pure spirit is *unvorstellbar*—not thinkable for minds like ours. But an ambiguity of usage gives the name Nature, sometimes to the physical world exclusive of man, sometimes to the material element of all experience. S. Francis of Assisi was at once the lover and the hater of Nature. In the world outside us we have the same tendencies or principles at conflict as within ourselves—an actively constructive principle of order, beauty, harmony, life, joy, expansion, fertility; a resistantly destructive principle of confusion, discord, death, pain, degeneration, sterility. It is only in man, as in the highest known product of the general process, that the conflict takes an ethical character. Good and evil have merely animal and physical values on the lower planes of Nature, as lower manifestations of spirit and matter; but they are, none the less, blind strivings for primogeniture of the same Jacob and Esau, whose struggle becomes self-conscious only in man.

Hence the man in whom the antagonism is most explicit, and the victory most complete, is he who best interprets the spirit of Nature by the spirit in himself, the lower by the higher manifestation, the rude essay by the finished work—a Jesus of Nazareth, a Francis of Assisi. There is, however, a gloomy morose austerity which seals the eyes and bars the heart against Nature. And there is a liberal measure of poetic Nature-worship, compatible with moral frailty, though perhaps not with cold viciousness and indifference. Yet the very ugliness of a harsh servile asceticism is evidence of material-mindedness—of an

imperfect victory of the spirit over the flesh—of a mechanical conception of morality. And the poetic sentiment of the sensuous is rather anthropomorphic (a reading of a lower self into Nature) than spiritual; it is not sympathy with an universal more-than-human life and conflict, common, though in different degrees, to man and Nature—with a divine all-pervading struggle between right and wrong, light and darkness, true and false, life and death, in which *we* can cooperate consciously and freely, *Nature*, blindly and instinctively.

4. CONSCIENCE IN NATURE

The mere fact that conscience is in conflict with that psychic element of our being which, by contrast, we call Nature, in no wise proves that conscience is not a manifestation of Nature in the more adequate and truer sense. For below this level of Conscience, and within the realm of physical and psychic Nature, we observe precisely similar conflicts of higher with lower laws, of which laws the higher is a conscience with respect to the lower. Thus the psychic forces of my being struggle with and overcome the physiological, as these do the merely chemical; or as the human world subdues the animal, the animal the vegetal, the vegetal the inorganic; or as, within each of these worlds, Nature struggles with herself, one hand against the other. There is, then, no clear reason why we should not regard Conscience and Spirit as *within* the totality of Nature; as among the forces whose conflict and struggle work out an ever fuller, yet ever imperfect revelation of her spirit.

Veni Creator Spiritus—that spirit in man, which we call Conscience, is precisely that creative spirit which works throughout Nature, from the lowest to the highest, shaping everything according to the law of its being, and helping it to subdue to its own unity and service forces lower than its own characteristic or specific force. The same Creator Spirit which makes the psychic triumphant over the physical in the production of animal life, makes Conscience triumphant over psychic Nature in the production of man—the difference being that, from the very idea of spiritual life, man is, in this latter case, the conscious co-operant of the Creative Spirit. Thus the Stoics were right; the struggle of reason against sense, of conscience against passion, is literally as *natural* as that of the spider against the fly. Conscience was shaped for victory, and passion for resistance. Still, if we use *natural* in the Pauline and Patristic sense of psychic, we must speak of the spirit life as supernatural.

5. GOD IN NATURE

As our knowledge of anything real, and not merely abstract, is always a mixture of true and false; and as our progress is only an approximation to unreachable adequacy, or a gradual weeding out of tares to the advantage of the wheat, so, still more evidently and necessarily, are our best actions those in which there is the least admixture of evil, and none is wholly unalloyed. In each there is at least some "material sin," some enforced trespass against duty. What scholastic moralists viewed as a rare but possible

contingency, a perplexed conscience, a conflict of duties, is the universal rule ; and our one duty is to choose or permit the lesser evil rather than the greater. What purifies conscience and counts in the eyes of God is the spirit, the tendency, the direction of our choice, rather than its attainment ; what it makes for rather than what it is. Many, if not most, acts, taken even in themselves or their immediate and conscious results, are double-faced. We cannot be kind to spiders without being cruel to flies. Nature is so ordered throughout that each part thrives at the expense of some other ; and society is, in this, her counterpart and extension.

But when we look forward indefinitely to the remoter consequences of any act, and attempt to balance its good and evil fruits, we are simply bewildered. One could easily show from history that good deeds have been the seeds of infinite sin and misery, and evil the seeds of as infinite beneficence and goodness. In spite of Huxley's *Romanes* Lecture, the "struggle for existence" is the same in the moral and the physical order. He erred in not seeing that *conscience* and *altruism* have their analogues and progenitors in the latter ; that any higher law is *conscience* to a lower ; that the cruelty of spider to fly is that of the spirit to the flesh ; that the species instinct masters the individual and makes him die for his kind. So, in the moral order, duty conflicts with duty ; one good cause ruins another ; mercy and justice butt one another ; righteousness and peace rend one another to pieces. The parting of ways never points us clearly to good and evil ; but to a more or less of both one and the other. The murderers of Christ and Socrates

were not merely doing something utterly wicked "in good faith"; they were partly right. They were defending undoubted rights of order and public authority against a still greater right of truth and sincerity. Each combatant was, not merely subjectively, but objectively, justified, though not perhaps equally. It was the duty of the priests to command ("All that they shall say unto you, observe ye and do"), and of Christ to disobey. He himself must have seen and felt this tragedy of life most keenly: "Amen I say to you, this night ye shall all be scandalised because of me"—for had He not previously taught them the duty of obedience? When He prayed for His murderers on the Cross, was it not as one conscious that there was much to be said for His opponents? and that His own conduct, considered objectively, was evil as well as good, the only issue of a perplexed conscience?

Thus the same tragic law seems to pervade Nature from highest to lowest—the life, movement, progress, advantage of any one part is at the cost of some other part; all good entails evil. But what is the evil of any part, considered abstractly as a whole and in imaginary isolation, is its good and gain so far as Nature lives in that part and constitutes its deepest reality. The Dominicans tell us that the souls of the reprobate contribute to the beauty of the universe, as a dark background to throw out the brilliancy of the blessed. There is a grain of sense in their bushel of nonsense.

It so happened that in Christ's day authority was the oppressor and Liberty the oppressed; the Past set its foot on the neck of the Present, and strangled the Future in its birth. Hence Christ dies at the

hands of Authority in the cause of Liberty. It might as well have been a counter-crisis ; He might just as well have been crucified in the name of Liberty for the defence of Authority—as He has been a thousand times. To-day, too, there is little doubt that, on the whole, He would die for the cause of man against that of God—while recognising the peccant cause as God's. Rome would crucify Him, and New York would crown Him. He would stand for the fearless facing of all truth ; for the radical search into principles and origins ; for the ruthless subordination of all customs and institutions to their one justifying end—the good of man. Still it would be as a choice of evils ; and with a consciousness of an unavoidable injustice to the opposite just cause. Act we must ; and to act is to take a side. No side is altogether right or wrong.

“Are God and Nature then at strife?” No, for God, as Nature, is careless of both type and individual : “I care for nothing ; all must go.” The whole scandal is from the fancy of a Man-God outside Nature, moulding and moving all things like a mechanist. “Immanuel” means, not only in-dwelling, but working *from within* ; and God works no other way than does Nature. Conscience is the key to it all. In us Nature, the whole, works as Conscience. In everything else Conscience has its analogue—the highest law of its being or kind. “And out of Darkness came the hands that reach *through Nature* moulding man.” In Nature, as a whole, God works the same way as in us through Conscience ; as an energetic ideal, seeking serial self-expression in a resisting medium. The precise relation between God and Nature, like that between Conscience and myself, is necessarily unthinkable

and unstateable ; it is not identity or diversity, not oneness or two-ness, since all these relations are between *objects* ; not between subject and object or between both and that which is neither. Hence such questions as pantheism, monotheism, polytheism fall through. " God is a spirit "—a " power *within us, not ourselves*, which makes for righteousness," *i.e.* which bids us subordinate our individual self and interest to an absolute and universal interest, which is that of our deeper, unknown, spiritual self.

6. THE UNSEEN WORLD

The idea of two worlds, natural and divine, visible and invisible, earth and heaven, here and hereafter, is rooted in the fact that our organic self is not only tied to a particular place and time, but, by the nature of its faculties of sense, is tied to what is probably an infinitesimal fraction of the possibilities of experience, which surround it like an unperceived atmosphere. We are certain that other lower animals are awake to worlds of sensation non-existent for us ; we can be equally sure that there are worlds without end to which we are dead, blind, and deaf. Thus the universe is divided, *not* objectively, but by our limitation, between the known and the unknown. The latter is infinite compared with the former, and explains its mysteries as the unintelligible part is explained by the revelation of the whole. The causal and intelligible unity and continuity of both worlds is obscured by popular religious dualism ; and God or the Divine is put outside Nature as an object of Faith *versus* Science. The truth is that Faith is not a guess or a hope, but

merely (as Paul says 1 Cor. xiii.) an inceptive science or vision. In the knowledge of physical Nature Faith precedes Science ; the hypothesis its verification. It is not a belief on the word of others, but a dim seeing for ourself. So the belief in God, *i.e.* in the (equivalent) personality, goodness and love of the unknown world, which explains the known, is a dim vision of that which reveals itself to us through the known ; and which, above all, evokes the response of our heart and affection as well as of our reason. If the sun were hid from us by an everlasting mist, yet his light and warmth would lead us to believe in him as a source of life and joy, and to frame hypotheses as to his form and nature. Such knowledge would be an inchoate science. We would not call it Faith, because the sun does not, *literally*, reveal itself to us, or speak to us ; whereas the Eternal and Spiritual Sun is freely, spiritually, self-revealing.

7. MAN'S DESTINY

As soon as Fichte (*Destiny of Man*), passes from *a priori* to prophetic history, and begins describing the universal state or Kingdom of God as something that will actually be realised on earth, we must take leave of him. Such a notion implies every bit as complete a subordination of the physical universe to man's uses as that implied in the crudest interpretation of Genesis i. Moreover, it ignores the problem of the contradiction entailed in the very notion of a world of saints and perfect mortals ; since good and evil are correlative, nor could there be good men were there no bad men. His fallacy is that he argues

from man's destiny to its realisation in a wrong way. He forgets that, from the analogy of all Nature, we know that the vast majority of "destinies" are destined to come to nothing; that of seed-forces of all sorts most are *of necessity* frustrated; that the good of the all, not of the species or the individual (*as such*, and as *distinct* from the All) is the only "destiny" that is absolute and infallible. Truly, every acorn is *conditionally* "destined" to be an oak; every man is *conditionally* destined to perfect spiritual development, but not *absolutely*. Nature's waves beat for centuries in vain against the cliffs of inert limitation, before a last wave conquers and effects what each had "intended." So, in every direction, she forces upward and onward, to be foiled millions of times ere she wins a little advance. On her myriad planets, circling round her myriad suns, she attempts the drama which she attempts on earth. But as little need we suppose that here or there it will reach its final act, as that this or that man or seed must fulfil the law of his Nature. All we can say is that, *of itself*, and in due conditions, humanity makes for such a Kingdom of God on earth, but the odds against the conditions are all but infinite. Yet this in no way weakens the duty of struggling for existence, and for the fulfilment of our collective and individual destiny. Enough to know that somewhere, somewhen, the Idea that works in our spirit will at last fulfil itself, nay, may have fulfilled itself millions of times; that it is our own spirit which is the one subject of all experience; that if it is "I" who fail here and now, it is "I" who succeed there and then; if I succeed there, it is because I have struggled, not only there, but everywhere, for

success. Every fair stroke struck for goodness is an eternal acquisition; every false stroke or wasted chance an eternal loss and impoverishment. The "empirical" self of each moment is either lost or saved for eternity; an object of everlasting love or of everlasting reprobation.

"The lost days of my life . . .
I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
'I am thyself, what hast thou done to me?'
'And I—and I—thyself' (lo each one saith,)
'And thou thyself to all eternity.'"

Lost Days. D. G. ROSSETTI.

1904-1906.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH

I. DOMUS DEI

Unam petii a Domino, hanc requiram, etc. "One thing have I sought of the Lord, and this will I require of Him, that my dwelling be in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." How truly and sincerely are these and kindred prayers uttered by many in the days of their spiritual childhood, when this or that dwelling made by hands, this or that human institution originally designed for God's service, seems to them to be "truly none other than the House of God and the Gate of Heaven"; when to be numbered among its members seems to be synonymous with being reckoned among God's children; when the outward and visible sign of such membership seems a significant pledge of the inward and spiritual grace; when to forfeit the sign is to forfeit the thing signified. Slowly and painfully the old, old lesson must be learned by each in turn: that He dwelleth not in temples made with hands; that these are but symbols and shadows of that spiritual temple, built up of living stones, quickened by the Spirit of Him who is the chief corner stone, elect, precious, rejected indeed of men, but chosen of God. What excommunication should scare us if only we are numbered with the communion

of the truthful, the sincere, the Christ-like; and what will any other sort of communion avail, if we be not within that pale, outside which alone there is no salvation? God is not deaf to the cries of our pupilage, but reads those depths and implications of our desires that are hidden from ourselves. He strips the childish and transitory form from the precious substance of our prayer, and when we think that all is lost we suddenly find that all is gained.

2. THE CLERGY

Far more than the onslaughts of historical and philosophical criticism is the mental and moral character of the clerical class the cause of unbelief in Catholic countries. Where the people have been for centuries educated to take their religion on authority, passively, and in no sense to acquiesce or verify it for themselves actively, the discrediting of the witness in respect to his intelligence or his trustworthiness involves of necessity the contempt of his message. And this witness in Catholic countries is not the Pope, in his abstract, theological aspect, as the inheritor of Peter's prerogatives; nor is it that other theological entity, called the Universal Church or the Ecumenical Council; but it is the priests, the clergy, with whom the people come in contact, and from whom they receive, thus passively, their religious tradition. But when these priests are felt to become, relatively, more and more uneducated and alien to the general culture every day; when criticism convicts them over and over again of the most monstrous credulity, superstition, and unintelligence; when they are found to be un-

scrupulous and uncandid in defence of their class-interests and prerogatives; and when, above all, their lives are not such as to command respect, to say nothing worse, is it wonderful that truths that rest on no better evidence than the witness of such a class should be ignored or denied? A theologian will discern between the trafficking devotions which the priest, *qua* man, inculcates, and the duties and doctrines which he imposes in the Church's name. But will the layman stop to distinguish? Will he not justly say that, as a class, the priests are not trustworthy?

3. LIMITS OF AUTHORITY

One strong and right conviction of Protestantism and Quakerism is that the necessities of our spiritual life should be such as it is not in the power of man to take from us; that our peace and its foundations should be such as the world can neither give nor take away. If sacraments can be given and withdrawn capriciously by ecclesiastical authorities, at the suggestion of any irritated theologian or other mischievous person, is it not better to learn to do without them, and to exclude them from the reliable building-materials of our spiritual edifice?

Needless to say, no man has any true power to cut off from another what he believes to be the supplies of eternal life and the medicine of his moral infirmities. Consistently with the whole practice of interdicts, the Roman Church should forbid or invalidate our prayers; and, no doubt, does so equivalently in her solemn curses and anathemas. Still, if we accept, as we must, the *social* idea of a religion, we cannot but be dependent

for its advantages on the will of men—an argument no doubt *against* the social idea. There remains the hypothesis that society is a great help, but not an absolute necessity.

4. THE FAITHFUL

Catholicism, Greek or Roman, is the religion of the poor, of the masses. Anglicanism is too academic, too educated; Protestantism, in some of its forms, is only for a spiritual aristocracy, for the naturally religious, for the elect or for the converted; Catholicism it is which appeals to the mediocre millions.

True, but could not the same be said of some of the worst religions in the world? Are not those mediocre millions the easy and natural prey of a priestly caste, with its usual promises of cheap salvation by unspiritual external methods; its judicious caterings for, and tradings upon, the credulity and superstition of the childish and illiterate; its instinctive hostility to any sort of spiritual or mental enlightenment that might make the crowds less docile and subservient to its supernatural claims and privileges? Was not the corrupt religion of those Scribes and Pharisees and Priests, whose vices are lashed so mercilessly by the Most Merciful (Matt. 23), in one sense a religion of the poor? "The poor ye shall have always with you," says our Lord. Yes! but he goes on: "and ye can do them good whensoever ye will."

It is not in having the poor with it, but in doing them good, that a religion is proved to be Christ's. What if it keep them poor, or make them poorer, or foster their ignorance and moral degradation? What if, for the sake of their pence and their services, it

pander to their superstitions, their vices and frailties ; if it come down to their level instead of raising them to a higher level ? Was this the sense in which Christ preached the Gospel to the poor ; or was it not rather a Gospel of deliverance from the internal and external oppression of a selfish and tyrannical priesthood ?

The real question is, therefore : " What does Catholicism do for the moral and spiritual elevation of the degraded " ; not : " How many millions of such does it number among its adherents " ? What percentage of the poor does it elevate ? Nor is it enough to get them to go through a routine of religious duties, if there be no moral redemption in the gross. The light of a public religion must so shine before men that they may *see its good works*.

5. PROPHECY AND SUPERSTITION

Not imagination, but the lack of it, is at the root of most popular superstitions. The legends of saints and heroes exhibit a materialism, a monotony, a poverty that is unmistakable. Activity is not fecundity. At once the crowd must clothe its hero in the conventional garb ; must drag him down to the level of the vulgarest, most general forms of apprehension. The prophet is necessarily somewhat of a poet. He translates his intuition of eternal reality into concrete, sense-striking, heart-moving images, which *for him* are *consciously* images, analogies, and no more. The crowd to whom he preaches lacks his intuition, and so is not consciously sensible of the imagery *as imagery*. It is disposed to receive it at its literal value,¹ as in-

¹ Selden : " Transubstantiation is rhetoric turned into logic."

spired prose and matter of fact. Later, when this literalism has been imposed as dogma, come other prophets who restore its original value, believing themselves to be innovators and allegorists, and so accounted by others.

As prophecy is essential to religion, so its perversion is inevitable—*pauperes semper habetis vobiscum*, we shall always have the foolish crowd to reckon with; but let us not strangle the prophet out of respect for the superstitions of the crowd—as Rome does.

But if, to escape superstition, we confine religious teaching just to what admits of scientific prosaic statements, *i.e.* to theology, we end in Unitarian and rationalistic deadness. Theology is to prophecy what logic is to reasoning—a test, a corrective; but in no sense a principle of fecundity and life.

6. SANCTITY

If it is to the Saints, and not to the theologians, we are to attribute the healthy growth of the Christian Idea, we must not understand this of the canonised Saints of the Church, who, as a matter of history, have been neither invariably, nor exclusively, the moulders of the Catholic Creed and institutions. Rather is it to the Christian Spirit, as influential in various degrees in the lives of all more than nominal believers; or, one might say, to the sanctity of the Church in its collectivity.

The officially Canonised Saints are not raised to the Altar primarily for their eminence in those “natural” virtues, which Augustine says were only vices in the pagans; and which, Newman says, may abound and

superabound and yet leave their possessor on an infinitely lower spiritual plane than the vicious profligate in the first instant of sacramental absolution. They are canonised as heroic in Faith, Hope, and Charity, as filled with that supernatural grace which (by definition) evades all experimental test, and is absolutely separable from ethical goodness, however much it may postulate it as a congruous adornment.

Thus, when we say that goodness is the road to religious Truth, we are surely thinking of the Sermon on the Mount rather than of mystical experiences, ecstasies, levitations, miracles. For myself these are the indications, not of sanctity, but of abnormal conditions of mind and sentiment. *Securus judicat* refers to what is average or general as a corrective of subjective deficiency. If the canonised are at times true *originals* and not mere *eccentrics*, if they include and transcend the normal in the supernormal, and thus effect a real development, yet the test of this must be its eventual acceptance by the Church, its ability to survive and establish itself in the *orbis terrarum*; and thus again, it is to the collectivity we look, and not to the individual, for our rule. If to the individual, it is not as Catholics we do so, but as ourselves individuals.

Moreover, the motives of official canonisation are too mixed, too human, to command confidence. We should prefer the judgment of Saints about Saints to that of theologians, lawyers, and worldly-minded ecclesiastics; especially when the canonisation is made to depend on the fact and significance of miracles, that are neither facts nor signs of sanctity.

It is, then, in the diffusion of Christian life and sentiment among her members that the Church possesses

the *charisma* of spiritual discernment, such as it is, which gives to her pronouncements such authority as they possess. So far as she lacks a monopoly of this practical Christianity, and so far as its diffusion among her members is unequal and imperfect, she fails of that authority which is of her ideal.

Still, as aiming at that ideal identification of the Visible with the Invisible Church on earth, of all Christians in name with all Christians in fact, she demands of us an ideal of deference and submission which no other Church reasonably can, and which we can accept and defer to with qualifications proportionate to her own failure of attainment. "He that heareth you heareth me"—so far as her voice is that of Christ we obey her as Christ.

7. HERESY

"If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican"—a curiously clumsy and unsympathetic interpolation of early ecclesiasticism. If we imagine so unchristlike an expression from the lips of Christ, we must surely interpret it by what we know of his attitude towards the heathen and the publican, an attitude of compassion and fraternity: "If he will not hear thee, still try to gain his love through the intermediation of the Church; and even if he still keeps his wrath, and will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican; show him at least all the love that you have been taught to show to the alien, since he persists in his alienation."

So interpreted it is but another inculcation of the

doctrine : " Not till seven times, but till seventy times seven." It is not that the Church makes or declares him an alien, but that he has made himself one by his refusal to be reconciled, or to listen to mediation. Still he cannot alienate himself from the Christian love, which embraces the alien and the enemy, the heathen and the publican.

8. THE FAITH OF CONSENSUS

The evidence of our outward senses is supposed to be the strongest popular proof of reality ; nothing so real as what we can see, touch, and handle : " Unless I see the wounds and thrust my fingers into the prints, I will not believe." Now what is thus " real " exists for the senses of all ; it possesses, to use the current idealist expression, " intra-subjective " reality ; or, to use the realist expression, " objective " reality, compared with which those feelings which exist for me alone (pleasure and pain, &c.) are considered less real, merely subjective. Further, what is given even to my outward senses is pronounced illusory and subjective, should it prove to have no existence for the outward existence of others. So that the common idea of reality is that of existing for the outward senses of the generality of men ; and its supreme test is not what my senses tell me, nor what I see, but what others tell me they see ; in other words, my belief is influenced more by the consentient testimony of others than by the evidence of my outward senses ; so that if all with whom I lived conspired to lie to me about the facts or outward sensation, I should believe myself mad. To such an extent, therefore, is the

individual dependent on society for the formation of his mind. If, as seems generally admitted, nine-tenths of what we seem to see directly is filled in by subjective contributions, by dream-stuff, and memories, and associations, and inferences ; if the senses give us no more than microscopic hints and suggestions of the object which we construct in response to their stimulus ; as much, or more, of what we seem to believe independently is imposed upon us more or less unconsciously by the influence of Society.

If, then, this consentient testimony overrides the evidence of our senses as a witness of reality, it is not surprising that whatever comes to us on such testimony should impress us as irresistibly real—just as the merely inferred solidity of a distant house impresses us as much more real than its superficiality—which is what we actually see. In both cases it is harder to resist the indirect, and somewhat inferential, impression than the direct ; though the former may be, and the latter cannot be, unreal and illusory. It is therefore psychologically impossible to stand alone against the consentient testimony of one's *entire* world, however small.

The Catholic Church recognises this principle in her insistence on uniformity of expression, uniformity of ritual, uniformity of practice, on segregation and exclusion from all idea of possible diversity. Hereby the things of faith, or still more the principles of morality implied and asserted in conduct, gain a reality that is truly "intra-subjective," and superior even to that of the sensible world. Segregation from dissidents and ignorance of dissent are not, however, easily manageable in these days ; though even still, in the

seclusion of some cloister, the religious, undisturbed by any suspicion of a counter-consensus outside, can find his creed made sensible and irresistibly real in the unbroken unanimity of all around him, not only as expressed in their speech but also as implied in their whole life and conduct ; so that, for him, the outside world grows as dreamy and unreal as that of the cloister is for the outsider.

But however desirable it may be as an extrinsic condition of faith, this purely psychological habit is in itself of no moral value whatever, and can be used in the interests of evil and error as well as of goodness and truth. It is none the less commonly confounded with Faith by its possessors and others, giving, as it does, a certain "substance to things hoped for," a certain "evidence of things not seen," which enables the believer to laugh the sceptic to scorn, as though he had denied the evidence of his senses. Yet the solidity of Faith is not so easily procurable. It is a free act of the self-determining will, not a necessity of the determined mind.

9. PUBLIC RELIGION

Certainly a *prima facie* objection to a public religion, and an argument for pure individualism, is found in the fact that our spiritual growth demands that the object of our worship, our God (in other words), should be the embodiment of those moral ideals, towards which we are struggling out of our present and past imperfections. Now the God of a *public* religion necessarily embodies the moral ideal of *past* generations, and these, in the measure that

they are imposed upon us as of divine authority, act as a check on our progress, and trouble us by a conflict between the dictates of religion and ethics, which ought to be in perfect accord.

For all of us at the outset of life, for a vast proportion of us throughout our whole lives, these authoritative ideals of the past furnish a standard of higher attainment; but for the living, leading, progressive part of the community they are a hindrance more than a help. These last must, so to say, comprehend and pass beyond the God of the public religion, and, by so doing, further the development of that conception which else, remaining stationary, would become a more and more demoralising influence in every successive generation. Indeed the God of one age may, by mere inertia and through the petrifying effect of authority and religious conservatism, become the devil of a future age; even as the virtue and wisdom of childhood become vice and folly when they are carried on into mature age, or as anything that *ought* to grow becomes evil and mischievous by not growing. There is one God of the Old Testament and of the New, but the Old Testament conception of God would be demoralising were it not corrected by the New and recognised as its faulty embryo. Similarly the New Testament God is not the God of the Church of these latter days.

And what holds of the conception of God holds of the rest of a public religion, which is always in advance of the religious and moral conceptions and aspirations of the backward section of the community, is on a level with those of the average, but acts as a clog on the progressive section if its authority be so

exaggerated as to make criticism treasonable, and to rob the moral sense of its sovereignty.

10. THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH

May it not be that one's union with the visible Church often needs, like an ill-set bone, to be broken and re-set? We sought in it what we had no business to seek; we took it for the substance, whereof it is but the shadow or sacrament. As, one by one, the claims of the hierarchic Church dissolve under criticism, and as our attitude towards the official and theological defenders of those claims becomes one of opposition and indignant protest, and brings upon us the sense of unmerited outlawry, and at least the anticipation of violence and oppression, we are driven more and more to content ourselves with a sense of spiritual communion with all lovers and martyrs of truth and conscience throughout the world in all ages, present, past, and to come, and at last come to find, in this communion with the invisible Church, a far deeper source of strength and solace than that from which the duties of inward sincerity have in some measure shut us off.

