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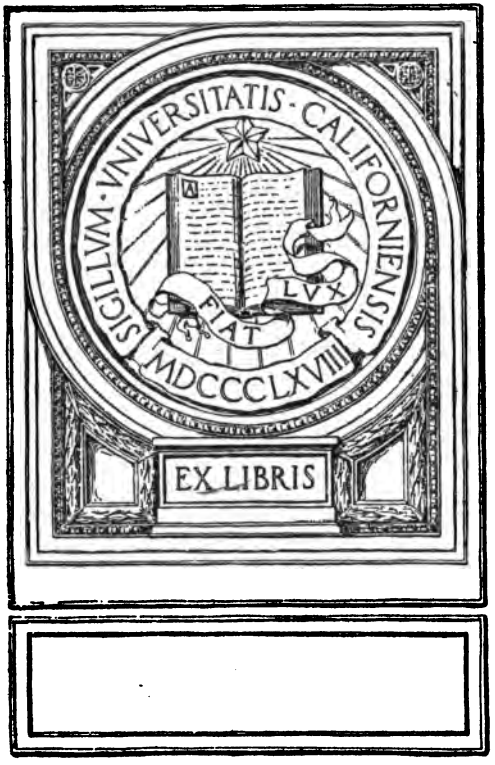
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# THE FAITH AND THE WAR

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# THE FAITH AND THE WAR

A SERIES OF ESSAYS BY MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHMEN'S UNION AND OTHERS ON THE RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTIES AROUSED BY THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE WORLD

EDITED BY

F. J. FOAKES-JACKSON, D.D.

HON. CANON OF PETERBOROUGH

ἵνα μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα

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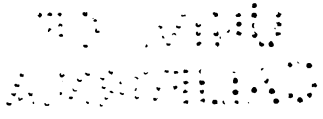

# EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE Council of the Churchmen's Union, feeling a natural desire in this supreme crisis, affecting as it does every part of the nation's life, to offer their contribution to the solution of one of its most pressing problems, invited me to edit a volume of essays, such as might help those who were perplexed in these days when the foundations seem to be shaken. Six of the writers in this volume are members of the Churchmen's Union; the other four are not necessarily in sympathy with its general policy. The co-operation of the latter will be valued, not only because of their personal distinction, but also as a guarantee that the book is intended to be a brotherly hand held out to aid those who are in trouble rather than an attempt to propagate any particular view; for it is of the essence of Liberal Churchmanship to allow thinkers of every school to deliver each his own message in his own way. It will be obvious to readers that the general harmony of the writers is tempered by differences. There has,

indeed, been consultation between them; but each one is to be held responsible only for the opinions expressed in his own essay.

I desire gratefully to acknowledge the help received from some friends who are not contributors: Professor James Ward, F.B.A.; Professor Sorley, F.B.A.; the Rev. Dr. E. W. Barnes, F.R.S. (Master of the Temple); the Rev. Canon Nairne, D.D.; and Dr. M'Taggart, F.B.A.

F. J. FOAKES-JACKSON.

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*The contributors whose names are prefixed by an asterisk are Members of the Churchmen's Union.*

# INTRODUCTION

WHEN an editor has collected a group of writers like those who are contributing to this volume, he cannot expect or even desire anything approaching uniformity. All those who have co-operated with him have won distinction in some branch of learning, and have from time to time made contributions to the religious thought of the day. That all should see things in the same light is obviously impossible; and they would be less able to give help to others if they did so. For in this time of distress each of us has his own peculiar difficulties, due to differing types of intellect and temperament. The object of the essays is, perhaps, rather to hold out helping hands than a helping hand to those who are in distress, that every one may grasp the hand most likely to assist him. Some writers appeal to the sanguine, others to the despondent; some write for those accustomed to philosophic methods, whilst others address those inclined to be impatient of them. In more than one instance a complete difference of outlook is revealed. Nevertheless the reader will not fail to recognise a common purpose throughout every essay, in a genuine desire to help those whose hearts are failing amid the dangers and perplexities of the present world-crisis.

The general plan on which this volume was projected is fairly obvious. The first difficulty which must present itself to all is the question whether the world

of human affairs is governed by a divine Providence or not. The first three essays endeavour to supply an answer by tracing the workings of Providence, first in the individual, then in history and, finally, in the universe. In the fourth essay the whole crux of the problem appears in the discussion as to why evil is permitted to exist. The next group of essays represents an endeavour to discuss the three means by which the fact of the existence of evil in the world can be reconciled with the belief in its Divine government. Hope is treated first; then man's right to a belief in a personal immortality. The relation of Faith to Reality is the subject of the third essay of this series. It would be impossible to treat of the War from a religious standpoint without inquiring whether a Christian, even in the direst extremity, is justified by the teaching of the Master in taking part in it. A chapter has therefore been devoted to this under the title of "War and the Ethics of the New Testament"; and a second, "What is a Christian Nation?" reveals another aspect of the same theme. The tenth and last chapter is constructive. It shows what, in the writer's opinion, are the problems before the Church of England at the conclusion of the War and how they may be met. The points on which the writers are in substantial agreement are more important than any discrepancies between them. On the need of taking a nobler view of God and of man's duty towards Him, during and after this fiery trial, there is no shadow of a difference. All are at one in acknowledging that the Christian Church, in the widest sense of the term, has not yet risen to the occasion; but, at the same time, all are conscious that this trial of faith will purify Christianity, and make those who truly profess it attain to a fuller and higher conception of its meaning. There is a consensus of opinion, expressed in the first four essays, that to understand the significance of evil in the world, it is necessary to

recognise that, under the present dispensation at any rate, there is a plurality of spiritual forces which God permits to exercise control over the course of events. It is often asserted that the Church recognised this by calling God παντοκράτωρ (all-ruling), wrongly translated *omnipotens* or Almighty. A remark to this effect in an early draft of one of the essays elicited from Professor Taylor a most illuminating note; but his whole letter is of such interest that it is quoted almost *in extenso* at the end of the Introduction.

There is little noticeable difference of opinion as to the justice of our cause in the war. The eighth essay concludes with an appeal to the Christian communities in the world to make a special effort to render the recurrence of such a catastrophe, if not impossible, at least extremely difficult; but here and throughout the volume there is a conspicuous absence of impracticable suggestions as to what should be done under circumstances which may never arise.

The contributors, who are all members of the Anglican communion, hold different opinions as churchmen, and, although the tone of most of the essays is anything but controversial, it is impossible that the views of this or that writer should not occasionally reveal themselves. The Editor has allowed each contributor to use the words 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' in the sense he is accustomed to attach to them.

The subject of the third essay, "Providence in the Universal Aspect," was suggested by Professor James Ward, and it is a matter of sincere regret to the Editor that his multifarious duties did not permit him to undertake it. The Professor's view of how this topic should be treated is so interesting that his permission has been asked to reproduce an extract from his letter.

"'Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; though with patience He stands

waiting, with exactness grinds He all.' The grinding is the perfecting of the world, *die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.* There are two points to make first: The world has advanced. In the past good has come out of evil. But the progress is slow, especially the moral progress. But why so slow? Above all why the set-backs; why is the progress seemingly so tortuous? I have referred to this in the *Realm of Ends*, pp. 352 *fin.*, ff., p. 356 f., and elsewhere. The main point is: The world has thoroughly to evolve itself; everything is tried, and what is found wanting cannot survive. Experimentally to know evil is to shun it. Here the slow grinding and the exactness come in. Applying the argument to the present time. The German ideal of militarism is a great experiment of the sort men try, like slavery, polygamy, and the exploitation of labour —the masses as 'hands.' If military imperialism is utterly defeated and exposed now, that will be a move on for the world; and the lesson, it may fairly be said, will be worth what it costs, especially if it clear the way for social and political advances, which have been so long delayed. Other costly struggles could be cited, the agonies of which were temporary and are forgotten, the good of which remains. There is what Höffding calls (in his *Philosophy of Religion*) a conservation of values (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13), but there is no conservation of evil. And here again there is an important point, though you seem to deny it—I mean that there is no *principle* of evil, no essential solidarity of evil as there is of good (cf. *Realm of Ends*, see Index, *s.v. Evil*)."

It will be evident that the writer of the third essay is greatly indebted to Professor Ward, though he does not represent identically the same point of view.

## NOTE BY PROFESSOR TAYLOR ON *OMNIPOTENS*

"*Omnipotens* is a literal translation into Latin of παντοκράτωρ, a common epithet of God in the LXX and the N.T. *Apocalypse*. And παντοκράτωρ is used in the LXX, not only to translate the Hebrew שדי, but regularly, (at least in the prophets; I have not examined other parts of the LXX in detail,) as the equivalent of יהוה צבאות. I think I could make out a good case for the guess that the word was coined on the analogy of the astrological κοσμοκράτωρ, and that its original meaning was that God is master even of the evil astrological powers, (the 'malign' constellations,) which were universally believed in in the Hellenistic world from about the middle of the second century B.C., though quite unknown to Greek thought of the better and earlier period. It is against these κοσμοκράτορες that the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, which calls them the κοσμοκράτορες 'of this darkness' and τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, 'the spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavens,' tells us to put on the πανοπλία τοῦ θεοῦ, (c. vi. 10–13), and it is apparently they who are meant by the 'rulers of this age' in 1 *Corinthians* ii. 6-8, where it is said that if they had recognised the Lord of Glory they would not have crucified Him. (It is, I think, incredible that such a phrase as 'rulers of this αἰών' can refer to a petty Emir like Herod or an inferior Roman official like Pilate.) Hence the use of the word παντοκράτωρ in the LXX shows, I suppose, that the Greek translators interpreted יהוה צבאות as meaning 'Yahveh—or Yahu —of *hosts*,' and supposed the 'hosts' to be quite literally the *caelestis exercitus* of the stars. 'All-*ruling*' is only a partial rendering in English; the word means 'having *supreme might*' over τὰ πάντα or τὸ πᾶν, the

universe and everything in it, not merely 'ordering all things.' Hence *omnipotens*, as contrasted with such phrases as *maris potens*, is an exact translation. Thus Horace calls Venus *diva potens Cypri*, but God is not *potens Cypri*, lord of Cyprus, but lord of *all* places and things. The God of the N.T. is *κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ*, where *κύριος* represents the *nomen ineffabile*, and *παντοκράτωρ* expresses the absolute *dominium* of which Newton speaks, (with philological inaccuracy,) in his famous *Scholium Generale* as the signification of the word *Deus*. I have no concordance either to the Hebrew O.T. or to the LXX at hand, but I doubt very much whether *παντοκράτωρ* was primarily intended, as is often said, to translate the Hebrew אל-שדי. In *Exodus* vi. 3, where the Hebrew text makes God say that He was known to the patriarchs as El-Shaddai, (A.V. 'God Almighty,') the LXX has merely *θεὸς ὢν αὐτῶν*. So in *Genesis* xvii. 1 (LXX) God is to Abraham merely *ὁ θεός σου*, and the rendering is similar in *Genesis* xxxv. 11, xlviii. 3, where the Hebrew has אל-שדי in each place. This looks as if the meaning of *Shaddai* was unknown to the LXX translators themselves. So, to take other places where the word occurs in the Hebrew, in *Genesis* xlix. 25 the LXX has *ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐμός*; *Job* v. 17, *παντοκράτωρ*; *ib.* vi. 4, *κύριος*; *ib.* viii. 3, *ὁ κύριος*; viii. 13, *ὁ κύριος*; *Ruth* i. 20 and 21, *ὁ ἱκανός*, this last being, to judge from the Hebrew lexicons, probably the most accurate equivalent of all. Does not this variety, as contrasted with the standing *παντοκράτωρ* as the equivalent of the prophetic יהוה צבאות, show that it is this latter for which *παντοκράτωρ* was devised as a 'stock' rendering, and that different LXX translators used different equivalents for 'Shaddai' just because that word had no living meaning to them?

"I know that this point about the origin of the epithet *παντοκράτωρ* is quite a minor one, but it

interests me because some of my friends seem to have a sort of spite against the word 'omnipotent.' I think I see a very practical reason for the Church's insistence on the Divine omnipotence. It was meant as an assertion of the freedom of men from that supposed fatal bondage to their horoscopes which Posidonius and the later Stoics had taught the Graeco-Roman world to believe in. The early Christians meant to say that astrology is vanity and that God is master even of the 'rulers of the House of Life.' (Is there possibly an allusion to this in Our Lord's parable about the 'Lord of the House' who is taken by surprise and his goods plundered?)

"As to '*the* Devil.' Is it *de fide* that Satan is absolutely bad? May one not suppose that he goes from bad to worse? Is not 'absolutely bad' a *contradictio in adjecto*? If Satan exists, he must be *very much* alive, as you say, and therefore seems not to have the vices of feebleness and vacillation. I can think of something 'so good that nothing better can be conceived,' but I find myself as unable to think of 'something so bad that nothing worse can be conceived' as to think of a line so crooked than none more crooked can be conceived.

"I think something may be made of a reflection of Plotinus which is very pertinent to our present situation. Defending the goodness of God in the face of the inroads of the barbarians on civilisation, he says that to some extent the successes of the barbarians *are* due to their virtues. On the whole account they are worse men than their victims, but the victims are suffering for their neglect of some points of virtue which the barbarians have cultivated. This seems to me true of ourselves. Bad as the Germans are, they have been our superiors in discipline, and the readiness of classes to sink their narrower interests in the consideration of what is, however wrongly, thought to be

the interest of the whole nation. We, or, at least, a large class among us, have deliberately refused to believe in any interests higher than those of the class, and what we have called our 'democracy' hates and resents the 'holy spirit of discipline.' In so far as our troubles are due to the spirit of class-particularism, to shirking, thoughtlessness, and indolence, to the desire to be always getting something out of the social order without paying anything in, to sheer want of the disciplined temper, we are surely being *justly* punished, however criminal the agents who are doing the work may be, and it is childish to quarrel with God's justice because we have to pay a heavy price for our shortcomings."

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# I

# PROVIDENCE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

BY

PERCY GARDNER, F.B.A.

# I

## PROVIDENCE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

In the early days of the war an American liner, passing along the north of Ireland, narrowly missed running on to a German mine. The Admiralty publicly proclaimed the fact in the hope, which in those days seemed reasonable, that the statement would shock the German conscience. But the Admiralty perversely added to the statement a comment that the escape of the vessel was due to pure chance. In so doing they went beyond their last. The fact they could ascertain. But what means had they for discovering the explanation of the fact? Perhaps they were using words in common employment without considering exactly what they implied. But strictly speaking the explanation which they put forth was a purely atheistic one. If so, every English Christian has a ground for complaint against them; and not only all Christians but all Theists. For it is to a Pagan philosopher that we owe the profound saying that all things are full of divine Providence. The Admiralty apparently preferred the view that all things are guided by chance.

I propose to consider the question whether the progress of knowledge and the experience of the world compel us to accede to this pessimistic doctrine. That in the course of the terrible calamities which have fallen upon Europe many men should be driven into pessimism

and doubt of divine Providence is most natural. But does reason and quiet reflection justify pessimism in this matter? That is the question to be answered.

We may take up this question from several points of view. We may consider it in relation to the origin of the world, and the evolution of mankind. We may consider it in regard to the growth of peoples and the development of nationality. We may consider it in relation to the individual. In each of these cases the contrast between the theistic and the atheistic view is in principle the same. If there be any such thing as divine Providence, it exists in regard to the world, the nation, and the individual. In the present paper we consider the question only in relation to the individual life. We deal with the microcosm, not with the macrocosm. And this is the less to be regretted because all discussions as to the working of Providence in the world at large are extremely difficult: it is almost impossible definitely to prove such working; whereas when our view is turned inward on personality and conscious life we may reach a certainty of divine aid and control which is based on experience, and which can only be denied by denying all that makes life worth living.

## I

I will first sketch in outline the history of the belief in divine Providence, and then consider it in the light of reason and experience.

The belief has passed through much the same stages as religious belief in general, beginning at the stage of magic and superstition, and being gradually refined and raised by the travail of the human spirit and the progressive revelation of the ways of God to man.

No doubt in a sense it has been more prevalent, has occupied a greater space in human life, at a very low level of humanity. The savage recognises and expects

at every turn in his life the intervention of spirits to aid or to thwart his schemes. It is by the aid of some ancestral spirit, or some charm of supernatural power which he carries about his person, that he finds the wild animal which he needs for food, or succeeds in defeating his enemy. If a storm drives him back in an expedition, the reason is the displeasure of some spirit: he is ever on the look-out for some indication, by the action of bird or beast, or through dream and vision, of the intentions of the spiritual forces which surround him. And he thinks that it is possible, by old established ritual or sympathetic magic, to get these powers on his side, in which case his success is certain, unless his enemy can range stronger powers on the other side. He knows very clearly what he wants, and he hopes to secure it by persuading or inducing the spirit powers of the world to support him.

And after all, how slowly man, in his general level, changes. There are doubtless multitudes of peasants at present in the armies of Russia or Italy who think that charms which they carry about with them will divert bullet and shrapnel, and save them from wounds and death. There are multitudes who are confident that candles burnt before the shrine of a favourite saint, or a vow to bestow a gift on some religious institution, will bring them safe through the perils of war.

Man comes into the divine presence full of self-seeking, anxious to get his own way, ready to accept as his divine patron any power which will further his private ends. And then by degrees, more and more as the ethical level of life is raised, man finds that there is a higher and better will than his own, that the line of his best development and his highest happiness lies in growing into a right relation towards this encompassing Power, in subordinating his immediate impulses to a higher law, in thinking less of the things which can be seen and more of the things which are invisible and

eternal. He passes the bridge which leads from magic to religion.

We see also that as, according to biologists, there have been in the history of our cosmos certain periods of crisis, when the evolution of the world of living things, especially of the human animal, moved with sudden rapidity, so that in a short space of time greater changes took place than would ordinarily come to pass in long ages, so it has been in the mental and moral history of mankind. Of all periods of rapid human expansion perhaps the sixth century B.C. is the most remarkable. Then the philosophy of Confucius in China and the religion of the Buddha in India marked for the spirit of the Asiatic peoples a course which they have ever since pursued. In Judaea, with the restoration by Cyrus comes a wonderful new flow of inspiration to the Prophets, and the higher religion of Israel is established. And in the West the wonderful inspiration which then descended upon the Greek people gave birth to a philosophy, a literature, an art, which mark a rapid rise of the teachers of the world to a new level. From that century for a while the path of development went steadily upwards until the impetus was exhausted and, at the beginning of our era, the time came for a new departure.

Some of the ages of Christianity, such as those of the Friars and of the Reformation, were such turning-points in the history of the world. One cannot imagine thoughtful men who lived after those ages going back to the state in which men had lived before them. The doors of retrogression were suddenly closed ; and every thinker and reformer had, whether willingly or unwillingly, to launch out into the sea, and shape his course for a new objective.

I think that all men who reflect have been driven by the terrible and astounding events of the last year to realise that we live in an age which is thus cut off from

the past and determinative of the future. And to every Christian the question comes home. Is Christianity a failure? Is it only a stage in human history? Or has it still that capacity for change and expansion which prevented the Reformation of the sixteenth or the Revolution of the eighteenth century from destroying it? With other religious doctrines that of a divine Providence has to be reconsidered from the foundation.

II

It is recognised by all that no teaching is inculcated with more emphasis in the Synoptic Gospels than the doctrine of a personal Providence. It is the part of man to put an absolute confidence in the Father in Heaven, and to avoid anxious care for his own future. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered!" "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." It is true that these sayings come in close connection with precepts as to complete renouncement of all planning for the future which cannot possibly be carried out in an organised modern society. Among us a man is obliged to think how he may make a living and not be a mere incumbrance of society. But the precepts, though expressed without regard to worldly necessities, are based upon profound ethical truth. There is no corrective of worldly anxiety like profound trust in the divine goodness. Most of us have known men who have been unsuccessful so far as external goods go, and yet have been wonderfully happy in their confidence in divine leading. And it is a mere matter of observation that devotion to the divine will, and confidence in the goodness of God may survive all shock with circumstance and bear men and women lightly above the rough experiences of life.

To St. Paul also the doctrine of an individual Providence is among the great secrets of the Christian life. "All things," he says, "work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. viii. 28). To St. Paul alike the course of history and the life of the individual are guided by a Power which shapes and moulds all things for purposes of kindness and mercy to mankind. In many saints of the Christian Church this has been one of the deepest and most fundamental of convictions.

But there are other elements in the early teaching of the New Testament, less obvious and made of less account, which we have to consider, before we can put together the whole Christian doctrine of Providence.

It is a proof of the inexhaustible depth and profound inspiration of the early Christian literature that each fresh age of the world discovers in it something which previous ages had overlooked or had undervalued. In this respect the New Testament may be said to resemble Nature itself, which to each generation of scientific researchers shows new depths and aspects before unrecognised. I cannot here go through the history of Christianity, to show the constant discovery of new truth in ancient record and Christian institution.[1] I can only cite one or two obvious examples. Thus in the days of St. Francis the Galilean teaching of the love of God and the brotherhood of men came out, so to speak, in a new edition, and a wonderful wave of sympathy, kindliness, and humanity went out over all Europe. Again, at the time of the Reformation some Christian teachings which had been obscured by the growing conventions of the Catholic Church were rediscovered—such teachings as those of St. Paul in regard to the spiritual relations of all Christians to the Divine Spirit working in the community, and the infinite worth of the individual soul.

[1] Something of the kind has been attempted in my little work called *The Growth of Christianity*.

There can be no doubt as to the side of the original Christian enthusiasm which it is the business of our age to place in a clearer light. Modern research has shown, as it was never shown before, the prevalence of law and order alike in the visible and the spiritual worlds. We realise that God is pre-eminently a God of law and order; that His reign is no rule of mere caprice, but a constant working through the chain of cause and effect. We no longer expect God to act by sudden miracles or by a suspension of law, whether material or moral, but to work beneath law for the gradual permeation of human society by the divine ideas, which are slowly and successively worked into the frame of society.

An examination of the writings of primitive Christianity shows that the recognition of law in the physical and spiritual worlds is an element alike in the primitive preaching in Galilee and in the semi-Hellenised teachings of St. Paul and the Fourth Evangelist.

If we turn to the Parables of the Kingdom we shall find that the point of many of them lies in the parallel drawn between law in the natural and law in the spiritual world. The parables of the leaven and of the mustard seed set forth the way in which a divine idea or impulse, when it gains a footing in the world, will grow and prevail, turning to its own use and nourishment all the surrounding conditions and forces. Both of these parables have been wonderfully illustrated in the history of the Christian church. The vital force of an indwelling idea has constantly used the surrounding materials, just as a growing plant uses earth and water to build up its own frame. No statement of the working of spiritual law in history and in the human heart could be clearer than the lessons drawn in Matthew and Luke from the growth of the fig-tree and the signs of the weather. "Now from the fig-tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its

leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh ; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that He is nigh, even at the doors" (Matt. xxiv. 33). If there may be here present some expectation of a sudden visible coming of the Kingdom of God, yet the principle applies just as well to a more gradual and invisible coming of the Kingdom. Again, "When it is evening ye say, it will be fair weather, for the heaven is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather to-day, for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven, but ye cannot discern the signs of the times" (Matt. xvi. 2, 3). Was there ever a clearer statement of the rule of law in the course of history? All that takes place has its roots in what went before ; and those who have true insight can see the future in the present.

"Do men," Jesus asks, "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matt. vii. 16).

St. Paul speaks of law in the spiritual world, as we might expect, in a more intellectual and dogmatic way. "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. vi. 7). The Fourth Evangelist puts the same doctrine in his own way when he writes, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6).

## III

This teaching, which is thus clearly set forth by early Christianity and which should have been borne in upon us all by the daily clearer view which we obtain of the predominance of law both in the world

of nature and in that of spirit, has been in the modern world, and especially in England and America, almost buried out of sight by a spurious Christianity, and a moral feebleness, which have led us to imagine that a man or a nation can escape the consequences of their actions, that they can slip off their evil habits as a serpent slips off his old skin, and stand on the same moral level as if they had never offended. When a man has ruined his health by sensual indulgence or persistent folly, he may repent bitterly; but his constitution remains a ruin. If he has through indolence thrown away his chances in life, he may see his fault and earnestly strive to amend it, but all his life will be an uphill struggle against difficulties. If in a moment of temptation he embezzles money, however real his repentance may be he has to nurse it through years of imprisonment.

In setting forth this hard and dark side of life we do not of course for a moment deny the reality of divine forgiveness and grace. Nothing is more clearly taught in the Gospels than the willingness of God to forgive. And to this teaching the facts of experience fully conform. When a man has thoroughly repented of evil ways and prayed for forgiveness, the forgiveness comes. His relation to the divine Power ceases to be one of hostility and rebellion, and becomes one of loyalty. The change of heart goes to the depths of his nature; the consciousness of guilt passes away; and happiness often returns. But the divine forgiveness does not remove the consequences of sin; they persist. It only disposes a man to bear them with patience and courage as an atonement for what has happened. Many men have even felt an exaltation in bearing them; have been disposed to glory in them, as a sort of counterweight to the transgression, as ascetics have rejoiced in physical pain, or as St. Paul gloried in infirmity.