"Be my soul with the Saints!" says Newman, looking away from Anglicanism towards the altars of Rome. But is there not a wider Communion of Saints, whereof the canonised are but a fraction, and whose claims are founded, not in miracles or prodigies, but in that sincerity to truth and righteousness, without which even orthodoxy were nothing worth? Be my soul with such saints, whatever their creed and communion!

To have been thus thrown back on this invisible communion, the only veritable mystical Christ; to have been made conscious of it by way of contrast with and opposition to its symbol, is, for a few perhaps, the necessary condition of a healthful and free relation of union with the visible hierarchic Church. For then they will realise that the latter fails of its ideal perfection, and of the full measure of those prerogatives which are dependent on its actualisation of the ideal, just so far as it fails of precise coincidence with the invisible Church, the mystical Christ, the assembly of those "who are led by the Spirit of God and are the Sons of God"; and just so far as thousands of such Christlike men are excluded from its communion, and thousands of un-Christlike men are therein included.

The Christlike alone are genuine successors of the Apostles; to such only is it said (in no mere legal, official, fictional sense), "He that heareth you heareth me. . . . As the Father has sent me so send I you," &c. Could all these, and only these, be united in ecumenical Council, there would Christ be in the midst of them; their utterances and teachings would be, purely and only, the product of spiritual experience, undistorted and unalloyed by the influence of intellectual curiosity, or of sacerdotal ambition, or of other unworthy determinants of doctrinal variation; their authority would be that of the collective conscience of humanity.

Towards this never to be attained ideal we are bound to struggle, praying that God would bring together, into this one visible society, the members of his mystical body scattered throughout the world: *Quam*

pacificare et coadunare digneris toto orbe terrarum. And in the Roman Catholic communion principally, though also in other essays and attempts at the same end, we must learn to see an as yet woefully abortive endeavour to bring forth this ideal of the invisible "communion of Saints" made visible, made flesh. Her error lies in claiming to be actually what she is only in ideal and aspiration, what she never can be fully—One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Infallible, Impeccable, &c. &c.

For example, her infallibility is precisely proportioned to, because rooted in, her holiness; for (as opposed to mere scientific and theological criticism) it is the infallibility of an instinct, of the spiritual life and appetite for its congenial doctrinal pabulum. *In theory*, her ecumenical Councils are assemblies of Saints; *in fact*, as history shows, they are nothing of the kind. Still, their teachings are not valueless because necessarily imperfect. Again, the unity she aspires to is spiritual; it is a purely spontaneous unanimity of ideas and purposes, begotten of the workings of the same Spirit in each several soul. Of this the uniformity of general orthodoxy of utterance, imposed from outside by juridical coercion, is, at best, a symbol, or a reminder, of what we must aspire to.

So far, then, as the Catholicism or universality of the Roman Church is still fictional, and merely ideal, she necessarily fails of that plenitude of spiritual authority which would be hers were she coincident with the invisible Church, the spiritual aristocracy of humanity. It is impossible to see in her claim to quasi-civil, coercive control over men's conduct aught but a misinterpretation of that absolute spiritual

authority, which belongs only to the invisible Church as voicing the collective conscience of the Saints, and thus furnishing a rule or corrective of the aberrations of the individual conscience.

Once fully conscious of these limitations of the visible Church, and of the necessary gulf that must ever in some degree separate what she is in act from what she is in ideal and aspiration, we can believe in her once more as the embryo, grotesque and in some sense repulsive, of that social and mystical Christ, who is struggling to birth, slowly, through a series of transformations and revolutions, of castings-off and takings-on: *donec occurramus omnes in unitatem fidei et agnitionis filii Dei, in virum perfectum, in mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi.*

1904-1906.

CHAPTER VII

DOGMA

I. LEX ORANDI

IT may be urged against the whole theory of *Lex Orandi* (the theory, namely, of devotion as the determinant of dogma, of spiritual need as the guide to religious truth) that, as a fact, the greater part of Catholic dogma has been shaped by the results of theological curiosity, by the controversies of the philosophers and schoolmen ; by anything rather than by the pure interests of inward religion. A partial answer is found in the contention that much of this intellectual construction is apologetic and defensive, a reply to the attacks of philosophical and historical criticism upon beliefs shaped originally by the exigencies of spiritual life. We may question the wisdom of meeting intellectual curiosity on its own ground, instead of taking refuge on the higher plane of the distinction between religious values and their historical and philosophical embodiment, still it is right to hold as much of the said embodiment as will bear the test of criticism, and not to yield to every wind of doctrine. Though primarily interested in religious truth, yet religion is also interested in all truths ; more especially in those most intimately connected with her own, as being their contingent and actual, if not absolutely necessary, embodiment.

But a fuller answer is found in the fact that a sentiment or instinct is not directly creative or "revelatory" of the truth by which it is explained or justified, but is only selective of materials that are offered to it, choosing this or that somewhat blindly, according as it is felt to be more congenial, more approximate to the required truth, more satisfying to the soul's desire of what the world should prove to be. For every sentiment seeks and gropes after a certain environment, and (so far as it is a normal and universal sentiment) is warrant for the existence of such an environment. Though not itself inventive, yet the religious sentiment puts our inventive imagination and reason into play, with a success conditioned by the purity and intensity of the sentiment, on the one side, and, on the other, by the native vigour and the cultivation of the said faculties of invention and hypothesis. Such invention, though *a priori*, is not, like the romancing of the love-sick, merely poetical, but rather consists in a re-arrangement of the world in accordance with desire; and yet in such a way as not to conflict with established and accepted truth, but simply to interpret doubts and uncertainties in a manner favourable to our hopes and longings. This power of inventive re-arrangement we observe in all great religious geniuses, whether affecting their reading of history or their interpretation of life and nature. Unchecked by a sense of the rights of criticism it often works havoc in the mind, and produces fruit of little or no permanent value to religion. Duly controlled by the critical conscience it is the chief instrument of theological progress, of those epoch-marking, harmonising hypotheses, which

are hardly distinguishable from revelations except as the laboured products of talent are from the sudden inspirations of genius.

That the leading ideas of Catholic dogma, the ground-plan of its construction of the supernatural world, have been more or less consciously divined by the inventive faculty, inspired by the Spirit of Christian Love, must be allowed.

But there are other contributions in regard to which the functions of the Spirit have been purely selective, and which have been supplied by non-religious interests, good, bad and indifferent. Not to speak of that purely intellectual, theological curiosity and inquiry, which is often most active in the least reverent, which kindles a controversial ardour that is so falsely confounded with zeal for the truth, and which we may call the scholastic spirit, there are the religious notions and traditions already to hand when Christianity first comes on the scene ; and there are the historical, scientific and philosophical convictions of each age and locality, with which Christianity must come to terms as far as possible, weaving such material into the texture of its teaching ; and then there are, alas ! beliefs that have been suggested and fostered by unworthy motives, by the desire of temporal gain, or of spiritual ascendancy, or by superstitious fear, or selfishness—beliefs that represent the spiritual weakness or deadness of the numerical majority. Over all these the Holy Spirit exercises a selective criticism ; for there is no inherent connection between the religious interest and those by which they have been dictated. Their origin has nothing to do with their truth. He who digs for lead

may turn up gold, and truth often drops from lying lips. Of such beliefs it may be said: "Every plant that my Father hath not planted shall be uprooted"; it will wither away because it has not much root; or, in other words, because it will not endure the test of the collective experience of succeeding generations of the faithful, by which alone its religious serviceableness (and, by consequence, its fundamental truth can be demonstrated.

2. ORGANIC CONTINUITY

The public mind, sentiment, custom, morality, of a people or society, is an educational instrument and standard for the individual mind, which must be formed upon it and characterised by it in order to be capable of any critical reflection by which the said public standard may be improved and developed. Though fixed, relatively to the individual, the public mind is slowly progressive from generation to generation, through those accumulated criticisms and amendments of individuals, which have succeeded in approving themselves to the general sense. We may distinguish in the public mind a *formed* part which constitutes its bulk and mass, and a part in process of formation; a margin of uppermost surface of soft sensitive pliant matter, which will be the hard dead matter of the next generation, and whose formation is the task of the present generation. And in this task they have a responsibility to the past and to the future, which must limit and guide their work if they are not to break loose from the process which constitutes the life of humanity, and to apply the fallacy of

crude individualism to one generation in relation to the multitude of its predecessors and successors. For as each man receives freely from his fellows, and must freely give, so too each generation, as it lives *from* the past, must live *for* the future; none is primarily *for* itself, but each one is part of a wider universal self, which lives in and through it.

To acknowledge an organic continuity between the succeeding generations, to recognise the whole process as the gradual unfolding and self-embodiment of one and the same spirit, will save us from the fanaticism of that pseudo-revolution which would wipe out the past as wholly worthless, and bid us begin afresh at the very beginning—a behest that we simply could not obey if we would, since our whole mind and sentiment, however revolutionary, is shaped by our past. So far as there is some blind implicit justice at the root of the revolutionary sentiment, and so far as the revolution is proved to be healthy, fruitful, and enduring, it is simply because some deeper law of the process of social growth, long neglected or perverted to the hurt of orderly development, at last makes itself painfully felt in the general subconsciousness; it is because the community is sick and disordered in consequence of past irregularities, and must now go back upon that past, critically, till it finds the point of deviation; must destroy and reconstruct just so much and no more as is needful for its perfect recuperation.

It is no "propriety" of the Past that it should be a complex tangle of false and true, evil and good, weakness and strength; the present and the future are subject to the same necessity. Of all men and movements Reformers and Reformations are the most

one-sided, over-emphasis and under-emphasis being essential to their corrective influence, and being, moreover, the secret of their uncritical self-complacency, of their conviction that the present is all right and the past all wrong and the future all radiant. *Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper*—man's nature, like God's, is unchanging; for ever, though in lessening proportion, false will mingle with its true, evil with its good, not merely intermixed as tares with wheat, but permeating and combined in a third nature or substance, that is neither one nor the other wholly.

I cannot, then, repudiate wholly, or wholly in any element, that life of the Past—physical, mental, moral, social, religious—out of which I have grown; through and in which I have lived. I cannot, because in some particular I have carried on the process further or corrected its deviations here and there, forget that I, who judge it, and the principles by which I judge it, are its product and outcome, through which, rather, it judges, reforms and heals itself. In the measure, however, that the process becomes more deeply and fundamentally self-conscious in me or in my contemporaries; in the measure, that is, that we apprehend better the idea and law of human progress, we shall necessarily *appear* more radical in our criticism, *being* all the while more conservative, more strongly assertive of the oldest laws and constitutions of our general life.

Thus the only solid reformation of our religious conceptions and belief is to be sought, not in some brand-new "thinking-out" of the questions of God and the Soul, without any respect whatsoever to the confessedly false and inadequate conceptions of the

past, as though such attempts did not, even by their very crudities, testify to the existence and nature of the experience they strove to formulate. Rather, we must recognise religion as one of the great constituents of this self-evolving life of humanity ; as a sort of life that unfolds itself, like an organism, from age to age, that exhibits an immense variety of species and genera in different times and places, in all of which, collectively, its potentiality is progressively disclosed. It is only from such a study that we can hope to go on approximating, though never attaining, to an adequate conception of the nature of religion and of its implications about God and the soul ; and, by means of such conceptions, to classify, to criticise fruitfully, to distinguish the higher from the lower, the normal from the abnormal and the morbid. It is in this general life, stretching like a spiritual vegetation over the whole earth, and from the dark past into the light of to-day, that we are to look for that wider revelation of God, in which the Christian revelation is included as central and supreme.

To bring all this scattered experience to one focus, to determine its meaning, to organise and control it in the light of a better understanding of its nature, is the result of social development viewed on its religious side. The religious, like every other element of human life—the physical, intellectual, moral, and political—gains indefinitely by that co-operation and division of labour whereby the experience of millions is heaped together, sorted and unified to the profit of each, and becomes a capital at the disposal of every one who chooses to appropriate it. In claiming to be Catholic and universal, the Christian Church has only claimed

an ideal for religion which belongs to every element of man's life. The ideal science and morality and polity must be in some sense as catholic and universal as human nature itself—one with the unity-in-variety of an organism, not with the uniformity of a regiment.

3. SPIRITUAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is important to remember Kierkegaard's insistence on the great difference between spiritual and physiological development, which Newman and his school are too little conscious of. The former is self-wrought, the latter passively undergone; the former creative, the latter merely explicative. The organism is potentially at the beginning what it is actually at the end; its "idea" is present from the first, and shapes it to a vehicle of self-expression. Not so the character of a man or a nation. No two minds or moralities are alike. Each is absolutely original; self-built, according to a series of self-chosen plans. I gather wild flowers as I go along, and arrange them each moment, according to what I have got in hand, in some sort of harmonious unity. I gather more, and forthwith I break up the unity in favour of another more inclusive arrangement, which takes in all the old materials in new relations. The final arrangement is not implied in or exacted by the first. It is not a process of passive unfolding, but of active reconstruction. So it is with our gathering experience, of which the later additions are no way involved in the earlier. Every moment we unmake our world and build it anew. And this holds of the collective

as of the individual spirit life ; of the Church as well as of the Nation. What we have to look to is that in our hasty reconstruction we do not simplify by casting out and forgetting those elements of our past that will not fit in easily with our new synthesis ; but rather gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing be lost. We are all disposed to forget the disagreeable.

The "law" of spiritual development is a freely chosen path to good—one of many ; that of organic development is a fixed path to a fixed form or determination of good ; my bodily future is predictable, not my spiritual future. Who knows how a child will "turn out" ?

1904-1906.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION AND TRUTH

I. WHAT IS ILLUSION ?

IN all perception part is furnished by experience (*i.e.* it is given to us and received by us) ; part supplied by the mind. Thus, whether I look at a house or at its mirrored reflection, the eye gives me a surface, the mind supplies solidity. In the former case there is reality—in the latter, illusion; there, what the mind supplies, when tested, is verified by experience, here, falsified. But if I *know* that I am looking at a reflection or picture of the house there is no illusion of solidity; for the inference is corrected by knowledge that it is only a picture—*i.e.* a detected illusion is not an illusion in the strict sense. Again if, *unawares*, I see an object through a magnifying medium, my predictions about it, founded on its relative size, will be falsified. But if I know and allow for the medium there is no illusion. Illusion is not in experience, but in the interpretation of experience—in that part of perception which is supplied by the mind. The so-called “inferences” of ordinary perception, by which we seem to infer the whole of a thing from the presence of its part and to interpret this latter as a symbol and guarantee of the whole, is plainly not a *reasoned* inference, and defies all syllogistic rules.

Uniformities of sequences and groupings in our environments, reproducing themselves in our memory, constitute a practical and roughly sufficient substitute for rational calculus, and give us a command over absent and future conditions not given us in the bare data of present experience, and so enable us to adapt our action to a wider world. Illusion is the limitation of this natural expedient or instrument of life. An object looks so large *more or less* uniformly, but occasionally this uniformity of conditions may be broken, some magnifying medium may be interposed. *Reasoned* inference is, in due conditions, exempt from illusion; but then it is practically barren as an instrument of life. It would not allow me to treat a thing as solid till I had proved it so.

Let us imagine a man whose eyes have always magnified. Here we take as standard or norm the general vision of mankind, which we assume to be as uniform as the outward organ. We mean that, could he for a moment change eyes with another, this other would be transferred to Brobdingnag and he to Lilliput. But suppose half of mankind saw with big eyes and half with small, which vision would be illusion, and which reality? Plainly neither; nor would their intercourse ever reveal the difference.

Illusion, therefore, has reference only to the uniformities of some individual mind. A congenital blindness or deafness or colour-blindness does not produce illusion, which is always due to a supervening defect whose presence is not recognised and allowed for. The man who is wholly blind, or blind to certain differences and relations of colour-sensation, is of course shut off from a certain tract of common ex-

perience. But he makes up his own world without it, and though his knowledge is more limited yet he is not illuded.

The normal (*i.e.* the general) sense of redness is a function of the coloured object and the normal visual organ. The same object, related to an abnormal visual organ, yields a sense of drab just as rightly and necessarily. When the colour-blind says: "That is drab and not red," we say he is wrong. We mean (strictly) that he is wrong in supposing it should appear drab to others. What he is really deceived about is the *medium*; not the *object*. There is no more illusion here than when an object seems larger through a magnifier. That is how it ought to seem in relation to such a visual apparatus. Illusion would only lie in false expectations founded on such an appearance.

As far as the sense of muscular strain and distress goes, what is heavy for a child is light for a man. Yet in the external work done by the same weight we have a sort of absolute or objective standard of weight. Had I been unconsciously weakened by an unperceived loss of blood I might easily be illuded as to the weight of an object—*i.e.* I might expect it to do more work, to counterpoise some heavier known weight than it really would. Here the presence of illusion is easily detected. But also, if I became suddenly and unconsciously colour-blind I might make a hundred mistakes in judgments dependent on a sense of colour-difference that would convict me. Were the defect congenital I should not make these mistakes, for I had never depended on my eyes to tell me the difference, *e.g.* between a green orange and a ripe, and to associate sourness with that, sweetness with

this. And chiefest and commonest among these outer criteria is the testimony of the normally constituted majority of mankind. It is only by this means that congenital abnormalities can be detected at all.

Putting abnormalities of the individual aside, and speaking now of the human mind as a whole, it is plainly nonsense to inquire whether its knowledge may not be wholly illusory. The case is the same as would be that of one sole human being in a world apart, for whom there could be no possible question of "normal" or "abnormal" congenital sense-faculties; who might, however, be liable to illusions through unconscious alterations of the *habitual* sense-conditions, as well as to those resulting from irregularities in the usual sequences and groupings of his surroundings. The "truth" of his mind means the correspondence of its expectations to the actual sequences and groupings of sensations. In this sense the "real" (*versus* the "mental") stands for what is and can be *given from without* in sensation; the "mental" for the reproduction (inchoate at least) of the same from within (the repercussion or reverberation of the subject). That, given one link of a sequence or grouping of sensations, the mind should supply the image of the rest *before* they are given in sensation is obviously an immense advantage in the battle of life, enabling the animal to retreat or advance or otherwise accommodate its action to what is coming. Uniformities of our mental apparatus create expectations that can be relied on, and enable us to pass by spontaneous quasi-inference from the exact and immediate data of sensation to much that lies out of sight, and thus to adapt our action to a

wider view of our surroundings. This is the very condition of life and of its advance and extension. But there are limits to this faculty, and consequently universal or normal illusions—such as that concerning the movements of the heavens—illusions due, not to the constitution of the mind, but to the imperfection of its data, the narrowness of its experience, and, indirectly, to the faults of its calculation and explicit reasoning; illusions which are slowly corrected by the general progress of knowledge. To childish humanity an apparent motion, like that of the sun, uniformly justifies certain further expectations; but wider experience and thought destroy this uniformity for a sphere beyond that of daily practical necessities. The quasi-inferential or associative faculty, whose errors produce illusion, is primarily an instrument of life, and not of speculation. Were there no regularities of sequence and grouping in the world round us our life would be impossible, or would be narrowed to that of a unicellular microbe. Our command of our surroundings depends just on the measure of their uniformity and of our acquaintance with the same—on our power of divining what lies beyond the hints of our actual sensation.

As distinct in common parlance from *illusion*, *delusion* is an error of inference proper, of reasoned calculation.

2. FAITH AND ILLUSION

A certain kind and measure of illusion seems to be a necessary condition for vigorous life, as though the full truth, or even a fuller truth, would exercise an enervating and blighting influence. We know that

men of general philosophic outlook, and consequent impartiality and freedom from prejudices and illusions, are rarely men of action and of success; and how much fanaticism, bigotry, egoism, narrowness, conduce to vigour and energy. Indifference—a sense that nothing matters—and consequent apathy is the fruit of oriental meditation on the Wheel of Existence, and of the asceticism which struggles to escape from illusion. Work and progress characterise the West, which yields itself passively to illusion. The self-preserving, self-furthering interest and aim of the individual make him instinctively arrange the world round himself as its centre and controlling end, giving birth to a reading of life as illusory as the Ptolemaic reading of the Heavens. No two of us construct the world alike, but each for himself, as the centre of space and time, as well as of interest and meaning. To become aware of this illusion is to awake to a more real order of things; it is to recognise oneself as the centre of an over-individual or social interest, and to subordinate the individual interest as illusory to the social interest as comparatively real. Now, that is really true which is true for all and not merely *for me*; if my judgment differs from the general judgment it is wrong, illusory. And that is really *good* which is good for all; what is bad for all and good for me alone is *really* bad. Thus the vigour of the egoist life is weakened by the strengthening of the social life; the centre of my world is put outside my individuality. The moral struggle of this stage is against occasional relapses into egoistic states, in which altruistic ends seem illusory, and selfish ends the only real ones. Yet on recovery I feel that I

have wakened from a dream to a comparative reality ; that I am sobered after an intoxication.

But deeper reflection tells me that the social life itself owes its vigour to a similar illusion ; that the common mind, sentiment, will, and habit, as expressed in the common language of a community, is the victim of an illusion of self-centralisation. The first duty or need of any "part," even in the eventual interest of the "whole," is to forget the whole, or to regard itself as a whole. It has, so to say, no energy or attention to spare for the later, ulterior work of adjusting itself to the "whole"—a work which demands a sense of its subordination to the "whole" and a preference of the wider to the narrower self. A premature selflessness, or consciousness of one's wider significance, would be fatal to orderly development.

Just then as individual selfishness warps the judgment and produces an illusionary world, so the community-spirit or party-spirit is a source of illusion and false valuations of all sorts.

Not, of course, that illusion *as such* is conducive to life. When we advise people to do what they are at *as though* there were nothing else worth doing, &c. &c., we do not counsel illusion. What we mean is that their interest and energy are as yet too limited to be diffused over a wider sphere, and must be narrowed and concentrated in order to do work. The illusion consists in expecting the wider world and the absolute whole to be moulded on the same lines, controlled by the same ends and interests as the narrower world or "whole" that we have made for ourselves, and which, by habituation, has become the "real" for us.

When the villager comes to London, or the islander

goes on the continent and finds other and wider interests ruling, and his own held for nothing, he is as in a dream, for his expectations are everywhere balked. Let him live there long enough, and outgrow his provincialism and insularity, and the interests of his early life become illusory; his native hills are hillocks; at times he may relapse, at least in memory, and the old impressions and valuations may reproduce themselves, but now he *knows* that he is dreaming, that is, he is only half asleep.

But where, if anywhere, does this process of "relating" stop? Where is there a world of reality that is not a dream relative to some waking into a world of yet higher reality? Reflection on the brief episode of human existence on earth and its relativity convinces us that no attainable width of outlook and interest can deliver us from the illusion inseparable from phenomenal life.

Faith is the recognition of this network of illusion which, once recognised, is ruptured. It is the conviction of an absolute Real, behind, above, beyond, and permeating the endless series and grades of relative worth and reality; of an ultimate Whole, in which they are included and explained. Morality is the relation of conduct to that ultimate Good. Its motive is absolutely, and not simply relatively, "over-individual"; for every other social or over-individual good must give way to the Right, when once the Right is known.

There are mystical states when we not only affirm (as our reason can always do) that all is vanity save to do the Absolute Will, but when we *feel* it, when all ties with the phenomenal are loosened, and the world floats

away from us, and its voices grow faint with distance, and we stand outside it all, strangely indifferent, as one who has waked from a vivid dream and wonders how he could have believed it. Returning from such brief flights above the finite we may quickly recover our illusory belief in the worth and solidity of the world of daily experience; but enough remains perhaps in memory to confirm the teachings of Conscience and Religion that "but one thing is needful," and all the rest is of such stuff as dreams are made of.

The judgment of Conscience, like other judgments that relate our conduct to a wider world than we are aware of, and seem to fight with the egoism of our first explicit thought, is instinctive. It is as the guidance given by parents to children in their minority, whose wisdom will be gratefully acknowledged in years of mature judgment. Our spiritual progress is ever towards a deeper reading of ourselves and of reality; it is a bursting through veil after veil of illusion, an approach to that *absolute* totality to which our conduct is adapted by the instinctive judgments of Conscience. Its last stage is that in which the spirit shakes off every dream and returns once more to perfect self-consciousness.

3. FACTUAL AND IDEAL TRUTH¹

Because there is an everlasting, though an ever-lessening, chasm between "what ought to be" and "what is," there must be a corresponding tension and antagonism between the truth of art or religion and that of history and science. But "what ought to

¹ Cf. "Prophetic History" in *Through Scylla and Charybdis*.

be," if in one sense less real, is in another and deeper sense more real than "what is"; if future and non-existent as an effect, it is present and existent as a cause and first-root of reality; it is contained in "what is" as the potential in the actual, as the organism in the germ. It is the end or the ideal viewed as already governing the beginning and process of things—as struggling to realise itself. In theological language it is God, considered precisely as immanent Creator, and as realising his own image in the finite order. It is therefore that deeper underlying Reality, whereof the actual is but an unfinished copy.

If these orders of "reality" and of corresponding "truth" are thus distinct, they are also manifestly connected and correlated, and together constitute a certain unity. The actual, "that which is," is in a certain measure identical with "what ought to be"; fact-truth is partly coincident with ideal truth. But it is also contrary to it. Fact-truth is reached in general by the understanding through the senses; ideal-truth, by the spirit through the sentiments. But so far as Nature is recurrent and uniform the understanding applied to experience can teach us "what ought to be." We have seen oaks grow from acorns, and hence we know that acorns ought to turn into oaks. Here there is no need of a divining spirit, but only of experience and understanding. On the other hand, the spirit will often instinctively divine some fact-truth just because "what ought to be" is partly realised and coincident with "what is." The truth of the understanding is the agreement of our systemisation of experience with the actual—with what is and

has been. The truth of our spirit or feeling is its agreement with that Spirit which is striving to realise itself as "that which ought to be" in "that which is," and primarily, therefore, in our own spirit. In us, as spiritual and sympathetic, it finds its highest, fullest, and readiest expression; whence our discontent with the lower grades of existence, with the less responsive and pliable remainder of "that which is." By a "spirit" in this connection we may understand a feeling or sentiment evoked, determined, and characterised by some inexplicable experience or mass of experiences, by some deep and utterly undefinable sense of the nature of reality and of our relation to reality. To interpret and formulate this feeling would be to interpret and formulate that reality by the consciousness (or sub-consciousness, or presence, or mere existence) of which it is evoked. The feeling cannot therefore be formulated, but it may be partially manifested or suggested in some one or more of its infinitely various workings, and so be progressively revealed to and apprehended by kindred spirits. From each such manifestation it would be absolutely possible for an unlimited intelligence to reconstruct the entire Spirit thus partly revealed (as a physiologist ideally reconstructs an organism from any single part), and then from the Spirit so reconstructed to pass to that view or apprehension of reality by which that Spirit is characterised, specified, and individualised. More than this; even a spark of that particular spiritual fire may, where the fuel is apt, be sufficient to reproduce, not only the whole strength of its conflagration, but even a greater measure. How many a genius has inspired his pupils to surpass him; how many an

original idea or inspiration has lain barren in a duller soul till it has been transplanted to a brighter! Unconsciously imbibed (as it were a virus or germ) in some single utterance or manifestation, the spirit of one man may reintegrate in the soul of another, transforming it and dominating it altogether, or else mingling with it as co-factor of a new resultant.

Since a Spirit or Love is determined by and lives on an apprehension of some prior reality, it would seem a contradiction to say that the *Ultimate* or *Supreme* Reality is in this sense a Spirit or a Love, to say that "God is Love." But this were to forget that all distinctions vanish or merge in the Infinite; that God is at once Spirit and Love and Reality in a transcendent way, because He is that Simple Goodness which is equivalent to, but immeasurably greater than, them all. With this in mind, we can see how one may truly say either that the Ultimate Love or that the Ultimate Reality is the rule and norm of our Spirit or Love; for, in God, Love and Reality are identical. But this identity is not for our minds. We must conceive God's Love or Spirit as one thing, and the Divine Reality by which it is evoked and characterised as another. As we can catch the spirit of a fellow man from his words, work, deed, gestures, tone, and together with his spirit, as involved in its very essence, his outlook on life and reality, so can we catch God's Spirit and Love and kindle it in ourselves, and therewithal attain to a mysterious and unutterable sense of the Ultimate Truth and Reality, which is identical with and involved in that Love.

Thus in the measure that man's spirit is in harmony with the Divine he can, by an interpretation of that

Spirit, arrive at some notion of the ultimate meaning of life and existence and of the sort of conduct demanded by his own relation to the whole. Nay, it is rather in matters of conduct that the instinctive guidance of the Divine Spirit is felt directly, and from the conduct thus suggested and sanctioned by conscience we may pass to some conjectures as to the environment, the spiritual world, to whose exigencies such conduct adjusts us. A certain spirit goes with a certain reading of life; two men of the same spirit will read life in more or less the same way, they will have more or less the same God, the same devil, the same heaven, the same hell. Calling "what ought to be" so far as it is known through the spirit, or as it were felt and divined by sentiment, *Ideal truth*, and calling what is got at independently of such feeling through the senses and the understanding *Factual truth*, let us observe that Ideal truth is not the same as Aesthetic or Artistic truth.

The truth of a work of art is analogous to verbal truth; it is its correspondence to the artist's soul. He strives to make us feel about something as he feels about it; to present the object to us with just those suppressions and additions, abstractions and emphases, that will show it to us, not as it is in itself, but as it is in his mind and for his feeling; or else to create some ideal object of a particular emotion or sentiment, and so present it to us as to awake a sympathetic sentiment in us. He is a good orator who can make his hearers feel about things what he wants them to feel. But he is a good man only if he feels and wants them to feel what they *ought* to feel. And this *ideal truth* should be, but is not, kept distinct

from *artistic truth* in our criticism of art. Thus the presentment of the horrible is *artistically* true if it inspires the horror which the artist strives to express, and not merely ridicule or contempt, and it is *ideally* true if moreover the object *ought* to inspire horror in a well-constituted mind. A man's inward conception of Christ or the Virgin may be worthy of all reverence, may be *ideally* true; yet his artistic presentment may be utterly false and provocative of disgust. We may say then that artistic truth is the correspondence of a man's work to his feeling and spirit, and that *ideal truth*, or the truth of his ideals, of his feelings of "what ought to be," is their correspondence to the Divine Spirit, to the ultimate reality of things.

Our feelings and judgments of what ought to be, or our ideals, are always conditioned by our knowledge of what already is, and this knowledge is always fractional and inadequate. Taking certain data and circumstances apart from the context of that totality of things into which they are interwoven, we can criticise them, and say how far they fulfil or fall short of our ideal of what ought to be. And this judgment of the Spirit may be true in the abstract, yet quite false in the concrete, just because these data are not a complete whole or system, but merely part of the entire system of things. But though as a judgment about facts in relation to the ideal it is only conditionally true, yet it may be absolutely true as an expression of that Ultimate Reality which is the source and norm of all spiritual truth.

From my knowledge of some kindred spirit I can judge how he ought to act in certain conditions. But if my knowledge of the conditions is imperfect, and

he acts quite otherwise, my judgment is not less true so far as it affects his character or spirit. So my ought-judgments may be quite wrong as applied to the fact-world, yet quite true to God's Spirit, and therefore true to the ultimate and deepest reality with which that Spirit is identical. The religious spirit, in its earnest desire for the instant realisation of the Ideal, is prone to arrange and interpret its experience as though it were the whole or nearly the whole of experience, and to determine, rightly perhaps, what ought to be *on that supposition*, and then to grow dogmatic and prophetic as to the past, present, and future, and to impose its own reading on the data of experience; to "idealise" history and science more or less artistically into an expression of its own faith and feeling. In all this it may be false to fact, may act as a principle of bias and falsification, and yet be true to the deeper reality. Corrected by history and science as to its assumptions of fact, it does not cease to be true in the deeper sense. Here is the realm of its relative infallibility; here it cannot be criticised or corrected by mere fact-truth. Thus, *e.g.* apart from all fact-truth the infancy-stories of the Apocryphal Gospels are false; that of the birth in the manger as recounted by Luke, true. To determine their fact-truth is the proper work of criticism. Should the received belief prove to be the result of a too hasty and uncritical moulding of history in accordance with the sense of "what ought to be," the belief loses its literal or factual truth, yet becomes prophetic of the truth to be found in a wider outlook. What is true *ex hypothesi* does not cease to be true when the hypothesis is not verified.

4. TRUTH FOR ITS OWN SAKE

Writing to —, I said that he whose position is more or less final and fixed has a right to win, or wish to win, others to his way of thinking, whereas I, who am avowedly in search of a position, have no such right. A pioneer, I say, has no right to a wife and family, or to allow others to share his risks. Wherefore he need not fear me or warn others against me, as though I were trying to lead a party. On the contrary, I studiously repel "followers," and live apart as much as possible. When I am asked questions I answer them frankly, unless the questioner is a fool or a mischief-maker; but I dislike being asked. I go on to say, hyperbolically of course, that my own aim is to "follow the truth to hell if necessary";¹ that my interest in Catholicism is subordinate to and only part of my interest in truth. It is because I believe truth lies that way that I am a Catholic. In reply I am told that this attitude is "false to the laws of the human mind"; that it is one which may and does often "lead to a total loss of faith." Here the whole ethics of candour is touched.

If by a "law of the human mind" is meant its all but universal way of acting, then it must be allowed that to put truth pure and simple before any affective motives whatsoever is "false to that law." But surely a "law" in this sense may be a universal limitation. Selfishness is a law of human

¹ The Saints have been as scandalous: "I had rather be in hell with Thee than in Heaven without Thee" is a frequent hyperbole in their mouths.

nature on which the economist and politician must reckon, as the engineer must reckon on the law of gravitation. But in a stricter sense a "law" is *in bonum*, not *in malum*, beneficial, not hurtful. Were men universally unselfish the world would be better, not worse; hence the so-called law of selfishness is more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and the greatest benefactors of humanity are those who have risen superior to, and, so to say, transgressed that law. Similarly, the law according to which the mind is stirred to action and criticism only under the influence of some bias is no true law, but only a more or less universal limitation; Christianity itself, and every fruitful revolution in the spiritual order, owes its birth to the fact that some man or other has over-ridden this limit, has put truth in the first place and stripped himself naked of every biasing affection.

What lends plausibility to the other view, and raises a difficulty against the plain unsophisticated judgment of conscience in the matter, is the fallacious interpretation to which the maxim "Truth for its own sake" is exposed. No one, however political-minded, would have the hardihood to assail the principle: "Right for Right's sake," to question the absolute unconditional claims of the imperative of conscience. Yet though "Truth for Truth's sake" is hardly more than verbally, or at most modally, distinct from that principle, being simply its application to the affairs of the mind where Right is called Truth, it admits of a misunderstanding. For the term "sake" implies an end, a good, a motive of the will. "Right" is more

obviously an *end*, a good of man's whole spiritual nature, an end in itself, subordinate to no other; "Truth" is the end or good of the mind alone, that is, of a *part* of man's spiritual nature—it is not so immediately and obviously identified with man's unconditioned good. Proverbially, great philosophers are not great saints, nor are "good men" usually critical-minded or passionately devoted to intellectual truth. Rightly or wrongly, there is a sort of "law"—in the wrong sense—of antagonism between them; whence a vague unuttered feeling that there may be something better than truth, that compromise and diplomacy and political methods may and should be applied to the "conduct of the understanding" in the interests of goodness.

Moreover, it is contended that, except perhaps in the rare case of a cold-blooded intellectualist—obviously a perverted, not a normal, type of humanity—the desire of mental truth as a good in itself, and apart from all consequent advantages, is inoperative; that it is always a desire of finding that *this* rather than *that* is true, of establishing a position with which some non-intellectual interest is bound up, which stimulates men to fruitful inquiry, that even the controversies of dry-as-dusts of the Casaubon type are kindled by *amour-propre*. The wish is not for the truth, but to find something to be true. It is contended that when self-interest depends on the *fact*, on the truth of the desired belief, then the "wish to believe" renders us keen to inquire, quick to doubt, slow to believe; that it sharpens our critical faculty; that the bias is hurtful only when our self-interest depends, not on the truth, but on

our belief in the truth; when it is better to be deceived than undeceived. A vain man's desire to think well of himself will fool his judgment to any extent, except so far as self-deception may cost him in other ways.

Thus the "law of bias" is said to be truly a law, because it works for the benefit, not for the hurt, of man and his mind.

This ingenious tangle of sophistry is quickly unravelled by allowing freely that the separation of the mind from the will and feeling is abstract and methodical but quite unreal; and, similarly, the separation of Truth from Right. The mind, as the "pragmatists" rightly contend, while viewing it in this abstract way, is *subordinate* to practical ends; it is merely an instrument of Life, a means to man's ultimate Good or End; Truth is but its due disposition, it is what sharpness is to a knife. We do not sharpen a knife for sharpness' sake, but in order to cut. The "intellectualist" is one who lets his interest in the means quench his interest in the end, as the miser does, when he hoards for the sake of hoarding, not for the sake of spending. In this sense "Truth for the sake of Truth" is as false a maxim as "Money for the sake of Money"; it can only appeal to an artificial and morbid condition of mind. But in its true sense it appeals to the simplest, sanest, noblest; it is no hollow-hearted cant, but an inspiration of heroism.

Reuniting what only abstraction and analysis have sundered, we recognise that thought, will, and feeling are but three aspects of the same spiritual life and of its every act—that the True, the Right, and the Good

are ultimately identical in God, who is the object, the food, the perfection of the finite spirit. Whether by the path of purification of the Mind, or by that of purification of the Will, or by that of purification of the Feeling, the term we approach, by these now separate but converging paths, is one and the same—God. With regard to this ultimate End their interests are identical; Goodness is the road to Truth, Truth is the road to Goodness. With respect to this ultimate Good, the deepest faith of our soul teaches us that Truth is, under all circumstances and without condition, the sovereign “utility”; that Truth for Truth’s sake means Truth for Good’s sake—for God’s sake; that every little point of truth in the mind is a partial realisation, in the soul, of God, the supreme Truth and Goodness; that however advantageous wilful ignorance or error may be, however disadvantageous truth may be, relatively to intermediate Good, yet, with regard to the Ultimate Good, Truth is always the best “policy,” error and self-chosen ignorance always the worst, in the long run. When the sacred, the divine character of Truth is thus realised, however instinctively and inexplicably, “Truth for Truth’s sake” becomes coincident with “Right for Right’s sake”—a principle which excludes all compromise and diplomacy in the government of the mind. It is as the Incarnation of Truth, no less than of Right, that Christ says: “Unless a man forsake *all* that he hath, father, mother, brethren, wife, child, possessions, yea also his own life, he cannot be my disciple. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”

In this sense, therefore, I say that, if there is no real

distinction or priority, there should certainly be a logical priority of one's love of truth to one's love of any creed or cause, how holy and venerable so ever; that it is of a man's limitation and weakness, not of his strength and perfection, when he finds no inspiration in the love of truth for its own sake before all else—not as an intellectual self-adornment, but as a matter of moral principle and of loyalty to God. It is but another form of the same limitation which requires him to be bribed to moral conduct by non-moral motives of reward and punishment. Such a man has not yet begun to be moral, for morality is not his motive; nor has the other begun to be truthful, for truth is not his motive, but only the advantages of truth.

To say that such an attitude leads or must lead to a partial or total loss of faith is surely a damaging admission for the faith in question. It makes one suspect that faith must be here used as equivalent to theological orthodoxy, and by one who secretly or subconsciously feels that theology needs a good deal of protection, and cannot, like truth, be cast naked and unarmed into the arena. Such self-protection is quite right for those who are mentally and educationally unfit for criticism and investigation in any department. For them the most critical and truth-loving attitude is one of self-diffidence, and reliance on the consensus of experts *where such is to be had*, and suspension of judgment where doctors differ. But we are here dealing with the critic, the investigator, the pioneer. Let such an one set forth, by all means, with his hypothesis, with his hopes and predilections as to the possible results; but if he is not

prepared to forsake all, he had better stay at home nor put his hand to the plough.

If then "faith" stands for good faith, for sincerity, for a blindfold fidelity to the instincts of conscience; if it is a trust in the highest intuitions of the Spirit as distinct from any system of conceptions, from any philosophy or theology; a trust that says to Truth: "Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest; I will go with thee to prison and to death"; or "Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step enough for me"—if this, rather than theological orthodoxy, which is at best its contingent embodiment, be the very soul and essence of faith, then it is not the principle of "Truth for Truth's sake," but the introduction of political methods of compromise and diplomacy into the realm of spiritual self-government, that leads to a "total loss of faith" and, finally, of the very capacity for faith. Orthodoxy—an unattainable ideal after all; for the greatest doctors of the Church, Augustine, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Bernard, were unorthodox, and the Fathers, to a man, were materially heretical—orthodoxy is plainly but the embodiment of the spirit of Faith, and gets its value thence. Apart from that, its moral value, its "goodness" is nothing. Given the spirit of Faith with a loyal, blind devotion to Truth, and failure of attainment, more or less, is of no account; whereas the most perfect attainable orthodoxy, held by force of habit, tradition, party-spirit, or mere intellectual conviction (such as the devils might possess), is morally worthless. Infinitely better to lose all one's orthodoxy in the endeavour to retain one's sincerity, than tarnish one's sincerity in the endeavour to save one's orthodoxy. "It is the Spirit

of Faith that quickeneth ; the flesh (orthodoxy) profiteth nothing" ; *i.e.* its relation to the Spirit is at most sacramental, and *Gratiam suam sacramentis Deus non alligavit*—God has not tied His grace to the sacraments.

5. RELIGIO DEPOPULATA

"How doth the City sit solitary, that was full of people ; how is she become a widow that was great among the nations and a princess among the peoples. Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her ; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. All her persecutors overtook her within straits ; the ways of Zion do mourn because none come to the solemn assembly ; all her gates are desolate, her priests do sigh ; her virgins are afflicted and she herself is in bitterness. From the daughter of Zion all her majesty is departed ; her princes are become like harts that find no pasture ; and they are gone, without strength, before the pursuer. Jerusalem remembereth in the days of her afflictions and her miseries all her pleasant things that were from the days of old. All that honoured her despise her because they have seen her nakedness. The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things. All her people sigh, they seek bread ; they have given their pleasant things for meat to sustain life. Her gates are sunk into the ground ; he hath destroyed and broken her bars ; her prophets find no vision from the Lord ; the elders sit upon the ground, they keep silence ; they have cast up dust on their heads and girded themselves with sackcloth ; the young children and sucklings swoon in the streets of

the city ; they cry unto their mothers : Where is the corn and the wine ? their soul is poured out into their mother's bosom."

If these words were to be discovered a century hence for the first time, and interpreted as prophetic of the history of Catholicism in the twentieth century, they would probably be discredited, as forged *post eventum*, so precisely do they figure forth what may be expected if things move as they are moving. *Religio depopulata*, according to the fabled prophecy of St. Malachy, is to follow (more or less immediately) upon *Ignis Ardens* ; the ardent fire of Sarto's well-meant, but often disastrous, zeal may only end in laying the sanctuary in ashes. Let no man deceive us with vain words, saying Peace, Peace, where there is no peace ; let us sit down quietly and count the cost, and find what is shaken and what stands firm, what is gone and what remains, what is going and what is coming. Is it merely the *desiderabilia*, the pleasant things, the luxuries of religion that are threatened ; or is it also the necessities of bare life, the corn and the wine ?

Take, for example, the cultus of Mary ; think what place she holds and has held for centuries in the life of the Church and of the faithful, from the Council of Ephesus, which proclaimed her Mother of God, to the day when Pius IX defined her conceived without sin. Count, if you can, the millions of millions of *Aves* that have risen before her shrines from hearts full of faith, trust, and love ; the cries that have gone up to the refuge of sinners, the solace of the afflicted, to "our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope," to "the Gentle, the Loving, the Pitiful Virgin Mary." Count

the altars and churches raised to her name; the masses, litanies, rosaries, offices said in her honour. Think of Lourdes and Loretto and countless other scenes of her manifestations and favours; of what she has been to the Spaniard, the Italian, the French; not only to the people at large, but to the mystics and elect of religion, to S. Bernard, or S. Philip, or S. Ignatius, or S. Francis. Nor, when we see how this worship of Mary is entangled doctrinally with the theology of the Incarnation, and derives its justification from that fact, can we well relegate it to the class of *desiderabilia*, of the dispensable luxuries of Catholicism, or deny it its place among the substantials.

Yet, if criticism is right, if we are to eliminate the protevangelia of Matthew and Luke and the Gospel of S. John, in which Mary is but the symbol of the Jewish Church, and the allusion to her in Acts I, what is left to us of all this creation or construction of faith and piety? Mary was but the wife of Joseph, and by him the mother of Jesus and of his brothers and sisters, and all that we are told of her is that she did not believe in Him, but thought He was beside Himself; that he was a prophet who found no honour in his his own home or among his own kindred. Thus the Mary of Catholic faith and devotion is a pure fabrication of theology and sentiment.

It is idle to underrate the loss or pay ourselves with words; to say that Mary is the Ideal of the Fulness of Redemption, or the Personification of Purity, or to find in her an embodied measure of the enthusiastic faith evoked by the goodness of Jesus. Had men believed she was only this, would they have loved her, prayed to her, fought for her, clung to her? could a

personification or idealisation have called forth the devotion that raised her through the ages from heaven to heaven, and set her in rivalry with God Himself in their worship and affection? Persuade them she is but an ideal or a symbol, and will she be more to them than a poet's image? or will they not feel that a tradition, which has so deceived men *semper et ubique*, is no longer to be credited in other matters?

And so, too, if we consider how the doctrine of the Incarnation, or of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Presence, or of the Sacraments and priestly powers is woven into the very texture of Catholic life and practice, it is perfectly idle to say that the modifications required by philosophical and historical criticism affect merely the "pleasant things," and not the very corn and wine on which the faithful have been fed for centuries. Most of all, they affect our trust in a tradition which has deceived us so deeply, so extensively, so arrogantly, and for so long; and thus, indirectly, they destroy our faith in much else that we accept purely on the authority of that untrustworthy tradition.

Surely, then, we may pardon the instinctive, if not very intelligent, hostility displayed towards criticism by the official upholders of that tradition, and by the millions who look to it for their spiritual daily bread. Ask the liberal to paint the glories of that New Jerusalem which is to rise on the ruins of the old, and the pencil falls from his fingers on the blank sheet. *Religio depopulata*—that is all he has to show. Ask him what he has to give in lieu of what he has taken, and he answers: Truth. Truth should be everything, and yet it is nothing if it is merely the

negation of a life. And this is the natural penalty of lying, that the road back to Truth leads through a weary desert of ignorance and uncertainty. We must be houseless in the interval between the pulling down and the building up. If man crucifies Truth, Truth must crucify man—*magna est et prævalebit*. But *in cruce salus*, only through that crucifixion can man be saved and reach the Truth—*per crucem ad lucem*.

6. RELIGIOUS REVIVAL¹

Wesley and his kind roused the masses to religion by an appeal to their faith in Hell and Heaven and in the Scriptures as God's Word. Nearly all revivalism has had practically the same fulcrum for its level. Thus, the Spiritual Exercises² re-echo "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul," *i.e.* go to Hell. How can we hope to re-awaken religion in (say) the French peasantry or the modern city masses, for whom the "psychological climate" (not of course any reasoning of their own; for neither their faith nor unfaith is the fruit of reasoning) has destroyed such simple beliefs; who will want to know, first, on what their teachers really rest such assumptions; who will ask: Is there a soul, a God, a hereafter, a heaven, a hell? What could one say, where could one begin, with such a deeply materialised auditory? Is there any other way in which we can convince them that religion is a real, a supreme interest of life; that the salvation of their soul is more profitable than the gain of the whole world?

Plainly the "psychological atmosphere" they

¹ Published in *The Optimist* of Jan. 1914. ² Of S. Ignatius Loyola.

breathe is created for them by the thinking classes; and it is because those classes have become impervious to the old appeals that the masses have slowly been permeated with the same unfaith. And thus the problem is pushed back one step: How can we reawaken the thinking classes to a care for their souls, when the very clergy seem to be unable to care for their own souls, let alone those of others? What is to take the place of Hell-fire?

Notice, first of all, that the appeal of the Gospel of Christ was not directly to Hell-fire, or to another life. It was a call to prepare for a Kingdom of God, and for entering into the joy of that Kingdom—a call to devotion to a great, over-individual, selfless Cause; a call to die to a lower, particular, psychic self in order to live to a fuller, universal, spiritual self. Whatever its material setting, it was, in substance, an appeal to a spiritual, unselfish self-interest; a promise of an eternal life *on earth*, instead of a temporal and perishable life; a promise of a true happiness and peace, that the world could not give or take, and therefore especially a message of glad tidings to the poor, afflicted, oppressed.

One might say that the essence of Christianity (as an *individual* acquisition or attribute) is a life of sacrifice for the ideal in conduct, recognised as the will of God, and therefore bringing all that peace, meaning and dignity into life which comes from a sense of union with the Power that works for the Ideal in all Nature, and for Righteousness in man. This is the meaning of Christ Crucified—man agonising for goodness and truth even unto death, and thereby fulfilling the universal law of God in Nature and

in himself. If the mentality of the age is insensible to the older and ruder symbolism of this idea, it is perhaps more sensible to the idea itself, for never were men more conscious of the vacuity and senselessness of any other view of life but that which gives eternal value and significance to its sufferings. If the masses are less reflective than the classes, yet the dull mechanism and senselessness of their lives make them more thirsty for some idealising faith.

Hence, instead of Hell-fire, I should preach the hollowness of the self-life in and out, up and down, till men loathed it and cried : *Quis me liberabit ?* and then I should turn to the Christ-life, not only of Christ, but of all Christlike men, and make its reality, solidity, eternity stand out stereoscopically.

Plainly this must be done as concretely as the old preaching of Hell-fire—a vivid picturing and illustrating of the worthlessness of self-life ; a vivid picturing of the life of sacrifice ; no mere dry-as-dust Stoic prosing on the rewards of virtue and the miseries of vice. There is something in *every* man, a sort of spiritual ambition and desire of true self-possession, that makes him admire those who can suffer and endure, especially for selfless motives, for truth and principle and love. The religions of Asia show us that men can be fired by an ambition of suffering as much as, and more than, by the fear of suffering. After all there *is* spirit in every man and not mere soul (psyche) ; and spirit does respond to its proper bait and lure as surely as the soul to its own psychic objects of attraction. Have not our Hell-fire missionaries lacked faith in this fact ? Or is it that the psychic, coarser appeal is easier to hand ; more effectual with themselves ?

I still think, therefore, that Christ Crucified is the best and surest Gospel to reawaken a faithless world, or rather a world that has outgrown faith's short-clothes. But instead of beginning with the dogmatic *Weltanschauung*, and deducting the practical life from faith in that same, let us begin by preaching the Life and winning faith in that Life directly, and only indirectly in the Truth it implies. Then let us unfold these implications, already believed and loved, and show that Life to be a self-conformation to a world of eternal (though mysterious) realities and facts. After all, we know by experience that the mere example of Christ and the Saints, and of the great and good both of history and fiction, draws men to their imitation; and has a suasive force *in se* apart from all the theory implied. Indeed we *believe* doctrines only because of their bearing on life, and as guiding us how to live. Much more immediately therefore do we *believe* in a life or way.

1904-1906.

CHAPTER IX

A PERVERTED DEVOTION¹

A "DEVOTION" in the sense here implied is not quite easy to define, but may be explained by way of induction. We have the Church's doctrine or dogmatic teaching about the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin, Purgatory, Indulgences; and in all these cases, as well as in others, the teaching, which is essential, constant, and universal, has given rise to corresponding devotions, which are variable for differences of time, place, character, need, and the like. As to the doctrines, all Catholics must agree; as to the devotions, it is "everyone to his taste." A devotion implies something more than an accommodation of our will and our practical judgment to the doctrine in question. Every Catholic must take practical as well as theoretical account of the doctrine of the Eucharist, or of absolution, yet need not have a devotion to the Blessed Sacrament or to the Sacrament of Penance. It seems, then, that a devotion means a special *attrait* towards some particular point of Catholic teaching, as harmonising

¹ *Weekly Register*, 16th December 1899. This article, which scarcely belongs to the series, is inserted here on account of its particular interest as marking a crisis in the development of its author's life. (See vol. ii. of *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell*.)

with the peculiar and personal needs of the mind, and soul of the individual in question. Although commonly embodied in some kind of pious practice, yet this is hardly essential to a devotion, except so far as pleasurable and affectionate contemplation can be considered a pious practice. Thus devotion to the Blessed Trinity, to one or other of the Divine attributes, to the Immaculate Conception, does not directly embody itself in outward practice in the same way as does devotion to the Holy Souls, which is shown in helping them; or to Indulgences, which is shown in gaining them.