But the weak sentiment of a softened age takes in regard to transgressions a very different line from that of God. If a man confesses a sin against a fellow-man, we expect the fellow-man at once to try to save him from all the consequences of his action. An employer who has been robbed will often, if the robber be penitent or express penitence, refrain from punishment, without considering the wrong he is thereby doing to society, or the temptation he is laying before all needy men in a position of trust. When a man has committed a murder, unless the circumstances be such as to arouse horror, there will always be a number of sentimental people ready to sign a petition that the law may not take its course.

The same sentimentality which has caused almost all offences to be regarded as venial, and which has revolted against the idea of just punishment, has also invaded the doctrine of divine Providence, and so weakened and softened it that it has ceased to correspond to anything in the world. It has assumed that a man need not reap what he sows, that God is an indulgent parent who desires the comfort and prosperity of his children rather than their spiritual health and their ethical development, that He will look after a man as a fond parent will look after a spoiled son, to save him from anxiety and even exertion, to bestow upon him benefits which he has never earned, and to find excuses for faults which deserve severe chastisement. And when a sudden storm, such as is now raging in Europe, comes on, a Christian who has such a notion of Providence as this is driven from his moorings and drifts at random. He finds that the Ruler of the world can be stern, and, not distinguishing between sternness and cruelty, will feel that his religion is a hollow thing, without root in the nature of the world.

It is proverbially easy to believe in divine Providence

when we are prosperous, when all goes as we would have it go, and our purposes easily realise themselves in the world. But it is proverbially hard to believe in Providence in times of sadness and of stress, when disappointment dogs our steps, and our life has to sink to a lower level. The reason is our idolatry, that in place of studying to find out how the will of God works in history and in the lives of individuals, we form *a priori* a notion of how it ought to work to suit us in particular. So in place of forming a doctrine of Providence from experience, and trying to conform our ways to it, we make a sort of idol, and deck it with our vain imaginations, and then, when it will not hear our cryings or save us from the enemy, in a fit of disgust we dethrone and destroy it, and find nothing to worship in heaven above or in the earth beneath. Any worthy notion of Providence must conform to the words of St. Paul, "God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

It is of course true that observation, apart from faith and the ideal, will never give us a really religious view of the world, or reveal the ways of God. By the cold and dispassionate intelligence the question whether things are ruled by chance or by God can never be solved. Theistic and atheistic interpretations of history are both tenable, until we bring emotion and will, as well as thought, to bear on the matter. But it is equally true that emotion and will, if allowed to run riot in the contemplation of the world, will never reach a rational interpretation of it. Emotion must be swayed by intelligence, and intelligence impelled by emotion, before we can reach any durable and satisfying explanation of the meaning of the world. God is always ready to reveal Himself; but He stands revealed only to a modest and self-forgetful study. The way of magic, which desires a knowledge of the divine in order that a man may better win his way in

the world, must give place to the way of religion, which feels that the knowledge of God for its own sake is the highest of all knowledge.

The questions are, How can the strict reign of law, which we find alike in the physical and moral worlds, be combined with a belief in a divine Power which is after all overruling? And how can a vivid sense of the immense power and horror of wickedness in the human world be combined with belief in a supremely good Deity? These two questions we must take up in turn. The first, to anticipate our conclusion, can only be solved by a distinction between the world of sense and that of spirit. The second can only be solved by a consideration of the limitation, or self-limitation, of the divine power.

As I have already observed, I will here confine myself to the relations of Providence to the individual.

## IV

To revert to the instance with which I began. All that observation can tell us in regard to our steamship just missing the mine is that it so occurred. But directly one begins to analyse the facts, the matter is not simple. There must have been reasons which induced the enemy vessel, when it laid the mine, to lay it at precisely the spot in which it lurked. These reasons we do not know, but they may have been of the most complicated kind, going back in a chain of cause and effect far into many lives. Some eye and some brain fixed on the spot, and if the life-history of the owner of that eye and brain had been different, another spot would in all probability have been chosen. And then of the liner: If the steersman had made the least turn of the rudder to left or right, the vessel might have struck the mine. His reasons for taking precisely the course he did take are very obscure;

probably many of them acted quite beneath the level of consciousness. And every one of those on board, whose lives depended upon missing the mine and not striking it, was on board for some reasons connected with the whole course of his life. He did not draw lots to decide whether he should take a passage in that particular vessel, but acted on reasonable grounds. Thus an event which at first glance seemed the mere ruling of chance, was in fact the wonderfully complicated result of innumerable series of intertwined causes and effects.

Perhaps what we really mean when we say that an event is the result of chance, is merely that it is the result of causes so complicated and so minute that we cannot trace them. If a man throws a set of dice, the result is to him a matter of chance; but really it depends strictly upon a number of causes which can be enumerated, on the way the dice are placed in the box, on the action of the hand and the wrist of the thrower, on the precise mathematical exactness of the forms of the dice, and so on. When we say that the result is a matter of chance we only mean that it depends on a number of minute adjustments so intricate that no man can purposely contrive them.

The view that it was pure chance whether the lives of A and of B and of C who were on board our ship came to an end or were continued is quite superficial. A, B, and C have a perfect right to believe that their escape was providential. So far as we can see that escape was the result of thousands and millions of petty adjustments, and the reasons of those adjustments are infinitely too complicated for us to discover.

But we may regard the long trains of cause and effect in either of two ways. Either we may think that just as in the physical world effect follows cause in unvarying order, so in the spiritual world, the world of thought and consciousness, every event is rigidly

determined, and the notion of the existence of free will and of overruling spiritual powers a mere delusion. Or we may think that, while the body of man is part of the physical frame of things, subject to the force of gravity, the ways of chemical combination and the like, the conscious being, the spirit of man, is a member of another realm, the realm of free will, of self-determination, of spiritual inspiration.

In the latter case one does not deny the presence of law and order in the intellectual and spiritual world, but only of rigid and unvarying law. One only rejects a stern fatalism, and asserts that the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters of consciousness. If God be a reality, and if there be a way of intercourse between God and man, then there is a possibility that human lives are guided to ends of which we are often unconscious, or of which a consciousness slowly dawns on us in the course of living.

It is clear that this is too large and too deep a question to be taken up in a parenthesis in a short paper like the present. I write only for those who believe in human free will and responsibility, who think that there is a relation between the consciousness of man and a surrounding spiritual environment, that prayer is an actual way of communication between man and God, that we can, in the words of Longfellow "touch God's right hand in the darkness, and be lifted up and strengthened." The basis of such a belief must always lie in spiritual experience, whether our own, or that of some person whom we accept as a spiritual authority and guide. Unless a man believes so much, it is obviously of no use to talk to him about Providence, of no more use than to talk to one blind from birth as to the facts of vision. But when he does accept the fact of spiritual intercourse, and the possibility of a divine control of the individual life, then the task of meeting the intellectual difficulties which can be brought against

the notion of a Providence for the individual is not hopeless.

For if the wrecking of a ship on a mine, or any other of the outward events which come in to bring death or life to a man, depend upon an infinite number of minute adjustments in the minds of various men, then at any moment in any of these adjustments an overruling spiritual power may exert control, and so direct the course of events in the visible world.

There are two or three considerations in regard to the manner of the working of Providence which may here come in.

In the first place, though the working of a spiritual power may sometimes be realised in consciousness, so that a man will instinctively say, "It was a direct inspiration," yet far more often it will take place in the vast realm of the sub-conscious, on which consciousness floats as a ship floats on the surface of the unfathomed ocean. We see the results of such working, but usually we do not see how they are produced.

In the second place we may reject a notion which may occur to us that the part thus assigned to Providence is not altogether dignified. Would a divine Power, it may be said, thus linger among human desires and habits and impulses, to bend them in this direction or in that, to be constantly striving with, and often frustrated by, fixed habits or overpowering circumstance? This objection, like nearly all *a priori* objections of its kind, seems to me to have very little value. Our notions of what is dignified, great or small, are merely subjective and purely conventional. An event is great or small entirely in relation to its moral character or its consequences. For example, what event in life could be more trivial in itself than the catching or the missing of a train? Yet it is easy to imagine a case in which the missing of a train might cause the loss of an appointment, and the wrecking of a career. Giving a coin in

alms is a trivial matter: yet we have the highest authority for thinking that the giving of a small alms, the widow's mite, by one who is almost destitute, may rank very high indeed among the world's noble deeds. If we try to look at realities, and not at the mere outside shows of things, we shall see that to apply our petty measures to the working of Providence is an impertinence.

In the third place, though divine power may work in the ordering of lives, it would be a mere reversion to the condition of mind which I have called the magical or idolatrous, to expect or hope that the divine Power will carry out our wishes merely because they are ours. Prayer and Providence are closely intertwined; a man who believes in the divine control of life will naturally ask aid of the controller. And it seems to me quite right that he should utter in prayer any desire of his heart which is not vicious. But in many cases our particular wishes cannot be granted without inflicting injury upon others, or without damaging our own characters. Thus a belief in Providence, to be worthy, must needs be combined with a desire that, whatever be our wishes, the higher will of God should be done.

But it would seem that this mere speculative question as to the possibility of a directing Providence is not one that seriously troubles ordinary men. The mass of mankind do not greatly care about logic or consistency of thought. What really directs their beliefs is not speculative reason, but emotions rising from the experience of life. To most of those who do not believe in Providence, that want of belief is really the child of pessimism or despair. They see things going on daily, terrible things which cut them to the heart, and which seem the very negation of divine rule in the world. They see, as the Psalmist did, the selfish and the unscrupulous flourishing, and living a life of self-

indulgence, apparently undisturbed by any reproaches of conscience. They see noble endeavours frustrated by circumstance, and high hopes constantly blighted. We have all recently seen terrible sufferings inflicted by military violence on people who seem not to have deserved thus to suffer; we have seen many of the best and most promising of our youths cut down, or slowly dying in great agony. We have seen the happiness of thousands of homes blighted for ever. We have seen, what is most perplexing of all, deliberate and long-laid plans for the torture and destruction of men succeeding. What wonder if in our days especially pessimism spreads, and men feel as if it were impossible to believe that there is a God, or that He concerns Himself with our affairs?

The easiest practical cure for pessimistic despair is vigorous action. It is not so much those who are fighting and organising who are liable to it as those who watch from a distance. When energy goes out in deeds there is less of it left to express itself in emotion and thought. Old men and women and those who are out of the current of active life are much more liable to the disease of pessimism than those who are battling in what they regard as a righteous cause. But if thought and leisure are to provide a remedy for the evils to which they are specially subject, they may work on the lines which here follow.

I have heard a pessimist defined as a person who has lived with an optimist. And there can be no doubt but that one of the most usual causes of pessimism is the disappointment of unjustified and unreasonable expectation. Men are very apt, especially in quiet and prosperous times, to think that comfort and enjoyment are obviously the best goods, and that the promotion of the worldly advantage of as many as possible must be the end of providential guidance of the world, if it exist. This is in fact a most astoundingly superficial view,

which could not be held by any one who had with any care studied the phenomena of the world and of society.

Men who, on grounds of mere fancy and emotion, form notions as to what action the divine Providence ought to take in the world, and expect to find the outward course of events conform to their hasty and superficial ideal, are sure to be disappointed. Ethically they are on the same level as the savage who tries by magic to compel the spiritual powers to do his will. But those who humbly wait to learn what the will of God is, striving to observe it in the events which take place around them, and to study it in the recesses of their own consciousness, which they try to lay bare to spiritual influence, will not be disappointed in that way. Their faith may suffer many a partial eclipse, and they may pass through many dark days: but their belief is not liable to sudden ruin, because it is humble, content to watch and to wait. It can only be destroyed if all belief in God and the life of the spirit is wrecked.

## V

But such faith will not guarantee an optimistic view of the world, a view that everything is always for the best. For every study of nature and of history shows us, not a triumphant victory of good over evil, but a process by which good is slowly evolved out of evil. We see in the world everywhere good and evil in contention one with the other: sometimes, even for long periods, the evil seems stronger than the good; and instead of an upward progress we trace only degeneration and decay. In our own lives we see the will to do good thwarted by external circumstance; and it seems to us that an overruling spiritual power could easily have so disposed events that we could have been of more use in the world. Not only do we find that the help we hoped for is not forthcoming, but it

sometimes even seems as if powers of evil were doing their best to defeat our endeavours in good causes, and to prevent the realisation of our plans.

As regards the nature of God's work on the world there has been in modern thought a steady drift in a direction which would have startled our ancestors. Thinking men have more and more accepted the view, repugnant to the old *a priori* theology, that the divine Power as revealed in experience is not victoriously omnipotent, but works gradually, makes its way by slow progress, often suffers partial defeat from the hostile forces of evil. Also that it is our duty and our highest privilege to place ourselves on the side of that Power, to work with it, and that in such partisanship human merit lies. We further think that as man can be of use to God, so God can suffer with man, identify Himself with human beings, live through them and in them. The doctrine of the Incarnation, long regarded as a high mystery, has become recognised as the best explanation of human life as revealed to us in the world.

The speculative question, whether the divine Power is limited by the coeval existence of evil spirits, or whether it is only self-limited, for reasons which we may or may not be able to fathom, may be left aside. The important thing to note is that, as known to us, the divine Power is thus limited, and appeals to man for aid to overthrow what is hostile to it. I remember that when in the posthumous papers of John Stuart Mill I first met this view, it shocked me extremely. But every year since has shown me that it conforms to the facts of life better than any view which can be put in its place. A man who wishes to be of use in the world must in practice accept it, even if he be able to combine with it in some way the doctrine of the divine omnipotence, which is on the logical surface of things irreconcilable with it. In order to work for good, a man must believe in the good, and believe in

some form that he is working in unison with the ultimate purpose of the world. But he need not believe that good is the destined end of all, that the powers of good must necessarily triumph, that evolution must always be in a good direction. In fact, too ready an optimism will be likely to decrease his energy. It is as with a soldier in a battle-field. He is strengthened by a strong hope of victory, and a belief in the goodness of his cause. But if he thought that victory was easy, and that it was certain quite apart from any action of his, this would tend rather to diminish than to increase his power and energy.

Such is the testimony of experience. But if a man has the faith and the courage, in spite of it, to hold fast the belief that the divine Power is in a higher sense omnipotent, and that experience lifts only a corner of the veil which hides from men His real being, such a man will attain to the creed which has been that of great doctors and saints of the Church in all ages.

It may well seem that a rigid system of law and order in the visible world is not easy to combine in thought on the one hand with a gradual working through phenomena of the divine ideas which slowly raise the level of human life, and, on the other hand, with a fatherly divine care for the individual. It is true that these three elements are not easy to reconcile in a speculative system. Their combination shows a system of the universe infinitely complicated. But such difficulties always lie in the way of the discovery of the highest truth. It is comparatively easy to form a scheme of the universe, if we leave out of it complex and disturbing elements. A quasi-materialism like that of Haeckel, a scheme which, like that of Herbert Spencer, begins by setting aside the spiritual element in life as the unknowable, and then brings system into the rest of the phenomena, is much more simple, and will always attract those who love short-cuts to infallibility. But

nothing can justify the setting aside or neglect of classes of facts, or varieties of experience. In science, progress usually comes from study of the residuary phenomena, the phenomena which are not explained by the current hypotheses. It is through dwelling on these residuary phenomena that planet after planet and satellite after satellite has been discovered. In the course of my own archaeological work I have constantly found that it is precisely the facts which one is unable to explain according to current theories which are most interesting, and which turn out to be sign-posts marking the way to new and better theories. If only the pride of intellect in man were less, and he were content to accept working hypotheses for what they are worth, without trying to stretch facts to suit them, our progress in knowledge would be steadier and more solid. It has always been the tendency of great generalisers to cast aside the facts which they cannot explain, and to make much of those which best suit their views.

As regards the individual, one hypothesis alone can justify the belief in the providential ordering of existence, the hypothesis of a future life. The belief in a future existence wherein the sorrows and the apparent injustices of the present life will be compensated may well reconcile any one to the worst pains that the world can inflict. But this belief is somewhat crude in the form in which it has been accepted by the Church. And its character has been steadily changing in late years. The old facile optimism, once so prevalent in England, which thought that the gates of a heaven of perfect and eternal happiness would open for every Christian, has died down. In the Middle Ages and at present in Roman Catholic countries its excess of sanguine hope has been modified by a doctrine of Purgatory, of a place where the sins of the flesh are atoned for, before the gates of Paradise open. Modern Protestant belief does not quite go back to the doctrine of Purgatory.

But it holds that in the future life, as in the present, bliss will lie in doing the will of God, in spending and being spent for the glory of God and the good of human souls. No doubt the modern belief in a future life contains much that is crude, or contrary to what we know of the moral world: but surely no one can be contented with the old notion of heaven as a place of inactive enjoyment or eternal rest. Such a place would cease to be heaven in a few days. But the question of personal immortality is reserved for another writer in these pages. I must conclude with a nearer consideration of the present war as bearing upon the question of Providence.

## VI

Though the events of the present war vividly excite our emotions, and govern our imaginations, yet there is in them nothing which is new in the course of the world, or throws a wholly new light on history. Germany has prepared for war with method and perseverance. She has reaped as she had sown, in a splendid apparatus for war, in wonderful supplies of trained soldiers and of every kind of ammunition, and the Germans, whatever their faults, have also striking virtues, patriotism, courage, discipline. Such things make certain an immediate, though not necessarily a final, success. The nations which had less carefully prepared must pay in thousands of precious lives and untold millions of money before they can be on terms with Germany. But Germany has cynically flung aside the principles alike of Christianity and of humanity: she has struck for success, regardless of treaty and of principle. She has carried out remorselessly the old principle, 'The safety of the nation overrides all law,' and by 'the nation' she means herself, holding in contempt all other peoples. For all these things, sooner or later, Germany will suffer

bitterly. But when or how, the wisest of us does not know : we only know that punishment is likely to come by a gradual working like that of leaven in meal, rather than by a sudden catastrophe. We, too, have in some things grievously erred, not in the same way as Germany, at least in recent years, but especially in indolence, want of discipline and of foresight, worship of material success and comfort : we, too, shall find our punishment, and indeed it is already upon us. But our nation may well be redeemed by the self-devotion of hundreds of thousands of men and women who have given themselves freely for their kindred and their country.

And the individual? Those who march to meet the enemy must run the risk of wounds and death. They cannot expect a sudden Providence to turn aside shot and shell. The man who takes the sword, in however good a cause, runs the risk of falling by the sword. Else, where were his heroism? At the same time one can place no limit to the working of Providence amid human actions in the battlefield as well as at sea and everywhere, as we have already seen. But the result of self-devotion must be looked for, not only in the battlefield, but also in a higher place. It must be better, even for the individual, to meet danger in a good cause than to avoid it through cowardice ; and those who see in the past course of their lives the guiding hand of God will scarcely be afraid that, because they do their duty, that hand will abandon them. They also will reap as they have sown ; and if they sow to the Spirit, as St. Paul says, they will of the Spirit reap life everlasting, though the life may take a form to them wholly unexpected.

# II

# THE IDEA OF PROVIDENCE IN HISTORY

BY

ALICE GARDNER

## II

# THE IDEA OF PROVIDENCE IN HISTORY

BELIEF in Providence—in a divine control exercised over human affairs—is generally recognised as the most conspicuous element in popular religion at the present day. If we take the phrase in its widest significance, it seems to have been prominent in most religions, whether natural or positive, through all the ages, exclusive of the inchoate religion of primitive peoples which hardly deals with belief at all. It is generally, though not necessarily, implied in all theism; there is scope for it in the higher polytheism, and for something very like it in optimistic pantheism. Men are found to cling to it after they have abandoned as superstitions most of the religious traditions of their childhood. To many it would seem that the loss of it would imply acquiescence in a non-moral view of the world and a pessimistic conception of life. Yet it is not essentially either moral or optimistic. Many, confident of divine direction, have dared to commit abominable actions; and many have believed in Providence overruling affairs in a direction which no good man would regard as good. Yet, on the whole, it would seem that men and nations are better and more hopeful for believing in Providence. This fact, if fact it be, does not of course in the very least justify their belief. But it does make all more anxious, especially in times of stress like the present, to analyse the conception, to distinguish in

it those elements which are merely adventitious from those based on experience, or which form part of a religious philosophy which can stand all intellectual and moral tests; and to counteract the mischief done by well-meaning popular teachers, who sometimes bring the whole doctrine into contempt and provoke a reaction against it by insisting on interpretations which are completely out of date.

It will be observed that the present Essay has to do with one out of three aspects of the subject. The doctrine of Providence is concerned with the individual in his conduct and fortunes, and with our widest possible conceptions of the universe as a whole. Naturally the three are very closely connected. We have to deal with it here as it touches human history, *i.e.* the history of states and peoples as ascertained from documentary and monumental evidence. Many of the chief makers of history have believed themselves, or have been believed by their followers, to be under the guidance of a very special providence. And men's notion of the universe has often been chiefly determined by their very partial knowledge of that infinitely short line in the great arc of general development which comes within historical limits. But the sphere of individual consciousness is sufficiently distinct to claim a discussion to itself, and if we merge history in the universal we lose it altogether.[1]

Let us then consider briefly the principal forms in which the idea of a historic Providence has chiefly commended itself to the minds of thinking and acting people. I would regard them under three aspects,

[1] General interpretations of history have suffered greatly from the fact that few great metaphysicians are historically minded. Thus of Hegel Dr. James Ward says, in his *Realm of Ends*, "With his own philosophy, he has the sublime assurance to think, the history of philosophy closes; and in the restoration of Prussia under Stein, he thought the culmination of the world history was attained" (p. 191). Hegel's *Philosophy of History* is, of course, in its breadth of conception and consistency of plan, a great work, but wanting in the important desideratum of historic doubt. It does not, however, show contempt for the concrete as such.

which, for the most part, though not entirely, follow one another in chronological sequence: the idea of *α*, Tribal Deities; *β*, a Righteous Power manifested, amid human conflicts, on behalf of righteousness; and *γ*, all Creation as the working out of a general international or cosmopolitan scheme for the final good of humanity at large.

*α*. The idea of tribal deities may, in a sense, be regarded as antagonistic to that of an overruling Providence. But if the tribe-god is immensely more powerful than any tribe chief, he may in a sense be regarded as a providence to the tribesman. We are, of course, familiar in Old Testament history with the rivalry among the gods of the nations. But we see there also the tendency by which one particular tribal or national god came to be regarded as exercising cosmic powers. We see plainly how the process was going on in Israel with regard to Jehovah; and the comparative study of religions has shown us how the like was happening with other deities. The immense superiority of Jehovah to the gods of the peoples around made it possible, in time, for him to be credited with the character of entire supremacy. But while the aggregation of communities and the feeling of human solidarity occasionally elevated a tribal god to a supernational position, in some cases such deities come to be depressed as inferior to a god with universal power. In Homer (who, of course, is far from primitive) the Olympians, though not exactly tribal gods and goddesses, yet have their special local and personal predilections, and even the desires of Zeus must bow to the decrees of Fate. Yet the decrees of Fate may be much delayed in their execution by the desires and active energies of particular deities. The relation conceived as existing between Fate and Divinity all through the period regarded as classical history is a complicated one, and only to be noticed here in order to show that belief in an established order

and the cult of divine beings do not necessarily belong to the same department of human thought.

Another interesting inquiry might be made into the ways in which divine beings, crudely conceived as powerful partisans, have been expected to manifest their partisanship and to exercise their offensive or defensive powers. We are familiar with the stories of such powers displayed in natural catastrophes: storms, earthquakes, floods, sudden epidemics, and other events which have been supposed to lie beyond the region of human calculation. And down to the present day, when the causes of such occurrences are better understood, they are in the popular mind commonly attributed to divine interest in human affairs.[1] There is, however, another kind of occurrence which may have great effect on military operations, and which, being psychical, may appear to us as being more easily attributable to purely spiritual influences: the sudden, inexplicable terror, or panic,—the very name suggests praeternatural origin—which incapacitates a body of men from doing their best. On the other hand we have many examples of the infusion of a new hope into an army by visions of heavenly hosts or national heroes fighting from heaven and prostrating the foe. The inspiration of good counsels in the minds of the favoured party and of the reverse among the unfavoured is also familiar in ancient story.

β. In all of this there is nothing essentially moral or spiritual; yet such elements do appear, in two ways. In the first place the man who devotes himself "for the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods," and trusts to the tutelary god to bear him through, is a noble being, one who, we may say, deserves success. And again there is sometimes a consciousness that one side stands for a higher form of civilisation than the other, as the Greeks felt themselves to stand in their

[1] A man struck by lightning is still said to die by 'the act of God.'

great war against the Persians.[1] Perhaps the belief that one has a better cause than the enemy, quite apart from facts, helps in the formation of the confidence in Providence as a righteous power, overruling the strife and even the crime of man to the vindication of a supreme law of justice and right. Most conspicuously provocative of divine wrath in ancient times was the arrogance which meets its punishment in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, of Xerxes, and (in much later times) of Herod Agrippa (Acts xii. 20-23). But the chastisement of wicked nations and of wicked classes of the people for the ordinary human sins of rapacity, self-indulgence, and delay of justice is a very frequent theme of the Hebrew prophets. This, when it touches on the unlawful deeds of powerful peoples outside the Hebrew community (as in the indictments of Amos), rises above the practical and national to the idea of a divine judgment of the world. Again, we may find a historian applying the doctrine of a righteous judgment defeating iniquitous aims or punishing injustice even in the case of his own countrymen. Thus it has been frequently remarked how Thucydides, with all his absence of superstition and indifference to the supernatural, by in his narrative letting the disaster of Syracuse follow close on the abominable seizure of Melos by the Athenians, and their declaration that Might is Right, brings in a suggestion at least of poetical justice.