As regards the doctrine of Hell, all Catholic Christians are agreed; but as to what we might call the "devotion to hell," there is a lawful liberty and variety. The very idea of a "devotion to hell" may seem strange to some minds; and yet when we remember that it is only a particular form of a general devotion to the divine attribute of Justice, the strangeness must at once vanish. The eventual righting of what is wrong, the straightening of what is crooked, the triumph of every seemingly strangled truth, the strangling of every seemingly triumphant lie, is a consummation postulated imperatively by what is best in the human soul; longed for, prayed for, fought for, not only by saints and prophets, but by every true and just man who has ever walked this earth, with a power of divine indignation in his heart. *Dilexisti justitiam* and *Odisti iniquitatem*, "Thou has loved justice" and "Thou hast hated iniquity" are inseparable correlatives; and it is only the growing decay of belief in human responsibility that has, by weakening the first impulse, also

weakened the other, and has canonised this emasculated morality, this flaccid indifferentism, under the name of benevolence. There can be no adequate love of the divine goodness that leaves out any factor of that goodness; and justice no less than mercy, majesty no less than meekness, strength no less than gentleness, go to the building up of our conception of God's moral excellence.

So far then as there may be, and is, in certain souls, a special responsiveness to the beauty of justice; and so far as the doctrine of hell can be regarded as bound up with the notion of God's justice, we can conceive a person having a special devotion towards that doctrine and dwelling upon it frequently with a certain pleasurable complacency. But every devotion is liable to perversions and excesses, and needs to be curbed and brought into harmony with every other part and principle of Catholic truth; just because each feeling (and devotion implies feeling) tends of its own blind nature to assert itself to the exclusion of every other, and to tyrannise over the mind and reason. Hence so many heresies are simply perverted devotions. We have an example of this in Tertullian, whose "devotion to hell" is about the earliest instance on record. Here what may have been originally a love of God's justice, a sympathy with the divine indignation, quickly degenerated into an angry and egoistic vindictiveness, a hatred of wrongdoers and misbelievers, ostensibly, as opponents of truth and right; really, as his own personal opponents—as members of a hostile party, section, clique. Tertullian was yet orthodox in his own eyes, and in

those of others, when he dwelt with a cruel gleefulness on the prospect of contemplating hereafter the torments of his adversaries in hell; but the seed of death was already in him—charity had no part in that thought, and faith, next to none; it was a mere outbreak of personal vindictiveness, of the pent-up heat generated by acrimonious controversy.

I say “faith, next to none”; because, as far as theology goes in its own abstract line, we are constrained by logic to say: The blessed in Heaven rejoice in the will of God: but the torments of the reprobate are the will of God; therefore the blessed in Heaven rejoice in the torments of the reprobate. This we can stand from the theologians so long as it is clearly understood that the *minor* is not an obvious truth of common-sense, but a very profound mystery, and a very grievous burden to our faith; that it is true in some sense beyond our present sense; that it finds its full justification in certain supplementary facts which we know not now, but shall know hereafter. But when faint illustrative analogies from reason are put forward as satisfactory and adequate explanations of a difficulty which is only aggravated by such futile alleviations, we at once resent this intrusion of pert rationalism into the *arcana fidei*, and send the would-be theologian about his business. Still more are we justly disgusted and irritated if, rightly or wrongly, we suspect that the wish has been father to the thought, that, as in the case of Tertullian, a certain residual savagery, latent in our composition to a less degree or a greater, is gratified by that mask of severity and cruelty which the doctrine wears; and that a mere heartlessness and lack of moral sense is

disguising itself under the garb of vigorous faith and zealous devotion to the justice of God. If there is intellectual provincialism and narrowness in being surprised that the absolute view of things, as known to God alone, and as revealed to us by Him, should seem utterly unintelligible from our little corner of immensity, there is a still greater degree of mental and moral obliquity in one who finds in such a doctrine as that of hell no perplexity for his reason, no shock to his affections, no violation of his sentiments. That what seems black to me may seem white to God (and what it *seems* to Him, that it *is*, absolutely and all round); that the cloud, which looms dark as I look up to it, may be a bright sea of glory as He looks down upon it, is a general truth that well-taught reason assures me of—however my faith may stumble in applying it to particular cases; nay, more than this, it is evident to reason that the absolute and all-round view of things, attainable only to that Mind which gathers the whole into one simple unity, must reveal order and goodness and intelligence where I can see nothing but confusion and evil and folly; that no view, comprehensible and wholly satisfactory to a finite mind, can possibly be the ultimate and absolute view. But though God and reason demand that I should often believe that to be white which seems black to me, yet never am I asked to believe that what seems black to me *seems* white to me. And so, if I must believe that what seems to me cruelty and injustice in the doctrine of hell is only an illusory appearance due to my imperfect comprehension of the dogma—an appearance which will vanish in the light of supplementary facts as yet inaccessible to me; yet

I am not bound to believe that the doctrine does not *seem* cruel and unjust, or that reason can find for it a positive justification, as well as a negative defence. Until I have a key to the riddle I can and even ought to say that, as stated, it seems, and is intended to seem, absurd and impossible; for it causes man to appear more just, more kind, than his Maker, thus allowing the river to rise higher than its source. When God appears to us in blood-stained garments and terrifying aspect, doubtless He intends that we should be terrified, and yet that, at the same time, we should surmount or go behind appearances by a faith which, in this matter, is only the very perfection of reasonableness. Indeed it is hard to think He should be pleased with the disposition of one so out of sympathy with the Divine character as to experience no shock for faith to withstand.

What we have said as to hell holds good in reference to other difficulties against our faith in the absolute goodness and wisdom of God, arising from the existence of suffering, the permission of sin, the problem of predestiny. The attempt to rationalise these mysteries, to level them down to our range of vision, to patch them up, to whittle them away, is responsible for the widespread decay of faith which they have occasioned—well-meant ingenuity no doubt, but surely misguided, and ill-judged! As far as the matter is presented to us, we should say frankly that, were any man to act with such calculated cruelty as God seems to act with, according to the commonly expounded doctrine of predestiny, such a man should die the death. But God cannot be cruel, therefore the matter is only partially and inadequately presented

to us; and supplementary facts will make the crooked straight and the rough smooth; filling up the *lacunæ* in our knowledge and levelling the obstacles and scandals. When God chastises us He certainly does not expect us to like it; nor does He expect the discipline of faith to be agreeable and easy. Thousands would willingly submit to these mysteries were they allowed to preserve that agnosticism in their regard which is one of the elements of real faith; but they will not, nay, they should not, give up their liberty of shuddering at appearances, while trusting in realities.

Where there is a seeming antinomy, as between the truth of God's goodness on one side, and the truth of predestiny on the other, intelligent faith will hold the two irreconcilables together, without attempting any premature and impertinent synthesis, *donec dies elucescat et lucifer oriatur*; but since such balance is rare, and the mind always inclines to rule one of the truths into agreement with the other, at least we should follow Joubert's advice, and make that which is clearer the rule of the less clear. The goodness and wisdom of God is a clear truth, whereas the doctrine of predestiny or of hell is an obscure truth; yet the Calvinistic temperament ever tends to take the latter as luminously self-evident and as throwing shadows of doubt over the former; to make a thesis of the difficulty and a difficulty of the thesis.

It is in this temperament that we sometimes find a morbid perversion of the "devotion to hell," a pleasurable complacency, not merely in the essential reality signified by the doctrine of eternal punishment, but in those very features of its presentment that faith tells us are but due to our relative and imperfect

mode of apprehension ; which exults in the seeming cruelty and injustice, rather than in the absolute justice and love which, reflected through our dim atmosphere, present this distorted appearance. Stranger still is the desire that no one shall have the bitter pill sugar-coated for him, but shall swallow it without a grimace, with not so much as a drop of water to wash it down ; nay, he must swallow, not only the kernel of truth, but the very husks and shells, the opinions, theories, and illustrations with which it has been set forth by popular preachers or writers. It is these strange, but not inexplicable, tendencies to extravagance that make the attitude of some towards the doctrine of hell justly comparable to a devotion ; for it is only some engagement of the affections that can play such tricks with the understanding. He that touches their hell, touches them in the apple of their eye ; all that would lighten the burden of faith, or sweeten its yoke for them, is heterodox ; all that aggravates and embitters it is orthodox ; and when we ask ourselves : Why should it not be just the other way about ? the answer is that the darker truth of the antinomy has been chosen as thesis, and the clearer is consequently treated as a difficulty—this choice being the result of a certain *Tertullianism* of temperament, fostered by education, which exercises a selective influence in the free formation of the mind.

The nature of the pains of hell, the nature of its eternity, and the proportion of mankind that goes there, are all matters of some dispute, where this temperament can display its selective influence, choosing ever what is more, rather than less, difficult to normal intelligence and moral sense. One would not think,

at first sight, that the precise mechanism by which the pains of sense are produced was a matter of vital moment; still, if indeed it be a revealed point, we are willing to believe that material fire is the agency by which the fallen angels are tormented. But the particular gratification that certain minds get out of the *materiality* of the fire can only be accounted for by a nervous dread of in any way making the doctrine mysterious, or removing it from the jurisdiction of common-sense—of that semi-rationalism, which delights to express and explain things spiritual in terms of matter and motion, of chemistry and mechanics. The pain of loss, they admit, is, no doubt, the substantial and principal part of hell; but then it is something mystical, spiritual, unreal, immaterial, so let us have our good familiar hearth-stone fire that we all understand; there are difficulties, no doubt, but they can be smoothed away with a little ingenuity. Rather than part with the materiality of the fire, they will endow it with a special, supernatural, “spirit-paining” quality, which is tantamount to saying that the pain is not produced by fire at all; or they will tell us that, though it does not affect the spiritual substance *per modum combustionis*, or by way of burning, it does so *per modum alligationis*, or by way of bondage; not, however, that the withes and straps by which the spirit is fastened to the flames gall its limbs and members, but that its sense of propriety and self-respect is hurt by its unseemly embodiment in gross material flames—an explanation which upholds the existence of material fire while depriving it of its proper function, which is the disintegration of matter; and which unwittingly substitutes moral

for physical pain. Whatever meaning, therefore, may be hid away in the affirmation of the materiality of hell-fire, it is no meaning clearly accessible to us, until we know a good deal more than even philosophers know about the precise nature of matter, and of fire, and of combustion, and of spirit, and of sensation in general, and of pain in particular. Far from bringing the doctrine of hell within the scope of our vulgar reason, it pushes it further than ever from the reach of our intelligence, and warns us more emphatically that we are in the region of faith and mystery, and must wait the answer to these riddles in patience and humility.

Eternity, again, admits of a dangerously mystical and spiritual mode of conception, painful to the devotees of matter and common-sense, who accordingly prefer to explain it as time multiplied by infinity ; and who rather resent the seeming—though, indeed, only seeming—alleviation, given to the terrors of hell by taking eternity strictly as a *tota simul* duration. For this sounds to them like saying that it will all be over in an instant—a cruel injustice to themselves, who have borne the burden and heat of the day. Of course this is a misconception, for, as Aquinas explains the matter, it is not that there will not be the equivalent of infinitely protracted time in eternity, but that the protraction of time is something indifferent to the penalty. When a man is sentenced to six months of hard labour the penalty is not sudden and complete in the first instant, but part is added gradually to part till the sum is fulfilled ; but when he is sentenced to lose life or limb, the eternity that follows his penalty does not augment it,

or otherwise affect it. Still, just because there is a mere semblance or sound of alleviation of the intellectual and moral difficulty in this mode of presentment, our devotees will have none of it, but will go on with their studies in celestial mechanics, their æonian calculus, piling century upon century and age upon age; sitting down breathless at times to rejoice in the reflection that they have only just begun.

But it is more especially in the peopling of hell that there is room for the play of temperament and personal devotion, in selecting one or other of the many free views open to Catholic Christians. I read, in a recent number of an ecclesiastical periodical, that two eminent theologians have satisfactorily refuted the work of another theologian defending the opinion that the majority of mankind will be saved. It might not at first sight, and apart from the grave authorities, patristic and otherwise, on the opposite side, seem an altogether rash and extravagant opinion that, out of the some fourteen hundred millions of the present population of the globe, something less than seven hundred millions should perish everlastingly; or, to put it in other words, that only forty-nine *per cent.* of the people we meet any day in London are doomed to eternal flames. Still, we may more than suspect that this lax theologian, sadly weak in devotion to the doctrine of hell, and with a strong *Sacré Cœur* or anti-Calvinist bias, really meant, in the naughtiness of his heart, much more than he dared to say; that, given an inch, he had it *in petto* to take an ell, and, once over the crest of the hill, to run down the other side at a gallop. For ourselves, while respecting the goodness of his heart and the amiability of his

intentions, we have no belief in the wisdom of his endeavour, and without pretending to analyse the spirit of his opponents, or to determine whether or not they be of those whose devotion finds rest in "the greatest possible misery of the greatest possible number," we have no difficulty whatever in embracing their conclusions, or others still more rigorous, were they, too, shown to be part of Catholic doctrine.

For, indeed, as we scholastics say, *Magis et minus non mutant speciem*—"More or less does not change the quality." That a man has been convicted twenty times, rather than two hundred times, for pocket-picking is a point quite indifferent to my estimation of his moral character. Whatever sense of transcendental benevolence in me might be faintly gratified, could I accept the more lenient view, I should not, on that account, wish to entrust the gentleman with the management of my purse.

The real difficulty proposed to our faith in the doctrine of hell is that God, foreseeing that even one soul should be lost eternally, should freely suffer things to take their course, when He could (not only *de potentia absoluta*, but, as theology confesses, *de potentia ordinata*) have hindered the tragedy. This, in default of supplementary knowledge, which faith expects hereafter but does not possess now, is so appalling a mystery to those who reflect, that the mere multiplication of the seeming offence is a matter of but little concern, a mere straining at a gnat after having swallowed a camel. But the same intellectual humility, the same unshakable trust in the truth that no man has ever conceived any thought of mercy or loving kindness comparable to the thought of God,

who put that conception into his heart, makes faith as easy in one case as in the other—if only rationalism would cease its elucidations. God will save His word in all things; no particle of the Church's accredited teaching but shall be found true in some higher and grander sense than our poor muddled wits ever dreamt of; and yet all shall be well. Thus we can hold, on the one hand, that the gate is strait and the way narrow that leads to life, and that few find it; and, on the other, that "somehow good shall be the final goal of ill"; we can hold that there is a higher truth that binds these contraries together, and, by supplementing, harmonises them. And far deeper and higher is the faith that not only holds firmly to both the seemingly conflicting views, and waits confidently for their synthesis hereafter, but reverently rejects all attempts of intrusive rationalism to rob faith of its crown, and to anticipate the dawn of God's own day.

Those who are in a position to know how much distress and difficulty is caused to many souls inside the Church, and how much scandal is offered to men of goodwill outside, through short-sighted attempts to accommodate to reason what can only be accepted on faith, will not take these reflections amiss. If, in behalf of those who possess the faith, the attempt to sever tares from wheat may often be dangerous, for those who are seeking the faith, which they have lost or which they never had, the severance is all-important. As a rule, it is not the truth that is doubted or rejected, but the setting in which the truth is embedded, the husk which encases the kernel and makes it all-repulsive and unappetising.

It would almost seem, from many indications, that the same rationalism in religion which occasioned the defection of the sixteenth century has, like a fever, worked itself out, and brought about its own cure by an experimental demonstration of its insufficiency as a substitute for faith. In a saner spiritual philosophy, born of a revolt against materialism—the last and lowest form of rationalism—a basis is found for a certain temperate agnosticism, which is one of the essential prerequisites of intelligent faith; the attempt to build up and interpret the higher by the lower is definitively abandoned; the essential incapacity of finite mind to seize the absolute end, which governs and moves everything towards itself; the natural necessity of seeming contradictions and perplexities in our estimate of God's thoughts and ways, is accepted as inevitable. This sense of our mental insufficiency is no reason for credulity; nor does it relieve the "apologist" of his burden of establishing the fact of revelation; but it prepares the way for Christ, by showing that something equivalent to a revelation is as much an exigency of our nature as religion is. Thus God's spirit working outside the Church is preparing for Himself an acceptable people; and we within must co-operate and go forward to meet this movement, by purging out of our midst any remnant of the leaven of rationalism that we may have carried with us from earlier and cruder days, when faith needed the rein more than the spur.

PART II
ESSAYS ON IMMORTALITY

CHAPTER I

PERSONALITY AND ITS SURVIVAL

I

Credo quia absurdum is a wise principle of criticism when we are dealing with matters transcendent, or of extreme complexity, whose full understanding is reserved for the remote future. In such matters the facility, completeness, and rationality of a solution is a sure sign of its narrowness and shallowness. Not that the absurdity of a guess is a guarantee of its truth, but that the truth will necessarily appear absurd to the present unprepared state of our mind. It is not to this "absurdity" of revealed mysteries that men object, but to the pretension to certain and clear possession of such truths on the part of those who can in no way justify such a pretension.

That we shall ever get to know *wholly* what we really are may be denied; for it would involve omniscience—a knowledge of everything else. Yet, with our knowledge of other things, our knowledge of ourselves, the knowers, grows, and must ever continue to grow, *pari passu*. If I know what I am better, now, than I did at the first dawn of my consciousness; if at least the depth of the mystery, the data of the problem, are better grasped by civilised than by primitive man, there can be no positive reason for

supposing that this progress shall cease abruptly. If, at times, it seems that we learn only the depths of our ignorance and blindness, it must not be forgotten that this is itself a true advance, and the result of a true advance, in knowledge and understanding; that it is a step on the forward path; that it cannot claim to be the final step except by an act of the most suicidal dogmatism.

Often our temporary agnosticism in the face of certain world-old problems, such as immortality, freedom, &c., is due to some rooted, universal, and ancient presupposition with which the task of its solution has hitherto been approached; and in consequence of which the most powerful and original genius has returned from the attempt, baffled and empty-handed, time after time. This is an ill-service that tradition and education do to the cause of truth—one that can be corrected only by the deliberate and systematic tracing-out and criticising of all such accepted assumptions, lest we be fooled into mistaking habit for necessity, and the unusual for the unthinkable. Sometimes this deliberate and reflex criticism, sometimes the mere freshness of an ignorant and unbiassed mind, suddenly questions the unquestionable, supposes the impossible, puts the sun in the centre, or puts man in the centre; and streams of thought frozen from eternity at once begin to flow in all directions, and a new era is opened for the human intelligence.

If the indirect reasons for the belief in immortality are much strengthened, in these days, through the influence of Kant's ethical and religious philosophy; if, in spite of the bankruptcy of pure metaphysical

psychology, experimental psychology is groping here and there after "the larger hope," yet I feel that we are still far too deeply saturated with images and conceptions, derived from the animism of prehistoric times, to be capable of approaching the problem with the necessary freedom from such prepossessions. Even the most philosophical mind can hardly put the question save in terms that misdirect the quest; for, however subtly and unconsciously, it is dominated by those old-world beliefs in a shade that quits the body, and flies thence to a shadowy world, to live a shadowy life, in company with a multitude of fellow-shades.

It may well be that the attempt to verify any conception of immortality, cast in an ancient mould whose antiquity gives it a sort of necessity for thought, is doomed to failure; and that our only chance of real progress, and of bringing our psychology into harmony with the postulates of religion and morality, is to shake our mind as we should a kaleidoscope, and to frame hypothesis after hypothesis, courting rather than shunning the absurd, as offering at least a refuge from the enslaving tyranny of the conventional.

2

It is somewhat in this spirit that I ask myself what likelihood there is of my survival in any form after death. And certainly orthodox theology must be silenced for the time being, though afterwards it may be profitable to see how far its utterances are susceptible of reinterpretation—more politely called "development."

I observe, then, that my conscious life, that, namely,

whose continuance in some form I desire, consists in a certain activity; and that the object of this activity is self-formation, the formation of my body, of my mind, of my character. I am continually taking in new matter, new knowledge, new experience, and building it up into a new and improved self. The result of this conscious activity is certain habits of body and mind, which rapidly turn into a second nature, and at length evade all consciousness, all possibility of free control, or even intelligent explanation. I have learnt how to walk and talk and cycle; I have learnt to read, to think and to reason. I have formed these habits, which were not innate, by conscious thought and experiment; but now I could not tell myself how I do these things. They have quickly grown as necessary and instinctive as the simplest functions of my bodily nature.

Life so far as it is conscious, enjoyable, desirable, consists in the active process by which I build up such habits. Once formed, and rendered unconscious in their functioning, their value lies in their conditioning a much wider and fuller life and activity.

Thus every addition to knowledge is delightful in acquisition; but quickly grows stale. Yet, when acquired, it is a seed of future acquisitions otherwise impossible; it is a new power of fuller growth and life.

It is characteristic of habit-function, as opposed to conscious intelligent activity, to be mechanical and blind; to betray the intelligence which originated it, but to betray none of its own. Planned for certain uniform and recurrent conditions, it is helpless in the face of the unexpected and irregular; and unless it

can be adjusted and reshaped by conscious intelligence may, in such case, prove as mischievous as it is useful in normal conditions. And this characteristic becomes more pronounced just in the measure that the habit (be it of thought or action) is older and more deep-rooted; nearer to being a "second nature." If, then, habit gradually turns into nature, is it not an almost irresistible presumption that nature (as, I think, Pascal has said) is but an accretion of habits, and that it has been formed by precisely the same process? Do we not justify the geologist, who assumes that the earth's strata were formed in the past by the same processes that govern their formation in the present? In default of better, no other assumption is possible. Layer upon layer, our habits lie in orderly series, each conditioned and supported by that underneath it; the undermost being the hardest and most immutably fixed of them all.

But here our traditional mode of thought bursts in with an obvious and seemingly conclusive objection: "It is I who have formed my acquired habits of walking, speaking, thinking, &c.; but it is not I who have formed my innate habits of growing, assimilating, repairing, developing. Hence, if my nature be a mass of habits they are not habits that I have formed; they are habits of Nature, of some universal intelligence and agency; and all I can do is to play upon and modify and adapt the instrument that Nature has put ready made into my hands. Is it for a moment credible that I myself, whose conscious knowledge and intelligence and skill are so limited, am really possessed of the knowledge, skill,

and intelligence demanded for the process by which I have been developed from a cell to my present state of bodily and mental formation ; that the laws and uniformities by which that process is governed are simply habits that I have consciously taught myself ? And, even were it so, how comes the uniformity of the life-process among all men ; among all animals of the same species ? For that uniformity is, relatively to the species, what a habit is relatively to the individual ; it is a habit of Nature, and Nature must then be fancied as a single, living, intelligent agency, with whose work we individually co-operate ; or else as a sort of docile, passive, receptive intelligence or sensitivity, which retains and transmits the impress and form given to it by the active intelligence of generations and multitudes of perishing units—much as a State or a Society retains and transmits the garnered results of individual activity in the form of a corporate mind and character and sentiment, which shapes (and is in turn modified by) the individual of the future. The plasm from which I am built enfolds the results of all those lives through which it has been transmitted to me. Its law or habit of development has been acquired through millions of lessons and repetitions. *It*, and not *I*, is the subject of this habit ; a habit which *I* find irresistible in the main, and modifiable only in trivial details.”

And yet this view labours under as many difficulties as there are words in it. Amongst others : if we accept the doctrine of evolution in any received sense, it must be conceded that my physical nature, structural and functional, is the product of collective individual experience, of the attempts at self-adapta-

tion to environment by which living things have, in the past, taught themselves to grow and to function in a certain way; that this habitual growing and functioning is, by continuity, identical with the conscious action in which it began. Thus, that my cycling becomes gradually automatic and unconscious, does not at any point make it cease to be *my* activity. Similarly, if I had lived millions of years, and had built up my own nature by conscious experience, my digestive or circulatory processes would not be the less my action because they had become habitual and evaded the power of attention and voluntary control, or because I could not remember or explain the infinite accumulation of experiences and adaptations by which I had shaped and trained myself to be and to act in this wise.

Let us then try the results of the other hypothesis. Finding repeated actions becoming habitual, and growing at last into nature, and yet remaining mine and being the fruit of what was once perception and conscious adaptation, let me assume that every vital process that goes on in me is *mine* in the same way; that I have really made myself from germ to manhood.

From this it would follow that, as an acquired habit implies in me a latent memory and understanding of all the experiences by which it was generated, so there is in me a similar latent memory and understanding of all those experiences which resulted in that accretion of habits of growth and function called my nature. But those experiences are coextensive with the whole history of life from its earliest dawns, and in all the endless variety of its forms, specific and individual. If it is I,

actively, who live this organic life, such life is *my* habit; if it is *my* habit, it is a form of action that was once conscious and deliberate with me. But that was not, and could not have been, in *my* lifetime.

Heredity, the transmission of habits, only states but does not explain the matter. Can a habit, any more than an experience, be passed from subject to subject? That which shapes the plasm to a man, in the case of the parent, is either the same agency that so shapes it in that of the child, or else a new one, to which the same skill has been transmitted. Which is the easier supposition, from what we know of habit?

Let us then suppose that it is the same agency, the same subject, which works by nature-habit in me and in all living creatures past and present, and that this agency or subject is simply my self, the same subject which, in my organism, consciously acquires new habits and labours to convert them into nature-habits—which strives to perfect itself in me, or to perfect nature in this particular fragment, as much as possible; and which works similarly in every other fragment of living nature.

What are the inconveniences and the advantages of such an hypothesis?

What we know of "divided personality" in the same organism opens a way to solving some of the more patent inconveniences. We know that what is normally one subject may be split into several. Taking subject and object as correlatives, as two aspects of one experience, wherever, owing to some cerebral or nervous dissociation, we have a complete

dismemberment of experience we have a corresponding multiplication of "personality." Sometimes a narrowing and concentration of perception make us unconscious of our full normal experience; sometimes an intensification and diffusion of our vision make us see further than usual. In each case the narrower self is unaware of the broader; though the broader remembers the narrower. At other times neither is inclusive of the other; as when the selves are produced by two wholly different narrowings of the field of consciousness. Yet these may both be included and united in some moment of diffusion and comprehension. Which self is the true self? we ask. Each is true in its time and measure; each totality of experience has a relative personality and distinctness; some more than others. What is abnormal within the limits of a normally coherent organism may be perhaps quite normal among the whole collection of separate organisms, between which experience is necessarily split up, and, together with experience, this relative personality or subjectivity. We can imagine that in an "arboreal" animal, like the polype, which propagates by gemmation and without breach of physical continuity, there would be no such splitting up of experience or subjectivity within the family represented by a single "tree"; and that the same might have held of the whole animal kingdom, had not propagation by fission become a necessity of higher developments. We may try to imagine the "fission" as in some sense a contingency rather than a necessity; and so consider the splitting up of human and other experience between an infinite multitude of successive organisms

as on all fours with the morbid phenomena of "split personality."

The conviction of the unbroken continuity of all finite existence, which has come in with the hypothesis of universal development, carries with it a conviction as to the unity of that finite spirit which is manifested in the myriad forms of life, and in the whole of Nature, so far as the living and not-living are organically united in one system. We are constrained by necessity of thought to think of the whole of existence in terms of the highest category we know, which is that of self; to think of it, that is, as of a spirit which thinks and wills and works like our own; which develops its own physical embodiment, together with its own potentialities of knowledge and character.

It is, of course, the prejudice to our own separate personality that makes us recoil from such a view at first hearing. We feel as though separateness were really constitutive of our conscious being and personality. But may this not be true only in the sense in which concentration, abstraction, separateness is constitutive of the "I" of a moment of ecstasy, or of the "I" of an actor wholly absorbed in his rôle for the time being? When the ecstasy is over, when the rôle is finished, the illusory "I" is not wholly destroyed by being taken back into the fuller context of the agent's normal life; rather it is raised and perfected. The myriad rôles which the Nature-Spirit plays in every living creature, in which it becomes self-forgetful, constitute so many illusory selves, which are reabsorbed into the full Self of the Nature-Spirit, when the part is played and that particular work is finished. In each it works two-fold;

first, habitually or according to the "laws of nature," so far as it but repeats an action or series of actions more or less mechanically and unconsciously; but, besides the common, ancient, and universal problems, each individual of a species presents new and unique problems of adjustment and further development which, as unique and non-recurrent, need more or less conscious perception and choice. Here the spirit in me is roused to consciousness; it becomes identically my conscious self, yet oblivious, in me, of its fuller state for the time being, and wholly concentrated on the interest of this particular piece of work which I call my conscious life.

And with these particular problems of adjustment and conscious self-formation I deal; not with the intelligence, will, and power of my full and universal state, but with the limited vision proper to this state of concentration or narrowed attention.

As for moral responsibility, the difficulty is the same as in cases of split personality, morbid or normal. How do I stand now to the sin of that child self, long since absorbed into my adult self? Do I not feel in some sense laden with the sins of another personality altogether?¹ The Self of no two acts is quite the same, since subject and object vary together. It is the same by continuity, a continuity

¹ "I am the head-boy now, and look down on the line of boys below me; with a condescending interest in such of them as bring to my mind the boy I was myself when I first came there. That little fellow seems to be no part of me; I remember him as something left behind upon the road of life—as something I have passed rather than have actually been—and almost think of him as someone else."—*David Copperfield*, chap. xviii., A Retrospect.

Is not this a universal experience?

not of simple persistence but of growth and inclusion. Hence this illusory Self of my present consciousness will be saved in my fuller Self—the Self of the Nature-Spirit, which I truly am—as my childhood is saved in my manhood. So too all those other selves, perfect or imperfect, whose distinction from me and from one another will not be destroyed by their subsequent resumption in that full Self, which is common to all.

To be born, then, is to become fixed on the task of forming and perfecting a particular branch of this infinite tree of life in which I—the Nature-Spirit—am uttering and evolving my potentialities, working out the ideal, striving endlessly towards the Absolute; it is to be concentrated on this task to the oblivion of all others, and of the fulness of my total life. And to die is to return to myself after this action, this experience or episode, and to build this experience into the unity of my undying life; it is to wake from this passing ecstasy or distraction and to find myself again.

It is, of course, not worth while to work out the details of an hypothesis so remote and unprovable. But it is surely not more remote than the truth would be, were we in a position to know it. Moreover, it colligates a multitude of observations, and answers a score of difficulties, that are left straggling by the popular animistic conception, and, so far, may dimly indicate the direction wherein to seek for further evidence.

3

A thousand considerations suggest themselves, which lend a certain plausibility to the foregoing

conjecture or hypothesis, and will need to be dealt with before it is relegated to the limbo of dreams, and supplanted by some better guess at the same riddle. It is not worth while to marshal them in logical order, as one would do were one nearer at grip with facts; it will be sufficient to put them down in the rough order in which they suggest themselves:

1. There are cases alleged, not merely of successive, but of coexistent multiple personality (probably many such have been interpreted as diabolic possession) where, within one organism, the same distinctness obtains, morbidly, as normally obtains between two organisms. This points towards the inference that our normal distinctness depends on organic conditions.

2. Experimental Psychology shows that these morbidly-isolated tracts of experience are capable of development, and grow gradually to a greater distinctness of character and personality; that they are susceptible of education; that the morbid or "schismatic" personality may at last outgrow and excel the original or normal. This points to the inference that what we understand by a "Me," or a "Self," or a phenomenal or empirical *Ego*, is simply the unity of a tract of experiences connected by continuity of simultaneous comprehension; that this subject "I," who know and feel, am but the correlative of this total object, this tract of connected present and remembered experiences, known and felt; that I am aware of myself and of it in the same act; that it is only by reflection and abstraction that I resolve this "given" into Subject and Object, according as I look at it from one end or the other.

3. To live consciously is to develop that tract of experience which now constitutes me, to amplify and include it in a fuller, wider, deeper, more organically united experience; and, therefore, the desire for "immortality" is not for a persistence, but for a continual development of my present self. The desire could not be satisfied by elevation to a new and *wholly distinct* plane of experience. In such case nothing of what I mean by or care about as Myself would persist; only a sort of imaginary, characterless Ego, the product of abstraction. Nor, probably, could I possibly desire a development of my present experience, of a wholly non-imaginable kind; for, first, I can only desire what in some measure I know; and, secondly, a development is necessarily within the category and kind of that which is developed.

4. Yet the idea of a persistent noumenal Ego or spirit, which is the common subject of the two experience-tracts in a divided "personality," is not easily dismissed, and has a deeper root than in the organic unity of the body, which is the theatre of the drama. I am conscious that the totality of what I here and now know and feel and remember is but a fraction, included in the higher totality of all that is knowable. I am, in the same act, conscious that "I," who am here and now constituted and measured by my present total object, felt and known, am but a fraction of a possible total "I," correlative to the total of all that is knowable. Feeling this "I," to which I might grow, to be contained in my present self potentially, as a tree in a seed, I am conscious of a sort of noumenal "I," hidden behind or under my apparent and empirical "I." It is "the more

that I might be." Yet this potential "I" is still of the empirical sort or quality. Its unity is merely that of the object known—a unity of continuity in time and place, divisible into parts, moments. The empirical self is thought of in terms of the object; because it must be turned into an object to be thought of at all. Its unity is not that of the "knowing" Self, to which the "known" Self is made object, and from reference to whose acts alone the multiplicity and disconnection of the object gets its unity. Thus the "known" or object Self gets its unity from the object, but the object gets its unity from the subject or knowing Self.

5. This "knowing" subject is therefore not divided with the divisions that sever tracts of experience from one another, but is one with its own spiritual and original unity; nor can we assign any means of differentiating it, except by a purely mental reference of it to these different experience-tracts, which are its own acts. In this sense, therefore, the "knowing" (though not the "known") "I" of any two severed tracts of experience is always one and the same; it is the "I" constituted by the totality of all present and past, and by the potentiality of all future experience. It is not only "the more that I *might* be," but "the more that I *am* and *have been*." In the parts of the divided personality it is this "I" of all experience (these divided experiences included) which is the common subject. That, in the act which is constituted by that tract of experience which I call my empirical Self, I should be unaware of my complete self, and of my total experience, in which this is necessarily included; that I should be conscious

of the part in being conscious of the whole, yet not of the whole in being conscious of the part, is the mystery; but it is not one without analogies.

6. The "I" which governs the anæsthetic hand, that writes fairly intelligent answers to questions, while its owner is absorbed in conversation or otherwise distracted, is often proved, by hypnosis, to have been, all the time, the subject of a wider experience, inclusive of both principal and secondary personalities. These seemingly separate "I"s were unconscious of that wider "I," which, however, was conscious of the several experiences as its own. Else, their re-sumption in one experience would be impossible. They were but two different acts of the same "I," which thought them together in some third act.

7. It is true that the most widely sundered twigs on a tree have some point of common descent or junction; and similarly that all experiences are part of one universal experience, and *therefore* connectable, if not connected. But consciousness may be compared to a light of varying intensity. Only its fullest power lights up the whole connection. In "me" it is too weak to do more than give light for my proximate and separate needs. In the measure that it is intensified it shows my experience in a wider and deeper connection; it reveals the remoter and more buried strata of the relatively sub-conscious. But, to reveal all, it would need to be as intense as the consciousness of the whole.

8. In each individual consciousness seems to be limited quantitatively, and to be diffused unequally among many connected centres, subject to one centre

and focus of consciousness. Yet even in the remotest centre, so long as it is in connection with the rest and does not evade the chief centre altogether, the "I" exercises a certain power of choice and intelligence and adaptation, however weak and attenuated; it "manages" that centre in the interests of the whole plexus of co-ordinated centres; and this is possible only because the "I," as conscious and intelligent in the part, is the same "I" that is intelligent in the whole. When, however, the light that reaches to some extreme outlying centre is too feeble when it gets there to reveal to that centre its connection with the rest of the organism, the centre in question no longer connects its action with that of the whole; "I," as in that remote centre, am intelligent and adaptive only in that centre's interest, as though it were a separate personality. It is subjected to the general interest only in so far as it is passively controlled by the chief central intelligence, or functions according to "habit"; but it does not any longer control *itself* in the general interest, but merely in its own interest. This is, of course, what happens in hysterical patients, whose spirit-force is too weakly transmitted (if at all) to outlying centres to reveal to them their connection with the whole.

Perhaps, then, in us separately, the "I" of the Nature-Spirit has not light enough to reveal in us (*i.e.* to make a part of our separate tract of experience) our solidarity with the whole of Nature; but only enough to enable us to see, choose, and act in our own separate interests—except so far as "faith" intensifies the light enough to make us dimly aware of our wider self. And yet, *in the whole*, the same

"I" or Spirit may be cognisant of such divided parts, and strive to control them into obedience, and to check their "selfishness." Thus the struggle to "know myself," and to master myself so known, the whole "ethical process," were but my response to this weakly-felt control from the centre, *i.e.* were a continual fight with the normal "hysteria" of egoism, an endeavour of the part to find its true relation to the whole, or, an effort of the Whole to become fully self-conscious and active in the part.

9. At this rate it would no longer be necessary to regard the germinal cell from which I have grown as a cunning mechanism, contrived to go through a series of evolutions reproductive of the specific and family characteristics of my sort. Rather it is ever one and the same plastic spirit, the single subject of all natural experiences, memories, habits, generalities (for habits are generalities of action and suppose a consciousness, however dim, of similarity of relations) which moulds the formless plasm *habitually*, and according to methods of operation so oft repeated as to have become its *nature*, and to constitute what we mean by *Nature*. *Nature*, therefore, is the universal creature-spirit, so far as it has developed for itself a certain fixed character and mode of operation, which has become in many ways virtually unchangeable. This is what we mean by a man's "nature," when we use it as equivalent to his now fixed, though originally self-formed, character.

10. Judged, then, by these categories, what would death mean? Let the anæsthetic hand of an automatic writer perish, and then let the patient, by hypnotism, be brought to that buried but wider con-

consciousness, in which the normal and anæsthetic consciousness are found co-ordinated as part of one life.

The "I" of the anæsthetic, as of the normal self, will then be revealed as identical with the "I" of the wider inclusive self; the experiences, limited intelligence, choice, self-adaptiveness, of that state, are saved in its present state, just as the phases of our childish experience are saved and included in those of our manhood's experience. My separate mortal life is thus but a passing episode in my universal life.

11. As has been said, the "I," never being the same absolutely, but only by continuity and inclusion, in any two of its actions, it is not more difficult to hold the universal "I" responsible for the acts of the limited and partial "I," than to hold the man responsible for what he did when confused or half-mad. In these infantile or half-mad acts there is (as in an imperfect automatism) a certain degree of sight, choice, and adaptation, though with little or no possible regard to the wider interests of the fuller saner self. Still, within the limits of such vision, there is room for a relative right and wrong in choice, and a power of sin or desert in relation to that wider self. The narrower self is responsible, though the wider (since its control is imperfect or none) is not.

12. As included in my fuller and later self I approve or condemn my earlier and narrower self, according as its actions further or retard my present self-developments. Similarly the whole episode of my separate and mortal life will be judged, when it is

absorbed into my fuller and universal life. In it the consequences of my present actions will be felt in all their wisdom and all their folly. The loathing I shall have for my wrongdoing and "selfishness," for my "hysterical" egotism and waywardness, and the pain it will cost me to rectify such follies, will be the "hell," in which the self of each sinful moment will be punished everlastingly; something analogous to what an ambitious man suffers from the limitations imposed on him by his boyish folly and neglect of opportunities.

13. In this view at least some intelligible reason and content is given to the life hereafter; it is not an idle, eternal resting, a *dolce far niente*. Again, a solution is offered to the seeming futility of wasted lives, and of lives extinguished ere rightly kindled at all. For all are episodes in one life; they are aborted but not idle efforts, by which it strives to push out in a million directions all at once. They are not "souls" wasted or thrown away, as in the old animistic view.

14. Plainly there is no taint of pantheism in this view. The magnitude of the created Spirit, the plentitude of its existence, do not make it infinite or divine, or greater than orthodox theology has figured the least of God's angels. The Nature-Spirit depends on God, lives by Him and with Him in precisely the same way in its universal embodiment as in any of its particular embodiments.

And with this we may leave the matter. With the growth of all knowledge man's self-knowledge will deepen down and reveal to him more and more of the hidden strata on which his nature rests; and

therewith will surely come many a startling revolution in his psychology and metaphysics. The old animism, bequeathed to us from prehistoric times, is not elastic enough to hold the new wine of psychological advance, not to speak of the compression it exerts on our moral and religious expansiveness.

New bottles for new wine ; new categories for new knowledge. A thousand attempts, like the above, may at last, by some lucky chance, find us what we want.

1904.

CHAPTER II

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

Non omnis moriar

MAN'S spiritual growth under the influence of civilisation is almost universally marked by a developed sense of fraternity and equality ; by a breaking down of partition walls between nationalities and classes ; by a sympathy which is, at root, a sense of unity, of sameness, of solidarity of interests. A further effect of this deepening of self-consciousness, of this "explicitation" of our dim spiritual instincts, whereby the foundations of our being become more distinctly revealed to us, is an extension of a like sympathy to the whole sentient world ; a tenderness for the lower animals, proportioned to the measure of their nearness to our own humanity. But more significant still is a developed love and affection towards inanimate Nature, a so-called, but miscalled, "pantheism" of the Wordsworthian type, whose motive and character are altogether different from those of that true pantheism, which is directly developed from polytheism by the unifying tendency of philosophical reflection. Rightly interpreted it is not the recognition of *God*, but the recognition of *Self*, in Nature that is the secret of the Wordsworthian sentiment. It is the same sort of "homing" instinct as that which fills us with a tenderness for all the haunts and associations

of our childhood ; for all that puts us back into the past, or brings the past and present of our life into unity, overcoming its dispersion through time, and foreshortening it into one depth and fulness. So too the "historic" sense and emotion, the love of all that is ancient and primitive, whether it be of the monuments of man's life in bygone ages, or of the eternal hills and oceans, the endless processes and revolutions of heaven and earth—how is it explicable save by the fact that the life of Nature is my own, that her past is my past, that I lived through it all from the beginning, and yearn towards it as towards my childhood ?

That the feeling and emotion are such as would spring from the dim subconsciousness of such a relationship, from a blindness to and separation from one's fuller self, as well as from a craving for deliverance and for conscious reunion therewith, does not indeed prove such to be the only possible explanation of the feeling in question ; for it is but one explanation out of multitudes equally plausible. Still, if my relationship to Nature, such as here assumed, were probable on other grounds, the existence of such emotions would strengthen that probability.

Besides all this, it must be observed that the moral sense, the sense of right, whose growth is identical with that of man's reasonable and spiritual nature, and implies a deepening of his self-understanding and of his insight into his true relation to Nature, is a sense, not only of the solidarity of his private interest with the universal interest, but of the latter as being his own in a profounder way than the former. He begins to recognise the narrower self and its interest

as illusory, in so far as seemingly separate and independent; and to fight down this illusion and its unmoral, or immoral, consequences. If there is a superficial self, or rather condition of the Self, which rebels against the moral law, there is a deeper subconscious Self which imposes it, not perhaps ultimately, but vicariously, as mediating between the Divine and the natural.

And, now, it is not on the mere horror of death and extinction, common to every sentient being, and which the worst and worldliest men experience no less, or perhaps more than, the best, that any solid plea for immortality is grounded. Reason cannot allow that the persistence of such processes is necessary or due. No, it is only the *moral* process in man that seems stultified if it is not to persist and advance for ever; immortality is the postulate of our spiritual, not of our animal life. In other words, it is the deeper and more universal self in us that is imperishable, and of whose imperishable nature we become more clearly conscious in the measure that the separative conditions of the illusory state are overcome by moral effort, and the true Self is thereby allowed to appear. So much truth perhaps underlies the doctrine of "conditional immortality." For though it is the same Self which survives, yet it is only its moral and universal process that will have "the glory of going on and still to be"; the separate non-moral interests, having served their purpose, will live on in memory and in their spiritual effect, but their process perishes necessarily with the organism.

In this sense the wicked perishes while the just man's life, as just, is eternal. Even in this mortal life

the "selves" of his past evil moments (for the self of no two moments is the same, viewed from the "objective" end; but each dissolves into its successor) are condemned and repudiated by the just man; they live on only in the determination they have imparted to his present self, but the process they belong to is broken off and discontinued; whereas his present righteousness is the development and continuation of his past righteousness (even as the subjective self is the same throughout); it is built into it and not cut away and cast off.

1904.

CHAPTER III

OUR SENSE OF PAST INNOCENCE

Toda la vida è sueño

THE "contract" view of the origin of civil society, in the form held (*e.g.*) by Burke, is undoubtedly false as history, as an account of what actually happened; but it is largely true as explanatory of the relationships, the rights and duties, of the members of society in regard to one another; that is, it possesses a practical or pragmatismal truth. This, according to Mr. W. J. Williams,¹ is the sort of truth which Pascal ascribes to the story of the Fall.

That story is not, however, a mere symbol, any more than was the "social-contract" theory in the mind of Rousseau, but is a reading of history, an interpretation of the past from the contemplation of the present condition of mankind. It is, perhaps, an over-easy account of this and kindred beliefs in a golden past, forfeited by sin, to say that they have arisen from an attempt to explain our aspirations towards the ideal, towards a golden future, as being a sort of "homesickness." For if, as a fact, there has been no golden age in the past, if our whole struggle has been upwards from the mire of bestiality and savagery, it were easier to accept aspiration as an ultimate fact than to explain it by the hypothesis of a fall. We might as

¹ See *Leisy, Pascal, Newman, and the Catholic Church*.

fairly explain our downward earthward tendency by a primitive condition of animalism. Is there any demand for a reading of history that shall show man not merely to be rising, but to have fallen; not merely as imperfect, but as ruined? What business have we to presume that a boulder is a meteorite?

But the sense of spiritual captivity and stifling oppression, the craving for redemption, for deliverance, and not merely for help and advancement, the persistent *Quis me liberabit?* that breaks from the heart of all inward religion, is too persistent and universal a phenomenon to be explained away as a looking-glass fallacy, which confounds the end and result of a process with its cause and origin.

A far deeper measure of historical truth will attach to the story of the fall of Adam—the first man, in whom all humanity was incorporate physically and juridically—if we view each several human organism as the work and manifestation of a single spirit, which, in each of them, is clearly conscious of itself only as identified with that particular manifestation; which is, as it were, stupefied and drugged as to its wider and universal activity, and whose whole task and effort in this organism is to work itself sober, to recover its full self-consciousness—a result which depends on the success with which it brings its separate self into perfect harmony with its universal self, by obeying the obscure suggestions and instincts of that universal self as *felt* in subconsciousness, and as growing ever more explicit in the measure that they are obeyed.

Thus man's cry for deliverance is like that of one

who feels that some deadly slumber has stolen on him, and has robbed him of the possession of senses and feelings which he once had and which he must recover at all costs ; who feels that, if he cannot resist the narcotic, if he ceases to struggle and sits down quietly and yields to its influence, it will seal the little sense that remains to him in everlasting sleep.

It is then this fallen self, which I once was, that groans within me for freedom, and that feels cribbed, cabined and confined by the conditions of mortality. It is not only because I am *capable of becoming* more and greater than I now am consciously, but because I *am* actually greater, and possess a subconsciousness of that greatness, that I feel the need of a Saviour. *Moram faciente sponso dormitaverunt omnes et dormierunt;* in our present mortality we are all as the slumbering virgins of the parable, and our separateness is but part of our dream ; but perhaps the midnight cry that shall waken us may prove us one with one another and with the Bridegroom.

CHAPTER IV

THE SELF AND THE WHOLE

I. THE RETURN TO SELF

In se autem reversus

THE scholastic definition of the soul's presence in the organism: *totus in toto, et totus in qualibet parte*, may serve to express the relation of the universal Self or Nature-Spirit to Nature as a whole, and to each part of Nature, animate or inanimate. The process by which the individual man is put forth by the species, through the instrumentality of his mother (as a new shoot in some arboreal growth) is governed by the *intentio Naturæ*, and is in the general interest. First there is the earliest stage of "germination," or absolute dependence and continuity, in which the formative process is purely active in the whole, purely passive in the new part. Then, in the now separated part, the Self forgets its fulness and lives wholly for and in the new organ. In this stage the necessary "egoism" and self-seeking tendency of the part needs to be held in check from outside, by the force of the whole, in the interests of the whole. Law must appeal to egoistic motives of hope and fear, or even to means of violent coercion. Thus the law of the "survival of the fittest," the laws of pleasure and pain, health and disease, life and death, all regulate and check the selfishness of mere sentient life—animal or sub-human—

in the general interests of the species, and serve as a rude substitute for that inward principle of spontaneous altruism that as yet lies dormant: "The wages of sin is death"; "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

This selfish phase is an advance on the former, in so far as the vital, formative process is now *ab intra*, and the Whole is relieved of part of its labour; further, the selflessness and subjection of the earlier stage was merely negative and passive. Moreover, it is necessary, because the part, or separate organ, must exist and be perfected absolutely in itself before it can be usefully subordinated and related to the general good; and this prior task occupies all the energy, intelligence and adaptiveness of the imperfect spirit. Only when this self-formation is finished, and the powers of thought and action have been developed by experience and reflection, does the General Self *in the part* begin to be dimly re-conscious of its generality, and to desire to subject and co-ordinate its action, in that part, to its universal action. Passing out of childhood—physical, mental and moral—the man becomes a social (if not a humanitarian or a divine) being and agent; becomes consciously sympathetic and co-operant with that *intentio Naturæ* that gave birth to him; and he tends at last to recognise the identity between the "I" that lives in his separate human organism and the "I" that is the conscious subject and agent of the whole Nature-process; which latter "I" is *totus (totaliter) in toto, et totus (etsi non totaliter) in qualibet parte*. Now, not only is he capable of self-formation *ab intra*, but also of a free self-adjustment to the Universal good; he has passed from the bondage of the law to the liberty of the Gospel; *he has returned to himself*.

2. SEPARATENESS

If by a distinct Self we mean the one Self considered as the subject of a distinct act, we learn to give a somewhat new turn to the *transeunt omnia* of the mystics and ascetics. Every act, every self is, in one sense, indestructible and immortal. Within the compass of my separate human life the self of my infancy, boyhood and youth have died into the self of my manhood: and, of this, each act and moment dies into the next, which is built up on it and made out of it. Yet so far as I am developing myself truly and rightly, it is only the right and true self of the past that are now saved in my conscious life; the others are condemned as worthless or hurtful. And if my whole life should be ill regulated, and waste or worthless, it will be similarly related hereafter to my universal life; nay, it is already judged and condemned therein and thereby, though I am not awake to the fact. I shall look back upon it then as, in my better moments, I now look back on the worst passages of my past, with a pain and repulsion measured to the clearness of my vision and the strength of my moral sentiment. Thus it remains as true as ever:

“Then shall he stand to judge, who now submits himself humbly to the censures of men.

Then shall the poor and humble have great confidence, but the proud shall fear on every side.

Then will it appear that he was wise in this world, who learned to be a fool and despised for Christ's sake.

Then every affliction that we bore patiently shall delight us, and all iniquity shall shut its mouth.

Then shall all the devout rejoice, and all the profane lament.

Then shall the flesh that was afflicted rejoice more than if it had been nurtured in delights.

Then shall the mean attire shine gloriously, and the silken robes seem vile.

Then the poor cottage shall be more commended than the gilded palace.

Then will steady patience help us more than all the power of the world.

Then simple obedience shall be exalted above all worldly craft.

Then shall a clean and good conscience more rejoice a man than learned philosophy.

Then shall the contempt of riches weigh more than all the worldling's treasure.

Then wilt thou find more comfort in devout prayer than in dainty cheer.

Then wilt thou rejoice more that thou hast kept silence than that thou hast talked much.

Then will holy works more avail, than many fine words.

Then a strict life and severe penance will be more pleasing than all earthly delight." (A Kempis, i. 24.)

Those selfs and actions alone are real, are eternal, are true, which go to the building up of the Spirit; to the furtherance of truth and goodness and reason and love; which are saved in the resultant and enter into its constitution permanently. The rest are condemned, hated, overcome for all eternity; for "separateness" is of their very nature. The good self and action is that which is harmonious with and subject to the universal self and action; in which, as in its instrument, the universal lives and moves and acts. Then, and then alone, am I truly myself in the deepest sense.

CHAPTER V

SIN

I

Lord, who hath sinned? this man or his parents?

THE invincible desire to have others think, feel and will as we do, or else to bring our thoughts, feelings and ends into harmony with theirs, is probably best explained as an instance of the general desire of being at unity with oneself, of thinking consistently, feeling harmoniously, willing and acting coherently and sanely. Only in this instance it is our deeper and more universal Self, in which we are all one, that makes itself felt vaguely in the depths of our subconsciousness; yet ever less vaguely in the measure that we grow more deeply self-penetrating, and reach downwards to the hidden roots of our being.

Yet deeper than this desire of spiritual agreement with others is that of agreement with "the right," with some ideal or typical mind, sentiment and will. Only as better representing or approximating to this ultimate rule or ideal do we prefer the more general to our own particular fashion of soul, presuming that our difference therefrom may be eccentricity and error rather than originality and deeper insight.

Moral, as being more than social sin, is an act of my narrower surface-will against my deepest

universal will; and so far Kant's idea of "autonomy" will stand justified; the law against which I offend is self-imposed. But it is imposed and transgressed by a different "I," a different "Self"—just as in ordinary experience the "I" who resolves to-day, and who breaks its resolve to-morrow, is the same yet different. When I sin, however, the forbidding and the "transgressing "I" are co-existent and simultaneous in time. Here, again, ordinary experience offers parallels. We often sin deliberately against our selfishness; some particular feeling or passion (greed or vanity or anger) breaks loose for the moment, masters us, becomes a separate self, and makes us do or omit what our natural self-love wants omitted or done. The narrower, included self violates the wider including self. Still more parallel are cases of "disgregation" of consciousness. A "habit" will disobey me at times, even when my whole attention is given to resisting it. Yet it is not *purely* mechanical, but has a certain narrow range of perception, intelligence and choice of its own; there is a little bit of myself in it which disobeys, or at least disregards my fuller self. As an individual man I can, and do, in like manner disregard and disobey that world-self of mine, in which my human selfhood is contained.