The occasional vindication of divine justice is, however, a very different thing from the unfolding of a divine plan. Sometimes it wears the aspect of a superfluous protest, or of a reminder that great and unknown forces lie somewhere dormant and may have one day to be reckoned with. This kind of futile manifestation may be seen in the stories of some Christian martyrdoms. Swords and arrows are mysteriously turned back or other means of

[1] On the other hand, the worship of the Olympians, in spite of its glorious artistic inspirations, cannot be regarded as more elevating than that of Ahuramazda.

chastisement checked, only that the martyrs may testify a little longer and then fall victims to the then dominant power. Of course it may be said that the sufferings of the martyrs are part of a divine plan, which wholesale deliverance would frustrate. This may be true, but our present point is that the action of a supreme righteous power in the world has seemed at times to be sufficiently proved by isolated instances rather than by a clearly marked tendency in events. They do not provide a theodicy for the historian, but they more or less satisfy, at least in normal times, the faith of an ordinary believer.

γ. This brings us to the third and highest conception of Providence in History: the idea of all history as the gradual working out of a great international plan. I use the word *international*, knowing that it is inadequate (as mankind has a history before the grouping into nations begins, and may have one with a grouping of a totally different kind), but preferring it to *universal*, which would go back to the earliest forms of life and perhaps even onward to the extinction of physical life altogether.

Now any idea of a conscious plan to be discerned in the course of historical events must imply at least two things: (1) that history can be viewed as a whole; and (2) that in the whole there is to be seen something of the nature of progress or of gradual change for the better, though this progress need not necessarily be conceived as advancing at a uniform rate, or without retrogressions of a local and temporary kind. The first desideratum implies a wider range of historical knowledge and more intimate intercourse among peoples than has been possible at most periods even of the history of civilised man. We can by no means say that we have yet attained it, in spite of the widening of our bounds, spacial and temporal, through modern discoveries. Yet there have been times more marked by cosmopolitan tendencies than others, and at such times something

like a general theory of history has been possible. Leaving aside the remote ages when there was a good deal of interchange among the great organised powers of the Orient, all historical students know of the give-and-take between East and West and the breaking down of spiritual as of political barriers in the days of Alexander's successors and still more in those of the Roman Empire. The establishment, after a season of strife and anarchy, of Rome as *caput orbis terrarum*, implying the absence of external warfare, and an open door to every citizen into the great moral and material heritage of past ages, might well seem the consummation of the whole course of human history; and, as Virgil and his contemporaries consider, the beginning of an age of gold. And the personality of the national deities (never as *Roman* very distinct) had even earlier become merged in the more general agency of the Immortal Gods, who might be supposed to watch over the nations, and to commend the general supervision of the world to the Eternal City.

Thus the second desideratum for a world-wide Providence might seem to have coalesced with the first: the world was one, and it had been guided in an ascertainable direction towards peace and prosperity. Yet, of course, not all Roman literature was optimistic, nor was Greek thought, even in the best time of Roman dominion and Greek municipal freedom. Those who see a golden age in the past are never without justification for their belief in present degeneracy, and when the signs of break-up came, peace, unity, prosperity, and hopefulness departed, though not the idea that the City should stand till the dissolution of all things. But meantime the whole doctrine of the meanings and destiny of the world, for learned and unlearned alike, had been profoundly changed by the adoption of the Christian religion.

Christianity has always been a religion of hope, but

not always a religion of progress. What happened at the critical time of its adoption (though of course the progress began earlier and continued later) was a shifting of mentality which necessitated a breach with the historic past and consequently with all theories as to the action of divine Providence on the nations of the world through past history. For it implied a removal of the centre of gravity, by which one nation, and that one of slight account, became of greater consequence than the most gifted and successful peoples of antiquity; further, it brought with it a revision of the whole standard of values in human actions as manifested in history. Thus where idolatry was identified with the worship of evil spirits and polytheism with idolatry, there was little scope for veneration of the patriotic virtues so conspicuous in the intellectual and religious life of antiquity. And a further change of momentous result was the adoption from later Judaism and primitive Christianity of the belief in a comparatively speedy destruction and renovation of all human life on earth. Of course this very general statement cannot be taken without modifications. For one thing, all the world did *not* become Christian. And again, men are never quite consistent, and ready to "burn what they have adored and to adore what they have burned," so that never entirely in the West and still less in the East did the 'natural piety' (which every generation has for previous ages) die out. We see it in the deep though melancholy veneration of Dante for Virgil. We see it yet more strongly in the attitude of some mediaeval Greek Christians towards the Greeks of classical times. And belief in the approaching nearness of the end was intermittent in its practical force. Still, it marked a difference in the general outlook on the world, its past, its future, and its providential direction.

The adoption of a supernational religion was, in a sense, favourable to the conception of history as a unity.

Chroniclers began to think it their duty to begin with the story of Creation and the dispersion of the peoples; and, apart from cosmopolitan headships of Papacy and Empire, never really as comprehensive in practice as in theory, there were bonds of union, spiritual and material, in mediaeval Europe, which gave something of a common background to life. But there was, as far as I know, no tendency in mediaeval times to regard the progressive steps in social advance as manifestations of divine will or of a divine plan for the world.

It is otherwise in modern times. It may sound paradoxical but is really quite natural that the idea of a divine plan gradually unfolding itself through the ages should find no scope in a distinctly ecclesiastical and theological society such as that created by mediaeval dogmatism or Reformation controversy, but await the development of a more secular view of life—such as arose with the Renaissance but bore its fruit some centuries later. This view ignored if it could not deny the probability of a coming cataclysm, and it preferred, even for individual souls, to dwell more on this world than on the world to come. Thence those who had faith in God and who realised the order and beauty of the world and the great possibilities of mankind, came to build their hopes more and more on the advent of a time of peace, harmony, and brotherly love among all nations. To Christians of the normal type, this implied a conversion of all heathen nations to Christianity; to coarser minds it meant universal peace and prosperity; to the more spiritual, unity of faith, hope, and love among men, and the joyful recognition by all of the wisdom and goodness of God. The growth of scientific discovery, and above all things the principle of evolution, with the recognition of the antiquity of the Earth, and the gradual growth of various forms of life, harmonised well with a hopeful view of human progress from the lowest barbarism to the highest civilisation. To non-

theists, the progress itself was the great object of admiration, and to assist in it the privilege of each man as a moral being. To those who believed in a Supreme Mind, the progress appeared as the unfolding of one great thought, the accomplishment of a living purpose. God appeared less as a judge and more as an educator of man. The other world remained in the background, but was regarded as a continuation, in its most essential parts, of the life on earth. Here, too, breach of continuity was to be avoided. This cheerful, optimistic view of life and history had a vivifying effect on the thought and activities of fifty years ago, and was nobly expressed in the poetry of our two great Mid-Victorian poets.

Now the three conceptions of Providence we have been considering: as intervening on behalf of a favoured nation or group; as appearing on occasions in which principles of right and justice need special vindication; and as inspiring and directing the manifold forces which make for human progress, though easily distinguished in thought are commonly combined in practice. It may be as well to see how far they agree with actual experience, how much is to be found in them of pernicious error, and whether we may in some measure attain to the truth they endeavour to reach and the strength that they certainly impart, while avoiding, as much as possible, both prejudice in practical judgment and crudity in thought.

In the historical experience of mankind we do find that nations with certain qualities seem bound to succeed, and that these qualities are such as we should ourselves approve and would naturally expect to find approved by God. Power of cohesion and endurance, strong family affection, temperance in food and drink, honesty in mutual relations, a certain measure of forbearance in dealing with dependants, above all readiness

to command or to obey according to circumstances, these are, generally speaking, the characteristics of a people that can hold its own and generally acquire power over its neighbours, and the fact that this is so seems to point to the existence of an Eternal Power that makes for righteousness. Again, we find that courses of action that we condemn as irrational and unjust, such as religious persecution, oppression of the lower classes, faithlessness to solemn treaties, have commonly led, not only to a failure of policy, but to the personal destruction of their promoters. And, to take a wider sweep, there is the undoubted fact that whilst in many regions of the globe savagery has given way before civilisation, nations, and the human race in general, have not only learned by experience, but have grown up to a higher standard in social relations and ethical principles. Our very power of discerning and criticising our own faults proves that we are or might be on the path to amendment.

Yet, as commonly set forth, these moral platitudes belong rather to a crude anthropomorphic theism than to a living faith in an entirely righteous and loving God. A very little self-questioning would make us acknowledge that the virtues which ensure prosperity and permanence, however admirable, are not those which we, following the Christian or any modern standard, hold as only or chiefly to be desired. As to policies and false moves which recoil on the heads of their promoters: if we often see crime punished, does not well-intentioned ignorance frequently meet with equal severity? And if we think of the process by which the nations of mankind have attained to their present happiness and strength, would not the God of History (if anthropomorphically conceived) appear, as some portray the God of Evolution, in the light of a careless spendthrift of good material, and an indifferent spectator of unnecessary suffering? When we think of the

amiable races that have disappeared from the field of History, of the movements towards enlightenment that have been crushed by brute force, of the many "might have beens" of past times which, to all appearance, might well have replaced the inferior products afterwards established in their stead, do we not feel a lingering desire that things might all have somehow been differently arranged? Or if we take up the idea of 'The Education of the Human Race' it seems natural to complain: 'Yes, man learns by experience indeed, but how bitter that experience!' Does not the Supreme Educator appear in the light of a schoolmaster who should demand sixth-form work of children in the kindergarten, and cane them because they cannot do it? Take the history of any nation and observe by what painful convulsions it has, perchance, attained the form of government suited to its genius; also at what terrible cost, in plagues, famines, and other calamities, it has come to recognise the simplest laws of health and the main principles of public finance.

But the anthropomorphic view is, it will be answered, repelled by all enlightened teachers. I am inclined to think, however, that in many places it holds its own, and that to a large number of even fairly educated persons it is presented as the only alternative to a mechanical or irreligious view of the world. It seems to me that, unless softened down, as it commonly is by pious souls, the presentation of the Deity as thus conceived is irreligious in a high degree. It would regard him in the light of a clever chess-player, and ourselves as pieces on the board, whom he would allow to be taken—knights and bishops as well as mere pawns,—or to threaten or remove other pieces, with a sole view to his own plan in the game and his wish for the credit of winning.

If immoral in itself, this crude view of human affairs has done intellectual as well as moral mischief in vitiating the study of history. It may indeed be said that

there is little harm in embellishing prosaic records with stories of superhuman aid in times of need, such as may tend to inspire faith and courage for the future, at any rate in a simple and unscientific people. The drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, or the adjuration of Joshua to the sun to stand still, may, when quite literally interpreted, have done no harm to the Jewish people; and would have heightened their assurance as they sang: "Lord, thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another." But they may also have stimulated that national arrogance with which their prophets so often bitterly reproached them. In less unsophisticated times, we English felt thankful for the 'good Protestant winds' that helped to scatter the Armada. Those, however, who have investigated the evidence are inclined to attribute less importance to the winds and more to our Elizabethan sea-captains. Posterity might regard both sources of deliverance as equally due to Providence; but it would hesitate, in the former case, to assert any connection with Protestantism. Unless, however, the belief in providential escapes or assistance leads to fatalistic inactivity, some feeling of thankfulness, even on uncertain grounds, may be a wholesome corrective to national self-conceit. But where liberties are taken with historical facts in order to prove that Providence has always been on one side or another in every great war or even in every party squabble, the desire to moralise history has had precisely the opposite effect, has obscured ethical bearings, strengthened party spirit, and hindered the reception both of accurate knowledge and of practical warnings that come from a study of cause and effect.

But the worst moral effect of the crude providential theory is seen in the worship of success. The end may crown the work, but neither end nor work always lies within the limits of human observation and experience. Seeming failure often follows what is of the highest

ultimate worth. This is, of course, one of the fundamental bases of the Christian religion, and it is gratifying to find that the Mediaeval Church, however far removed in much of its teaching and practice from that of its Master, was active in putting an end to the barbarous and pagan institution to which it had formerly given sanction, of trial by Ordeal. It may, of course, be argued that in trials of this kind consciousness of innocence might nerve the accused successfully to resist the pain, as in the kindred trial by battle a clear conscience might give courage and even increase physical strength and dexterity. But such advantages would not, in the long run, prevail any more than the steadiness of the tortoise over the swiftness of the hare, and we may be sure that they did not enter into the original idea of either method of discovering truth and right.

But if the theory has ceased to do mischief in juristic institutions, it is still to be traced in the field of historical criticism. We are familiar with what is erroneously called the 'brute force' school of historians, which comprises men otherwise so widely differing as Carlyle, Froude, and Mommsen, to say nothing of those who at this moment stand for the historical views of present-day Prussia. In all of these we find a contempt for every statesman, or group of statesmen, thinker, or school of thought, which through some weakness or inadaptability to surrounding conditions, did not contain the elements of success, and failed to achieve lasting constructive work. But many who have little sympathy with this attitude of mind feel bound, just because they do acknowledge an overruling Providence, to extenuate much which was bad in past history and to ignore the merits of much that was excellent. We find it assumed that some promising ecclesiastical movements of early times cannot have had much good in them, or they would never have been crushed out; that some political experiments

were not worth trying, because they obtained no fair trial; that certain measures for curbing either intellectual or industrial effort were good because *necessary*, though their necessity is only based upon the belief that they have generally been considered so. It would be more honest to allow that all along there has been a human and faulty element in history all over the world, which has hindered forces working for reason and happiness; and that the better forces have not always, perhaps we might say not generally, been the dominant ones.

But to come to more definite conceptions of a 'plan' or leading idea in human progress: as is well known, philosophers of history have, according to their special standpoint, fixed on one or another process to take as a guiding thread to which all other lines of improvement might be attached. Thus some have taken the growth of human knowledge, especially as bringing more and more power over the forces of nature; others (like Hegel and more lately Lord Acton) the growth of human liberty; others, the spirit of mutual understanding and co-operation among men everywhere. With regard to all of these, temporary set-backs have been obvious, but they seemed likely to diminish in force and duration with time, experience, and facilities in communication. Thus the world might seem to be progressing with ever-accumulating velocity. This might be taken as the general *Weltanschauung* of the plain man as well as of the optimist philosopher.

A good many students of history have felt that the great set-backs were too serious to be thus summarily dismissed. Also they have felt that the optimists were too patient with the mass of sin and misery inherent in modern civilisation, some ingredients of which may seem to be rising rather than declining as that civilisation advances. But to very many more a rude awakening from an easy-going contentment has come with the outbreak of the present war.

For what do we see with regard to the three great lines of human progress mentioned above? The skill of man in using natural resources to his own ends is showing itself in the exercise of powers of destruction greater than any ever wielded before. Instead of human liberty we see the extraordinary force, over minds and hearts as well as bodies, of the Prussian autocracy, and in our comparatively free country the eruption of class dissensions which make us cry out for stricter organisation. And as to humanity: the word has almost an ironical sound. Not only are the members of a civilised power, with whom, not long ago, we were on terms of friendly comradeship, singing hymns of hate and accusing us of wicked designs and contemptible character, but the war itself (not, thank Heaven, on our side, but on that of our chief opponents) has assumed features of inhumanity unsurpassed in some of the most ruthless wars of mediaeval times. It is pathetic to read the quite reasonable expectations of thoughtful men of the last generation, that *if* any future wars should ever break out, they would be waged with diminished severity, and with more consideration for non-combatants, the sick, and the wounded. The ugly cry for retaliation has been raised (more, I believe, by those who are sitting comfortably out of danger than by combatants at the front); but it may be found impossible to stifle it altogether.

The spectacle has had a distressing effect both on agnostic optimists and on believers in an overruling Providence. The former have in some cases made matters worse by trying to lay the blame of the great international struggle on a few interested or bungling diplomatists, almost reviving the declaration of the French Revolutionists, which proclaimed the unity of all peoples and the doom of all existing governments. There is a touch of irony in a group of particularly intellectual persons desiring to hand over so delicate

a branch of government as the direction of foreign affairs to the mass of the people, who, be their good-will what it may, are not, in England at any rate, well instructed in the varied interests, industries, and parties of European countries. These inconsistencies, however, are by no means the most serious element in the present mental distress. There have been many, as we have already seen, who had come to identify human progress with the victory of the Christian Church, and their premature exultation has met with a tangible rebuff. The cheerful society that adopted as its motto 'The evangelisation of the world within this generation' may find it hard to acknowledge either that the end it desired is not so near as they had thought; or that the evangelisation they were aiming at was, at best, a poor and superficial thing, the postponement of which is not, after all, very greatly to be deplored. Yet any who, in despair, have been driven to complain that the Church of Christ has proved a failure, and the divine ordering of the world a baseless myth, may be convicted not only of faint-heartedness, but of ignorance and confusion of mind.

For, if the whole object of the Church, from its foundation to the present day, had been to influence the world in the direction of a higher morality, there are many moments in Church history when the cry of failure might have been raised at least as appropriately as at present, and it might have been most fittingly uttered at the times of the Church's greatest grandeur, with their dangerous tendencies to secularisation. But I am not sure whether, when we say that the Church ought to have done this or that, or that it has failed in its object if it has not accomplished some particular end, we may not be taking too mechanical a view of the Church altogether. For the Church (unlike the *churches*) should be regarded rather as an organism than as an organisation. If it is what it is by virtue of a

divine indwelling life, it may at times be weak, but is not worn out so long as that life is still manifested in its members. True, if those members had been entirely faithful to their vocation, the world itself might have been a very different place from what it is. But in the very worst times, the Church of Christ has maintained somewhat of the spirit of the Master, and so it does to this day.

Then with regard to the divine ordering of the world, are we not, as lately suggested, too much attached to the idea of the superhuman chess-player? though the analogy breaks down in one point: unless we are dualists—the figure on the other side of the chess-table is gone. If it were not so—if we believed that all history represented a game between God and the Devil, how gladly should we, as pawns or worthier pieces, be content either to take others or to be taken off the board ourselves, according as our sufferings or efforts helped to bring victory to the right side! But if we can no longer conceive of an active Power of Evil consciously hindering and counteracting the Power working for good, and the whole idea of plan and of sacrificing lesser ends to greater ones seems futile, is not the fault in us for presuming that we possessed a definite truth when we had only suggestions and adumbrations? The terms *Governor*, *Ruler*, *Dispenser*, even *Providence* (for 'with Him is no before') are what some mediaeval theologians would call *Names* of God, used by us not because they are really appropriate or descriptive, but because they stand for some particular aspect in which the Divine appears to human faculties. God may be called the Orderer of all things because we regard Him as the source of all order. Or in other ways these words bring home to us our entire dependence on God and our obligation to receive and use our faculties and our reverses and successes in life as gifts, limitations and opportunities to be received

and used in His service as if under the authority of a wise and legitimate sovereign.

But in condemning as anthropomorphic much of what has been taught as the doctrine of Providence and suggesting a reinterpretation of that doctrine, we may be accused of taking refuge from stern facts in vague mysticism. Especially we may be asked: what is actually to be said to those who find the dark pages of history a contradiction of the divine goodness? Is no scope to be allowed to the simple piety which feels grateful for national successes and humbled by adversities? And what is to be said of the moral teaching of history, if, indeed, such a notion is still admissible? Each of these questions may be briefly considered in order: (1) As to the relation of God to human wickedness: I should feel inclined simply to reply: There is none. I am here following a pagan rather than a Christian leading, but, as I hope to show directly, the Christian teaching rather transcends and supplements than contradicts that of philosophy. In the well-known Hymn to Zeus of the Stoic Cleanthes we have set forth the creating and regulating power of God in all things except that which is evil:

> Nought cometh forth, Spirit,[1] apart from thee,
> On earth or sea, or in the starry sphere,
> Save works of wicked men in folly wrought.
> But thou canst harmonise conflicting strains,
> The foul thou makest fair, e'en hateful things
> Thou hatest not; together thou hast bound
> Evil and good, that one eternal law
> Might rise and rule o'er all. . . .

He goes on to pray that those who in folly seek the satisfaction of their own desires apart from the divine law may be delivered from their blindness and come to recognise and to rejoice in the eternal reign of wisdom and justice.

[1] δαίμον.

Cleanthes does not go so far as to deny the reality of evil altogether, but he excludes it from the sphere of the divine rule, and trusts that in time it will cease to be. In the New Testament, especially in the Gospels, we may find suggestions that evil is within limits permitted to have its way, but to the early disciples the times of restitution seemed nigh at hand and the theoretical difficulty was not pressing. However, as Christian thought became articulate, it became more and more certain that *all* moral or spiritual evil was contrary to God, and that every form of pain was, compared to it, no evil at all; and that the annihilation of evil was reached by obedient suffering. Furthermore, the doctrine of that suffering as shared by God with His creatures, though in some forms subsequently condemned as heretical, seems to be essentially of the very nature of Christianity. We have it in St. Paul's words that "the whole creation . . . groaneth and travaileth in pain with us (R.V. marg.) until now" (Rom. viii. 23) (with what follows); and that he rejoices to "fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ . . . for his body's sake, which is the church" (Col. i. 24). To develop the relation between sin and suffering would be an enormous task. We may leave it with these hints, and with the suggestion to those who ask "Why does God permit these terrible crimes?": "How do you know that He permits them, and that He does not suffer by reason of them far more than you do?" It is not that God is *there* but inactive and indifferent. The sin is sin just because He is *not in it.* But perhaps He is in the suffering in so far as it forms part of the redemption of mankind; as He assuredly is in the deeds of heroic self-devotion which form the one relief to the dreary outlook.

(2) I come to our second question: How, from this point of view, can we dare to express gratitude to God for national success and pray to Him for guidance and strength? As to the second part of

this question, one knows that some people do not think it right to pray for victory. To me it seems distinctly wrong to embark on a war in which we cannot, with a clear conscience, pray for victory. Prayer is a means of increasing strength, whether for an individual or a nation; and if this is so, we are bound in junctures like the present to increase our strength by all lawful means in our power. And it is right to thank God for every step towards victory or mitigation of defeat, simply because it is easier for us to recognise the divine support in such cases than in adversities. The religious soul feels a gush of gratitude on a sunny morning or on a fair autumn evening. It may have no such feelings for a seasonable day of slush and darkness. It would be folly not to thank God when and where we *can* because we are not able—as we ought to be—to give perpetual thanks for blessings in disguise.

(3) Finally as to the religious education to be derived from history: I entirely believe that it is good for the student, whether child or adult, to be led at times to regard with awe the great march of time, in which important results often arise from what seem petty causes, and in which the rise and fall of human and national greatness give a wholesome check to our natural belief in the stability of things as we know them. Also the material, intellectual, and moral advance of peoples through the ages may often breed courage or at least check despondency. But I think we practically find less inspiration from the tracing out of what may seem a great purpose in history than from a sympathetic study of the worthy men and women who, in scarcely failing sequence, have done their life's work in obedience to the call of duty. We must all of us have felt our hearts vibrate in hearing read the 44th chapter of Ecclesiasticus ("Let us praise famous men") and the 11th chapter of Hebrews, concerning those "of whom the world was

not worthy" and "who all died in faith," especially if we take in the further reflection that "they without us might not be made perfect." A similar list of great names and great achievements belonging to less remote ages and peoples might be invigorating both to our patriotism and our religion. But perhaps there is no person alive whom we could safely trust to make it.

In discussing the historical idea of Providence I have for the most part left aside the consideration of Fatalism. The two did not seem to be identical except in supposing a certain unity in human affairs and also the helplessness of man in isolation to direct his own path in life. But Providence brings in generally, as I have tried to show, an anthropomorphic, or at least a rationalised, conception of the Ruler of the Universe, if Fate is commonly conceived as blind. Yet sometimes, in practical ways, both act in the same direction. Both, when forcibly realised, may avail to crush human effort. Yet a man who believes either that he was born under a lucky star or that he is a chosen instrument of Providence may become strong to a point of irresistibility. In neither case is there necessarily any element of morals or of higher religion.

The result of our survey seems to be that the doctrine of an overruling Providence has not been discerned in history, but brought in to interpret it, as well as to assist the present actors in the historical drama. And the working of the idea at most times has been encumbered by gross and non-moral associations. Nevertheless it always has been, and must be for many, the form in which it is most easy to realise the thought of God. Only we must warn those who make it the major part if not the whole of religion, that this, like all other conceptions of God, can give us but "broken lights" of Him. The thought of God is needed to ennoble human history and individual human life. However it may have originated, we may say that now

it is by introspection, assisted in each one of us by the work of others who have practised introspection themselves, that we arrive at consciousness of a Supreme Goodness delivering us from the dangers and diseases of ignorance and sin. But human history needs interpretation, and national duty needs sanctions and inspiration such as can only come from faith in God and loyal admiration for the labours and devotion of those who, in past times, have been, consciously or unconsciously, His servants in the fight. For whatever else life is, it must, both in the macrocosm and in the microcosm, be a field of conflicting forces, and faith in Providence, or, better, in the Living God, is the one assurance of victory.

# III

# PROVIDENCE—THE UNIVERSAL ASPECT

BY

FREDERICK JOHN FOAKES-JACKSON

"The mills of God grind slowly."

## III

## PROVIDENCE—THE UNIVERSAL ASPECT

In times of trouble we are put to a test which is liable to make us reveal the essential paganism of our nature. It comes out in our view of the Universe and in our belief in God: for then we demand that the world should be different from the one which human experience has disclosed, and that God should be other than He has been revealed to those who have known Him. Accustomed to regard things as having long gone on in their normal course, we cannot understand when it is rudely interrupted even by natural and accountable events. Hence there rises to our lips the cry 'If God is just why are such things as we witness permitted? If the world is ruled by a power which makes for righteousness how can such wickedness be allowed to prevail? With our own eyes we have witnessed things which could never have happened if there were such a thing as a Providence in the government of the world in which we live.'

Being as we are it could scarcely be otherwise. It is not hard to accept the doctrine that all things are for the best when all is well with ourselves. Even when trouble comes and we are able to strive against our misfortunes, even though we feel ourselves succumbing to them, we are not for that reason altogether miserable. The sense of combat brings with it a certain exhilaration. Suffering itself is almost better than monotony in life. We have hope in the final issue,

and as long as that lasts we can believe that, however dark the present, things may be ultimately working for good. But there are times when all these supports fail. We realise our powerlessness to withstand the onrush of evil. Nothing we may say or do can avert it: the whole foundations of the earth are out of course. Then it is that we fail completely to understand that our experience is not wholly exceptional but common to man. Our theories of life, of justice, in a word, of all that we mean by God, crumble away and we are possessed by a hopelessness which causes us to deny all that is assumed by a fair-weather philosophy.

It is hardly too much to say that for one case of doubt produced by reason there are countless instances of the scepticism of despair. True it is that trouble is often the means of turning men from a godlessness which seemed part of their being, and making them look in their anguish heavenwards; that sorrow brings out their best qualities, unexpected stores of unselfishness and devotion; that human nature is purified from its dross in the furnace of affliction. But the opposite is true, and it is with this that the present essay will attempt to deal, namely, with the practical paganism which is constantly revealed in times of great sorrow and disillusionment.

The god of the pagan may be defined as a deity created by the man himself—an image called into being by his own hands or even by his own imagination. The pagan first postulates the attributes of his god, and then judges of him by his ability to act in accordance with them. If uneducated he beats his idol when his prayers are unanswered, whereas the more disciplined individual cries in his moments of disappointment there is no God. In either case the elemental impulse rises to the surface and asserts itself. But as a rule an idol is not easily destroyed. A man does not lightly dash in pieces a carefully wrought image which has long been con-

sidered to be helpful and efficacious, and may prove to be so again. Still less does he abandon lightly that which he has, almost unconsciously, created in his own mind and made an integral part of himself. It is only under some tremendous stress that he is impelled to put his god to the supreme test whether he is the true God or a thing without being or substance, a mere *eidolon* or shadow of the reality.

I suppose there is hardly a minister of religion who cannot remember many cases of people consulting him as to how it is possible for them to retain their faith in face of some terrible sorrow or bereavement which has befallen them. Never does a great tragedy and loss of life appeal to the public without the same question being asked in the columns of the newspapers. And in the time of a great and devastating war, with its fearful toll of human lives and its wasteful destruction of many things which men value, the question arises in all men with full intensity, and the god each one of us worships stands on his trial whether he is after all but an idol or the Truth.

Times such as ours demand that the case should be stated in the simplest of language and without technicality. Whatever may have been the theories of our philosophers, the ordinary view of God taken by the plain man is as a rule almost childishly optimistic. In England our peculiar position has greatly contributed to this. For centuries our country has never experienced a great tragedy. Stirring events have occurred in our history, deeds of unexampled heroism have marked its course; but Englishmen have been privileged to shed their blood abroad, and not at home. As a result we have witnessed a steady peaceful progress, perhaps unexampled in the history of the world, which has engendered a belief that such a condition is the best for humanity and, moreover, is the will of God.

It is truly wonderful how widespread in England

was the belief that the world had outgrown the danger of the catastrophe of a universal war. Despite the fact that Germany, the most practical nation in Europe, had been making every preparation and her people had taken upon themselves an immense burthen of taxation in order to be ready for a bid for world domination, many persisted in maintaining that war could never come. It seemed incredible that a world in which the humanising influences of popular education were making such progress, wherein men were so closely bound together by facilities of travel and the bonds of commerce and finance, could ever allow itself to be dissolved in the horrors of universal strife. People here acted as though peace was assured for all time, in the belief that the material progress of the world would inevitably tend to make a great catastrophe impossible. And now that the catastrophe has come and men's hearts are failing them for fear, is it to be wondered that there is a cry that God has proved a delusion, that there can be no divine government in a world like ours, and that a calamity which threatens to engulf the civilisation of centuries is a proof of the falsity of all that they have been taught and believed? Such is the case, stated it may be somewhat crudely, as it may be supposed to present itself to the average man. To adopt an even greater brutality of language, we may say that the god in whom he trusted has disappointed him. He expected him to be on the side of regular steady progress fostered by improved education, increasing knowledge, the spread of democratic institutions, the fostering of the amenities of life, better surroundings for the working classes, a general understanding between nations by mutual intercourse. And suddenly, with only a few hours of warning, he found that all progress was arrested, the passions of a primitive age had broken out, with the greater fury because long restrained, and human society seemed to be plunging back to the chaos

from which it appeared long ago to have emerged. Men trusted in a god of progress, and amid the welter of a world-wide war they declared that such could not exist. For a god of mild benevolence an earth so filled with violence could have no place.

When people are in this frame of mind it is well that they should be reminded that the experience of mankind is against the presupposition that progress is steady and uniform. The facts of history, as has been already shown, are against such an idea, and it is not necessary here to recapitulate them. The problem before us is rather to deal with those views of God which make the question of the recognition of His sovereignty in troublous times so acute.

This is the main theme of the Old Testament, and may be perhaps described as the sum and substance of its theology. The Hebrew nation recognised, amid all its chequered and disastrous history, at any rate from the days of the earliest literary prophets, that its God was 'the Lord of the whole earth.' At the same time it must be borne in mind that His relations were, as a rule, not with the human race, but with His chosen people. But even in this narrower sphere the difficulties are met and in a measure overcome as we pass from the simple idea that a just God punishes those who do evil and rewards the good to the more complex question of unmerited suffering. As, however, the Old Testament is the work of the saints of Israel the attempt to vindicate God's justice is apparent throughout, though in certain passages, which are of no less value on this account, notably in Job, in the Psalms and in Ecclesiastes, we hear the genuine accents of human despair acknowledging that the attempt to understand the way of God to man is 'too hard.'

In dealing with the problem several stages are observable. First we have the theory, common also in

Greece, of transmitted guilt, put before Our Lord in the question, 'Did this man sin or his parents that he was born blind?' (John ix. 2). Ezekiel modifies this by his teaching that repentance will avert divine displeasure; and shows that the moral sense of the sixth century B.C. was not completely satisfied at seeing the innocent son suffering for the guilty father. The whole argument of Job's friends is that he cannot possibly be as innocent as he declares, but must be suffering a just punishment. Here and in the Psalms the ultimate fate of the ungodly is the vindication of God's righteousness. The troubles which later befell the faithful remnant of the nation for their devotion to the God of Israel made the assurance that the reward came after death general. But throughout Israel's history the nation was honourably distinguished for adhering to the belief in the inherent justice of Jehovah's rule.

The Old Testament writers, however, are seldom philosophers. They tell us what God has done, what He demands, in whom He takes pleasure, but they do not theorise about Him. His existence is for them a supreme reality rather than a subject for discussion or even speculation. He is the God of Israel, and the nation's sufferings are His discipline. Somehow in the end good must come out of evil. When we recollect how much attention is paid by Philo and the Christian philosophers to the first chapters of Genesis, and how these are almost ignored in the earliest Hebrew literature, we shall realise how little the Israelite thought troubled about questions of cosmology or the relation of God to the Universe. The teaching of Jesus Christ so far resembles that of the Old Testament that to Him God is the God of Israel extending His fatherly love to the whole world. But His relation to His creatures is in the main personal. Jesus does not theorise about God as the Creator, nor dogmatise concerning Him as transcending the Universe or as

immanent in it: He only asks His followers to put their trust in their Heavenly Father and to leave the future in His hands, believing that He protects them, cares for them and loves them. God, as Christ spoke of Him, satisfies the religious needs of man.

Platonism, Judaism, and the many Oriental systems which had penetrated the Roman world, all contributed to form the idea of God in Christian theology. Philo virtually took over Plato's conception of the artificer and founder of all things (Timaeus, p. 29) as hard to discover and impossible to be spoken of before every one; and made the God of Israel a mysterious and unknowable Being, who could only be approached mediately through the Logos. The Gnostic Basilides declared Him to differ from everything which existed by proclaiming His essence to consist in the fact that whereas all things have their being, God is distinguished by Not Being. Clement of Alexandria tells us that only when we have taken away every attribute of which we can form a conception do we begin to reach the idea of God. In their intense spirituality these thinkers were tending to abolish the God of the Old Testament, the God of piety and the God of Jesus Christ, and to make Him the Great Unknown. But this could never satisfy the human desire for the knowledge of God, and men were taught to connect Him with certain attributes such as eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, etc. Cardinal Newman's definitions may be taken to represent the views of Christian theology. "Since God is First Cause, this science of sciences says, he differs from all his creatures in possessing existence *a se*. From this a-se-ity on God's part theology deduces by mere logic most of his other perfections. For instance, he must be both *necessary* and *absolute*, and cannot be, and cannot in any way be determined by anything else. . . . The absence of potentiality in God obliges him to be *immutable*. . . . Furthermore he is *immense*, boundless; for could he

be outlined in space, he would be composite, and this would contradict his indivisibility. He is therefore *omnipresent*. . . . He is similarly present at every point of time—in other words *eternal*. . . . He is *omniscient*, for in knowing Himself as cause he knows all creature things and events by implication, etc., etc."

Despite the fact of the eloquence and beauty of the passage in its entirety—and it is, as Newman says, 'theology touched by emotion'—do these 'attributes' convey anything definite to minds unpractised by a deep study of philosophy? The average man has a hazy idea that his religion depends upon judging whether the attributes he has been taught to ascribe to God are such as are revealed in the government of the world. On the whole, he is ready enough to avoid the difficulties which to a philosophic mind seem so formidable and to take things on trust, often displaying a marvellous constancy of belief under the severest trials. It is only when the stress becomes overpowering that many give way, and even then they do not as a rule formulate their reasons. If they did they would cast them into such simple forms as these: 'If God is almighty, why does He permit such intolerable tyranny and cruelty as I see on every side?' 'If He is all-wise, why does He not foresee and avert the evils which are afflicting the world?' 'If He is all-loving, how can He see mankind, of which he has revealed Himself to be the Father, enduring such countless and, perhaps, unmerited sufferings?' The rest of this essay must be devoted to a consideration of how these questions, not propounded by the trained thinker but wrung from the anguish of the heart, may meet with a helpful if not completely satisfactory solution. It is with no small diffidence that I suggest that for the present the fundamental problems of the origin and nature of evil and of the introduction of sin into the world should be set on one side, and that we should approach the matter from the standpoint of experience rather than from

theories regarding the unknown.[1] Not only do we know nothing of when man first developed moral consciousness, without which sin in the strict sense of the word is impossible, but we are completely ignorant even of the beginnings of what we call civilised life. We find remains of it taking us back in Egypt and Babylonia perhaps to 6000 B.C., but how and why these peoples emerged from primitive or even semi-primitive conditions to a state in which art, writing, commerce, etc., became possible is merely a matter of conjecture.

According to geologists the appearance of man on this planet is comparatively modern ; but even if we reckon by hundreds of thousands of centuries, how infinitesimal a space does human history occupy ! Egyptologists tell us of Menes, the traditional first king of Egypt, and of even earlier dynasties, but no name in history approaches an antiquity of ten thousand years ; nor can history, in any true sense of the word, cover more than five. Small indeed, then, are our data when we deal with the nature of the progress of humanity and the providential government of this world.

But certain things are so evident as to be almost truisms, the first being that the course of human history reveals a contest in which good and evil are striving for the mastery, with varying fortune, but upon the whole in favour of the good. This cannot be defined as dualism, because that would imply that there were but two powers, one entirely good and the other the reverse. But good and evil are so intermingled in individuals and in societies that it is impossible to say, this is wholly good, and that wholly bad. All we can say is that the main tendency of one is in the direction of good, and

[1] I feel that I am here in danger of seeming to fall into the error of separating religion from theology and philosophy to their mutual disparagement. So far from this my conviction is that the very simplest statements about God are profoundly philosophical and demand the interpretation of the theologian. But it is necessary to remind some people that, however much religion needs the controlling influence of philosophy and theology, neither can possibly produce it of themselves.

that the other makes on the whole for evil. Hence in the world there is a pluralism of sentient beings, a seen and an unseen world, and it is our duty to take the side of what makes for righteousness. But in this contest we may believe that there is a Power of absolute goodness which will in the end prevail, and that its triumph will be the ultimate vindication of God. We are unable to form even an imperfectly correct idea of how this contest has gone on in the past. As to what is happening at the present moment we are as ignorant as an illiterate soldier at the front, with a single point to hold, must be of the course of this world-wide war. But we cannot play our part manfully unless we are confident that the ultimate issue will be for the best. We are in the main in the dark. Of the past we know only some broad outlines, of the present we see little beyond the task we have to do, and of what will be we can know nothing. But we do know that pessimism in regard to the future issue is as inexcusable in a Christian as it is in a soldier on service.

It may be well here to admit that, if we acknowledge the unity of God, it is not possible by explaining the evil in the world on any pluralistic hypothesis to acquit Him of all responsibility for it. The Church naturally never made any attempt of the kind, but its recognition of a multiplicity of forces which contribute to produce the state of the world as we know it by experience helped to save men from the profanity of judging God by the light of what seems to us to be the injustice of the present government of the world.

With this proviso one may begin by quoting three scriptural sayings about God which appear to be the pillars on which all religious theories concerning Him must rest: (*a*) No man hath seen God at any time; (*b*) There is none good but one, that is God; (*c*) God is Love.

(*a*) The fact that no man hath seen God is empha-

sised both in the Old and New Testament. Even Moses was not permitted to see His face. The meaning is clearly that the Divine nature cannot be known to man. However anthropomorphic are the presentations of Jehovah in the ancient scriptures, though human passions are ascribed to Him, yet there was a realisation that He was outside the ken of human experience. The teaching of both Testaments is that on the one hand God is accessible to those who seek Him, that his relationship with man is not remote but fatherly; but at the same time that there is a mystery about Him that man cannot unravel. In other words, it is an act of faith to believe in God. Faith is, however, not a mere acquiescence in a creed or dogma, or the acceptation of the fact that God is because it is the teaching of religion. It is a principle both active and individual. A man may not really believe in God, even though he is able honestly to persuade himself that He exists. He must 'come to God' in order to have faith in him. And further faith must be based on a personal experience. If it is to be of value it must have somewhat of the heroic element which refuses to abandon God, though the most plausible arguments may seem to justify such a course. Even in the calmest day the world has ever known God cannot be seen; but when the world is darkened by calamity, then faith triumphs and inspires hope and courage. The instinct which leads men to trust in God is then a surer guide than any process of the discursive intellect.[1]

(*b*) Not that reason can ever be divorced from faith, for our belief in God necessitates the acceptance of the doctrine that He is good, nay, more, that He is perfect

[1] I am anxious to avoid the impression that faith is opposed to reason. Instinct, as I conceive it, is not unreasoning impulse but highly specialised knowledge, which has become so ingrained in us as to be subconscious. It is no disparagement, for instance, to say that a man's discernment is 'instinctive,' rather than due to a laborious intellectual process.

goodness. 'None is good but One.' No created thing, even the highest angel, is perfectly good; and for this reason we are forbidden to worship any but Him. All other powers—that is moral agents, whether spiritual and invisible or human—are good only in a relative sense; perfection, which is God's unique attribute, is denied to them. It is permissible to doubt whether all powers, like all men, are not partakers of some good; for it is arguable that nothing absolutely evil can exist. Goodness is in fact almost synonymous with life, since it is hard to conceive how anything which continues to be alive can do so without something good to preserve it. Therefore, even though we were to admit that a belief in God were above reason, we could not say that a belief in goodness was not in accordance with reason. Latimer in a famous sermon contrasts the bishops of his day unfavourably with Satan, because whilst they are sluggish and negligent, he is untiringly active. Now though this activity is in a wrong direction, the quality in itself deserves admiration, and therefore here we have what is good, though in this case perverted to evil.

A belief in God as the one perfect goodness is therefore an acknowledgment of God's power; for goodness is so powerful that even an evil being cannot exist without something which, however perverted, is of its essence. If we confess that good is inherently stronger than evil we acknowledge the power of God and the prospect of an ultimate triumph in the great contest of what He *is*.

(*c*) But pure goodness may seem to many a merely negative quality—an abstinence from evil; and a good God might be conceived as one who does nothing. Goodness to be really understood by us must have an active principle, and this we find in love. When we acknowledge that God is Love we mean that He is no passive spectator of the world contest, but that he

desires the victory of the good. He is a helper, not a mere umpire to decide the issue.

Admitting that we know and feel that thus much is true of the nature of God, we may now examine the story of mankind, not inquiring too closely into what we cannot know, but guided by the light of experience.

Man after having existed for ages on this planet suddenly appears as a *ζῷον πολιτικόν*, to use Aristotle's untranslatable phrase, in the valleys of the great rivers of the nearer East. Already he seems to have attained a high standard of what we call civilisation. His communities are organised; he has a regular religious system and presumably a priesthood; he buys, he sells, he marries and is given in marriage. At a comparatively early date we meet with Hammurabi's code of laws presupposing a system of legislation to have been in existence for ages. We can trace man's progress in the arts of life as the stone age is replaced by the bronze and the bronze by the iron. A moral improvement is also traceable as brutal laws and customs are succeeded by milder and more refined ones. Thus human sacrifice is gradually replaced in advancing nations by offerings of animals, and legal procedure supplants the law of blood revenge. Religion becomes less associated with magic and more with conduct. Such progress is not uniform, it ebbs as well as flows, but even when an empire or nation perishes it often leaves behind something which enables other peoples to advance. In such progress we recognise that good is making way in the world, but never uninterruptedly nor uniformly. Before going further it is necessary to point out that progress is twofold, material and moral, and that there is a sharp distinction between these. We have been taught to attach great importance to the advance men have made in arts and science and in the multiplication of the conveniences of life. We have shewn a tendency to consider that the improvement of

the conditions under which men live is so bound up with moral questions that they cannot be separated from it. We are even inclined to maintain that we have only to perfect inventions, and to develop legislation by removing the grosser inequalities of life in order to bring about a social state full of virtuous people. The absurdity of such ideas has been revealed in the melancholy history of the decay of empires and the last days of ancient civilisations. 'Effete' and 'degenerate' are the epithets we apply to peoples who have reached, as it were, the highest point of refinement of which they are capable, and having made their final effort are awaiting the storm which will bear them away. And material progress does not even develop the highest qualities of the human mind. On the contrary, when a short while ago it seemed to have reached an unexampled height, we were lamenting the lack of great men in the world. We need not therefore be tempted to deny God because He has repeatedly allowed material progress to be interrupted, often, as events have shown, for the ultimate benefit of humanity.

But it is very different when we speak of moral progress. Herein lies the great problem in the contest between good and evil. If good is the stronger we have a right to expect that in every succeeding generation mankind should make an advance by becoming better, purer, kinder, and should this prove not to be the case there is excuse, if not for complaint, at least for profound consideration of a great difficulty.

Material progress, as has been shown, by no means necessarily brings about a moral advance, but the converse cannot be maintained. There is no doubt that the conditions of life would be happier than they are if men were better; for then civilisation would have a deeper meaning. A family, for example, may be infinitely happier in a poorly furnished house with no conveniences than a divided household in a palace

replete with every modern luxury, and the same is true of nations and of the human family at large. The great test of progress is not mechanical or scientific discovery, or even social conditions improved by legislation, but happiness resting on virtue. It is undeniable that, so far as we can see, humanity has failed in this respect. The war is after all the outbreak of a fire which has long been smouldering. Its horrors have in a terribly dramatic form brought home to the world the fact that the gravest imaginable moral evils exist. The ruthlessness which is its marked feature, together with the employment of every devilish cruelty science has placed within man's reach, only reveal how deep-rooted is our callous disregard for others in the pursuit of wealth whether by nations or individuals.

If there is one lesson which the study of history teaches us more distinctly than any other it is that, slow as is the advance in science, progress in morality is even slower. For the quest of goodness is longer and harder than the mastery of nature. Well may Job say, when he describes all that man has effected towards the subjugation of the world to his needs, "But where can wisdom be found?"

The most instructive episode in the world's history is the story of the work of Jesus Christ. He came and He revealed to man a perfect character. His followers saw in His life the fulfilment of the will of God. They acknowledged that what He was, that God would wish them to become. One of the chief objects of the Church was to assist man to copy the example of the Master. It was hoped that He would soon return to the earth to redeem His people and to make the world all that He desired it to be. But how sad a story is the history of that Church! Nineteen centuries have made it abundantly clear that the lessons which Christ taught were not to be learned easily or understood without long and patient toil. We can now see clearly that the process of educating

man is a vast one, that he has to acquire every step by experience, and when he makes a mistake he has to correct it by many a painful effort. Many forces are at work around him, within him are good and evil each striving for the mastery; but as the contest sways to and fro the brave and true realise that One is above all, as well as through and in all, who is on the side of good. But, as has been shown, the experience of mankind is so short, even if it embraces the whole history of mankind, that it has no means of teaching us how we shall develop towards perfection or even whether human society will ever attain it upon earth. And if historical experience is brief, how infinitesimal is human life! We are placed here but for a few days, we are set down amid the throes of a great battle, and it is the business of most of us to strive for the right rather than to devote the time which should be spent in action in speculation as to its final result.

Times like ours demand not ingenious surmises but a working faith. We find ourselves in a world in which the very foundations of human society, as we have known it, are apparently being dissolved. Before us lies a future which few can look forward to without dismay, around us are the worst of possibilities; for so far as one is able to judge the triumph of the wonderful organisation, discipline and preparation, which have made Germany so powerful would be the greatest calamity the human race has as yet experienced. Considering the actions of our enemy up to this time, it would be the victory of gross materialism and selfishness. As long as such a triumph of wickedness is even possible, our faith must stand prepared for trials calculated to cause to stumble even the elect. As our statesmen and our soldiers need above all things brave hearts and calm heads, so do our religious teachers. The world needs to be reminded by them that even out of the worst periods of human history men have endured

that future generations might gain; that suffering, and suffering alone, brings out what is best and destroys what is evil in man, and that it is perhaps for this reason that the noblest natures suffer most, and it is no mere accident that the best man the world has known is called the Man of Sorrows. Further, we need to be told the madness of judging by the light of our infinitesimal experience the world-process around us. A man's duty in days of trial is to play his part manfully, to believe in the triumph of what is good, and to hope that at the last he may have done his share faithfully and to the best of his power.

> Was it for mere fool's-play, make-believe and mumming,
> So we battled it like men, not boy-like sulked or whined?
> Each of us heard clang God's Come! and each was coming:
> Soldiers all, to forward-face, not sneaks to lag behind!
>
> How of the field's fortune? That concerned our Leader!
> Led, we struck our stroke, nor cared for doings left and right:
> Each as on his sole head, failer or succeeder,
> Lay the blame or lit the praise: no care for cowards; fight!

Thus far I have dealt with our duty as individuals in regard to our personal share in the world-process. Our lives are so short and our experience of human history comparatively so limited, that we are not able to form an adequate judgment of its ends and purposes. Every man must do what he conceives to be the duties that lie before him; and for all of us the most important matter is, not the ultimate issue, but the manner in which he behaves himself in the supreme crisis. To do this he does not, I venture to say, need to philosophise deeply, and for him religion may be described as a simple and straightforward affair.

In the present crisis in human history we are compelled, whenever we reflect, to seek the aid of philosophy and the consolation of religion since it is not possible to be satisfied with the thought that human progress is

so slow and its set-backs so frequent, that we are unable to expect anything, at all events in this world, for ourselves or even for humanity.

But there are considerations which are able to bring no small encouragement even when we realise the slowness of the moral progress of humanity, its numerous set-backs and its lack of continuity. The very slowness and difficulty of which we complain, the trouble and loss which mankind sustains in making the smallest advance, may well be part of a divine purpose in the moral evolution of a world of beings endowed with the responsibility inherent in free will. To be thorough this evolution cannot come by leaps and bounds, but by the patient teaching of experience. Progress, so far as we can judge, is always the result of experiment; and the most successful results are as a rule attained after repeated failures. As nothing is accomplished thoroughly save by this means, we may naturally look for it in the moral progress of humanity. As the poet[1] says:

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.