2

All that popular religion tells us of the terrible evil of sin, its everlasting torments, its offensiveness in God's eyes, would be a most exaggerated symbolism of the poisonous and hurtful effects of sin in the individual life—at least so far as moral and spiritual

evil is felt by the agent in the form of suffering. The hardest heart feels it least; and the merely temporal consequences are neither invariable nor in any way proportional to the guilt. To make it true for the individual life, this life must be prolonged in a supernatural other-world, wherein the manifest inequities of the natural will be adjusted.

But our religious language about sin chiefly derives from the Old Testament, where the people, and not the individual, was the agent under consideration. The people possesses a relative immortality, and individual inequalities are equalised in the average. Laws of sequence are true in the gross, though fallible in single cases. Thus the sins of the fathers, collectively, are visited on the children, collectively, to the third and fourth generation, and further. If the people sins in one generation it suffers in another; for it is the same collective subject.

If to Ezekiel it seemed an iniquity that the children's teeth should be set on edge because their fathers had eaten sour grapes, this was because he had outgrown tribalism, and interpreted of the individual a proverb framed in earlier times, when the unit was nothing and the mass everything.

All that is said of God's wrath and hatred of sin may mean that when the individual will is merged in the divine, when it recognises universal interests as its own deepest interests, it will wake up to the enormous, and at present unsuspected, ill-consequences of sins done in the flesh, and its feeling towards them will be just that which is figured in the language of popular religion as the eternal, unquenchable fire of God's wrath. If in any true

and practical sense the slayer and the slain are, as Brahmanism teaches, one and the same, this would give as strong a sanction to the moral law as any doctrine of rewards and punishments, provided the sense of that oneness be realised in some future stage of existence. Would a man willingly slay his neighbour's son, if he knew it was his own son? What would his feelings be on discovering his mistake? Does not such a view throw new light on the golden rule—"do as you would be done by"? May it not be the true explanation of sympathy and humanity, and of the dependence of their development on that of insight and imaginative intelligence?

3

We dismiss the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration as outside the range of serious hypotheses, and are fairly self-complacent as to the superior rationality of our own Hell-and-Heaven scheme. Yet, surely, for all its fancifulness, the former answers better to the irresistible moral postulate that, *of its very nature*, a good deed, like a good tree, must bring forth good fruit; an evil deed, evil fruit; that it should not be necessary to invoke a cataclysm, a general judgment, followed by a new Heaven and a new Earth, to adjust the crookedness and iniquity of the present system. Here is at least a deeper, if a blinder, faith in the rationality and goodness of the present universe; a conviction that things are so constituted that the soul which sins shall suffer "measure for measure"; that there can be no escape from the sorrow of existence into the Nirvana of a consciousness of deliverance till the lesson of life's vanity has been learnt and put in

practice ; till the heart has really and absolutely despised the finite as unworthy of itself, and has risen above it, not in the renunciation of the suicide who fears the pain of life and loves its pleasures, but in that of one who is dead to fear as well as to desire, and has won the peace of indifference by a super-human act of will. That the soul should be cast into the crucible again and again, till it realises its destiny ; that it should be set back further in its course according as it falls more foully—all this is simply a faithful translation into imaginative form of the postulates of the moral sense. The Jewish Hell and Heaven, even eked out with the most necessary but quite inadequate Catholic Purgatory, is but a clumsy device in comparison.

We are, perhaps, unduly impatient of what seems to us the unchristian and vindictive spirit of so many of the psalms. But if we look to the substance rather than to the form of the sentiment, and if we remember, too, that much which is translated as precatory and optative might as justly, or more justly, be rendered predictive, we shall see that, at root, it is a pure moral passion, an indignation against life's present inequities, a conviction of the ultimate justice and rationality of the universe, which there finds expression in the terms of a very inadequate theology. To a considerable extent personal and egoistic sentiments blend with the moral and religious, and mar the purity of its utterance ; but it is none the less true that the Psalmist sees the conflict between himself and his foes, or between Israel and the Gentiles, as a symbol, or rather a particular manifestation, of the eternal and universal conflict between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Faith and Unfaith.

CHAPTER VI

ONE SPIRIT AND ONE BODY

A READY objection against the mystical psychology of these pages is that the universal Self, or "I," simply absorbs the greater part of our conception of God and of divinity; or, at least, that if it leave anything over for God to do and be, it is nevertheless thrust in as a sort of barrier between God and the particular self. For the universal self is that from which the particular is derived, to which it returns, whose mind and will is the norm of its own, for whom it must live, through whom it is bound up with its fellows. It is, at once, the object and the cause of faith, *i.e.* of a sort of supra-rational apprehension of mysteries beyond the world of clear knowledge; and it is the source of life and strength, re-enforcing the feebleness of the part with the energy of the whole. It is, in some sense, the ever-watchful judge of our actions, saving or condemning, rewarding or punishing, eternally.

All this and more is true. But this universal self-evolving spirit is no whit less contingent and finite and dependent than the meanest of those lives, human or sub-human, in which it manifests some fraction of its potentiality; just as the complete self of any one separate organism is no less contingent than the

remotest and least of those subordinate centres of which it is constituted.

Thus the mediacy of our dependence on God through secondary causes does not lessen our dependence or make it less *immediate* in its kind. All Christian mystics have felt the need of some such invisible spiritual Church, some Communion of Saints, some mystical body of Christ, or organism of multitudinous members manifesting one and the same spirit in an endless variety of ministrations, through which, and in union with which, alone, the separate self is put in immediate communication with God. Not as though the mystic Christ stood between the soul and God, as a channel; but that only as forming part of that mystic Christ can the soul have direct access to the Father. Those who think thus cannot complain if we suppose a mystical universal self, in union with which, alone, we are united with God. Their "invisible Church" is open to all the same objections which they would allege against an hypothesis which is little else than an attempt to reach the same conception from the side of philosophy.

CHAPTER VII

THE SLEEP OF DEATH

Et dormiunt in somno pacis. In what sense can the transition of the soul from the dream of this troubled life, with its thwarted and limited activities, to its awakening to the consciousness of its deeper and wider self-hood, and to a life and activity co-extensive with that of the created universe, be compared to a falling into tranquil sleep? It might perhaps be said that to wake from the incoherencies, horrors, and perplexities of a distressing nightmare, to find oneself safe and sound in one's quiet bed, would be virtually a falling to sleep, a returning to peace and rest; and that, in this sense, death will deliver us from the doubts, obscurities, fears, and sufferings due to that disintegration and loss of our full self-consciousness which are inseparable from our mortal condition. But in a yet profounder sense it may be said that the fulness of activity is the fulness of rest; that what wearies is the fetters and shackles under which we labour here. When its rotation is swiftest the top is said to sleep, and so it is that "He giveth his beloved ones sleep." If "they rest from their labours" it is none the less true that "their works do follow them"—not merely as titles to payment for past services rendered, but as works that are continued, carried on, integrated and brought to full energy and

perfection by the removal of limiting conditions; works that are no longer labours, no longer wearisome, but welcome as exercise is to "the strong man who runs his course."

Blessed then are the dead, so far as they die in the Lord; so far as they have lived in the Lord and their life and work has been a divine life and work. In the measure that their surface-self has lent itself obediently to be an instrument of their deeper and diviner Self, their work will follow them, will be continued, completed and saved as an organic or constitutive element of that greater and universal work, which is the fulfilment of the Divine Will upon earth as in Heaven, in the relative as in the absolute.

In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam, quoniam tu Domine singulariter in spe constituisti me. Even in the peaceful resolution of our bodily frame into its component elements—"earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust"—we may see a figure (if not even another aspect) of the reassimilation or co-absorption of that separate experience, of which alone we are now fully conscious, into that universal experience of ours, whereof we are but dimly prescient and sub-conscious—an absorption quite analogous to the ordinary act of perception, whereby a sensation, otherwise evanescent and non-significant, is fitted into the system of co-existences and sequences that constitutes the world of our memory; or to the act whereby a perception, or body of perceptions, is worked into the unity of our understanding and made part and parcel of our *Weltanschauung*.

The process of our physical existence is, after all, but a wave, an eddy, upon the surface of the universal

stream of phenomena ; it is but a part, more or less arbitrarily cut off, by mental abstraction, from the unity of the entire physical process or movement. We put our bodily organism over against the world, in imagination ; but, after all, it is part of it, not merely materially and statically, but dynamically ; our separateness is only relative and imperfect ; we are bone of its bone, flesh of its flesh, as closely dependent on it as is the unborn child on the life of its mother. For the brief moment of its life-time the separateness that obtains between the most complex animal organism and the world, though immeasurably greater in degree, is not different in kind from that which severs the ripple from the stream or the leaf from the tree ; and this relation has its analogue, or rather its other polar aspect, in that which obtains between our particular and our universal experience, between what we are conscious of as identified with the parts and what we are conscious of as identified with the whole ; that consciousness which will be ours "when the body returns to the dust and the soul to God who gave it."

The Judæo-Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and, still more, the scholastic speculation, which viewed it as "due to nature," and as owing only its glorious adjuncts to the Redemption of Christ, if, in some sense, originally a product of materialistic psychology, is, in fact, a useful corrective of that false dualism of spirit and matter, which would turn the body into the soul's prison-house, and ignore that absolute inter-dependence of psychic and physiological activity which grows daily more evident to science. Of this interdependence the schoolmen were suffi-

ciently aware to allow that, though the *intellectus* might have a purely immaterial operation of its own, yet without the senses and imagination that operation would be sterilised. Wherefore they concluded that a *post-mortem* life of the soul postulated either a resurrection of the body or else some miraculous equivalent; that a permanent disembodiment of the human spirit was tantamount to its extinction. This difficulty would not have existed for them had they distinguished between the adequate and inadequate embodiment of the soul; between its adequate and its inadequate self-consciousness; between the true continuity of our existence, and the episodes into which it is broken up, through the abstractions of thought, preparatory to synthesis and unification.

1904.

CHAPTER VIII

BEFORE BIRTH AND AFTER DEATH

The Spirit shall return unto God who gave it.—ECCLES. xii. 7.

BUT what of the soul after death, when the organism through which its experience was gathered, through which God spoke to it in the symbols and shadows of sense, has dropped away and closed the brief chapter of its temporal life ?

The impossibility of imagining the extinction of our consciousness is no proof of immortality, since it is only the impossibility of imagining any scene at which we are not present as spectators ; we must be there in fancy to see our own absence. We have the same difficulty in picturing the times before we were born. We can throw ourselves into them ; but we cannot take ourselves out of them, if we think of them at all. To think is to present to our mind, to make present to ourselves. Hence also we cannot think of "no space" or "no time," or see darkness, or hear silence ; for here there is no object, as, there, no subject. But if our inability to present our past non-existence does not hinder our knowing it as a fact, a like inability with regard to our future non-existence is no proof that we shall exist. What began to be can cease to be.

One might be bold enough to conjecture and believe that, since "before" and "after" have reference merely to the bodily order of existence,

it is idle to inquire where our soul was "before" birth or where it shall be "after" death, since it *is* eternally in the thought and will of God—as it were a subsistent law or idea, working its effect in due season, and, in given conditions, possessing a dependent eternity which S. Thomas thought incorruptible creatures might possess; or one might think that, in its pre-natal state, unconscious of an empirical separateness of anything beyond the pure *ego*, each several conscience-centre slumbered in some dreamy ecstatic consciousness of the "other-than-self"; that, when clothed with a living organism, its wandering vision was gathered home and withdrawn from the depth to the surface in the measure that it was turned inwards upon the growing mass of its own direct experience, which mass of personal experience characterises its "empirical" personality, making it the subject to *this* object, and to no other—

"The baby new to earth and sky,
 What time its tiny hand is prest
 Upon the circlet of its breast,
 Has never thought that: This is 'I';

But as he grows he gathers much,
 And learns the use of 'I' and 'Me,'
 And finds I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch.

So rounds he to a separate mind
 From which clear memory may begin,
 As through the frame that binds him in
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their due,
 Had man to learn himself anew
 Beyond the second birth of Death."

This conjecture might account at once for the absence in us of any clear consciousness of pre-natal existence or distinct self-experience, and also for that dim sense of precognition and familiarity, with which we often greet experiences and ideas that, to us personally, are new; for if, buried in the inscrutable depths of our subconsciousness, there is a treasury of the accumulated experiences of humanity, over which our now self-concentrated vision was once dreamily diffused, we should expect to feel, in regard to many apparent novelties, this dim sense of previous acquaintanceship. Moreover, this conjecture falls in well with the theory of heredity; and shows how the soul in successive generations comes to the world, not as a *tabula rasa*, a blank transparency, but characterised in the dark foundations of its conscious life by all antecedent human experience.

Nor, in this, do we ignore the traces that heredity writes in our bodily organism, or set aside its dependence on material conditions; rather, we go to the root of that physiological law, believing that the soul makes and fashions this body to itself; that the "character" of the soul is, as it were, a pyramid based upon the inherited results of this most ancient and most universal life-experience, and tapering up, through those of more recent and particular origin, to those which we have consciously acquired by ourselves. How far these latter owe their character to the *milieu* into which they were received, to the subconscious experience we have inherited, is impossible to determine.

Even, however, if we allow the commoner conception that the soul "begins to be" in time; that the

formation of the embryo gives the signal for a new act of creation, and does not merely terminate and perfect an *ab eterno* existence hitherto expectant and imperfect (as *e.g.* it terminates the eternal decree of creation, so that we are forbidden to ascribe "succession" to God's creative activity in the production of soul after soul); even if we must confess that our soul—our particular conscience centre—began to be, yet it is hard to think that the experience which humanity has acquired through me and my physical organism should in any sense remain for others and yet not for me. Indeed my own consciousness is the centre which binds it altogether, and apart from which it is non-existent. There is no "subsistent humanity," no Platonic *autanthropos*, who can act as subject to the collective experience and life of the race, when the harvest is gathered in. It is to each several centre of consciousness that the whole history of humanity is, and will be, of interest; and, hence, if these are extinguished by death, as soon as they have spun their part of the universal web; if each does not survive, as it were a new eye and organ of the general vision, there will be no response to the deepest desire of the most unselfish hearts—

"That each who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet."

CHAPTER IX

THE DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY

THE popular argument "from general consent" in favour of immortality is of very dubious value. In simpler peoples the belief is largely bound up with "animism," and, as such, can hardly be of any philosophical importance. Nor does the universality of the desire to go on living for ever prove much. For it is a desire that must necessarily be disappointed so far as its object is just that kind of incorporate life and commerce with this world of ours which we enjoy, and, therefore, desire to perpetuate; and not a disembodied life, lived in unknown and unimaginable conditions. Besides, this desire is not strongest in the best and holiest, but in the most vigorous and hearty and worldly, in whom the dread of death is greatest. Moreover, it is a desire which usually fails with the general failure of animal vitality, and gives way to an apathy and indifference, and often even to a craving in regard to the sleep of death. In short, so far as the desire for immortality is at all universal, it is simply the rationalised form of the animal instinct of self-preservation and self-perpetuation. If it is lacking to the lower animals it is only because the knowledge and certainty of their inevitable death is lacking to them.

But if we say that, in certain stages of spiritual

and ethical development, men *always* wake to the problem of life and to the implications of conscience, then I think we may say there is an universal postulation of "eternal life" in some form or another, of a life different from, yet explanatory and complementary of, the present.

Yet not all to whom this postulate presents itself admit its claim, it is commonly resisted on the ground that an absolutely disinterested goodness must be improvident and indifferent to ulterior consequences: "Ah, Christ, if there were no hereafter, it still were best to follow Thee," says the Christian Positivist.

Against this, however, may be urged the quite disinterested and "over-individual" demand that the interests of goodness and happiness shall be ultimately adjusted in the world at large; that the self-defeating folly of sin shall be brought home to the sinner; that the rationality of God's universe shall be vindicated in the eyes of all, and not merely of a remote and purely hypothetical, if not impossible, generation of perfect humanity.

But I would rather urge that "eternal life," or some equivalent of immortality, is really wrapped up in the very notion of disinterested goodness, and that Christ "has brought life and immortality to light" only in the sense that he has made explicit a belief that is implicit in every truly moral act. When we feel that truth and right matter absolutely and unconditionally, we also feel that they matter eternally. A conviction that when, in a few thousand years, our race is extinct, it will be *all the same* how men have lived, whether as angels or devils; that history will then be as a tale told by an idiot "signifying nothing"—

such a conviction is fatal to the unconditional importance of goodness and truth. Nor could I, were I abandoned for life on a desert island, believe my moral conduct to be of unconditional importance were death to be altogether the end of me, and were I not implicitly convinced that my spiritual action in some way abides for ever. The "absoluteness" of the claims of Conscience may be explained away, but, while it stands, the belief in eternal life stands along with it.

It may be said that, as the artistic life is its own reward, so, too, the ethical, and that therefore, apart from belief in immortality, Robinson Crusoe had good reason to obey the moral law. But this is really a veiled "prudentialism" or "utilism," in that it makes the pleasure or happiness which is inherent in conscientiousness to be a motive for conscientiousness. It is as when a child takes physic willingly on account of its pleasant taste, and does not need to be coaxed by a promised lump of sugar; in neither case is the medicine taken on rational grounds, but simply as a means to pleasure. "Virtue its own reward" is as mercantile a principle as "Honesty is the best policy," unless it means, as it often does, "Virtue, irrespective of reward." The artistic life is vitiated by the pursuit of pleasure, just as much as the ethical. He who makes pleasure the motive has fallen from art. The æsthetic "ought" matters absolutely, and matters eternally.

As popularly imagined, the belief in bodily resurrection or reincorporation is largely dictated and shaped by the animal desire of self-preservation, and of continuing, in an improved and idealised form, our present mode of existence. As such, it may be dis-

counted. The conditions of our spirit, when it ceases to be related to the bodily organism, are altogether and necessarily unimaginable. Conscience demands that they shall explain and complement our earthly experiences, but that they will *continue* them, in any other sense, is infinitely improbable.

This must be remembered when we hear (as from the late Frederick Myers)¹ that the moral struggle, *Sturm und Drang*, which makes man's noblest and divinest life on earth, must be perpetuated hereafter for all eternity, and that the fixed ecstatic gaze of the Beatific Vision, the *Requies Aeterna*, of the Blessed does not satisfy our deepest ideals of life. As a protest against the notion of Heaven as a reward for righteousness ; as insisting on the inherent and absolute value of the moral struggle, irrespective of all pay or penalty, the contention is grounded on truth. But it is hardly less "geomorphic" (to coin a word for the conception of Heaven in terms of Earth) than the customary projection of an ideally perfect earthly existence into the unknown region beyond the grave.

Directly or indirectly, all that makes our moral life a struggle is dependent on our embodied condition. Take away our feelings, emotions and passions ; take away those senses which limit and colour the light they let in upon us and are the root of our ignorance and error, and the very object-matter of our moral life is gone. When we talk of the sins of angels, and of good and wicked spirits, we seem to talk sense only because we figure these spirits to ourselves in human form. And if, in some sense at least, society

¹ So, too, Tennyson asks no glory or guerdon for Virtue, but the wages and glory of "going on."

is the root of all right and duty, what are the rights and duties, what the standards of morality in a "communion of spirits," who have no temporal or spiritual needs of any kind that we can conceive, and for whom, therefore, all the ends and motives of human association are lacking?

That "our works do follow us"; that we carry the rich store of all our earthly experience away with us; that love once kindled in the heart shall never be extinguished, we may well believe. Yet "we shall rest from our labours" in that we shall be freed from the burden of the body, and "time shall be no more." That a new and wholly transcendent chapter of experience awaits us may be safely affirmed, but of its nature we can form no conjecture, except that Conscience postulates a completion, explanation and justification of our life in the flesh.

"When shall I come and appear before the face of my God?" is generally accepted as a true expression of that craving for eternal life which marks the fuller development of the spiritual character. But if the moral struggle is to be eternally perpetuated; if it is the necessary essence, and not a particularly conditioned manifestation of the divine life in man, then the said craving for rest in the face to face vision of God is doomed to eternal disappointment. For if, measured upwards from zero, our progress is real, measured downwards from infinity it is nothing; we shall always be as dissatisfied as now, always as far from God's face, from our Ideal, from our Peace. If, however, it be said plausibly that hereafter it will be a progress without pain, which is itself a restful activity, that it is only the uncertainty and

difficulty of the process that frets and wearies us here, yet we must remember that this is a merely "factitious concept," whose content we cannot present to ourselves; that it is got by an elimination of elements from life whose elimination is for us unthinkable; that it leaves us, as before, with the revealed confession of agnosticism on our lips: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." Reason can never read the riddle; Revelation speaks to us only in the language of prophetic symbolism.

In manus tuas Domine! it is best, with blind resignation, to render up our lives into the hands of God who gave them. To dispute with others over these fundamental truths of faith is but waste of breath, for they must be worked out and won by each one for himself, and cannot be communicated or forced upon the mind. The need and desire to believe them is the condition of the corresponding insight and of its preservation and deepening; and this need and desire are the fruit of our freely chosen attitude towards life. To multitudes these beliefs are given by tradition, yet they are dead words, seed lying idly by the wayside, till they are taken into the heart; till inward experience has created the desire and need of them. Others, who reject them on their intellectual side, and as they are formulated in the language of a philosophy which puzzles them, confess them in their hearts and lives, in every movement of which these beliefs are unconsciously implicated.

CHAPTER X
THE SOUL'S CENTRE

*Dum rerum tenax vigor
Immotus in Te permanens;
Lucis diurnæ tempora
Successibus determinans.*

VERBUM supernum prodiens, Nec Patris linquens dexteram: "The Heavenly Word proceeding forth, yet leaving not the Father's side." This double life is the secret of fruitfulness. If we are to go forth into the world of movement and speech and action, of psychic and physical life, into the world of appearances and symbols conditioned by time and space, into that world whose true end and *raison d'être* is to reveal the uncreated spirit to the Creator in terms of the finite; if we are not to be carried away helplessly as straws on the stream of fleeting events, if we are not to dream of life instead of living it, we must abide, fixed and immovable, in the world of reality; we must cling to the Rock. Without the mystical life, still, tranquil, changeless as its principle and end, its Alpha and Omega, the life of movement, with its fretfulness, its struggles, its vicissitudes, is meaningless as a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, yet signifying nothing.

Never for a moment, from the morning of life when he went forth as man to his labour, to his

task as word and revealer of the Father, till the sad vespers in which the sun sank over his grave, never once, midst all his ministerings and sufferings, did our Saviour rise from his resting-place by the Father's right hand. As one who in a mirror sees objects and movements on which his back is turned, and guides his actions by what he there sees, so by his inward gaze; ceaselessly riveted upon the face of the Father mirrored in the centre of his own soul, he guided and governed his life among men, seeing all in God and God in all.

There is no other absolute unity, meaning, coherence in the multiplicity of life but that which is effected by religion, by the reference of all to God; no other ultimate *why* and *wherefore* to save our actions from radical inanity; from being mere pastime, idling, the make-believe seriousness of children at play. "O children of men, how long will you be slow of heart? wherefore do you love emptiness and seek after deceits?" To love and to seek is the soul's inevitable destiny, or doom; it stretches out despairing arms, like the shipwrecked mariner, and clutches at any straw that offers; yet unless it can lay hold upon the Rock it must be swept away and engulfed.

"He who cleaves to the creature will perish with the perishable; he who embraces Jesus will be established for ever." This is the anchorage we need if we are not to drift and drift and drift. Like the sea-polypus, our soul must have a fixed root as well as free arms. There must be a first unchanging love, binding all our other loves together, and giving them meaning and unity; there must be a first persistent quest, to which all other quests are subordinated, else we shall

be loving emptiness and seeking a lie. "No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that hath descended from Heaven, the Son of Man, who is in Heaven." All the change and movement of our temporal life, inward and outward, return to God so far as they set out from God and are controlled by God; so far, that is, as the soul going forth to her labours abides unchangeably in her abode by the Father's right hand.

CHAPTER XI

PROPHETIC VISION OF EXTERNAL ORDER

THE prophecy of the Old Testament, so far as it is predictive of coming judgment, or deliverance, or other striking manifestations of divine Justice, Power and Goodness, is probably the fruit of a growing sense of the likeness between the character of Jahveh and that of the just man; and in this way the prophetic spirit, with its righteous indignation, its desire of justice and equity, its outbursts of pity for the smitten offender, identifies itself with "the Spirit of the Lord." Hence the imaginative and intellectual conviction that what, according to the prophet's own mind, *ought* to happen in the interests of justice and goodness, was about to happen, and that more or less surely and shortly in proportion to the intensity and clearness of the conviction. It is doubtless an advance of religious thought which finds the likeness of Jahveh rather in the just man than in the crafty or strong or violent man; but a further advance teaches us to see this likeness, not indeed contradicted, but swallowed up and transcended, in a Goodness which, to us, may seem evil, in a Light which, to our eyes, is darkness, in a Love whose ways and thoughts are not the ways and thoughts of our love. Hence, though we hope far more, we predict far less, and the demands upon our faith and patience are multiplied. The writer of Job

has already realised that the course of history will not flow in the channels which the prophets have scooped out for it ; not that he doubts the goodness of God, but that he despairs of comprehending the scale of His dealings to whom a thousand years are as a day, and whose uniformities elude the brevity and narrowness of our microscopic experience. Yet, for him too, God is alongside, above, over-against the world, and His salvation, come how or when it will, must come at last by way of interference and collision, by way of a miraculous breaking-forth of an alien Power from the Heavens, to crush down and overcome every hostile force in creation. Later comes a more definite figuring of this salvation in the conception of a future golden age upon earth—a Messianic judgment and kingdom, a resurrection and reign of the just upon earth.

If, in this view, there is a certain pessimism as to the possibility of an orderly and natural self-rectification of the world, it has at least the merit of redeeming instead of destroying (as a worn out garment) the order of Nature. With the gradual discrediting and proscription of Chiliasm the aforesaid pessimism has been somewhat accentuated ; the just are to be vindicated, the wicked punished in an entirely different world from this one, whose incoherence and irrationality is thus admitted. That they carry their bodies—dematerialised and transformed from their present earthly conditions—into the spirit-world, is at best a survival, a clumsy compromise with an obsolete, or at least obsolescent, eschatology.