Everything in the world has to be tried, and what is proved to be wanting is eliminated when it has proved to be unfit; for experimentally to know evil is to shun it. Nor can evil be received among men save under the appearance of good: as St. Paul says, "Satan is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14). If we apply this to the circumstances of to-day we see that certain ideals which, though absolutely repugnant to most of us, are very attractive to those who hold them, are on their trial. The Germanic people have become possessed with the idea of the inherent superiority of

[1] Longfellow translating a seventeenth-century German aphorist.

their race in force, virility and intelligence to all other peoples on the earth, and with the belief that if they are prepared to pay the price they can impose their will upon the whole earth and make all the nations the tools of the Teutonic race. They are firmly convinced that their whole system of life or *Kultur* is superior to that of all the less civilised nations as they deem them (including our own); and they are determined to impose it on the entire world. Having for many generations aimed at creating a military machine unrivalled in Europe, they are determined to employ this ruthlessly and to allow no scruples, no tenderness, no dictates of our common humanity to stand in the way. All these aims are summed up in Prussian militarism, a horror unprecedented in history, which has been described to me by a correspondent as "a living superhuman Blasphemy, worse than any mere 'moral' wickedness." But repugnant as it is to the rest of civilised humanity, Pan-Germanism has sufficient attraction to have inspired a devotion, a self-sacrifice and a recklessness of life which fills us with amazement. And the present struggle, whatever be the issue of the present war, can have but one result, namely, to reveal to mankind militarism as a thing so foul and abominable that humanity will no longer tolerate it. Even were the war to end in a triumph of the German arms, the yoke militarism would place on the world would be so unbearable that after the first burst of triumph was over the very people who forged it would be doing their best to break it; and if, by God's mercy, the allies are victorious, the reward of all the suffering of the world will at least be that military imperialism has been utterly defeated and exposed as evil, and that a way has been opened for a further advance in the moral education of the world.

In other costly struggles through which mankind has passed, with their immense losses and incalculable agonies,

—in the fall of the Roman Empire in the West and in the East, in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, in the French Revolution, to cite the most familiar examples,—the sufferings, which were temporary, have been forgotten; for the evils have, in a measure at any rate, passed away and the good gained has survived. For there is what Höffding calls in his *Philosophy of Religion* a "conservation of values." In the fiery trial, when the hay, straw and stubble is consumed, the costly stones and precious metals remain (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 12-16). Evil has in fact no 'solidarity,' and in this respect it differs from and is essentially inferior to good. To quote Professor Ward, "Extreme as the selfishness of many may still be, and rare as is any whole-hearted enthusiasm for humanity, yet the progress already made is amply sufficient to show that the direction in which it has moved and is still moving points towards the ultimate conciliation of self-interest and the common good. This progress may seem small, partly because the time it has taken looks immense, and partly because it still falls short of the ideal we entertain. But the problems that time involves do not much concern us in this connection. *Der Weltgeist hat Zeit genug*, as Hegel once said, and in contemplating the world historically we have to accustom ourselves to regard a thousand years as one day. Compared with the age of the earth itself man's appearance began upon it but yesterday, and he has hardly yet emerged from the state of infancy."[1]

And if philosophy gives us encouragement, the Christian religion gives us consolation. The God of vague 'attributes' is not after all the God of Revelation —He is rather goodness and love manifested in concrete form in Jesus Christ, who by the Incarnation has joined God and man in mystical union with Himself. In Him the love of God is displayed not only in the

[1] *Realm of Ends*, p. 133.

creative but in its redemptive aspect, and thus a divine purpose is to be recognised in the sufferings of the world. Further, we have hope beyond this world and in a truer and fuller life than we can ever experience on earth, and are able to acknowledge that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

# IV

# THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

BY

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# IV

## THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

THERE are points of view from which the problem of evil cannot be said to exist. To the perfectly contented believer in pure Materialism or pure Naturalism there cannot be such a thing as a problem of evil. If any one supposes that the Universe is simply a huge machine which was at one time a *mere* machine—mindless, unconscious, purposeless—but which at some late period in its history suddenly delivered itself of consciousness, a consciousness which, nevertheless, even now takes no real part in the working of the machine—for him the existence of evil in the world involves no difficulty. From such a point of view it cannot be a matter of surprise that the machine should produce results which are very much contrary to the wishes, inclinations, the so-called purposes, of the little creatures who fondly imagine themselves to be taking some small part in the working of the machine. If any one finds it reasonable to believe that such things as pleasure, pain, thought, conscience, goodness, sin, remorse, purpose, are so many mere waste bye-products of the vast machine, which would go on just in exactly the same way even if these things had never come into being—from this point of view there is nothing to explain in the fact that among these conscious bye-products of the Unconscious some should seem highly unsatisfactory to the individuals who are conscious. For those who believe that there is no such thing as *purpose* in the world, the fact that the actual results should be different from those which

a rational and righteous human being would purpose, or (if we adhere to the materialistic position) would imagine himself to purpose, is not a circumstance which requires any explanation at all. But at the present day a contented acquiescence in such a view of the Universe is much less frequently met with than was the case a generation or two ago. Even the Agnosticism which contemplates such a view of the Universe as a possible one, without positively affirming it to be true, is very much less common than it used to be in the days when Huxley and Tyndall were generally accepted as the leaders of scientific thought.

From the most opposite points of view we find a growing disposition to suspect at least that the Universe has a purpose of some kind. Even from the purely scientific point of view it is found increasingly difficult to explain the phenomena of living organisms without assuming that there is some sort of purpose, some tendency to an end, some striving, either on the part of the organisms themselves or of the Whole which has produced such organisms. And among professed philosophers—amid the widest differences in other respects—the disposition to explain the world teleologically is all but universal. I will just mention two of the best-known philosophers of the present day. I mention these particular thinkers because they are men whose names are well known outside the circle of professed students of philosophy. In other ways the philosophy of Bergson and that of Lord Haldane are poles asunder; but in their conviction that biological phenomena cannot be explained in terms of mechanism they are absolutely at one. I could not suggest a better corrective of the tendency to imagine that the world is a mere mechanism than a perusal of Bergson's *Évolution Créatrice* or of Lord Haldane's *Pathway to Reality*. And directly we begin to attribute to the world a purpose, the problem presents itself: "Why,

if there is a purpose in the whole, should so much of that whole be so unlike anything which a good and reasonable man would be likely to will?" Not all the thinkers who believe that the Universe has a purpose are what we call Theists—*i.e.* believers in God—in the full sense of the word. There are those who talk about an unconscious purpose in the Universe—a very unintelligible and self-contradictory conception to my mind—but I must not stop to criticize. There are again Pluralists who fully admit that a purpose implies a purposer, but who regard the events of the world's history as due not to the purpose of one single all-controlling Mind, but to a multitude of independent minds, uncreated, co-eternal, each controlling bits of nature but none of them controlling the whole. Even for such thinkers the existence of evil is a difficulty which has got to be explained. But it may be admitted that the difficulty is greatest to the thorough-going Theist who explains the course of Nature as due to the volition of a single, conscious, rational Will, which, with all due recognition of the inadequacy of such a mode of expression, he does not hesitate to call a Person. It is from such a point of view that I propose to approach the subject myself in this paper.

Why we should suppose that there is a purpose in the world, and why we should think that the hypothesis of thorough-going Theism offers a more satisfactory explanation of that purpose than any other form of spiritualistic belief, is a question upon which I can hardly enter. That is the supreme problem of Metaphysic, and if I were to attempt to deal with it at all seriously, I should not be able to reach my proper subject, which is the problem how this theistic view of the Universe is reconcilable with the existence of so much evil in the world—so much pain, so much ugliness, so much error, so much of the worse evil which we call sin.

And yet I do not like to pass over that greater and wider question entirely. I should prefer to indicate some of the lines of thought which lead to that great conclusion. The following remarks must be regarded as rather a personal confession as to my own reasons for accepting it than as an attempt to argue the matter out, and to meet the objections which may be made to my position.

(1) In the first place there is the fact of the existence of the Self and its activity. The theory that our thoughts, emotions, volitions and other psychical experiences are the mere bye-product—epiphenomena as the phrase is—of purely physical processes is one which on the face of it will strike most ordinary minds as incredible. Actually to disprove this theory would require a long argument. Those who care to go to the bottom of the matter may be referred to Dr. McDougall's recent book *Body and Mind*. Dr. McDougall discusses the subject from a purely scientific point of view, and shows how utterly destitute of empirical justification the theory is. I must not go into his arguments now, still less can I discuss the matter from a more metaphysical point of view. And yet after all the most that either psychologist or metaphysician can do is to show the unsoundness of the reasons which have been given against acquiescing in the plain man's immediate conviction that he himself both exists and acts—that whatever the relation may be between mind and body, he is at least something more than a mere series of conscious states produced by purely physical causes, that he really does determine in some measure the direction of his own thought and the motion of his own limbs. Now if *we* are spiritual, if *we* are active, is it probable that the ultimate cause of all phenomena should be something unconscious, inactive, unpurposeful? The common-sense of mankind will, I believe, in the long run reject such a suggestion as entirely incredible.

No doubt if we are not contented with this appeal to what strikes the ordinary mind as probable or improbable, we shall have to come to closer grips with the metaphysical problem, and if we did so, we should perhaps discover, on further reflection, that not only is it incredible that mind should actually be evolved out of a mindless and purely material Universe, but that the very notion of matter without mind is impossible and self-contradictory. Matter is a thing which we know only as entering into the experience of mind, and it is quite a gratuitous assumption to suppose that matter does or can exist except as the object of some mind. Clearly Nature does not exist merely in and for such limited minds as ours. There must therefore be a Universal Mind for which it eternally exists. I cannot stay to unfold the argument which leads up to this conclusion. I will only remark, in passing, that to myself this line of thought constitutes the surest and most strictly scientific proof of Theism.

(2) After this glance at a more difficult line of metaphysical thought, I will just touch upon another which is less difficult. Even if it be supposed that there is no impossibility about supposing matter to exist without mind, it may be pointed out that our experience of material things tells us nothing about causes. We see one event following upon another, we do not *see* one event cause another. So far Hume's contention has never been refuted. Everywhere in Nature, so far as external experience goes, we discover sequence but not causality. And yet we undoubtedly have got in our minds this idea of Cause, nay more, we cannot help supposing that every event in the Universe must have a cause. Where then do we get this idea of Causality from? I answer confidently and boldly "from our own consciousness of volition." I am immediately conscious of willing some things—the succession of thoughts for instance which I am now endeavouring to set before

the reader. I am conscious that *I* am a cause. And from that it seems reasonable to infer that if the events in nature have a cause—the events not caused by myself or any other human or animal intelligence—they too must be willed, and must be willed by a conscious, rational Being, which we can best think of after the analogy of our own conscious wills. That is one of the most convincing lines of theistic thought, and it is one which is sanctioned by a whole line of philosophical thinkers widely differing in other respects. Many people will be surprised to learn that Mr. Herbert Spencer must be included in that number. Mr. Herbert Spencer distinctly held that our idea of Causality was derived from our conscious experience in willing. And, in his own words, "This necessity in our minds to think of the external energy in terms of the internal energy, gives rather a spiritualistic than a materialistic aspect to the Universe."[1] We are accustomed to hear Mr. Spencer spoken of as the typical Agnostic, but surely in the face of such a declaration the appellation is a misnomer. If the energy which causes all the events of the Universe is to be thought of as something like our own personalities and not as something like inanimate matter, we do know a great deal about it, and a great deal which it is very important to know. This is one of the passages which go far to justify Mr. F. H. Bradley's famous remark that Mr. Spencer has told us more about the Unknowable than the rashest of Theologians has ever ventured to tell us about God.

(3) And now I will go on to a further step. If the Ultimate Cause of all things is purposeful, He must aim at some end which seems to Him good. We, in proportion as our conduct is rational and reflective, always do aim at some end; but we do not on reflection look upon all ends as equally good. We are conscious of drawing a distinction between ends. We distinguish

[1] *Sociology*, iii. p. 172.

between some ends which we think good and others which we look upon as bad, and that not merely from our private and personal point of view but from a universal point of view also. We are conscious of regarding some ends to which we might personally be inclined, as bad, and others to which (apart from such reflection) we might feel no inclination as good. Sometimes we regard one end of action as intrinsically higher and better for ourselves; at other times we think of one end as better than another because it is a universal end —a good for society so great as to outweigh our own private and personal good. We are conscious that we ought to aim at the higher rather than the lower, at the universal good rather than at the private and personal, even when in point of fact we do aim at the lower or the personal. We think it rational to act in this way; we condemn ourselves when we do not so act. It is not merely that certain kinds of conduct excite in us certain emotions—that we individually like one kind of conduct and dislike another, but we regard one kind of conduct as intrinsically rational, the other as irrational. And that means that we believe that all other rational beings must think the same. In other words these moral judgements of ours claim objectivity. For our mere likings or dislikings we claim no such objectivity. We do not insist that, if we like mustard, another man who dislikes it must be wrong. We should think it ridiculous to dispute whether mustard is objectively nice or objectively nasty. We are content to say that mustard is nice to one man, nasty to another. If our moral judgements were matters of feeling or emotion (as has of course sometimes been contended) they would be in the same case. But most of us find it quite impossible to acquiesce in that way of looking at Duty. Certain ends present themselves to us as ends which *ought* to be promoted. And we have every bit as much right to claim objectivity for these moral judgements of ours as

for the proposition that three and two make five, or that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, or that one syllogism is a good and valid argument, and another—which has one of the recognized logical fallacies in it—is a bad, invalid argument which does not prove its conclusion. Why do we believe these things? Because we immediately see them to be true. We believe them for exactly the same reason that we believe anything—because we cannot help believing them. We have exactly the same reason for believing the proposition that the good of many is more valuable than the good of one, or that pleasure is better than pain, or love better than cruelty. This involves, observe, no claim to personal infallibility. We may make mistakes in detail in our moral judgements, just as we may make mistakes in doing a sum. The rules of Logic are not shown to be invalid because at every general election more bad arguments are used, on both sides, than good ones. What we mean by claiming objective validity for these moral judgements is that we judge them to belong to the same class of truths as matters of science or matters of history—truths which are true for every one, so that if A is right in asserting them, B who denies them must be wrong. We do not look upon them as mere matters of taste in which two men may differ without either of them being wrong.

Now if these moral judgements of ours are objectively valid, observe what follows. We have every reason to assume that they are valid for God as well as for man. We always do that with such matters as Arithmetic. We do not suppose that Arithmetic is a purely human affair; we do not believe that for human beings, indeed, two and two make four, but that to God they may for all we know make five. What is really true, we believe, must be true for God as well as for man. We have every bit as much right to assume that the idea of Good is valid for God as well as for men; and even that, though

doubtless our moral judgements are often wrong in detail, the most fundamental of our moral judgements are revelations—imperfect, inadequate, fragmentary revelations of the truth as it is for God. If therefore we are justified in assuming that these truths hold for God, and that the course of the world's history is willed by God, we must suppose that they are willed because they promote the end which presents itself to Him as good. We must suppose that God, too, is aiming at an end not fundamentally different from the ideal which is set up before us by our own moral judgements. That is only to put into a more exact and philosophical form what is more popularly expressed by the old doctrine that the voice of conscience is the voice of God.

And now we come back to the problem which it is my present object to discuss—the problem why it is that a world which we have so much reason for believing to be willed by a rational and righteous spirit should, in fact, contain so much that strikes us as evil.

As to the matter of fact I suppose no one will have any serious doubt. As to the proportion of good and evil in the world, men will differ according to their temperaments, their circumstances, their experiences; but that there is in the world very much suffering, much undeserved suffering, a distribution of happiness and misery which strikes us as unjust, arbitrary, and capricious in the highest degree, and that there is a worse evil in the world called sin—an evil which (however we dispose of the Freewill difficulty) cannot in all cases be put down wholly and solely to the undetermined choice of the individual evil-doer—this much I suppose nobody will seriously question. The problem is why should there be any evil at all in a world ruled by a good and wise God?

The present war has brought home to us in a peculiarly impressive and appalling manner the full magnitude of this difficulty. The difficulty is no

greater than it has always been for any one with eyes to see the suffering which underlies the smooth surface of social life even at the most prosperous moments in the history of the most prosperous country, and with a little knowledge of the unutterable horrors which past history records. The sufferings of the wounded, of the gas-poisoned, of the bereaved are no worse than the sufferings of previous wars; they are hardly worse than the sufferings which what we call the ordinary course of nature daily inflicts upon the victims of disease and want and cruel governments. It has always been true that the earth is "full of darkness and cruel habitations." But somehow close contact with these horrors—even when we personally come into no closer touch with them than we are brought by the newspapers—has made us realise the gravity of the problem more intensely, even those of us who have been daily occupied with reading of such things in history, or in discussing the matter as a problem of speculative philosophy. And some not unintelligent people seem now to have awakened to the difficulty for the first time. Let us gird up our loins to grapple with it.

There are three possible ways of meeting this supreme difficulty: (1) In the first place it may be denied that evil is really evil. This is a very fashionable doctrine among philosophers; and we often find something very like this theory in more popular forms of religious teaching—in the speculations of the Christian Scientists for instance. The people who hold this view do not of course deny for practical purposes the authority of Conscience or the difference between right and wrong. They admit that we as men are bound by the moral law; and many of them for all ordinary purposes of life, may be, both as men and as moralists, quite enthusiastically on the side of the angels, as it is called. But from a speculative point of view they hold that after all morality is a merely human affair. It is

merely due to our too limited point of view that we cannot rid ourselves of the obstinate prejudice that pain and sin are bad things. They are no doubt bad, or at least they necessarily seem so to us, when looked at in themselves and apart from their relation to the whole. But when looked at from the point of the whole, from the point of view of absolute knowledge, they will be seen merely to add to the perfect beauty and harmony of the Universe. The man who would will them away is like the crude art critic who would paint out the shadows in the picture as so many blemishes, or who would strike out the discords which when duly "resolved" (as musicians say) do but add to the perfection of the symphony. For chloroform to have been discovered a century before it actually was discovered, for Caesar Borgia to have committed a crime or two less than he actually did commit, for a man like the Emperor Frederick to have occupied the throne of Germany in the year 1914 instead of a man like William II., would have only marred the perfect aesthetic effect of the world's history, which such persons are disposed to look upon as a highly entertaining tragi-comedy got up for the amusement of a few non-moral savants and perhaps of a Deity who is thought of as very much like those savants. All such speculations must, as it seems to me, founder upon this rock. Either our moral judgements are valid or they are not. If they are not valid, we have no right—it would, indeed, be meaningless for us —to say that the world is very good. We derive that idea of good from our own moral consciousness; and we can derive it from no other source. If the moral consciousness be an organ of truth, if the distinctions which it draws are true and valid distinctions, what reason have we for reversing the judgements which our moral consciousness actually pronounces? As a matter of fact we judge that pain and ugliness and sin are bad. To treat the bare notion or category of good in general

as possessing objective validity, while we say that all the things which we judge bad are really very good, is just like pronouncing that our category of quantity does indeed possess objective validity and is true even in and for God or (some philosophers would say) for the Absolute, but nevertheless to assert that the multiplication-table in detail is all wrong, and that for God or the Absolute two and two may possibly make five.

To put the matter still more simply, either the human Conscience tells us the truth or it does not. If it does not, we have no reason whatever for thinking that God is good; we have no reason indeed for supposing that anybody or anything in the world is either good or evil. If it does speak the truth, we have no reason for thinking that pain and sin are anything but the evils which Conscience undoubtedly pronounces them to be.

(2) The alternative way of dealing with the difficulty is to suppose that, while the designs or intentions of God are good, He is prevented from carrying them out without allowing or (to put it more frankly) causing some measure of evil. That is exactly the way we should explain the action of a good and wise man whom we actually find causing evil—a surgeon producing exquisite pain by an operation, a wise administrator of the poor law refusing to relieve suffering which in the particular case may well be quite undeserved, a religious-minded statesman sentencing millions of men to death or torture by declaring war. We say that he adopts means in themselves evil because they are means to a greater good which he cannot attain without them. We do not say, be it observed, that he is doing *wrong*: because it is not wrong to do evil as a means to the good—if the good is really sufficient to outweigh the evil. We do not say *he* is evil, but on the other hand we do not say that the evil which he thus causes ceases to be evil because it leads to good.

But whence arises for God this impossibility of getting the good without the evil? Whence comes the lack of power to do the good without the evil? The first answer that may be given to this question is to suppose that the lack of power arises from outside—from the existence of obstacles outside Himself. This is of course, strictly speaking, to go back upon Theism in the sense in which I have defined it, and in which it is generally understood. But I do not at all wish to exclude *a priori* the possibility of such a combination of Theism with some measure of Pluralism—a combination which has sometimes been attempted by religious and even Christian thinkers. God may be supposed to be the supreme and directing principle in the Universe while there are other forms of Being too, not created by Himself, which are capable of offering a certain amount of resistance to His will. The most natural and obvious way of thinking of such a principle is to identify this obstructive element with matter. Now this was to the naïf intelligence of the ancient world a very natural hypothesis. To Aristotle of course matter was eternal; it was controlled by Mind, but not wholly controlled. Nature wants, he tells us, to make all things for the best, but sometimes it cannot. Nature wants to make all cows four-legged: the idea of a cow, the typical cow undoubtedly has four legs, but occasionally one is born with six legs. That vagary is due to the imperfection—the original sin we may call it—of the particular piece of matter on which Nature was trying to stamp its universal type of a cow. All the peculiarities of individual things were accounted for in that way; they were just like the varying impressions of a single seal upon different pieces of wax. The imperfection of the wax accounts for the varying degree of imperfection in the impression. Now it must be admitted that in the superficial aspects of Nature there is much which suggests such a hypothesis. Things do

look very much as if there was an Intelligence at work struggling against obstacles. But such a mode of thinking does not in general commend itself to the modern mind for two reasons. In the first place it seems inconsistent with the modern conception of laws of nature, which are obeyed always and not only, as Aristotle thought, "for the most part": Aristotle had not the slightest notion that the *lusus naturae* (such as the birth of the six-legged cow) could be accounted for by fixed laws just as much as the normal case of the four-legged individual. And, secondly, it implies a distinction between what matter is and what matter does, which is entirely opposed to the tendencies of modern Physics. The theory in question regards matter as a dead inert stuff which has no definite qualities, which can only derive its distinguishing qualities from an externally imposed "form," and which cannot move without being set in motion from the outside either by other matter or in the last resort by an external mind dwelling outside the material Universe. This view of things is not open to those who regard the power of attracting other matter as an essential part of what is meant by matter, who tend to regard matter and force as inseparable, if they do not actually resolve material atoms or their ultimate constituents into "centres of force." The conception then of a dead, brute, inert matter which offers resistance to Mind is not welcome to the man of Science, while the idea of such an absolute antagonism between matter and mind is repugnant to all metaphysicians whose tendencies are at all in an idealistic direction. For these reasons we do not hear much of such views in recent times.[1] I may therefore be excused from saying more about them. As a matter of fact the attempt to think of God as existing from all eternity side by side with other beings not of his

[1] It is true that M. Bergson uses language which may be held to imply something very like this doctrine.

own creation is generally made from a spiritualistic or idealistic point of view. The outside resisting principle is supposed to consist in minds or souls, whether the minds of men or animals, or possibly souls of quite different order, which are supposed to be the reality underlying the appearance which we call matter.[1] The hypothesis of eternally pre-existent souls is no doubt in many ways attractive. It offers an easy explanation of evil. It enables us to say simply, "it is an ultimate fact that so many independent centres of consciousness have existed from all eternity—some good, some in various degrees bad." The world-process can then be looked upon as a process by which the evil is gradually being eliminated, and the good developed, by a perfectly good Being who is the most powerful Being in the Universe but not all-powerful. In this way it becomes possible to regard God as not only good but as not in any sense whatever the author of evil. The hypothesis is in many ways attractive, and it is one which does not admit of absolutely conclusive refutation; but it does to my mind involve immense difficulties—difficulties which are enormously greater than those which it avoids. Here I will only mention one. Whatever our exact view may be as to the relation between mind and body, it will scarcely be denied that they are in some way or other very closely connected. The development of mind goes on *pari passu* with material processes in the brain and nervous system. The natural inference is that whatever power it is which causes the successive steps of the material process causes also the accompanying psychical or mental changes. The limits assigned to this paper prevent my developing the argument further.

(3) If the limitation of power which explains the

[1] I do not here discuss the theory of a personal "Devil" because, if the Devil is thought of as a created spirit, the difficulty remains exactly what it is for those to whom the hypothesis seems groundless. Believers in an eternal or uncreated Devil are in the same position as other Dualists or Pluralists.

causality of evil by a perfectly righteous Will is not to be explained by the existence of beings or forces which are outside of Him, it must be due to an internal or original limitation of Power. There is, of course, nothing at all novel in this solution of the difficulty. God, according to this view, causes evil as a means to the greatest possible good on the whole. It is substantially the explanation which is accepted by all theistic philosophers and theologians who do not take refuge in some form or other of the doctrine that what we call evil is not really evil. Only, too many of them have combined the explanation with all sorts of doctrines or assertions which are really inconsistent with it. Too many, who have actually offered this explanation of the existence of evil, try to conceal or evade the necessary implication that God is not Omnipotent in the popular sense of being able to do anything that we take into our heads to imagine. I say the popular sense, for it is not really the orthodox sense in so far as orthodoxy can claim the support of really great thinkers. A philosopher so conservative as Leibnitz thought it enough to maintain that the world was the best of all possible worlds, not the best of all imaginable worlds. Omnipotence is defined by St. Thomas Aquinas as the power of doing all possible things. The theology of St. Thomas is taught in every Roman Seminary. It is the theology of the Pope. You cannot be more orthodox than St. Thomas, though a modern thinker finds himself accused of all sorts of heresies when he ventures occasionally to agree with him.[1]

Before I go on to consider some of the difficulties or objections which this theory has to meet, I should like to call attention to the absolute baselessness and gratuitousness of the contrary supposition. Theists and non-

[1] It is true that St. Thomas goes on to maintain that nothing is impossible to God which does not involve a contradiction, but very conservative thinkers have suggested that there are impossibilities which from the point of view of Omniscience may involve no less a contradiction than for two straight lines to enclose a space.

Theists alike often talk as though there were some strong *prima facie* reason for believing that, if there is a God at all, He must be of unlimited power as well as of unlimited goodness. I venture to suggest that the theory of unlimited power is one which has simply nothing to be said for it. It was pointed out long ago by Kant that no finite exhibition of wisdom or power which we may discover in Nature will prove unlimited power ; such a finite exhibition could only prove the existence of power sufficient to cause the actually observed effects, although in other ways he attempted to get rid of the natural inference from this observation.

It is curious what difficulty some minds, especially among the professional philosophers, seem to find in the notion of an intrinsic original limitation of power —not caused by the existence of concrete, outside independent obstacles to the exercise of power. This is due largely, I think, to that old source of philosophical error—the abuse of spacial metaphor. People seem unable to understand the idea of a limit except in the form of a limit in space created by the existence of material things, or at least of spirits which in this connexion they generally talk about as if they occupied space. They suppose that a limit to the power of God can only spring from the existence side by side with Him of some other things or forces or spirits which He did not create, which offer a resistance to His will and which He can but imperfectly control. But surely this is not necessary to the idea of a limit. After all, the most orthodox do admit some limit of the power of God. It is not considered necessary to the Omnipotence of God to suppose that He can change the past or cause $2 \times 2$ to $= 5$, or construct triangles with their interior angles not equal to two right angles. The limit that I assume is of exactly the same nature. It will be suggested that these last limitations mentioned are not really limitations, for the idea of freedom from

such limits is really meaningless. Be it so. Then I will venture to contend that at bottom the idea of unlimited power is quite equally meaningless. A being who could do anything whatever—any possible combination of things—would be a being without any distinct properties or attributes or nature. To explain events by referring them to such a Will is not an explanation; it is the negation of explanation. A cause is something which necessarily produces or accounts for a certain effect. To say that God caused 2,000,000 souls to be in existence at a certain date, when He might just as well have caused 3,000,000 does not explain why there should be in point of fact 2,000,000 souls and not 3,000,000. God is limited simply by His own eternal Nature. This is generally admitted by theologians as regards limitations arising from character. It is not considered necessary to the Omnipotence or to the freedom of God to maintain that He could do things inconsistent with His character, that He should be able to cause evil for instance otherwise than as a means to good—except by those theologians, neither numerous nor very important, who have frankly denied all intrinsic distinction between good and evil, and made morality itself depend upon the arbitrary will of God. Why should there not be a limitation of the same intrinsic nature to the power of God? And it is, I contend, demonstrable that unless you do admit such a limitation, you simply cannot maintain the unlimited goodness of God, except by the aid of some one or other of the sophisms which seek to show that an evil which tends to good is not really evil. And even then you do not escape. Let us assume that there is no positive evil in the Universe. Even so, the amount of good in the world must surely be limited. No matter what we consider to be the Good—pleasure, virtue, knowledge, or any combination of these—still the number of souls enjoying that good at a given time

must be a limited number. The existence of twice that number would be a greater good. Why was there not that greater good? If you say "God could have created twice that number, but did not," you surely represent Him as deficient in goodness or love. He would have shown still greater love by doubling the number. And so on *ad infinitum*. No matter how many souls you suppose to be in existence, you could always conceive more, and the existence of that more would always be a greater good.[1]

Before I conclude, there is one objection that I should like briefly to meet. It has been urged by Dr. McTaggart, of Cambridge—a philosopher who does not believe in anything like a personal God at all, though he does believe in a personal Immortality—that the notion of a creative God who is nevertheless a God of limited power involves this difficulty. A limited God, he suggests, might be a defeated God. The existence of such a God would supply no guarantee—not merely for the goodness of every particular thing in the Universe but even for its goodness on the whole. It would not assure us even that "somehow Good will be the final goal of ill." Such a God might do His best for the world but He might fail; the forces of evil might prevail in the end. I answer, "Not so. This is a mere caricature of the theory." On our view there are no forces of evil in the world except the forces which God has caused and continues to cause; and God would not have caused them at all unless He had been conscious of the power to overcome them sufficiently to produce a balance of good on the whole. This much we may assert confidently. The whole position is based upon the theory that there is no cause in the world ultimately but a rational Will;[2] and a rational

[1] This line of thought was fully and candidly developed by Origen.

[2] Together of course with the lesser wills which that Will causes, but these wills could not be brought into existence if their volition would not on the whole make for the good, nor can their willing at any moment be supposed to be independent of the co-operation of the Supreme Will.

Will can only be supposed to will evil as a means to good. The amount of good in the world must certainly preponderate over the evil, or there would have been no creation at all.[1] I think we may go a step further than that, and say that the good must very enormously preponderate over the evil; for the mere non-existence of good seems on rational reflection to be a much less evil than the existence of positive evil. And this consideration, I would add, carries with it, as it seems to me, the postulate of Immortality. I do not think we could reasonably regard the world as involving an enormous preponderance of good over evil, unless we did suppose that for the higher and more developed spirits at least the life that we know of on this earth is but a part of the whole—a discipline, a preparation, an education for something indefinitely better. But however high in fact the amount of good that may hereafter be realized in a future state of being, that will never actually cancel the evil which has been experienced on the way to it. The good without the evil would always have been better, if it had been possible to attain the good without the evil.

Why all this evil should be necessary as the means to an ultimate good on the whole, why God should not be able to attain His highest ends *per saltum* as it were, by a sudden creation of the highest spirits that this earth has known and not by a slow process of evolution from the *amoeba* to man, involving so much suffering and so much baseness of life on the way, wherein lie the meaning and necessity of each particular evil,—these are questions, of course, which we can never answer. We can see that, under the actual conditions of human life, evil is often a condition of good. We see how the faculties of animals and men have been developed and improved by the struggle with what often seems a

[1] This view does not necessarily imply a "creation in time"; it is open to any one who believes that the successive events of the world's history are willed.

cruel and pitiless nature ; we see how individual character is tried and strengthened by the struggle with temptation and difficulty, with evil within and evil without. But why there should be this conditioning of good by evil, we cannot say. We can only say that we have every reason to believe it to be part of the ultimate nature of things, which (if we are Theists) means the ultimate nature of God. There is, be it observed, a limit to all possible explanation. We cannot explain everything. To explain means to show that something is what it is because something else is what it is. We must at last come to something or some Being which simply *is* what it is. If we find that something in the eternal nature of one Spirit, we can only explain the presence of evil in a world which that Spirit causes either by supposing Him to have a limited amount of Power, or a limited amount of Love or Goodwill. I cannot understand how any one who thinks that Christ's conception of the Heavenly Father was the true one should have any hesitation as to which alternative to prefer.

And now let me briefly point out what a much more bracing and stimulating view of the Universe this conception supplies us with than the common popular notion of a God who could cause all the good without the evil, but simply does not choose to do so. The notion that God can do all things, and that therefore what we do or do not do cannot in the long run matter very much, has been, I believe, a fruitful cause of moral indifference and social apathy. I do not mean that people have very often said this to themselves in so many words ; but at the bottom of their hearts there has lurked the idea that, if they can just secure personal forgiveness for themselves before they die, what they have done or not done will not matter. All the evil they have done can be neutralized some day by the fiat of Omnipotence. It is well that we should remind our-

selves that the pain and suffering we have caused by our conduct, the lives that have been spoiled by our neglect, the disasters that have been caused by national wickedness or national apathy, can never be made as though they had never been. Good may be brought out of evil; the good that we might have done may be done by another hereafter, the people who have been made miserable or base by our neglect may hereafter be made happier and better; but the particular good there might have been had we acted otherwise will never be. It will always remain true that the world *with* the good that we did not do would have been a better place than the world without such a good. The conception of a God who might have produced all the good there is without the evil, and simply did not choose to do so, contains in it little to excite reverence, little to inspire love or to stimulate endeavour. Far more consolatory, bracing, stimulating is the conception of a God who calls upon men to become, in a quite literal sense, fellow-workers with Him, who works in and through human wills, and who through the co-operation of those wills is conducting the Universe to the greatest good that He knows to be possible of attainment. That is exactly the conception of God which St. Paul seems to have had before his mind when he spoke of himself and his colleagues as workers together or fellow-workers with God, and called upon his converts also to co-operate with God ("we, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain,") or again when he invited them to work out their own salvation, "*for* it is God which worketh in you."

Part of this article has already appeared in the *Interpreter*. I am indebted to the Editor for his permission to reprint it.—[H. R.]

# V

# HOPE, TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL

BY

WILLIAM RALPH INGE

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

"Hope is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast."

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

"L'avenir est un lieu commode pour y mettre des songes."

ANATOLE FRANCE.

# V

## HOPE, TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL

IT is often said that the ancients put their golden age in the past, the moderns in the future. Our ancestors believed in the fall of man, we believe in the ascent of man. This, however, is a very crude and inaccurate statement. Throughout classical antiquity, and wherever else men have thought about the origin, the condition, and the prospects of their race, a double line of speculation may be traced. Among the Greeks the theory of decadence derived a kind of inspired authority from Hesiod, among the Jews from Genesis ; but the doctrine of progress is assumed in the Introduction of Thucydides, in the *Prometheus Vinctus* of Aeschylus, in the speech of Protagoras in Plato, in Aristotle, and by the Epicureans, of whom Lucretius is for us the best representative. The mystical Orphics and Pythagoreans taught that the golden age still exists elsewhere—in paradise, we may say, and that the spirits of the just will enter into it. The Jews never brooded over their doctrine of the Fall, and when their political prospects seemed, humanly speaking, desperate, their indomitable optimism projected the dream of a supernatural Messianic kingdom at Jerusalem. At the beginning of our era a belief, corresponding to the apocalyptism of the Jews, was widespread that the 'Kingdom of Saturn,' the lord of the golden age, was immediately to appear. Virgil's Fourth Eclogue is a prophetic

vision of this coming millennium. But long before this, thoughtful men had recognised the truth of both theories, that of progress and that of decay, and even their dependence on each other. The fruit of the tree of knowledge has driven mankind from its first paradise; luxury, physical degeneracy, grinding labour, and above all war, are the heavy price which we have had to pay for civilisation. We recall Dürer's famous picture of 'Melancolia,' the figure of the race-spirit sitting in mournful meditation among all her discoveries and achievements. The polemic against war, of which there are traces in Homer, was taken up in earnest during the Alexandrian age; it became at last a rather stale commonplace that in the golden age men lived the simple life in peace and harmony, and that in a restoration of these habits (so the Stoics especially insisted) lies the way to recover our lost happiness. But the deepest thought of antiquity was not that the human race is either degenerating or advancing. Greek philosophy, like the older Babylonian speculation, for the most part taught that the life of the universe consists in a series of cycles, in which history repeats itself. This view is so far from being obsolete that it is much more scientific than the notion that the course of nature is a continual evolution towards higher forms. Astronomy gives us a picture of a wilderness of space, probably boundless, sown with aggregations of matter in all stages of heat and cold, from the furious furnaces of Canopus and Arcturus to the dead, dark, unchanging moon. The hot bodies are in some cases growing hotter, but in more cases slowly cooling, and when they have once grown cold nothing, it seems, but a chance collision can start them on a new cycle of change. If time as well as space is infinite, worlds must be born, live and die innumerable times, each life being terminated and preceded by a sleep of incalculable duration. Of progress in such

a system, as a whole, there cannot be a trace. Within each unitary life of a star or planet there may be interesting evolutions of this or that species; but as such evolutions had a beginning, so they must assuredly have an end; and at the last nature smooths all away as the tide levels a child's sand-castle. Since this is the only picture of the universe which science allows us to contemplate, it is strange that modern philosophy has taken so little account of it. Nietzsche, who was at first repelled by it, overcame his horror, and in this conquest found the highest of all the 'yea-sayings' of life. Kierkegaard also, the profoundly Christian Danish thinker, advocates the same view. "Who wills recurrence, he is a man," he says, quite in the spirit of Nietzsche. Whether we like it or not, no other view of the macrocosm is even tenable.

We must therefore understand in the first place that whatever hopes we may cherish for the progress of humanity and the greater happiness of our race—and we may contemplate a vast vista of millennia before our course is run—these hopes are, and must be finite hopes. They differ in scale but not in kind from our temporal ambitions for ourselves and our children. The new discovery of radio-activity, which, it is said, may maintain the heat of the earth undiminished for an immense period, only prolongs our lease; it does not convert it into a freehold. Civilisation may have millions of years to live, and if so the human race may be still in its early boyhood; but the race, like the individual, must die at last. Either by gradual cooling, or by some more sudden catastrophe, our home will become uninhabitable. And then will come a sleep and a forgetting, perhaps for billions of years, till a new solar system is formed, and life again begins to stir among the imperishable units of matter.

It has been objected that the theory of cosmic cycles deprives the history of the universe of all meaning and

value, and is even inconsistent with belief in God, since an intelligent Creator would be intolerably bored by the endless repetition of the same processes, and could not find any satisfaction in everlastingly shuffling and reshuffling the cards, like an old maid playing eternal games of patience by herself. To this we may reply that boredom is a human infirmity, and that an infinite number of finite purposes, each having a beginning, middle and end, and each exemplifying by its process some eternally valuable idea, is, so far as we can judge, as worthy an occupation for the Supreme Being as the pursuit of a single 'increasing purpose' (whatever Tennyson meant by this curious phrase) through all the ages. Those who are attached to this latter theory may be reminded that an infinite plan is by definition a plan which was never conceived and which can never be accomplished.

But what grounds have we for counting on the steady progress of mankind, for which, as is admitted, there is probably ample time? Progress is a rare accident in the physical world. Most species remain unchanged for thousands of years. The greater part even of humanity shows no tendency to alter its habits. There have been stable civilisations, like those of ancient Egypt and China, which have lasted as much as five thousand years without much alteration, until the equilibrium has been disturbed by foreign interference. Were we to judge from our observation of other species, the following fates would all seem more probable than constant upward progress:—(1) A course of development which has long been advantageous may at last land a species in complete ruin. The dinosaurs, once lords of creation, grew to a portentous size, and carried the heaviest armour. But these living Dreadnoughts perished at last either from change of climate or from their own unwieldiness, and the sceptre passed from the lizard tribe for ever. (2) The race may

reach a state of stable equilibrium, like the highly civilised polities of ants and bees. A perfected organisation of state socialism would probably produce this result; and if the feminist movement leads to the establishment of a gynaecocracy of maiden aunts, as in the bee-hive, the population question will give no trouble. (3) No other species has shown a greater genius for parasitism than our own. Nomadism is one form of it, the shepherds being in this case the parasites of their flocks and herds, which they follow in their migrations between winter and summer pastures. Slavery is another form of it; our pampered paupers and plutocrats furnish another example. Should any mode of universal parasitism be discovered, our race would perhaps gladly purchase comfort at the price of degeneracy.

Is there any instinct or tendency peculiar to humanity which invalidates these analogies? Even without leaving the standpoint of naturalism we might make out a strong case for believing that there is. Not only has man the power of looking before and after, and so shaping his destiny in a manner impossible to the brutes; but he possesses certain endowments which seem to have been given him not in order to help him to survive, but to help him to survive in a certain way. In other words, there seems to be a racial type which he is striving, both consciously and unconsciously, to realise. The sense of beauty, the faculty of disinterested curiosity (absurdly denied by the pragmatists), the love of duty and the power of self-sacrifice, are not easily accounted for on the hypothesis that every trait of human character must have a distinct survival-value. There is, explain it how we will, a climbing instinct in man, which has quickened into effective energy first the reason and then the spiritual sense. Man has his ideals; and ideals are ideas in process of realisation. There is no analogy to this in the animal creation; the power of self-determination in man is unique. We

may reasonably hope that these endowments, which make human progress possible, also make it ultimately inevitable. But whereas there is certainly no automatic law of progress, and, in civilised countries at least, no eugenic selection but rather the reverse, the gains of humanity must be very external and precarious, and the possibility of a great reversion to barbarism is in no wise excluded.

Hitherto we have taken at its face-value the picture of the world which natural science offers us, though we have admitted, as the naturalist may without forgetting his principles, the fact of man's spiritual endowments. But the world as known to science is of course a mental construction, not an independent system which the naturalist observes from outside. We are a part of all that we have met, in a different sense from that in which Tennyson's Ulysses speaks the words. Our world is the product of our thought and experience, and its resemblance to reality depends on the extent to which our minds themselves are in contact with reality. And when we find that our view of the world contains insoluble difficulties and contradictions, the inference is that the instrument which we use is imperfect, and incapable of presenting us with a true picture. Such familiar problems as the infinity of space and time, the nature of time-succession, and the relation of subject and object, suggest very cogently that the world as known to science must be only an abstract view of reality. More especially, perhaps, does our faculty for transcending time in our thoughts convince us that our minds are not in time, but rather time in them ; and so we are led on to the idea of eternity. Our spiritual faculty, weak and fitful as it is, strongly supports the belief that the real world is an eternal, immaterial world which reflects the whole counsels of the Creator, while the world of space and time was created as a sphere for the working

out of God's finite purposes—His thoughts shaping themselves as acts of will. So our hearts' true home is in a sphere where change and chance cannot hurt us. Our highest earthly ambitions are after all only loyal attempts to execute on earth that divine will which in heaven has not to struggle for its fulfilment. There is no utter defeat for him who fights on God's side; for those things which God knows as good are safe from ruin for evermore. Thus to every one who holds that reality is spiritual there comes the comforting thought that nothing of absolutely vital importance is at stake in any earthly conflict. He "has a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"; and, like the Stoic sage,

*Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinae.*

It has been lately said that to throw our ideals into the future is the death of all sane idealism. The warning was needed; but it is stated too strongly. We are living here under the conditions of time and place, and what is most real in our earthly lives is precisely the purpose and meaning which God intends to work out by and through us. Our world is, in God's sight, a network of unitary purposes, some of them bound up with individual lives, others embracing a far wider scope. These purposes necessarily point to the future for their fulfilment. Time is the form of all purposive action. Although the divine verdict is given upon the whole process, not upon the conclusion only, we need not assume that every moment in the long effort has the same value. It is a true instinct that makes us say, "All's well that ends well," and "Call no man happy before he dies." It is only when vulgar thought confounds eternity with duration, and survival in time with immortality, that we are bound to protest against such an impoverishment of our spiritual heritage. Our work is in time, but we

are citizens of heaven. Earth's success may be heaven's failure, and earth's failure heaven's success. Our hopes, like ourselves, must die to live; and to a being sure of immortality, 'death does not count.'

It is this confusion between time and eternity that has led so many well-meaning persons to say that Christianity stands for faith in progress, by which they mean inevitable and automatic progress. But there is no law of progress, and Christianity has never pretended that there is. God has given us the power and will to climb; but if this power and will are not well and wisely exercised, there is nothing in nature to prevent us from sinking. We can set before ourselves the inspiring vision of a city of God upon earth; but it depends entirely upon our use of the freedom that has been given us whether we march in the right direction or the wrong. And we have not advanced far yet. The plain truth is that we are still barbarians, slaves to the passions and the fashions. We employ those parts of our lives which are at our own disposal in solemnly playing at what for savages are the serious businesses of life. Our games are mock-fighting, our sports mock-hunting, and some forms of our public worship recall the primitive business of placating dangerous spirits by sacrifice, incantation, and noisy ritual. These occupations give a relief to half-submerged but still powerful instincts, analogous to that 'purgation of the emotions' which Aristotle found to be the chief motive of tragedy. For the most part we are content with this mimicry, and while using it as a safety-valve consider ourselves highly civilised. But from time to time the savage within us clamours for the real thing, hot and strong. Sensational newspapers give the populace, at second hand, the delicious enjoyment of actual scenes of murder and bloodshed; an American lynching revives the old-world thrill of an *auto-da-fe*; and above all, war carries us back at a bound to the

days when *homo homini lupus erat.* In this, the most monstrous relic of savagery, every semblance of humanisation is thrown off, and the devilish lusts of cruelty and wanton destructiveness rush exultingly out of the prisons where they have been confined.

It is no wonder that the sudden emergence of this hideous spectre in the most civilised countries of the world has come as a staggering surprise to the great majority of those who are involved in the catastrophe. It is no wonder that faith and hope should be engulfed in the pit which seems to have swallowed up their sister-virtue. Our horror has been greatly intensified by the fiendish cruelty and treachery of our chief opponent. We knew that there might be another great war; we did not know that one of the most gifted and civilised nations could be transformed at the word of command into a horde of Huns. Quite apart from our own danger, as lovers of humanity we are faced with the bitterest of disillusionments. Many are tempted to exchange their former genial faith in progress for a cynical despair of human nature.

This pessimism may be excusable, but I believe it to be quite unnecessary. We have, after all, made some progress from the savage state. We do not as a rule eat our enemies,[1] nor enslave their children; the milder torture of cross-examination has been substituted for the rack in our law-courts, and the Bishop of Zanzibar is not allowed to burn the Canons of Hereford. Besides, if we put aside for the moment the attitude of Germany, on whom rests the sole guilt of this war, and consider that of the other belligerents, we shall form a much more favourable estimate of the mental and moral condition of the leading nations in Europe. None of the other Powers desired this war. We ourselves drew the sword in grief and sorrow; and

[1] Though I have seen an Athenian picture-poster, printed during the last Balkan war, in which a Greek soldier is depicted gnawing the face of a living foeman. It is inscribed ὁ Βουλγαροφάγος, 'the Bulgarian-eater.'

many myriads of young Englishmen have obeyed the call of duty while inwardly abhorring the whole accursed business in which they are morally compelled to take their part. The French also have completely outgrown the Napoleonic tradition, which their rivals have adopted, shorn of the idealism which a hundred years ago partially redeemed it; and the Russians are only too full of the milk of human kindness to be a match for the hard-bitten warriors of Central Europe. If we turn our eyes to the new countries, where the populace has a real share in shaping the foreign policy of the nation, we shall see that the will of modern civilisation is set towards peace and international amity. There are no forts along the three thousand mile frontier between Canada and the United States. The lonely summit of the prodigious mountain rampart which divides Chili from the Argentine is crowned by a colossal figure of Christ, a symbol that the most progressive peoples of South America have done with wars for all time. Australia and New Zealand will fight for the freedom of the British race, but in no other cause whatsoever. If it were not most unhappily true that it takes only one to make a quarrel, the peace of Europe would not have been disturbed last year.

The unquestioned pacifism of all the new democracies is a proof that the barbarous passions which sleep a troubled sleep in the breasts of us all are no longer strong enough of themselves to turn the civilised world into a hell. They must, if they are to drive a nation into homicidal mania, be reinforced by certain 'false opinions' (ψευδεῖς δόξαι), as Plato calls them, errors partly intellectual and partly moral, and so doubly mischievous. These delusions will probably be found to be connected with old-world prejudices, since they are far less operative where new societies have founded their own traditions. Taking this hint as our guide, we shall readily identify the mischief-making ideas.

The notion that a chief increases his consequence by adding field to field has caused the greed of territorial aggrandisement to usurp the first place in national ambition, especially when the fiction survives that a country is the estate of its supreme ruler. Military 'glory' is still an idea to conjure with; and homicide and robbery, if they are on a sufficiently large scale, are still a passport to such immortality as triumphal columns and tombs in the national pantheon can confer. Above all, the notion of the State as the ultimate unit to which devotion is due has been actually strengthened by socialistic theory, and few realise its absurdity in a world which contains many political aggregates on the same level of civilisation, bound together by close similarity of religion, ethical ideas, and social customs, as well as by mutually dependent material interests. These are all 'false opinions,' which could only have survived through the inertia of inherited ideas combined with the pricking of savage instincts. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy" is the old tribal morality; and 'thine enemy' is still the unknown and unoffending person who lives on the other side of an artificial frontier, and in consequence pays his taxes to another government. If we could get rid of these 'false opinions,' which are seen to be anachronisms as soon as we allow our minds to play upon them, we could keep the ape and tiger in their cages. Even as things are, they would seldom get loose if it were not for the irrational herd-contagion which almost invariably acts on a much lower moral plane than the will of the individual. One of the most odious features of the German system is the deliberate attempt to foment, during peace, these obsessions of popular prejudice, and to direct them to hatred of the nation which it is designed to make the next victim of unprovoked attack. The intellectual class in Germany, to their eternal shame, have lent themselves as tools to an

unscrupulous Government, prostituting the honour of science and undermining the respect and confidence which Germany, above other nations, is willing to pay to learning. But the chief agency in this nefarious business is the popular press, an institution without which democracy could hardly exist, but with which a democratic country enjoys only the freedom of a flock of sheep. In Germany the press is controlled by the military bureaucracy; in England and America it is directed by the hardly less pernicious power of a few capitalists. Moreover, journalism, under stress of commercial competition, is driven to cater for the passions and prejudices of the herd; violent and unscrupulous partisanship is found by experience to pay best. Newspapers which attempt to maintain a fair-minded and judicial attitude fail, whether their clientèle is religious or political. And when we are in danger of quarrelling with another nation there is the same strong inducement for the press to use violent language, exacerbating the dispute and turning mistrust into hatred. This is a public danger for which no remedy has yet been discovered. The readers of newspapers, that is to say, the people themselves, are more in fault than the editors and proprietors, since it is the demand for strong partisanship that creates the supply. The old instinct of pugnacity is still very strong, especially in the self-assertive races of Western Europe. Hence arise those mad fits of aggressive imperialism which attack one great nation after another, and cause incalculable misery. We English have not been immaculate in this respect, though we have never flown at such high game as the Germans, nor shown such inhuman ruthlessness. History shows that these moods are not permanent, and that an acute attack of aggressiveness is generally followed by a sharp reaction.