Purified from this relic of earthliness, the popular Christian belief points to a decarnate state of existence

hereafter as an explanation of the otherwise irredeemable badness of the world that we know. Yet does not even this imply an over-readiness to interpret the world humanwise, to weigh God's action in man's balance, to sit in judgment and condemn as irredeemable and irrational a process of which we ourselves are part, and outside which we cannot stand?

Is it not wiser, then, to interpret the condemnation passed by the higher conscience of man on the world, as it presents itself to our limited understanding, as expressive of the general tendency of that Goodness which is slowly realising itself in the world, and which finds its most forward development on earth in the best minds of the best men, behind which the whole process lags, and on whose active obedience to the tendency, made conscious in them, its acceleration depends? The prophet, then, were but the herald of the dawn, a man before his time, one who "gets him up into a high mountain" and commands a wider outlook. What he foretells is not to be the result of a miraculous interference with, but of an orderly working out of, processes already in train. He aspires after those perfect adjustments between goodness and happiness, evil and suffering, ignorance and wickedness, and the like, which are the "ideal" of the world, already expressing itself in man's spirit, and calling on him to labour for its actuation.

The modern prophet regards neither the Powers of Good nor those of Evil as outside the natural order, nor regards this latter as their mere battle-ground. "As by its faith in the sovereignty of God the early Church rose superior to the pessimism which viewed the world as subject to the Devil and his angels, so to the

modern worship of Natural Forces do we oppose our conviction that God is stronger than these Nature-Demons, stronger than microbes or mechanism. How strong soever be those iron fetters of determinism which compass every living thing, yet stronger still is the sovereignty of God, on whose breath and will all life depends." ¹

But the purest faith is that which believes that between God and Law there is no real opposition, no need that either should be stronger than the other; that Love is not so much above, behind, and over against the harsh-seeming law-bound workings of deaf merciless Nature, as identical with them, working in them and through them; that belief in a certain sort of miracle is born either of ignorance or of want of faith, and implies a dualism which is injurious to the sovereignty of God's Goodness and Wisdom and Power.

¹ Johannes Weiss, *Die Idee des Reiches Gottes in der Theologie*, p. 128.

CHAPTER XII

SAVING FAITH

“ *Thy Faith* hath saved thee,” “ not I, or not I in the sense supposed, namely, by some physical emanation conveyed from body to body through my garments which you have touched.” There are, naturally, but one or two allusions in the Gospels to that vast majority of cases in which our Saviour failed to heal those who were brought to Him—failed, just because it was not His will, but their faith, which was the curative agency. “ He who made us without our will cannot save us without our will ” ; this is true of the soul. Is it not also true of the body—at least as regards its supernatural healing ? In both cases we are to *save ourselves* by our faith ; we are to be spiritually active and free, not passive or determined. And if such faith is itself the grace, the free gift of God offered for our acceptance, yet his grace is ever expansive of our energies ; not lessening our difficulties, but stimulating our courage and endurance ; not pauperising us with alms to idle upon, but giving us the means of independence, self-support, self-help. As he “ went about doing good ” our Lord made certainly far less of a distinction between soul and body than we are wont to do, with our long tradition of absolute dualism. At that time this crude dualism was a vague and comparatively recent speculation ; if the just were to rise

at all it was taken for granted they must rise in the body. The shades in Sheol did not properly *live*; theirs was but a shadow of life. Hence, too, the ills of soul and body were but dimly distinguished. Both alike were from evil spirits or from sin, in one way or another. "Either this man has sinned or his parents," or his forefathers, or Adam. To cure man was to "destroy the work of the Devil," to deliver body and soul from his dominion. Hence "faith" was the medicine of body and soul indiscriminately; it is by faith that the paralytic's sins are forgiven him, it is by faith that he takes up his bed and walks. A sediment of truth lies at the bottom of "Christian Science." The harmony of soul and body, in respect to health and disease, is like that between spiritual and temporal prosperity, between virtue and happiness; it is what we feel ought to be, but is not; it is what belongs to the ideal state of things, which is the good of all creation.

Under pain of pessimism we must even allow that the adjustment is already in process of becoming; that there is enough in the actual conditions and tendencies of life to build up our hopes on, to warrant our belief in the future. That, in the gross, vice makes for temporal misery is undeniable; even though it is not so clear that honesty is the best policy. So, too, there are views and moral dispositions that ruin the body, that write their name upon the features, that utter themselves in gesture and intonation and bearing and gait; and there are feeble frames invigorated by noble passion, and rude faces lit up and transfigured by the light of love, and ignoble exteriors dignified by the majesty of wisdom and inward experience. "Alto-

gether something like a miracle in the healing of the sick had been effected," we are told¹ of Elizabeth Barrett, who was raised from a long death to a full and vigorous life by the power of love, of faith in personality: "Thy faith hath saved thee." By such faith the wall of partition between soul and soul is broken down and they flow into one another, with a strange give and take, a communising of weakness and strength, the strong taking unto itself the infirmities of the weak by sympathy and pity, the weak invigorated with the energies of the strong, that send the languid blood coursing through the veins, and quicken the pulse, and brighten the eye, and give tone to flaccid nerves and sinews. Faith heals the body through the soul.

We may not suppose (it would be an anachronism) that Christ deliberately healed by suggestion; that were "faith healing" in a lower, psychological, non-religious sense. In some cases it may have been merely this lower faith in His wonder-working power that wrought a cure by way of "expectant attention," but the only faith He cared to inspire was a faith in the divine goodness and love as revealed in Himself; that faith which was a new life, a new light, a revelation of a new world of values and interests to live for and work for and die for.

That such a faith, with its consequent *μετάνοια*, repentance, or total change of mind should work a revolution from the inmost spiritual depths to the utmost bodily periphery of our nature is but a momentary anticipation of the final result of God's labour in man. Belief in this final adjustment of body and soul is

¹ Dowden's *Browning*, p. 97.

implied in the doctrines of Hell and of the Resurrection, as popularly conceived. It is felt, as a postulate of justice, that sin ought to prove a bad investment even from the lower standpoint; that its advantage should be only apparent and illusory; that the interests of body and spirit should, in the end, prove to be identical; that the faith which heals and glorifies the soul should also heal and glorify the body; that the present conflict of their interests is something radically wrong, that must be righted through the mediation of the great Healer, Jesus Christ.

1904.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PARUSIA AND SOCIALISM¹

“REPENT, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” Such was undoubtedly the substance of Christ’s preaching. It was a call to spiritual purification and regeneration, symbolised by baptism, in view of the close proximity of God’s Kingdom; into which none but the pure and righteous could enter, and from which all corruption, pride and impurity were to be rigidly excluded.

As to the precise nature of that Kingdom, Christ has little new to say. He assumes that His hearers are quite familiar with the idea. Nor is it different as regards the ideas of repentance and righteousness. There is almost nothing in the Gospel that we do not find in the prophets. At most there is a more uniform elevation of tone, and a more insistent spiritualising of current ethico-religious conceptions. There was little originality in the “notional” truth of the Gospel; it laid no extra burden on the religious understanding; it even removed a good many imposed by those who “made void the commandments of God by the traditions of men.”

The Gospel was primarily a new spiritual force, kindling the cold hearts, strengthening the faltering

¹This essay appeared, in Italian, in the periodical *Nova et Vetera* (now extinct) of 10th May 1908.

wills of men who knew quite well what they ought to do, but had no moral power or enthusiasm to raise themselves from their torpor and indifference. It is under its dynamic, not under its notional, aspect that we must look for the originality of the Gospel. "I came to send fire upon earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" Men needed heat more than light—the fire of an enthusiasm for humanity; the same enthusiasm that brought Christ to his death in the cause of God's Kingdom on earth. Such a fire is not kindled from ideas, but from fire: *Flammescat igne caritas; accendat ardor proximos*. It was the enthusiasm of Christ that set the world ablaze. He was the Paschal Candle, whose flame has lit the multitudinous lights of Christianity.

And what was the inspiration of His enthusiasm? Was it the *nearness* of the Kingdom, or the *nature* of the Kingdom?

The motive to repentance which He set before His hearers was: "The Kingdom of Heaven is *at hand*." Can we suppose that this *nearness* of the event was an adequate motive for their repentance, or for His own enthusiasm? I do not think so. For His lethargic and indifferent hearers it was a stimulus rather than a motive—a reason for rousing themselves to prompt action; for seeking the proper motives of true repentance; for repenting at once and not procrastinating. Did He Himself stand in need of such a stimulus? Would His enthusiasm for the cause of God and Humanity have been any less had He considered the event to be centuries distant? or had He conceived the Divine Kingdom in some other than the traditional Jewish form?

Certainly not. His inspiration was simply the love of God in Humanity ; the love of Humanity in God ; the accomplishment of God's will upon earth as in Heaven. The imaginative form, the proximate date of that Kingdom were absolutely irrelevant to the motive of His enthusiasm.

For His half-hearted hearers it was otherwise. Yet even for them the *nearness* of the Kingdom was not the motive of their repentance. The true power that changed their hearts was the fire of enthusiasm that burned in the heart of Christ, the infectious example of a love stronger than death ; the force that personality alone can exert on personality.

Why then did He insist on the *nearness* ?

Let us suppose the case of a man who has led a careless or sinful life. A thousand ties of worldly interest stand in the way of his spiritual liberty ; ties which his will is too enfeebled to break. Sickness comes upon him, and, in the opinion of all, death stares him in the face. As a priest I am called to his bedside. It is not for me to discuss, but to accept, the general opinion that the end is at hand. I tell him so. I show him how all these ties to life are going to be snapped by the irresistible hand of death. He is now free from the blindness that kept the truth from his eyes. He can consider the motives for repentance. The fear of eternal loss, the hope of eternal gain are no adequate motives, but they may stimulate his spiritual activity. The only motives of true repentance are those that were equally valid when he was in full health—the love of God and man, the love of Righteousness for its own sake.

So, like the nearness of death, the nearness of the Kingdom was a stimulus to repentance, but no part of the motive of repentance.

The mere fact that repentance and a new life are the conditions of entrance into the Kingdom points very clearly to the *nature* of the Kingdom. Whatever its imaginative and external presentment, its *essence* is simply the natural and perfect development of that new social and individual life inaugurated by the Gospel—the expansion and application of the principles of the sermon on the Mount, as exemplified in the life, passion and death of Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God is the peopling of the world with Christs—with true Christians. The Apostles thought it could be done in a generation; but they were mistaken. A new species is not evolved so quickly.

That mistake justified an apparent asceticism or indifference to natural interests and duties, of which the motive was in no way ascetical. When a man is dying he rightly ceases to plan and arrange for his own earthly future. He will not think of getting married, or seeking a career, or of fulfilling what would otherwise be imperative duties. This strain in the Gospel has been misunderstood and utilised in the interests of an utterly unchristian, dualistic asceticism of oriental importation. The solidarity of temporal and eternal, of body and soul, is of the very marrow of the Gospel. Christ is the deliverer of the whole man, of every single human interest, social, moral, intellectual, aesthetic. He fed the hungry and healed the sick. He did not preach the advantages of hunger and sickness. What He did insist on is a certain order and hierarchy of human interests:

“Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of Heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Of the asceticism of the Dervish or Fakir the Gospel knows nothing. But it is no less true that self-denial and self-sacrifice are its fundamental notes. For there is no true and orderly building up of personality, no true individual or social development without discipline and self-restraint. No man can follow Christ without self-denial. But the motive of such denial is not dualistic or Manichean. It springs from a belief, and not from a disbelief, in the value of life and nature.

Again, there is nothing in the Gospel to imply that pain, as such, has any expiatory value ; or that, apart from its disciplinary effects, it can satisfy God for past offences. But it is none the less evident that the true expiatory sacrifice of those who would toil, suffer, and die for the good of humanity always entails pain and suffering.

The attempt to express these gospel principles of self-denial and self-sacrifice in the categories of ethnic religions, with their ascetic and expiatory traditions, has been the source of incalculable mischief. It has led to a one-sided “other-worldliness” as dangerous as a one-sided “this-worldliness.” It has obscured that notion of the solidarity of temporal and eternal which is the key-note of Christianity. The truth which has been thus overlooked has not unnaturally been taken up by Socialism as if it were the whole truth. Socialism, with its economic paradise, its frank contempt for mysticism and other-worldliness, is more or less unconsciously inspired by a neglected principle of the Gospel. It refuses, not inexcusably,

to have anything to do with a religion which insists so exclusively on what seems a counter-principle, but which is only a complementary principle. Like every living movement with a vast future before it, it is far from having arrived at an explicit and coherent self-consciousness. It is most unfairly judged or condemned by its imperfect attempts at self-statement and self-realisation. But one thing it will surely learn by experience—that the divorce of temporal and eternal is disastrous, whether for the Church or for Socialism. Without self-denial and self-sacrifice in the service of the Ideal, in the cause of Humanity, there can never be even an economic paradise; and Idealism has its roots in the Eternal, and not in the temporal. Who will live, suffer, and die for Humanity, if, after a few thousand years, Humanity will have no more significance than any other extinct and forgotten species? What is the fundamental worth of Humanity unless its highest achievements matter not only absolutely, but eternally; unless its Cause be, in some inscrutable way, the Cause of the Eternal Itself? If man's earthly history is his whole history; if religion and its enthusiasm are but "pragmatic" tricks and illusions of Nature to further the physical improvement of the species, then, I think, we must regard that history as "a tale told by an idiot—full of sound and fury, but signifying *nothing*."

April 23, 1908.

CHAPTER XIV

DIVINE FECUNDITY¹

NOTE

THE following paper was suggested by reading the comments of the Italian religious press *à propos* of the recent earthquake at Messina. I give two or three specimens that speak for the rest.

The *Osservatore Romano* finds it "comforting and more befitting our dignity to believe that these forces, and the laws that govern them, are held in hand by a supreme Will that can change and reverse their courses," as against the "blind materialism," which delivers God from all responsibility of willing or deliberately permitting such evil. The *Unità Cattolica* says that "Faith, Earthquakes, and Tidal waves assure us sufficiently that God exists and makes Himself felt. And, if He punishes the innocent with the guilty, He does not on that account cease to be a most loving Father; for Faith tells us that the wicked are justly punished, while at the same time the innocent are rewarded. It tells us, moreover, that God punishes men that they may repent." The *Berico*, of Vicenza, tells us: "In such an hour of fear and anguish, when naturally we feel our misery and our absolute dependence on a Great Master, it is desolating to hear men speaking of scientific causes, of natural forces, of a relentless

¹ This was the title of a lecture delivered to "The Quest Society" in Kensington Town Hall on March 25, 1909. It next made its appearance, somewhat abbreviated, in *The Quest* magazine of October 1909, and is here published for the first time in its entirety. The present editor has transferred the "Note" from the end of the article to its commencement.

destiny. . . . O men of little faith, can you not hear the voice, the mighty voice of God, who repeats by the lightning flash, by the roar of the earthquake, by the tumult of the sea, that He and He alone is Master of life and death. . . . He whom men forget and deride, whom they would insult and put aside, but who will not be banished."

I own that I find these very hard sayings. On the other hand I am reluctant to believe that the alternative is "blind materialism." The problem of evil and that of squaring the circle are equally hopeless; but a pentagon is more circular than a square and a hexagon than a pentagon, and so there is always room for a greater approximation to truth. I ought to add that the following reflections have been largely influenced by Professor Bergson.

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At first sight it might seem that the impression made upon us by a collective calamity, like an earthquake or shipwreck, is largely irrational, or is, at most, the sum of the impressions that would have been created had each life been separately destroyed. It may be argued that every individual has to die once; that there are more painful and lingering deaths than drowning or crushing; that if all death is a curtailment of possible pleasures, it is also a curtailment of possible pains; that those cancelled years were pregnant with evil as well as with good; in short, that reason does not justify the disturbance and horror of the imagination.

There is something in all this. To some extent the curtailment of any individual life, prior to its exhaustion by old age, offers the same problem as the sort of collective catastrophe we are considering. But we cease to attend to a riddle that is put to us every day in the same terms, and that the whole

world has given up long ago. A collective catastrophe puts it to us in new terms and more insistently; it forces us to pause and guess again. But to a great extent it is the same riddle: "Wherefore hast Thou made all men for naught?"

But the collective catastrophe is often much more than a sum-total of individual catastrophes. It differs in kind as well as in degree. It implies a frustration, not merely of individual lives, but of social life. For a state or city has a life of its own, a history of its own. It has its aspirations, ambitions, ideals. Though history shows us that kingdoms perish, yet, for them, the law of death is not an apparent *necessity* as it is for the individual. They live, act, plan, design, on the assumption that they will last for ever. And so of institutions, associations, and other collectivities. They allow for, and are not perturbed by, the gradual elimination and replacement of their individual members. But for collective catastrophes, that interrupt their history or threaten their very existence, they do not allow.

For every loyal, true-hearted citizen the future, the honour, the prosperity of his state or city or country is the cause of God—a cause to which he owes the ready sacrifice of his own life. That he himself should be cut off in the flower and promise of his days, before he has rendered his fruit, would be a scandal and mystery, were it not so familiar an occurrence. But that the state, whose welfare has been for him a divine cause, one with which God was identified, should come to naught, and that all its toil and aspiration for the future should be frustrated, is a mystery of a new order. If God seemed careless of the indi-

vidual, it was only because He cared for the type, the race, the cause :

“ But no,
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries: ‘ A thousand types are gone ;
I care for nothing.’ ”

The more extensive and socially destructive such a catastrophe, so much the more does it bring home to us the possibility of what may happen, nay, of what must happen, though it has never happened yet; namely, the extinction of the human race in the midst of its career; the frustration of its collective hopes, ideals, and aspirations. Religion has probably only canonised and authenticated a spontaneous and perhaps useful illusion of the mind, in teaching us to believe that human history is working towards some definite and attainable goal in which its destiny will be accomplished; that, like an individual organism, its evolution has a certain inherently determined limit; that the process is to end in some “ Kingdom of God ” on earth, some socialist millennium, in which the wheels of life will spin round monotonously and without progress—where the order and the regular routine of the bee-hive shall be the solution of all our strivings after perfection. But, manifestly, collective humanity is in no way predetermined inherently to any such fixed goal. As far as it seems designed for anything, it is for an eternal process of ever expanding and deepening life. Not only to man, but to every living species, Nature says: “ Increase, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it ”; nor is there any inward principle limiting that increase and expansion. The posterity we work for is not some

final generation that is to enter into the fruit of all the tears and sorrows of the Past. Every future generation, even the most distant we can imagine, will have tears and sorrows of its own. If it will look back on our present with a sense of filial gratitude, it will look forward to the generations of an illimitable future with a sense of responsibility and shortcoming not lighter than our own. Relatively, the joys and sorrows of one epoch are no greater than those of another. New supplies create new demands; new answers raise new questions; new attainments breed new discontents; new ideals raise new aspirations.

The quest of happiness, as the older East has realised, should rather restrain than accelerate the march of progress. It should lead men to contentment; to a minimising of their desires; not to the feverish creation of new necessities.

We really progress, not in pursuit of a freely chosen end, such as an earthly paradise, but in obedience to a dire law of our nature, and because we must. Under pressure from behind and from around we are constrained to live better in order to live at all; to advance, in order not to perish. Apart from such pressure we are inert, and even retrograde. We kick against the goad that spurs us on to effort and conflict. Once forced into the battle our love of conquest may become a passion, which we put down to our own credit. We prefer to think we are actively pursuing an end, rather than passively obeying an impulse. Yet the only intelligible end we can put before ourselves is either some mark on our ever-receding horizon, some definite point of progress beyond which our foresight fails us; or else it is progress itself,

viewed as life and happiness, in contrast to stagnation and death. The latter is, strictly speaking, not an end at all, for by an end we mean that to which progress is a means; that which is being built up by our labours. Building is not the end of building; though it may be good exercise and interesting work. It may be a necessity of our nature, as it is with beavers; we may even foresee the fairly remote results; but whether there be an ultimate result, and what it is, we do not know.

Yet it is just because we assume that we are building up some final earthly paradise, some Kingdom of God, that we are perplexed by those extensive social catastrophes, that suggest the possibility of a racial catastrophe such as a universal plague, or earthquake, or cosmic collision. Our God is in our image and likeness; He is the embodiment and guarantee of our highest; we have no higher aspiration than the welfare of humanity. Can God be indifferent to this?¹

Indifference! that is the problem. Nature, or God, is so evidently careful, so evidently careless, about one and the same interest. Dualism offers a tempting solution for an apparent conflict between two principles—one constructive, the other destructive. But no! Construction and destruction are two plainly dependent factors of one system. Nature destroys in creating and creates in destroying. Death is but an economy of life in its higher forms; by no means necessary in the lower. The fly and the mouse perish

¹ Let me say, in passing, that in the present context I use God and Nature indifferently, *i.e.* I speak of God so far as God is immanent in and coincident with Nature, and not as supernatural and transcendent. Sometimes Nature sounds too inhuman for my purpose, at others God sounds too human.

that the spider and the cat may live. Yet Nature is on both sides at once. She pounces with the cat and she runs with the mouse; she rejoices with the conqueror, she mourns and struggles with the conquered. Is it not the same throughout the whole world? Everywhere forces, impulses, instincts of self-assertion, self-preservation, self-expansion, whose frustration is apparently as much the intention of Nature as is their realisation?

Nor can we say that it is the lower that yields to the higher; man may be the prey of a microbe. Nor again that the lower is wholly designed for the use of the higher; no plant or animal is designed for food, but only for its own life and self-expansion. While many are designed to prey on and infest others, not one instinctively yields itself to be eaten. All Nature's devices are for conquest or escape. She has filled the world with feeders, but not with food. Food is always artificial; it is made out of something that has another destiny of its own. We *destroy* a plant or an animal to feed on its materials. But its form or function, all that makes it what it is, is nothing to our purpose. Nature in each existing individual seems to be wholly on its side and against all the rest, while, at the same time, the very rivalry of types and individuals is the condition of their existence and development. Were any one type to fulfil the law of its being without check it would overspread the whole earth in an incredibly short time, and in destroying its rivals would destroy the conditions of its own existence. It is at once intended, and not intended, to prevail. Therefore man has naïvely believed, and made his religion teach him, that he is an exception to this law

of life ; that the strength and direction of his natural impulses and aspirations is a guarantee for their eventual attainment. It was thought reasonable that cows and sheep should exist only secondarily for themselves, but primarily to supply him with mutton and beef. Plants (though how few) existed for animals ; animals (though how few) existed for man. As for the extinct species that preceded man, they were an anomaly.

No ; there is no guarantee that man, in obeying the innate law of his being, in struggling upward and onward out of bestiality to savagery, to barbarism, to grade after grade of civilisation, is a favoured child of Nature, or is destined to prosperity, or that he may not fall the prey of some new microbe, or some wild upheaval of the earth's crust.

It is this combination of care and carelessness that constitutes the wastefulness of Nature. She is like some fickle genius who, as soon as he has proved his skill, wearies of his task, and throws it aside, unfinished, to begin another. She loves making, but not the thing she has made ; infinitely clever, infinitely heartless.

Newman said that, apart from the phenomena of conscience and man's moral life, he could not see evidence of God in Nature. I would go further, and say that the evidence points rather to a Devil. For a Devil would do good in the interests of evil, like a cat fondling and patting a mouse ; allowing it to believe itself free in order to prolong its agony by alternations of hope and despair. But a moral God could not do evil in the interests of good. We can understand how goodness in nature consists with an evil God ; we

cannot understand how evil consists with a good God.

She takes, not fifty, but fifty thousand seeds—vegetal, or animal, or human—in her careless hand, and flings them into space, on the chance that just one may realise some little part of that infinite potentiality with which she has endowed it. For each is pregnant with a whole world of teeming life. We look up and see the midnight sky white with star-dust, and we recognise her wasteful hand once more. And yet, in our conceit, we are still confident that our own microscopic atom is a favoured world-seed that cannot fail of eventual success. But what are the probabilities that its potentialities will come to anything, or that Nature would deflect by a hair's breadth the course of a destroying comet for the earth's sake, or turn an inch out of her straight path rather than set her heel on our laboriously constructed ant-hill? I think none at all. But we must perforce conceive the eternal and universal labour of Nature in the likeness of some human enterprise, with beginning, middle, and end; and of which every part and step bears on every other and builds up a final and predetermined result. For earlier thought this unity was more static and architectural; for ours, it is that of a building process, where nothing is wasted, where every movement looks to the total result. And if the manifest waste and incoherence of Nature give the lie to this anthropomorphism, we ascribe this apparent difficulty to the limitation of our view. Could we see all, we think we should see thrift and economy everywhere; "toil co-operant to an end."

But, before we go abroad with the stellar universe,

let us look at home and see if the history of this earth, or of man, bear out the idea of progress—of an all-embracing plan to which every existence and event is subservient ; let us see if we are justified in extending the categories of the part to the whole ; in conceiving the whole (with Fechner) as a vast organism. May it not be a boundless ocean of chaotic potentialities, in which myriad forms of organism appear, and, by their mere struggle for existence, come at last to constitute that hierarchic world of life, whose unity we are tempted to explain by some sort of finalism—whether that of a governing outside intelligence or that of an immanent idea, or *ratio seminalis* ?

The Naturalist school may have been justified in banishing finalism from this region, and only erred (like the Finalists) by their passion for unity ; their desire to make one category cover all. Finalism may preside over the living organism, yet not over the hierarchic arrangement of organisms. The Whole Universe is greater than its parts ; but it need not be higher, or as high. Its unity may well be of the lowest, most primitive and elementary type—the unity of a cloud or nebula. So too the unity, the intelligence, the experience of a state or society is greater, in some way, but not higher than that of the individual members. It exists for the individual, not conversely.

Are we then justified in supposing that, because progress or development is the innate law of life—of every living individual and type—it is also the law of the world which is the theatre of life ; that *the Whole* has been planned with a view to progress ? Let us shut up our sacred books, and look

at human history as a whole, or in any of its departments as we know it. Can we say that our present civilisation is the steady, orderly outcome of man's past history in the same way that a fully-developed organism is the outcome of its first germ? Can we say that all our past has been co-operant to this end? Manifestly not.

What makes us think so is that, as far as we know, ours is the highest civilisation so far attained. Moreover, it rests on a wider basis than any other civilisation. It is cosmopolitan. It is recorded, and protected against oblivion and extinction, as no previous one. Were it overwhelmed in one hemisphere it would reintegrate itself from the other. Hence there is every reason to think it will last as long as man, and that it will progress and develop without disastrous interruptions. For this reason we are tempted to trace this expanding stream of progress back to the very beginnings of human history, and forcibly to include the whole of that history between its banks. Nothing could be more unhistorical. Only the barest trickle from the Past mingles with its waters. The rest has sunk into the earth or evaporated into the clouds, and affects us as little as the history of Mars or Jupiter. For all that concerns us, the history of Central Africa, or aboriginal America, is mere waste. It might never have happened. I am not sure that we owe anything considerable to Assyria. And when we point to our debts to Egypt and Greece, let us not deceive ourselves. They have not lived on in us, but have died that we might live. We have not steadily built up the structure that they began, but have gathered stones from their ruins to

build into a wholly different structure. There is no more continuity of development here than between the beast of prey and its quarry. Let us remember this when we are carried away by the alluring category of religious development, and are told that all the religious history of the Past has been steadily converging towards Christianity as its final form. No doubt Christianity has built into its system many treasures from the ruins of past religions. When Israel came out of Egypt she brought with her more than earrings and jewels. When Christianity went into Egypt, Athens, and Rome she took as much as she gave. But let us not call this "development," or forget that, save for these scanty traces, the vast history of man's earlier religious efforts is mere waste, as far as we are concerned. Like the water bursting from some reservoir, most of it is locked and impeded and absorbed. Only our little stream has chanced to reach us, mingled and lost in waters of a thousand sources.

Each religion has its own internal law of development, according to which it becomes more and more individualised and separate, less and less capable of entering as a member into any sort of higher, all-comprehensive religious organism. If, to-day, various religions and sects are crying out for reunion, it is that their vitality is exhausted; it is that man needs a new religion, that is to be built out of the ruins of the old ones. They cannot grow into it; they can only die that it may live.

Still more futile is it to find a quasi-organic relation between the countless species of life, extant and extinct, that have appeared on our globe; to see

them all co-operant and convergent towards some grand final unification. Such order as we find is the result of struggle and competition. "The strongest eel," says the proverb, "gets to the top of the pot," the weakest gets to the bottom; and between the top and the bottom the others are hierarchically arranged, according to the degree of their efficiency. The history of species and genera is that of a process of division and subdivision in no way subordinated to some higher complex unity. Each goes its way independently, as if it were the whole; and its relation to the rest, if not indifferent, is hostile rather than co-operative. Horses do not volunteer to work for man; nor aphides for ants. As far as present species are concerned most of the past might never have existed, so little do they enter into the present resultant. Life has put forth a thousand branches that have simply perished without trace—each a separate world that has lived and died, but not for us. They might as well have flourished in the most distant stars as far as existing flora and fauna are concerned.

And those distant stars! Is there the faintest evidence in favour of Fechner's beautiful dream (described by Prof. W. James in the *Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1909) of an organic unity in which each has its part to play, each demands and is demanded by all the rest, in which not one is wasted, or fails to contribute to the realisation of a fore-ordained end? Does not all the evidence we have explain this apparent order as the blind resultant of a competition between brute masses and brute forces? Are they not ever crashing, colliding, destroying one

another in their struggle for free play, senseless as the furious billows of an angry ocean? Let us not be blinded by our instinctive craving for unity, understanding, comprehension; which is only an exigency of our practical life.

We can deal with the world only so far as we can unify it into a system that will make prediction possible. But for that it is sufficient that the little fraction of space and time, in which our lot is cast, should present certain purely relative and practical uniformities. Our mind can deal with that little fraction; if it would go beyond, it must divest itself of its practical prepossessions and face a world that is inhuman, indifferent to man and his interests. Religion has not been half so anthropomorphic as science, with its dogmatic generalisations of purely human and practical categories.

As far, then, as our experience goes the organic category—the co-ordination of parts by a whole, of functions by an end—has no application in Nature except to the individual organism. I say “in Nature,” for plainly we find it in the works of man and in human society. It cannot even be applied to the history and development of the species. For while the organism, left to itself, develops, and that in a fixed way, the species, left to itself, is inert if not decadent, and, when forced by external pressure to develop, may do so in any one of a thousand directions, determined by the more or less accidental nature of that external pressure. It accommodates and shapes itself as a river does to its bed; and with as little foresight or design. Its future cannot be predicted from any knowledge of its internal constitution.

Only, then, in the individual manifestations of life do we find anything that looks like plan or finality in Nature. These are, as it were, so many condensations or nuclei in the shapeless, aimless nebula or ocean of the inorganic; each a little world apart, adjusting itself to its surroundings and to its neighbour-worlds as best it may, leaguings with them for common advantage or adventure, depending on them for its very existence and preservation, yet not constituting with them any sort of higher natural organism, nor conspiring with them to any definite pre-established goal. Nature is not working to one end, but has just as many ends as there are living individuals. In each of them the Divine seeks a new self-expression. But its utterances are not connected; nor has their sum-total a separate, an "organic" meaning.

Is the universe then (as we know it) aimless and meaningless? Rather it teems with aims and meanings, although it has no *one* aim or meaning. It is like a great tree, that pushes out its branches, however and wherever it can, seeking to realise its whole nature, as far as possible, in every one of them, but aiming at no collective effect. This is its play, this is its life, this is, if you will, its end.

But the tree grows in the process; it is born and it dies. Have we any reason to think that the universe grows from anything to anything? Not the slightest. All we can find is an endless oscillation, like that of the heaving ocean—a process of making and unmaking, of condensation and dispersion; periods of progress alternating with periods of retrogression. We can see in it only the eternal

theatre of those self-manifestations which are, so to say, the pulsings of its universal life. To suppose that God is working out some ultimate end by means of those self-manifestations, that they are not ends in themselves, is to reduce Him to human dependency and poverty, to forget that they are but radiations from the source of life. As well look for plan and system among the blessings that the sun scatters upon our earth. The sun cheers each heart, tunes each throat, colours each flower, fertilises each grain, as though there were no other in all the world.

As far, then, as God in Nature seems at all to care or provide, it is not for the type, but for the single life; not for the Whole, but for a few of its parts. Plan seems to stop with the individual. He builds a ship, and provides it for all dangers and contingencies, and sets forth in it to encounter what storms and rocks chance may have in store for it. These are no part of the same plan, if of any plan.

Intending to exalt and magnify God, we do so in man's image, and thereby but narrow and degrade Him. The greatest human creator is he who carries a work through from a definite beginning to a definite end, and so orders the means to that end that not one is too much or too little; while each is valued only for the sake of the end. These countless billions of separate worlds and ends; this wasteful luxuriance; this lack of any ulterior design in whose realisation the cosmic labour is to cease; this work for work's sake—all this is perplexing to us, whose needs and limits alone drive us into action. The artist, the musician know something of it. We have made our God in the image, not of the artist, but of the artisan

or the man of affairs. "What is He going to make out of it all?" Perhaps nothing; perhaps the universe is but His eternal keyboard, His eternal canvas. Perhaps each melody, each picture, may have a worth in itself apart from all the rest. Lost stars, lost species, lost civilisations, lost religions—lost as far as any influence on our own is concerned—may have justified their existence, though they have led to nothing further.

Let us remember this when we think it an injustice that so many generations should have lived in savagery and barbarism in order that our civilisation might at last arise. Will not future generations look back on us, with a like mistaken pity, as having existed only for their sakes? Do we not feel, and rightly, that we exist primarily for our own? And did not our savage ancestors feel the same? Are we not mistaking a result for an end? We conceive progress as planned; as working for an end, an earthly paradise, into which some far-off generation is to enter, for whose sake all previous generations have suffered. And, pray, when? Our just indignation at such a scheme is, however, wholly wasted if there be no such scheme, and if every generation, every individual life, has an absolute value of its own, and constitutes a world apart.

Every animal multiplies, but no animal exists in order to multiply—in order that others may exist about whose existence the same question recurs. If we live only for posterity we live for nothing; for posterity, like to-morrow, never comes.

The good of posterity is the result, not the end, of our living as well and as fully as we can. We should

live, not for a posterity that never comes, but for the present—always remembering that our present is a little bit of the past, tied to a little bit of the future; the duration of our actual interests; the extent of our clear foresight and retrospect.

If, then, a collective catastrophe, interrupting the course of progress and civilisation, shocks and disappoints our expectation, it is because the expectation was ill-grounded; because we had thought Nature pledged to the development of the social organism in the same way as she is pledged to that of the individual organism—or rather more, since we conceived society as a higher inclusive organism.

Man has, to a great extent, organised society; but Nature has not. She bids the stream of life flow, but digs no channels for it. She increases and multiplies, she does not organise. Such order as her ranks preserve derives from external pressure, not from an internal principle. It is man, and not she, that makes the *res publica* an end in itself, superior to the multitudinous ends of the individuals, for whose sake alone it should be valued. The State is but a means, an instrument of the happiness of individuals—a single means common to a multitude of ends, not a single end common to a multitude of means. It is but part of our environment; and we do not exist for the sake of our environment, but conversely. Because we ascribe our own state-worship to Nature we consider her indifference to the State far more criminal than her indifference to the individuals composing it.

No doubt to view the cause of progress as God's cause, and to live and labour for an ideal society or Kingdom of God in the vague future, has been the

source of no little inspiration and fertile inventiveness.* But it has not been an unmixed blessing. The end is easily forgotten in the means; the means easily idolised into an end. Men come to care more for "causes" than for the persons in whose behalf they are taken up; more for the Sabbath than for man, more for the temple than for Him who dwells in it. Humanitarians may be very inhuman, and Churchmen often put the Church before Christ. We are the victims of our abstractions and personifications. The Church, Society, Humanity, and such abstractions easily become as concrete and separate for us as the living multitudinous units of which they are made up, and for whose benefit alone we may wish them well.

There is a worship of the Future not less pernicious than the worship of the Past; there is a devotion to progress as enslaving as the blindest Chinese traditionalism. Man must never be treated as a means, as a stepping-stone for his fellows. It is not by thinking of remote posterity that we shall do most for it, but by thinking of ourselves and of our children, and making the best of the present, and of that immediate future which is part of the present.

The root of the fallacy is the idea that, because millions of lives are more valuable than one, they combine to constitute a higher order of value; that, because the ocean is greater than all the life it contains, it has a higher life of its own to which its contents are subordinated. And the fallacy is favoured by that hierarchic order which results from competition, and mimics that of a living organism. "As many lives and ends—so many separate worlds." That is the verdict of experience and reflection.

If our problem is thus simplified, if we have only to puzzle over Nature's carelessness as to the individual, it is in some way also intensified. For there was some vague semblance of solution in the idea that the individual was sacrificed to some higher and more universal end, about which Nature was not careless. And even when her indifference to some chosen people or race, to progress, to humanity, to this planet, could no longer be denied, the end was only pushed further away into the darkness of the unknown.

For man's imagination Nature, like space, must be finite, with a centre somewhere; and if there is a multitude of ends and ideas there must be one that unifies and controls all the rest. The infinite, with its centre everywhere or anywhere, an infinity of ends, each of which is supreme for itself, is, for him, a denial of rationality. That the Universe should have no separate meaning as a whole; that its meaning should be uttered in varying aspects and degrees in every particle and every pulse of its totality, makes folly of most of our philosophy. Yet what we see suggests rather the idea of an Infinity that would utter itself to the very full in a million ways, did not such utterances limit and impede each other. As the whole of our knowledge and experience is brought to bear, in varying degrees of distinctness, on every perception and action, so God seems to throw Himself wholly into the very least of His acts and creations, as though it were His sole care and interest. To each microbe He says: "Increase, multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it"; to every force and energy: "Be thou the ruler over thy brethren"; to every soul: "Thou art My Son, to-day I have begotten thee."

Like a forest, the world grows in all senses and directions, in obedience to His pressure from within. Its branches thwart and strangle and overshadow one another. He cares not which prevails. Baulked in one outlet, He seeks another. His one end seems to be the fullest and most multitudinous self-utterance, but there is no sign of a general plan, no order but that which results from the very conflict of utterances. There is no arrangement of the garden, only a wilderness of glorious stars, each a world in itself. For us gardeners the universe as a wilderness is a scandal. The seeming wilderness must go to make a pattern in the eyes of God and His angels. We forget that what we call order, plan, classification is only a practical necessity for beings whose experience is limited; who cannot simultaneously apprehend the whole, in all its detail. A man with an unlimited memory would not need to index his books or catalogue his library. For such a being, order—an order that serves no purpose—might not even be beautiful. For whose benefit, for what finite mind, should the whole universe be tidied up and arranged like a Natural History Museum? Are the seas and continents, the clouds and mountains, orderly? What unity have the stellar nebulæ?

Shall we not then make a hypothesis more apt to cover the facts, as far as we see them, if we suppose God (or Nature if you like) to be bound by a twofold metaphysical necessity: first, the necessity of producing and creating in all senses and directions, much as a forest does; secondly, the necessity by which such individual productions interfere with and impede one another? What He produces are the individuals; the totality, and its more or less mechanically

determined order, *result*, but are not *produced* or intended.

On this hypothesis He cares, and cares supremely, for each individual thing as though it were a world apart. He equips it for the struggle; lives, fights, feels, devises, plans with it. He cannot do otherwise. If He fights against it, on behalf of its fellow-combatants, this, again, is a necessity of His Nature, which utters itself to its utmost in every possible way. He is on the side of the cat and on the side of the mouse; of the oppressor and of the oppressed. He does not will, but He cannot help, the conflict and agony. His will is plainly to minimise and abolish it if it were possible. Here it is that His freedom is exercised—*i.e.* in dealing with the problem produced, and ever renewed, by His necessary fecundity. Such progress as we see is the work of immanent wisdom and intelligence, striving to make room for the swarming children of life. It is, therefore, a libel to say He is careless of individuals. He cares for them and for nothing else. He does not sacrifice them as means to some far-off, universal, and impersonal end.

What, then, is His interest in man's social schemes and dreams? Just His interest in the individuals that are to benefit by them; just His interest in that problem of life which confronts each of them, so far as, in any degree, they are self-conscious and self-governing—the problem of relieving the pressure and suffering resulting from the fecundity of life, and of finding room for her multitudinous children. At first it would seem to be the self-conserving instinct that leagues them together for a common, or distributive,

rather than a collective advantage. But eventually we find a diviner type of life, in which sympathy becomes an instinct of the heart, a principle of the mind; in which the individual shares the divine interest in other individuals—first in its fellows, lastly in “all things both great and small.” Then man consciously co-operates with the Divine Will in its care of individuals; in its task of minimising pressure and suffering; in securing the fullest possible conditions of life for all; in wrestling with the inevitable limitations of the finite—with all-conquering death and decay.

The Kingdom of God, the Earthly Paradise, are not ends in themselves, but means to the multitudinous ends of individual happiness. Nor are they terms of an infallible unbroken progress, or ends that can ever be realised; they stand for the direction, not for the terminus, of the Divine effort to minimise the inevitable pressure of its inevitable fecundity. We have here, writ large, the eternally insoluble problem of that over-population, which is at once the source of progress and degradation, of happiness and misery, of life and death. If one people, one species restricts its fecundity, it will only be to the profit of its rivals. Dam the stream where you will, the torrent of life rolls on just the same, only to fertilise some other region.

That evil and suffering are in some way inseparable from the finite, is allowed by orthodox Christianity. The heterodoxy of this view lies in the necessity of universal fecundity which it imposes on God. If such fecundity is not necessary, the pessimist who believes that pain predominates over happiness can hardly forgive God for having produced at all, or for not

having accommodated His family to His resources. If, however, it is necessary, we must say that evil is inseparable from the divine fecundity ; from the overcrowding of good. No man produces a crowd of children, with all the attendant misery and poverty. He produces the individuals one by one, each for its own sake. The crowd results ; and calls forth his efforts to realise an income and position to relieve the pressure.

The theological objection to necessary creation is this : It would make God dependent on something not Himself. He would require the universe, as man requires air. But when we ask : How can God be infinite if creation lies outside His being—if God *plus* creation is more than God ? theology answers that creation is “being” of a different order and cannot be added to God, any more than a point to a line or a line to a surface. And so it is easy to reply that God depends on creation, as on a different order of being, which is a zero compared with His own. The answer is at least as good as the objection. Both are fairly worthless.

We have thus an eternal struggle, without beginning, without end, between being and the inevitable limitations of being ; between boundless fecundity and the bounds that result from it. In each particular life or branch of life the struggle is maintained as long as possible by all the devices and contrivances of an inexhaustible wisdom ; but sooner or later, as in the individual, so in the race, so too in the cosmic system, the problem becomes insoluble and death conquers. Yet there is no rest or repose in the ocean of being. Again and again, in countless millions of forms, the

task is taken up patiently and the riddle is attempted anew.

And now we may consider the religious and ethical bearings of such a view. In the first place, God is exonerated of all that burden of evil and suffering which He is supposed, if not to will, at least to permit deliberately, in the interests of some final scheme, compared with which the individual interest is of no importance in His eyes. Evil is the all-but inevitable result of His inevitable fecundity. His whole effort is to circumvent and minimise the result. He is entirely and only on the side of life and happiness, and of the fullest attainable expression of His own image and likeness. In all our struggles against evil, in all our endeavours to find room for the greatest possible fulness of life, we are with Him and He with us. It is He Who has gradually raised us to this sympathy with Himself, this sonship and confederacy—to share His joys and griefs. And surely He Himself bears our griefs and carries our sorrows. He is not, then, indifferent to our dreams, nor to our battles for a Divine Kingdom on earth, so far as they are inspired by the highest love of all—love for individuals, not the mere love of ideas and schemes. But this inspiration is no guarantee of an eventual and impossible triumph. All His works perish, from the least to the greatest, He alone abides and works eternally. Is it not enough to be at one with God, Who wills that the battle for life be fought valiantly, and sustained perseveringly, as long as a single soldier is left standing, even though final victory be impossible? Are not the single lives worth *our* care and love, as they are worth *His*?

And I ask whether this view does not enrich our religious sentiment with an element that we observe in the more refined paganism, and miss in the rather crude optimism of our own tradition. I mean, that pathetically wondering outlook of a helpless child in the midst of the strange and unknown; that mute resignation to the futility of man's greatest hopes and enterprises; that sense of a blind fatality that cares not for man, any more than man for the microscopic world that he destroys at every step he takes. Was there not a half truth in all this? Do we not find echoes of it in the great seers of all times?

We have been too long accustomed to a cheap eschatology; to a confident assurance that the whole creation centres round a chance page of human history, that has escaped the moth and mildew of Time and fallen into our hands. We are satisfied that God can have created but one world, that all is directed to but one end; that, could we but see all, we should find everything converging to a rational unity—letters, syllables, words, sentences, all combining to yield one reasoned and connected discourse. The pagan thinker has no such assurance as enables the confident Christian to interpret and justify the ways of God to man at every turn. The sense of dark mystery, of a sad mortality o'erswaying man's largest and loftiest undertakings, of a profound irrationality in the very heart of existence, had taught him more modesty and humility; had made him suspicious of prosperity and the insolence it fosters. We find this note in the wisdom of Job, and its rebuke of the smug exponents of a narrow optimism; or in Ecclesiastes, with its bitter acknowledgment of

Nature's indifference to good and evil, wisdom and folly. If, to our ears, this note rings harsh, it is not because it is untrue, but because it is solitary, and needs "a sweet yoke-fellow" wherewith to blend in harmony. The sway of sad mortality is over everything, not only over man, but over humanity; Heaven and earth shall pass away, without a trace of influence upon the heavens and earths that shall succeed them in an endless futurity. We shall not, we have no right to, fare better than the ant-hill built up by toiling generations, to be annihilated by the ox's hoof or the peasant's dog. Its end accomplished? What end? Was not each little life an end in itself? Was the ant for the hive, or the hive for the ant?

But, like the ant, man must obey the life-impulses of his nature, and go on building and toiling as though he were, what in a sense he is, a world apart. He may not sit down in oriental listlessness and despair, with a *vanitas vanitatum* on his lips. The ant does not know, man knows, that he shall die, and that the memory of his race shall at last be obliterated from creation, as a record written in the faithless sand. Here is the pathos, the depth, the dignity of human life and of the struggles of humanity. Here is the blind loyalty of the soldier, who rushes upon certain death in obedience to a command that seems to him folly. The law of his nature is imperative; its purpose is inscrutable. Man knows. There is something in him greater than himself; something of the universal and absolute, that enables him to stand outside and above himself, to measure his relativity, his finitude, his vanity. He looks at himself with God's eyes. Besides his life as an individual organism, he shares

a divine life and a divine outlook ; a divine sympathy. In him God has given to the work of His hands the power of recognising and understanding its maker, and of freely co-operating in its maker's purpose. Surely man is the son of God by some strange and inexplicable participation in the Divine nature ! It is not as a self-centred, self-seeking individual organism, but as the son, the infant son no doubt, of God, that he wakes to a sense of the tragedy and mystery of existence and of the nothingness and unreality of all that is not God. God alone is the substance that gives meaning to all this shadow-play. And thus we are driven back on Kant's great intuition, that there is nothing really or absolutely good, no end on which man may fix his whole heart, but good will. And good will is just God's will. To be at one with that will, to enter into and co-operate with God's struggle in the battle of life, that alone is the inspiring motive, the justifying end, of all our endeavours—that, and not some final resultant in which all these labours are to be crowned with success and rewarded with an eternal Sabbath of inaction.

Thus to the note of Stoic indifference and detachment is wedded that of Christian hope and enthusiasm. So far as God lives in us consciously, we too are sharers of the Divine fecundity and of all the problems it raises. We must, perforce, push onwards and upwards ; the love of Christ constraineth us ; woe to me if I preach not the Gospel—the Gospel of peace that brings the sword in its wake ; the solution that raises a host of new problems ; the supply that breeds more demands than it satisfies ; life, life, bursting forth on every side, choking, entangling, impeding itself, wave

against wave, current against current, victorious for a time, but at last defeated in its endeavour to utter the infinite words.

“But your life is hid with Christ in God.” The life of union with the Divine Will is alone the true life, the eternal life. It is exercised, strengthened and deepened by our co-operation with the Divine cause, by our obedience to the law of our nature, that bids us take our part in the eternal problem of the universe, created by the fecundity of God. The true Kingdom of God consists, not in a final solution of the insoluble, in the squaring of the circle, the equation of finite and infinite, but in the multiplication of the sons of God, of wills reconciled and atoned with the Divine Will in its endless joys and sorrows. “He prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small,” for it is by such a love of individual lives, each an end or a world in itself, that we are most closely united to God, and not by the love of collective ends, of states, churches and theocracies, which are but means and devices for individual good; which loom on us from a distance that may make us cold and indifferent to the present, that present whose rights and values are in no way subordinate to those of a to-morrow that never comes.

And perhaps it is not only in the realm of competing existences, but also in that of our own moral and social life, that we may find this problem of the Divine fecundity. Are we not ourselves torn by inward conflicts between impulses that are alike from God? Are we not perplexed as to how He who has given us our passions has also given us our reason and our conscience? Can He be on both sides at once?

And so in society, are we not faced by conflicting, irreconcilable tendencies and interests, each of which has justice on its side ?

Ought we not then to recognise that man, social and individual, is that imperfect solution of a problem that is finally insoluble, and that, apart from external and physical disaster, he, like other species, must at last end in failure as far as this life is concerned ? To believe that every moral and social problem admits of ultimate solution may be merely a necessary illusion to protect him from the apathy of despair, until such time as religion has taught him the duty of fighting for victory in the face of certain eventual defeat, and for no other reward than that of eternal life, through union with the Eternal Life.

And shall these sons of God, these Morning Stars, who shout for joy over the glory of creation, shall they, too, vanish like meteors in the darkness. Apart from the desire to live and prevail, which characterises every organism in its vigour, and on which no argument for personal persistence can be based, there is undoubtedly a desire for personal persistence or eternity, and even a hope or conviction of the same, that appears and grows step by step with our diviner life as sons of God. The life into which we then enter, which alone seems to us real and worthful, that life of sympathy with the Divine joys and sorrows, of co-operation with the Divine Will, presents itself to us as distinct from and above that physical and organic existence, which is rather its subject matter. In it we seem to belong to the plane of the absolute and universal, and to view the world and its drama, ourselves included, as spectators from the outside.

We are simply unable to bring this Divine life under any of those categories by which the mind apprehends and controls everything but itself, the apprehender and controller. We but symbolise it by the "I" of our thought, the object-I, individual and organic. Real, the sovereign reality, for our experience, it remains for our thought and analysis the mystery of mysteries. Let us leave it in the darkness, and trust the larger hope, not faintly but firmly. Man

"thinks he was not made to die,
And Thou hast made him ; Thou art just."

Had a clear knowledge of our *post mortem* state been a strict exigency of our natural and moral life it would have been provided, as is light for our eyes or air for our lungs. We have all the light that we need ; light to lead the divine life, to unite ourselves to the divine will, to obey blindly and truthfully the deepest and highest law of our nature, and leave our future tranquilly in the hands of one who is certainly not less just and merciful and loving than those creatures whom He has taught to know, to love, and to trust Him.

May we not then hope that, when the divine spark that is in us has accomplished all that whereunto it is sent, it will return to and merge in its primal source ; that, recalled from the outskirts and periphery of the battle, where he fought in blind ignorance of the fortunes of the whole, the soldier will be summoned to the Leader's side to enter into a more universal outlook and interest, into the very centre and source of the world's labour. To be enlarged is not necessarily to be absorbed ; nor is the identity of

our earlier sense destroyed when it is overclothed with the later and fuller. From that centre of all experience, and as identified with it, we may perhaps look back on the work we have done with mixed feelings of satisfaction with what was done well, and of abiding regret for what was done ill; crowning the former, condemning the latter; at once in Heaven and in Hell, as we are, even now, with respect to our unalterable past. But it is with this Heaven and Hell of the present that we have now to concern ourselves; with that little corner of the battle in which our destiny has placed us. The rest we leave in the hands of God, not asking to see the distant scene.

NOTE TO "DIVINE FECUNDITY"

If time allowed it might be interesting to dwell upon the religious and moral consequences of such a *Weltanschauung*. I can do no more than give the headings of such a chapter.

(1) The exoneration of God from the charge of willing, even permissively, the hurt or destruction of any individual life.

(2) His exoneration from the charge of using such hurt or destruction as a means to some imaginary universal and future end.

(3) The detachment of man from the superstitious belief in and worship of such an imaginary end; and the concentration of his care on individuals, taken distributively and not collectively.

(4) The condemnation of the Gospel of Progress, so far as it promises an eventual millennium, or anything more than an alleviation sufficient to balance the increase of individual suffering that Progress brings in its wake—or, rather, that is itself the cause of Progress.

(5) The need of fighting against evil for the sake of such alleviation, and not in view of ultimate success but rather of ultimate defeat—of fighting because we must and because we ought.

(6) The need of some transcendental other-world hope to oppose to this immediate and provisional pessimism ; as the only alternative to accepting that ultimate pessimism which is professed by the largest and oldest religion, or quasi-religion, in the world.

(7) The enrichment of the impoverished Christian consciousness by the restoration of that provisional pessimism to which Christ opposed His message of a transcendental Hope, and which, even by itself, is more respectable than the optimism that looks for a permanent and universal triumph of Progress, and far more respectable than the Christianity that identifies such a triumph with the Kingdom of Heaven promised by Christ.



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