It is indeed most unlikely that the frightful object-lesson which Europe now presents will be forgotten.

In all probability the nations, without exception, will work for a durable settlement, and will desire for the future to be 'good Europeans.' Military absolutism cannot permanently maintain itself against the steady advance of the labour movement, which is by principle international; and with the fall of this type of government the danger of war will be considerably less.

If Europe really wants peace, we can have it. The alleged biological law of international conflict is one of the 'false opinions' which have contributed to the present catastrophe. The impossibility of permanently subjugating foreign countries without exterminating the inhabitants is one of the best-established conclusions of historical science. A nation which adopts the habits of a wolf-pack has sealed its own doom. And the swarming period of modern history is nearing its end. All civilised nations are moving towards an equilibrium of births and deaths, such as France has already reached; and there is reason to hope that when this has been attained an epoch of accelerated progress and wider happiness may follow. The social problem will still remain; but attempts to solve it will no longer be foredoomed to failure.

So far we have said nothing about the influence of religion in averting war and other social dangers. It is and ought to be a matter for shame and deep searchings of heart that no one looks to organised Christianity as a probable saviour of society. Lovers of peace have hopes from social democracy, in spite of the impotence of the four and a half million German socialists to prevent a war of aggression or to rouse the conscience of the nation against its horrors. The social democrats have at least made a few feeble protests, while the German State Church has hounded on the emissaries of massacre and has justified or brazenly denied every atrocity. The Roman Curia has played an even more despicable part. Not only has the great moral authority of the

Papacy been unexerted; not only has Rome refused to condemn the greatest crime of modern history—the wanton attack upon Belgium; but no attempt has been made to protect its own priests and nuns from murder and outrage and its most venerated shrines from destruction. Until last year, the 'temporal power' of the Vatican was still considerable, as Bismarck found to his cost; but a Papacy which has sold itself to Pan-Germanism can in future enjoy neither credit nor influence. In France and England churchmen are showing themselves loyal and enthusiastic citizens; religious authority has had nothing to do but pronounce that our cause is just. Before the war 'the Churches' in this country were mildly pacific, but gave no strong lead in the denunciation of international injustice; and in France the Catholic revival had been, to a great extent, reactionary and militarist, as we can see from the writings of its brilliant literary exponents. The record of organised Christianity in promoting peace and goodwill among the nations is not an inspiriting one.

But nothing could be falser than to infer from this failure that the religion of Christ is powerless to appease human passions and to secure international justice. The weakness of Christianity is due simply to the fact that mankind is still too backward to receive it in its glorious simplicity. The message of Christ to the nations has never been accepted in practice, and seldom even understood. Let us consider what that message is. In the first place, the Gospel abolishes all artificial barriers by ignoring them. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free. We are all one man in Christ Jesus. This claim is based on a fact, that we are all children of God, and that Christ came to redeem us all, without respect of race or colour. The frenzy of nationalism, which denies all rights to other nations, subsides at once when this truth is realised. Next, Christ gives us the true

standard of values. We are not to covet anything beyond the necessaries of life; we are not to act as if life were only a livelihood; we are to love our neighbours as ourselves, since we are all in fact members one of another; we are to bear each other's burdens, and to sympathise with others in joy and sorrow; we are to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, and trust our Father in heaven to provide our bodily wants. What would remain of all that leads to wars of conquest if these plain teachings were accepted as binding both on individuals and societies? Thirdly, there is the Christian method of conquering evil—namely, by overcoming it with good. Christianity was really a power in the world when Christians were willing to suffer wrong, and leave vengeance to God. These principles are a part of the Christian message, and the world refuses to receive it. It is nonsense to talk of the failure of Christianity when Christianity has never even been tried. When the nations are sufficiently civilised to treat each other as good Christians treat their neighbours and rivals in private life, we shall hear no more of the failure of Christianity. It is we, not our religion, that has failed; and we have failed because most of us do not believe in our religion.

It is only convinced Christians who can understand what hope means in the Christian scheme. St. Paul enumerates faith, hope, and love as the characteristic Christian virtues, and intimates that these are the qualities in which the Pagan world was deficient. The heathens were not only "hateful and hating one another"; they "had no hope and were without God in the world." Hope as a moral quality was a new thing in ethics, though the Neoplatonists borrowed St. Paul's triad, only adding 'truth' as a fourth. The spirit of hopefulness, like the spirit of love, was as conspicuous among the early Christians as it was weak among the non-Christians of the empire. It was only in part an

expectation of future happiness, even in the next world, and had very little connection with what we call 'progress' in this world. It was a temper of trustful happiness, a confidence that for those who are 'in Christ' "all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well," as Julian of Norwich says. "In Christ," Augustine declares, "immortality is no longer a hope but a fact" (*iam non spes sed res*); and again, "the Christian already has in Christ what he hopes for in himself." The Pauline phrase 'in Christ' is no doubt difficult to explain. The words, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or creation)," indicate that spiritual communion with Christ lifts us into a wholly new order of being, in which, since time is transcended, hope, though still hope and not full satisfaction, is already in possession of what it desires. This is only another way of describing that life in the Spirit which we have already approached from the side of Platonic idealism. The object of hope, if it is to be at once future and present, a goal of will and a subject of apprehension by faith, must be no mere temporal thing, but must itself belong to the spiritual order. So Augustine says again: "Thou shouldst hope for nothing else from thy Lord, but let thy Lord Himself be thy hope." In fact, the true goal of hope is union with God; and this, though it cannot even begin to be without the inspiration and presence of God Himself, is a goal very far beyond our scope while we live here. A Christian's finite hopes are all summed up in the prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." He is justified in believing that those things which are dear to him are dearer to God—the objects, I mean, of his purest affections, such as his country, his church, and his closest friends. His hopes for them will be strong and confident; but he knows that they may have to die to live.

We can now understand why and in what sense hopefulness is for a Christian a virtue and a duty. It

is remarkable how completely the Christian writers discard the cynical and pessimistic language about hope which is common in classical literature. It is a moot point whether the Hope which was left at the bottom of Pandora's box was meant by the inventor of the tale to be a good thing or an evil. But the deceitfulness of hope is almost a commonplace of the classical writers. Hope and Chance are demons who sport with men till death liberates them. For the Christian, hope needs much purification, but never suppression. Nothing is too good to be true, though many things which we should like are not good enough to be true.

Christian hopefulness is much the same as trust in God. It necessarily manifests itself in that calm cheerfulness, serenity, and courage which have from the first been conspicuous elements of the Christian character. "We know that all things work together for good to those that love God"; and "we are persuaded that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, can separate us from the love of God."

To sum up what has been said. Our hopes for the future of humanity must be conditioned by the clear knowledge that

> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind.

This knowledge, which is as certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow, drives us to reflect on the meaning and reality of the time-series, and to ask whether what has been and is no longer, is as though it had never been. Such thoughts are likely to shake the materialist's faith in his theory, and it is strange if they do not show us what cogent reasons there are for believing in an eternal world, of which the visible world is only a copy

or a shadow. When we have once accepted the belief in eternity, hope takes on a different complexion. It becomes, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.

The prospects of continued progress for the human race are very hopeful if we believe that our species has certain endowments which make a generic distinction between it and other terrestrial creatures, and that the desire for progress, and capacity for it, is one of those endowments. But progress is entirely an affair of the racial will; and we cannot be confident that this will must always be active. The advance already made is often exaggerated. In spite of our wonderful mechanical discoveries we are still only half-tamed barbarians, and most of our favourite pursuits are irrational survivals. The race is probably much nearer the beginning than the end of its human development.

As regards war, the feeling of horror and indignation which it arouses is stronger than it has ever been before; but the primitive instincts are still too strong to make an outbreak impossible. We may, however, hope that the present struggle, in which war has been shorn of all its romance and chivalry, and which, moreover, will condemn the whole of Europe to poverty and grinding taxation for the remainder of the century, will scatter most of the illusions which still cling to the military idea. The peoples do not need convincing in their normal moods; but they are liable to fits of madness which are as atavistic as the lycanthropy of Nebuchadnezzar. Besides this, the Governments of Europe do not trust each other, and unhappily some of them are utterly untrustworthy.

Among the numerous influences which should make for peace is that of the Christian religion, which, if it were universally accepted, would at once fulfil the angelic promise of peace and goodwill, and establish a kingdom of God upon earth. But the leaven is very

slow in penetrating the whole lump. The Christian temper of hopefulness is an important help towards realising the objects hoped for, all the more because these objects are aimed at rather indirectly, as the necessary result of faith, hope, and love more than as in themselves the goal of effort. Christian hope maintains the true proportion in values, and thus escapes the fanaticism of the faddist ; it discountenances impatience and presumption, and so escapes many disappointments, and the pitfalls which beset all short cuts ; it encourages perseverance in prayer, by which the fresh springs of divine grace are always open to us ; it delivers us from *acedia*, that depressing blend of gloom, sloth, and irritation which makes us think that no good is worth doing. It is essential that both as individuals and as a nation we should maintain that spirit of hopefulness which is another word for trust in God. It has been said that "he who lives on hope has a slim diet." But a nation that tries to live without hope will very soon cease to live at all. For to abandon hope is to renounce the vocation to which we are called, and in this vocation, individual and social, lies the sole reason and meaning of our sojourn in this world of space and time.

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum. Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

Ὁ περὶ ψυχῆς ἄλλως δοξάζων ἀγνοεῖ ὡς θαυμαστοῦ τούτου κτήματος ἀμελεῖ. —PLATO.

Quisque suos patimur Manes.—VIRGIL.

## VI

# THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

CHARLES LAMB, in one of his most delightful essays sets it down to the credit of Shakespeare's Malvolio that, even when all about him seemed conspiring to badger him into lunacy, he proved his unshakable sanity by "thinking nobly of the soul." If this is the standard of rationality, it may be feared that our verdict on the sanity of the age which is now passing to a bloody and thunderous end will hardly be too favourable. We must admit that the fashion, at least, for more than two generations has been to think of the soul meanly rather than nobly. In the main Science has for long enough tended to treat belief in "the world to come" as either a proved delusion or, at best, a highly improbable and unprofitable speculation. Philosophy, which once regarded it as part of her duty to furnish proofs of the immortality of the soul, seems at the present day more concerned to discover a substitute for the 'great hope' of which the dying Socrates reasoned with his friends in the Athenian prison. Even Theology, at least in the Anglican Church, appears fairly content to rest her belief in the future that lies beyond the gates of death solely, or at least in the main, upon the 'historical' evidence for the resurrection of Our Lord. There can be even less uncertainty about the mental attitude of the average plain man and good citizen whose main object in life is simply to do his duty to the best

of his lights. It is surely largely true to say with reference to him, as Roman Catholic controversialists have often said, that in 'Protestant' countries immortality has almost ceased to 'count.' Among ourselves the average man probably does retain some vague theoretical belief in a future beyond the grave, as he retains other traces of his boyish education, but he does not think of reckoning seriously with this belief when he is deciding how to order his conduct. In determining what are his highest duties and chief interests in life he allows his vision to be confined to the experiences which lie between birth and death and the consequences which he expects his acts to have on the earthly lives of his fellow-men. The distinction, once so real and living, between a man's 'temporal' and his 'eternal' interests has lost most of its significance for the modern man, even when he continues to be a professed member of a Christian communion. Even our Christianity is, for the most part, a 'secularised' Christianity, more intent on 'social reform' than on the 'salvation of souls.'

There are even thinkers of high repute and professed reverence for Christian ideas always ready to urge that it is better so. "The dream of immortality," say some of them, "is after all a selfish dream, begotten of an immoral craving to be paid for doing your duty. If you must feed your mind on the future at all, it is a far worthier course to set your heart on your children than to hanker after an unimaginable continuance of your own petty private existence. What, after all, does that matter in a Universe so prodigal of life? Remember that though God buries His workmen, He carries on His work, and that it is the work, not the tools, which is the great thing."[1]

This apparent insignificance of the human person by

[1] See, for instance, the essays on "The True Conception of Another World," and "The Kingdom of God on Earth," in Professor Bosanquet's *Essays and Addresses* (Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1889).

comparison with the lavish and inexhaustible fertility of a Nature which seems to care nothing for the fate of any individual life, this ruthlessness with which what we account the most precious of human lives are daily cut short by what looks like the senseless sport of circumstance,—these, rather than any specific arguments, seem to be the considerations which, inevitably perhaps, weaken men's belief in an unseen future when that belief is no longer kept alive by the vigorous assertion of ecclesiastical authority. When the poet cries out against God

> Thou hast fed one rose with dust of many men,

which of us, in a scientific age, can help saying in his heart "Yes, *that* is the truth"? To men familiar with the vast mortality of humanity before birth and in the earliest months after it, as well as with the destruction of human life caused by earthquake, famine, and pestilence, it may rightly seem illogical to think that the case against immortality is in any way strengthened by the slaughter and waste of human personality attendant on any war, even the greatest. But it is at least natural that the regular publication of long lists of casualties, which perhaps include the names of some who are very dear to us, should bring facts of which, from their familiarity, we commonly think but rarely in more ordinary times, home to us with a special poignancy. It is fitting, then, that in this time of war we should take stock of our convictions and consider calmly whether, in the face of seemingly adverse fact, we can still hold fast to the Christian hope, and, if we can, what reason we can give for the faith that is in us.

Before we proceed to answer the question how the facts which our experience in war time thus specially forces on our notice affect Christian belief, we shall do well to be clear what the Christian doctrine calls on us to affirm and what it does not. For we may probably find that many of our difficulties are created for us by

a mere confusion of that which is *de fide* for the Christian, and that which is merely matter of 'pious opinion,' or perhaps only of crude popular imagination. What then is actually affirmed in the common creed of Christendom concerning the life to come? Three things are certainly asserted: (1) the continuance of the soul's life after the death of our 'body of humiliation'; (2) the necessity for our complete felicity of a body as well as a soul; (3) the dependence of our condition beyond the grave on the moral quality of our life on this side of it. The articles of the Creed which embody these beliefs pledge the Christian to a belief in immortality, in the "resurrection of the body" and in "judgment" to come.[1] Each of them may be regarded as the denial of a particular error. The Christian may not believe (1) that his life is extinguished at death, nor (2) that his final destiny is to survive as a mere 'ghost,' nor yet (3) that his destiny is independent of the character of the life he has led here in the flesh for good or evil. Or again we may say that what the Christian Creed asserts is (1) that beyond the grave the souls of the just are in the hand of God, (2) that God is the God of the body, and the bodily world generally, no less than of the mind, (3) that God is righteous in His ways and that the law of His dealings with us is that each of us shall reap as he has sown. But beyond this the Christian Creed affirms nothing. It tells us nothing, and professes to tell us nothing, of the special conditions or experiences of the 'departed' soul, nor yet of the character of the 'glorified body,' nor yet of the mechanism, so to say, by which it is ensured that our future shall depend on our deeds done here. On all these matters Christianity, as expressed in its Creed, is frankly agnostic. It is a religion and not

[1] It is true that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed does not actually contain the phrase "resurrection of the body" or "flesh." But it speaks of a "resurrection of the dead" (*προσδοκῶ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν*), and it appears that the actual words *carnis resurrectionem* formed part of the earliest confession known to us, the "old Roman" Creed. It is on this point that Christianity parts company with Plato.

a theosophy. The devout imagination, and even the mere curiosity, of all ages has sought to supply answers to these questions on which the Creed maintains an unbroken silence. Some of these answers have, no doubt, been preposterous enough, but the Christian faith remains untouched by any amount of proof of the emptiness of theosophic speculations to which it has never committed itself. Whatever may have been the sins of theologians, Christian Theology, as distinguished from popular superstition, is not fairly chargeable with an "insane license of affirmation about a future state."

Further it should be observed that Christianity, (apart from its assertion of the historical fact of the resurrection of Our Lord, a matter which does not fall within the scope of the present paper,) offers no special proof of its doctrine of the life to come. The Church requires its members to hold the belief, but does not require them to hold that any proof of its truth has ever been given or even that such a theoretical proof is possible. The Roman Church, it is true, with its characteristic rationalism, has gone somewhat further; at the Fifth Lateran Council, under Leo X., the doctrine that the immortality of the soul can be known only by revelation was formally condemned, and Christian philosophers commanded to refute the arguments of those who held this position.[1] But even the Roman Church does not require its members to believe that immortality actually *has* been "proved by natural reason." It is open to the most orthodox neo-scholastic to hold that every attempted 'proof' which has yet been put forward by divines or philosophers is fallacious, and even, apparently, that every future attempt at 'proof' may be equally unsatisfactory.

The utmost that even the Roman Church demands is the admission that 'proof' of immortality is not

[1] The Council was opened in 1512 by Julius II. and closed by Leo X. in 1517. The proposition that "human reason" tends to establish the mortality of the soul was condemned at the eighth sitting of the Council on November 11, 1513.

intrinsically impossible. Whatever we may think of the authority of the Lateran Council, it ought to be clear that there is a sense of the word 'proof' in which it *is* intrinsically impossible that there should be any proof of our immortality, and consequently that it is no argument against the legitimacy of faith in the unseen future to point out that *such* proof is out of the question. We cannot, for instance, prove the immortality of man, in any sense in which immortality has a value for religion, by inductive reasoning upon data obtained by observation or experiment. The attempts of occultists and psychical researchers to furnish empirical evidence for 'human survival' may be useful as calling our attention to obscure and interesting facts of psychology, but for the purposes of religious faith they must always remain worthless. For, even if the alleged facts were better substantiated than they are and further admitted of only one interpretation, they would not establish anything which could satisfy our deepest human need. At best, they would only show that the soul for a time survives the death of its body. They would show, in fact, that there is some kind of 'future' life, but they would not show that this future life is in any sense a 'better' life. What has made the hope of immortality precious to mankind in its hours of peril and bereavement is precisely that immortality, in the great religions, has always been taken to mean that it is the best features in our personality which endure in spite of the mortality of all earthly things, that in "the world to come" the soul will retain its interests in Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and will be able there to pursue these ideals as it cannot while it is hindered at every moment by the limitations imposed on its endeavours by its connection with its present body, and exposed to all the chances and changes of this mutable world. For religion an immortality which does not mean "life in God, and union there" is of no value; practical morality can derive no support

from belief in a continued existence which is not bound up with the present by the law that how a man fares 'there' depends on how he lives 'here.' On these fundamental things, even if the witness of spiritualism and psychical research could be received without question, it has really nothing to tell us. There is nothing in the alleged facts to show that a 'discarnate soul' might not be even more helpless in the face of untoward circumstance, less rational, less capable of caring for goodness and truth, than an embodied soul. Its 'survival' might be merely a slow sinking into mental and moral idiocy; it might outlast the body only to fall a victim to an ineluctable 'second death.' Nor is it true either that the 'facts' of the occultist are indisputable, or even, if admitted, capable of only one interpretation. The actual occurrence of the alleged 'facts' is often next to impossible to establish, and as for the interpretation, there seems no doubt that conscious or unconscious fraud plays a large part in the 'phenomena,' and it is at least likely that, where fraud is excluded, much that seems at first sight to be communicated by the dead is really derived by thought-transference from the living. If there remain any 'facts' which cannot be accounted for in these ways, there is still always the open possibility that the 'spirits' from whom the spiritualist medium obtains a message are mischievous, or absolutely evil, beings fraudulently adopting an *alias* for their own purposes. The traditional belief of the Church in diabolical possession, it may reasonably be held, explains many of the 'phenomena' as well as, if not better than, the theory of the spiritualist.

Nor is it really necessary, at the present day, to dwell at length on the unsatisfactoriness of the old-fashioned *a priori* 'proofs' of the soul's immortality. Without committing ourselves rashly to the assertion that no valid proof of this kind can ever be given, we

may at least say that none that has yet been given can really escape the annihilating exposure made by Kant of the ambiguities and fallacies of the old "Rational Psychology." We may say with equal confidence that no such proof, if we had one, would ever establish the conclusion we really want. What we want is to be assured that the life to come, for the man who has done his best here, is an ascending life, a life nearer to God, Who is the "fountain of life." No demonstration, if one could be given, of the mere indestructibility of the human soul could bring us one step nearer to this conclusion. If we knew that our souls were indestructible, and knew no more, we should have no good reason to feel sure that our doom in the "world to come" might not be to grow continually duller of understanding, coarser and feebler in character, more and more insensible to beauty. Our immortality, like the deathlessness of the Struldbrugs, might be a curse instead of a blessing.

It does not require much reflection to see why proofs of the kind we have been considering are neither possible nor desirable. The only kind of immortality we can pronounce worth having is immortality as spiritual beings, not mere continued existence as living beings. But the sort of proof offered us, whether by the old Rational Psychology, or by modern spiritualism, is mere proof of our continuance as living beings of some sort or other. In the interests of morality and religion it is positively a good thing that proofs of this kind should not be procurable. If we could find reasons, apart from a consideration of what is implied in the spiritual life itself, sufficient to prove our immortality, that very fact would be disquieting, as it would suggest that our immortality, since it could be proved without any reference to the spiritual life, might itself be no more than a mere unspiritual persistence. If we wish to know whether there are good reasons for the hope that

we shall not merely survive death, but shall survive as beings with a true and heightened spiritual life, it must be in the specific character of the spiritual life as we live it now, under whatever hindrances, that we must look for those reasons. To use a familiar phrase, the evidence for which we look must be 'moral' and not 'mathematical.' And for that very reason we must expect to find that our evidence, like all 'moral evidence,' gives us only a 'moral' certainty, an assurance which will satisfy the man who knows in himself what it is to live the life of the spirit, but can bring no conviction to the 'natural man' who is content to look on at the spiritual life of others without sharing it. If you do not care profoundly for moral and spiritual 'values,' you must not expect to be convinced by considerations which derive all their force from belief in the infinite significance of these values. That is why Our Lord is reported to have said that it is only those who are themselves *ex veritate* who can hear His words.[1]

Thus we get at last face to face with the real issue. Does the belief in the supreme value of the spiritual life imply as a consequence the belief in the indestructibility of the individuals who live that life? Was Our Lord thinking rightly, or was He committing a fallacy, when He gave as the sufficient ground for the belief that the saints have not ceased to be the argument that "God is not the God of the dead but of the living"? I shall try in the remainder of this paper to give my reasons for thinking that Our Lord's solution is the only one consistent with faith in the rationality of the Universe. But first it may be worth while to remark that the issue is not a remote and purely speculative, but a very real and practical one, one which none of us can avoid facing, even if he would. Our concern,

[1] I take the opportunity to express my indebtedness here and elsewhere throughout these pages to Professor Varisco's profound work *I Massimi Problemi* (English translation, *The Great Problems*, London, George Allen, 1914).

in deciding for or against the Christian faith in immortality, is not to gratify an idle curiosity, but to find a right rule for the ordering of our walk and conduct in life. It is impossible that the judgment of a man who holds the belief in a true immortality about the relative worth of goods and the relative importance of conflicting obligations should be the same as that of a man who does not. What type of character I ought to promote in myself and in others, what kind of satisfaction I should seek for them or myself, these are questions which must be answered differently according as one does or does not think "nobly of the soul."[1] It is said often enough by those who attach little value to the belief in immortality that the worth of a satisfaction has nothing to do with its duration. Yet this is surely but a shallow judgment. As Dr. Rashdall has rightly said, it has always been regarded as a chief reason for preferring 'higher' goods to the momentary gratifications of appetite or whim, that the 'higher' good is also the more abiding. No *obiter dictum* of a worldly-minded philosopher can take the truth out of Bunyan's contrast between Passion and Patience. "He therefore that hath his portion first, must needs have a time to spend it; but he that hath his portion last, must have it lastingly." If "practical wisdom" is not to be once for all forbidden to influence human action, it must make a difference to the conduct of life whether we believe ourselves and our fellows to be mere transient 'appearances' or pilgrims in search of a city that does not yet appear. The 'highest' goods, by the admission of all mankind, are only to be won by a life of arduous and bitter self-discipline and self-denial; in our

[1] A correspondent of the highest philosophical distinction objects that his own belief in immortality has never affected any of his moral judgments. My reply would be that at least it *ought* to have affected them. Our judgment as to what is good for children would be very different from what it is if we knew that they were always to remain children and never grow up. And if Christianity is true, we are all, in this life, children who have yet to grow up elsewhere. The immortality in which my critic believes is not a *vita venturi saeculi*.

experience here they are enjoyed rarely and but for a short time. If then the quest of them is so heart-breaking, its success so uncertain and so transient, with what warrant can a rational judge still pronounce these the highest,—*if* this life is all? Surely it would be more rational to "think thoughts befitting man's estate" and to make it the ideal for ourselves and others "to fleet the time carelessly," "to eat our bread with joy and drink our wine with a merry heart," knowing that the life of the philosopher, the artist, the saint, and all those who "scorn delights and live laborious days" is, in the end, vanity and vexation of spirit. Or again, to consider one or two specific instances, is it not manifest that our verdict, *e.g.*, on the lawfulness of suicide cannot be the same if we regard the demonstrable secular consequences of the act as its only consequences as if we judge otherwise? Take again the not uncommon case where we have to choose between doing justice and promoting the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" of those who, so far as we can see, will be affected by our decision. If the effects of my action on the souls of those whom it affects were really limited to this earthly life, I confess I should find it hard ever to defend the execution of a thoroughly unpopular act of justice; if this life is a fragment of an unseen whole, the case may be altered. Besides, even where there is no room for divergence of judgment as to what is right, our sense of the *importance* of doing right must be affected by our view as to the permanence of the results of our choice. It makes a difference, and a very great difference, to our conviction of the momentousness of our choices whether we think that it will be all the same after a few score years, for happiness or misery, to every one concerned, whether we choose rightly or wrongly, or believe that our conduct now must influence the destinies of our own and other souls for ever. The belief that one's personal action can either way have only transient

effects is one which paralyses the will, if one is in earnest with it. If we *are* "such stuff as dreams are made on," how can we, who know this, be expected to take life very seriously? More, this practical issue is one on which no mother's son can avoid taking a side. As Pascal said, "you *must* make the wager." For we must order our lives on the assumption that there is a beyond or order them on the assumption that there is not. To quote Pascal again, "not to bet" is, as far as our practice is concerned, equivalent to "betting against" immortality, since "not to bet" means in practice to order our lives *as if* no consideration of any but secular consequences should influence our judgment as to where the path of right and duty lies. It is therefore as a practical question of the assumptions on which it is reasonable to order our conduct that I propose to consider the issue about immortality in the following paragraphs.

As I have said already, the whole question is at bottom one of values. To any one who seriously believes that our convictions about the value of different types of life and conduct are purely matters of individual taste and that the 'Universe' is indifferent to them, I cannot hope and do not attempt to bring any conviction. I am henceforth addressing those who are so far agreed with myself that they are convinced of the truth of our judgment that the things we only know as manifestations of, or products of, individual intelligent personal life, human thought and human affections, science and poetry and art, are of supreme value to the Universe. Even the most anti-religious man of science must go at least part of the way with us in our conviction. For he at least believes that truth is in itself a thing of more value than error, a thing it is *worth* our while to spend and be spent in seeking for. And he does not usually think this belief in the worth of truth a mere personal peculiarity of his own, like a

relish for the taste of olives or a dislike of the taste of port wine. He holds that Science does reveal something of the real character of the common or objective world in which we all live, and that, for that reason, men *ought* to prize scientific knowledge and seek after it. Why truth, apart from any utilitarian applications we may make of our knowledge of it to increase human comfort, should be more valuable than error, he does not pretend to say. Nor could he well prove his assumption that truth is always there to be found if we look for it long enough and in the right way. He cannot *prove* that Science might not some day issue in a tangle of insoluble contradictions. He accepts his conviction that truth is worth having and that those who seek it will not be disappointed, as the Pragmatists say, at its 'face-value.' His belief that Science will never finally contradict herself is really an act of faith, faith in the rationality or reasonableness of the Universe, in the sense that the Universe answers our human demand that *it* shall not contradict itself. We who go further than the anti-religious man of science, and ascribe the same degree of value to the moral and religious as he does to the physical order, are simply carrying out this same act of faith more consistently and thoroughly. We, too, believe in the reasonableness of the Universe, but when we call it reasonable we mean that it answers not one but all of our fundamental human demands. If men judge truth to be more valuable than error, so also do they judge goodness better than wickedness, union of heart and will with the Power that maintains the Universe better than estrangement from it. And we maintain that the demand we make on the Universe that it shall answer our moral and religious needs is no less justified than the demand that it shall answer our desire for truth. We should think a Universe which proved to be in final conflict with our need for a moral ideal and a worthy object of worship as unreason-

able as a Universe which baffled the intellect's aspiration towards truth by contradicting itself. We, too, believe that if we seek we shall find, and that when we do not find it is because we have sought on the wrong lines or not long enough. The source of the scientific man's faith, his implicit conviction that a final contradiction between the aspirations of humanity and the structure of the Universe is an absurdity, is the source of our faith in a righteous and self-revealing God, and we claim to have the advantage in logic over the anti-religious devotee of Science just because we refuse to give an arbitrary preference to one single aspect of man's aspiration to find himself at home in his world. We believe in God because we trust our conviction that what mankind judges to be of supreme worth really is of supreme worth, and therefore to us a non-spiritual Universe, that is, a Universe which did not conserve truth and beauty and goodness, would be an absurd Universe.

For us, then, the really vital issue is this. We believe that the personal activities by which the things of highest value are produced and sustained are not wasted: the Universe conserves the highest values. But is the conservation of these values possible without the conservation of the individuals by whose activities they have been produced and sustained? In the view of many representative thinkers of our time the answer is that it is possible. Social and political institutions, for example, survive their founders; the poet's or artist's work survives to be a source of aesthetic delight and inspiration to centuries after the poet or the artist has become dust; a good life is a source of moral inspiration to many generations; even the most intimately personal of goods, our loves and affections, it is said, live on after us in their effect on the lives and characters of those whom we leave behind us; personal qualities, again, are often 'inherited' from

one generation to another. Facts like these are constantly brought forward to prove that it *is* possible that even the most intimately personal of values may be preserved in a Universe which makes no provision for the preservation of any individual person. We survive in our work and in the memories of those who have known us, and, we are asked, what more can we reasonably desire? A mere reference to the recent *Gifford Lectures* of Professor Bosanquet suffices to show that, in the opinion of some distinguished philosophers, we cannot reasonably ask for anything more, and, indeed, that to ask more is at least dangerously like impiety.

Yet there can be no doubt that most of us do ask something more of the Universe than this, or that if we resign ourselves to the substitution of belief in the survival of a man's work and influence for the Christian belief in the survival of the man, we do so with heavy hearts and because we fancy that Science has somehow destroyed the foundations of the Christian hope rather than because we think the substitute better than the original. If we have no longer any right to believe as our fathers did, no doubt we must do the best we can with the substitute; but, how much rather we would retain the genuine article, *if only we could*! Nor do I think this πόθος τοῦ εἶναι, this desire "to go on and not to die," is a mere symptom of human weakness, as so many have said. If I can trust my own experience, it is just when "life is low," and the order of the world seems to us hopelessly disarranged, that we can most readily indulge or even welcome the imagination of a complete surcease of being as an escape from the torturing "wheel of becoming"; when we feel most alive and vigorous in soul and body, when we feel surest that we are at our best and our thought at its truest, then, rather than at any other time, do we feel "in our bones" that a Universe which could allow human personality to vanish would be no better than a mad Universe.

As Nietzsche says, and truth is always twice welcome when it comes to us from the mouth of an enemy, *Weh spricht, Vergeh! Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit.* Hence it is natural to consider whether after all the doctrine which combines insistence on the supreme worth of spiritual things with denial of the permanence of spirits may not be as unsatisfactory to the brain as it is to the heart.

Put in the rather abstract language employed by philosophers, our problem is this: *Can there be conservation of spiritual values without conservation of personal life?* Translated into the more familiar language of religion this means: *Can we believe in God without believing in such a life to come as Christianity has taught us to hope for?* I am now to give my reasons for thinking that the true answer to this question is No.

1. As I have said already, I am not now seeking to establish our right to believe in the genuineness or the preservation of spiritual values. I assume as common ground to myself and my readers, that our estimate of these values is a true one, and that in some way the Universe recognises its truth by preserving them. The question is whether they can be preserved if there is one end to the spirit of the beast and to the spirit of man. According to those impugners of the Christian hope with whose view I am dealing in this essay, spiritual values are adequately preserved by their transmission from one generation to another. Persons perish, but the effect of their lives and work remains as a legacy to all the ages to follow. Now on this I have only to remark, that if what is meant is that our "*work* is everlasting," the permanence of the human race, at least, seems to be taken for granted. If the race itself is as perishable as its individual members, all that the thought of the continuance of our influence and our work after our death offers us is a stay of execution; with mankind all the spiritual values produced by man's agency

come to an end. Now, so far as the natural sciences go, there seems to be no more reason for believing in the "immortality of the race" than for believing in that of the individual. Natural science, in fact, contemplates with something like certainty the ultimate extinction of all human life as a consequence of the growing unsuitability of our planet to sustain human organisms. Nay, more, natural science holds out no hope that when mankind dies it will die in the full possession of its faculties. What it teaches us to anticipate as the most probable fate of the race is not a sudden extinction in its prime, but a gradual reversion to a condition of savagery in which our degenerate successors will be wholly occupied, like our remote ancestors, or like the most unfavourably situated human groups of to-day, with the immediate problem of keeping their bodies in mere existence amidst hostile surroundings. What it foresees for civilisation and all its works is a long-drawn-out but inevitable death from senile decay. Indeed, we might make yet a further point. We can have no assurance from empirical science that this decay has not already set in. For all we know, mankind may have done its best already, and our highest endeavours may be no more than fruitless efforts to recapture a short period of youth in advanced middle age. The witness of Science is as much against the possibility that mankind will remain at its highest development, when that development has been reached, as it is against the hope of continual progress. Take, if you will, the most generous views of our capacity for progress and the capacity of our planet to continue in a condition fit to be the home of highly developed persons, it still remains true that, if the attainments of man are bounded by the possibilities of our life here, "our ending is despair," the Universe does *not* make provision for the permanent existence of the spiritual values fashioned by noble human life and

noble human creative activity. Good, the highest conceivable human good, is achieved only to be lost. The "stream of life" runs out in the end into no sea, but vanishes meanly in bog and sand. "The immortality of the race," in any sense in which it could be a standing inspiration to endeavour, is no more guaranteed by Science than the immortality of the man; the victory in logic rests with the Pessimist who pronounces all human endeavour vanity and vexation of spirit.

2. We see, then, that natural science gives us no more reason to believe in such a "future life" for the race as would secure the conservation of values than to believe in the immortality of individual persons. The philosopher who looks to the future of the race to assure us that our spiritual gains will not be lost is making just as much of a 'venture of faith' as the Christian who looks for the same assurance to the future of the individual soul. Both are equally trusting to the evidence of things not seen and never to be seen by the eye which is directed solely on verifiable 'fact.' Indeed it might fairly be urged that the non-Christian philosopher's 'venture of faith' is, from the scientific point of view, much less legitimate than the Christian's. For though the Christian believer avows his faith in something which Science is unable to substantiate, he does not call in question anything which Science asserts. Everything that Science can tell him of the mortality of individual organisms, or of the whole population of this planet, he can accept without demur, just because it is not here that he looks for the final consummation for himself or for his kind. But, or so at least it seems to me, the philosopher who looks to the terrestrial future of the human race for the conservation of spiritual values is bound to imagine that future in a way which positively contradicts the forecasts which Science has, at least, made very highly probable. For him, if he is really in earnest with his faith in the conservation of

values, there must be, what there is not for the Christian, a real 'conflict' between Religion and Science. And there is a further consideration on which I should be inclined to lay a great deal of stress. How *much* value is, after all, 'conserved,' if the person only survives in his work and the fragrant memory of him? Something, no doubt, but surely more is irreparably lost. There is a real sense in which a man is always greater than his work. No man ever does succeed in putting his whole personality into his work. The work of Shakespeare or Michael Angelo is, to be sure, something of more spiritual value than the existence of these men, apart from their work, would have been. But the actual Shakespeare and the actual Michael Angelo did not exist separately from their work. If they had not expressed themselves in that work, they would not have been themselves but quite different men. Yet it is certain that there was more in the living soul of Shakespeare or Michael Angelo than ever got itself transferred to paper, or canvas, or marble. And there is more in any one of us than ever finds expression in what he does or says. His 'work,' or the influence of his character and example on those who know him, never exhausts him. For his influence survives, and the same is really true of his 'work,' only so far as there is full understanding for it on the part of those to whom "he, being dead, yet speaketh." And it is just the greatest men who never are adequately understood. Thus, if it is only in his work and influence that a man survives, much that was of the rarest worth in him must be irreparably lost at his death. We see this, again, in the numerous cases where a life of precious promise is cut short in the self-sacrificing effort to save an inferior life. When the Earl and Dr. Shrapnel, in *Beauchamp's Career*, looked at the mud-lark whom the hero had rescued from drowning at the cost of his own life, Meredith tells us that the unspoken thought in

both men's minds was, "This is what we have in exchange for Beauchamp." I do not see how the pertinency of the reflection is to be disputed. We see the same thing, perhaps more strikingly still, when we consider the case of the 'common' man who leaves behind him neither 'great work' nor any very remarkable example. Such a man may be what we call 'common-place' in every respect, yet his death may make a gap in the lives of those who loved him, and by whom he was loved, which nothing will ever fill. For them, at least, his extinction, to survive merely as a memory slowly decaying with the lapse of time, would plainly be the irreparable destruction of a very real and genuine spiritual value. And since most of us are, after all, fairly 'common-place,' it would be the rule, and not the exception, that the values created by personal human activities are not preserved.[1] I think, then, we may safely say as much as this. Unless our personality itself is in some way proof against death, there can be no preservation of more than the smallest fraction of the personal, or spiritual, values of life. If the Universe guarantees us nothing better than the preservation for a time of our work and the memory of us, it is not what we have the right to call a reasonable system. Indeed, if imperfectly understood work and a fading memory are all that are left of what was once a living man, we might fairly say that the Universe too often—

> Straws the wheat and saves the chaff
> With a most evil fan.

3. There is another side to this same thought which we ought not to overlook. I have already spoken of the difficulty of reconciling belief in the real preservation of the highest values in life with the premature

[1] But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me.

extinction of noble and beautiful personalities, and this difficulty is one which is naturally suggested to us when we meditate on the apparent irremediable waste of good caused by the present war. But there is another aspect of the matter on which something must be said. If the order of the Universe is to be pronounced truly reasonable, it must not be at hopeless variance with the foundations of the moral order. It must be at bottom eternally and inexorably just. All men know in their hearts, though a few may refuse to admit it with their lips, that a radically unjust universe would be a radically absurd universe. And all men who have not sophisticated their consciences with an immoral humanitarianism know well enough what the law of Justice is. It is that a man shall suffer as he does, that he shall reap as he has sown, that each soul shall itself be judged according to its works, and that no man shall make 'atonement' for another. So sure are we of the eternal rightness of this law of Justice that we would not have it otherwise if we could, even though we may shudder to think what its consequences mean to ourselves. In a truly moral order there is no 'letting-off,' and no moral man wants to be 'let off.' There are, of course, forgiveness of offences, and change of heart through genuine repentance, but where justice rules, forgiveness and penitence do not 'let off.' I may be sorry for my misdoings and I may be forgiven them, but neither the sorrow nor the pardon can avail to hinder the consequences of my deed from coming home to me. In fact, so long as a man's secret desire is to 'get off' bearing the consequences of his deed, so long he is no true penitent and no subject for forgiveness. A Universe that respects and conserves moral values must therefore be an inexorably just Universe. Now this is precisely what Christianity declares the Universe to be when it asserts in its Creed, as part of the truth about human

destiny, that a judgment to come awaits every soul of man. It is true that some versions of Christianity have at least gone perilously near converting the doctrine of 'Atonement' into a device for 'getting off' the misdoer by a sort of legal fiction, but that is just why the general sense of Christendom has condemned them as heresies, and why there is no future for this type of belief.

We can hardly help feeling that if what we see of the ways of God with man on this earth is all that there ever will be to see, Justice counts for very little in His dealings. We cannot even say with any confidence that history proves that on the grand scale right-doing exalts a nation and wrong-doing brings it low. We are probably all convinced that the cause in which we are now fighting is that of right against monstrous and shameless wrong, and that the lives laid down at the call of our country are lives sacrificed on the altar of Justice. But we should misread the lesson of history if we supposed that this is in itself any sufficient reason for thinking that our side in the great conflict *must* be triumphant. And even if we could be sure that this were so, it would not be of itself sufficient proof that Justice reigns in the Universe. Even so, if individual personality ends at death, it would still be true that many of those foremost in the guilt of the war never received the recompense of their deeds. Bismarck and Moltke, who taught Germany that national greatness is only to be achieved by injury to neighbours, and that the most dastardly fraud is sanctified when it is employed to ruin a neighbour nation, have gone down to their graves in peace, and left the reward of their evil-doing to be reaped by their less guilty pupils. Even among those who will have to pay a heavy price for walking in the ways of Bismarck and his fellow-conspirators against mankind, it is safe to say that the prime offenders will

have the least to pay; the heaviest of the debt falls on the mass of the 'people,' who are guilty only of doing what their rulers seduce or coerce them into doing, and on their wholly guiltless descendants.[1] And if this is the final truth about the matter I do not see how we can escape the conclusion that the Universe is a place where Justice is being for ever buffeted in the face. And I, for one, am so far on the side of the common man, that I cannot call such a Universe reasonable. A world so organised that the payment for misdoing regularly falls on those who have *not* incurred the debt in heavier measure than upon those who have, is not a world in which our highest human moral values are preserved. And it is idle to suggest in one breath that values are preserved while you declare in the next that all human standards of value may be hopelessly in error. You might as well say that the world obeys the laws of logic, and yet that it does not regard the law of contradiction, because that is only a law of imperfect "human" thought. To say that the Universe respects values, but that these values may be utterly different from the only ones of which we know, is one and the same as to say that it respects no values at all. Therefore, I maintain that, if spiritual values count for anything in the Universe, there is and can be, in the heavens above or in the depths beneath, no mightier law than the law of Justice and equal Retribution. And this means that I cannot by dying escape the just and full reward for what I have done. If the world or its Maker are to deserve my respect, to say nothing of my worship, "there must be Hell," or "something very like it." Here the righteous cause may be utterly defeated, the memory of those who gave their lives for it forgotten, the whole story so perverted in the 'history' written by the unjust but winning side as to make the victim appear

[1] *Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.*

the criminal,—and therefore, if spiritual values are really preserved at all, it is false wisdom to say, as it is characteristic of our enemies of the present moment that they have agreed to say—

*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.*

History cannot be the *liber scriptus Ex quo mundus iudicetur*. If the only bar at which the sinner has to stand is the bar of our gullible 'history,' then God is simply not just, and a God who is not, whatever else He may be, "just in all His ways" is no being fit to receive the *rationabile obsequium* of men.[1]

4. I have been arguing the case for the Christian Faith and its general conception of the 'last things,' as I have been careful to insist, on the assumption that whatever view we may adopt about the future and destiny of the values created by human endeavour, we are, in any case, appealing to faith and not to demonstration. But reflection along the lines which I have indicated ought, I think, to convince an unprejudiced judge that the faith in the preservation of values which is strong enough to include faith in the permanence of the persons who create those values is, on the premisses common to both doctrines, an infinitely more reasonable belief than any faith in the preservation of values *without* the permanence of personality. For *if* the faith of Christendom is true, it is clear that the personal values not only may survive the destruction of all we can see or touch, but are capable of continual and unlimited augmentation. But if the Faith is a delusion, if "in this life only we have hope," it has, I think, been shown that all we can look for is the survival, for a

[1] The distinguished critic to whom I have already referred writes that a rigidly just Creator would, in his opinion, be a fiend. If he really means that a world in which the man who is determined to "go to the devil" is forcibly frustrated would be better than one in which he is not, I am afraid there is an ultimate ethical disagreement between us. I do not say, and I am not aware that the strictest orthodoxy requires one to say, that any actual man *has* ever absolutely "gone to the devil." But there is always the possibility.

while and on unstable conditions, of a mere fragment of what makes life worth living. Hence pessimistic atheism seems to me the only logical alternative to Christian faith. Even in the world as a pessimistic atheism conceives it a man might, no doubt, play a not wholly ignoble part. Knowing that the stupidity and immorality of the Universe must in the end break him, he might, at least, make up his mind to die defiantly insisting, in the face of fact, on the supreme worth of the things the Universe throws away so recklessly. Humanity might as a whole emulate the fate of the three hundred of Thermopylae. But such despairing heroism would surely be achieved at the cost of clear logical thinking. It might in a way be noble, it would hardly be reasonable that generation after generation should die for a cause that is known to be doomed. In fact, the analogy with the heroes of Thermopylae does not really hold water. For, as Mr. Chesterton has somewhere said, in a battle one does *not* know from the first which side will finally triumph; you fight in order to find out who will win. Leonidas and his men knew indeed that they would fall; they could not know that the cause of Hellas would be ruined, and it was just that Hellas might survive that they laid down their lives. But if all the generations of mankind are fighting a forlorn hope, then we are not dying that humanity may live; our life is blind and our death is fruitless. Hence there seems to be something fundamentally unreasonable in the consideration which our Hegelian philosophers are fond of urging by way of reconciling our hearts to a Universe without immortality. They tell us, and with truth, that it is the law of all life, and peculiarly of all high spiritual life that a man must "die to live." We must die to the lower life that we may live to the higher. But I would insist on the point that, as this very formula suggests, the death to the lower is only

tolerable because it is also a birth into the higher. We put off mere animality or mere childhood that we may put on manhood. And in this process it is *we* who at once die to the old and are born into the new, just as, according to Christianity it is one and the same man who dies to the flesh that he may live for ever in the spirit. But if humanity is to die out of the Universe, its death is *not* a death into a higher life, it *is* the "second death" of spirit and body together. That a man should choose to die that men may live the better for his death, that we understand: but that all men should die that nothing human may live, where is the reason of it? Thus I set it down as in favour of the faith in the world to come that such a faith, and so far as I can see, no other, makes conflict and heroism and personal self-surrender finally reasonable. It enhances at once our sense of the possibilities latent in humanity, and our sense of the tremendous responsibility of each of us for all his choices, to believe that there is no decision between good and evil we can make now that may not be pregnant with unending consequences, for good or bad, to the souls of all mankind. If we are right in thinking that the denial of personal immortality means the perishability of all human personal values, I cannot help inferring that when all comes to the same thing in the end, no choice of mine between good and evil really matters very much. Why should we all, and the best of us more strenuously than any "strive to put the crooked straight," why should we even care very much whether we personally are happy or wretched, when the whole human struggle will all be over and done with in a time which, in the history of the Universe, may be counted as a watch in the night? True, no doubt, so long as life lasts the illusion that the struggle matters and that *our* action may make a difference to its results will persist in the face of all supposed philosophical

demonstrations to the contrary. But why should the rational man, or why should a humanity that has become rational, refuse to escape from the conflict between reason and illusion by the door which stands always open? Might not 'universal suicide' in such a case be the one possible supreme assertion of reason, inasmuch as it would mean the decision to bring about our inevitable doom for ourselves and with open eyes instead of leaving it to be brought upon us by irrational accident? I do not say, as some too zealous defenders of the Faith have said, that disbelief in immortality would logically lead to universal immoral self-seeking, since, if I am wholly mutable and perishable, I see no reason to ascribe any higher worth to my own self-hood than to that of another. What I do suggest is that the more logical a man is with such a creed, the more difficult it is for him to have a valid reason for preferring to do any one thing rather than any other. Self-seeking and self-devotion are, in the end, equally senseless fussing about the infinitely insignificant, and the heart is taken out of all human endeavour. It is significant, as an indication of the soundness of this line of thought, that thinkers who have combined denial of immortality with practical zeal for an ideal of human life, have regularly tried to recommend their ethical doctrines by the use of language which, if it means anything, means what is radically inconsistent with their speculative beliefs. Spinoza, the greatest of them all, may serve as one example instead of many. It is the standing puzzle of his philosophy that, whereas according to his metaphysical principles there is only one individual and permanent thing, the thing he calls indifferently Nature or God, and human persons (being, like everything else, mere modes or phases of Nature,) are neither more nor less abiding than anything else, it is fundamental in his ethics that the individual human mind is 'eternal' in a way in which

nothing else of which we know is 'eternal.' If you think things out to the end, man's prerogative of 'eternity' in Spinoza is just what others have thought his special inheritance of misery; he, alone among the creatures, has "foreknowledge of death." He has become "like God" by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the one thing he has learned by the experiment is that "thou shalt surely die."

On the other side, to the man who can believe in the world to come, it is just his belief that makes it possible to hold with Plato that the decision to be "really good or bad" is indeed "momentous, more momentous than it looks." If his belief is true, then though a decision for or against good may be taken in an instant, yet on that instant there hang absolutely incalculable consequences for himself and not for himself alone. And, for that reason, we may fairly hold that belief in the permanence of human personality, if it is only strong enough to dominate a man's life, braces to the great tasks, and that it is positively false to say with the superficial that the knowledge that the grave is indeed the end would make us more tender, more considerate, more wisely loving in our relations with those around us. If the grave is *not* the end, if it will *not* be "all the same a hundred years hence" how we have borne ourselves to those around us, then it becomes more and not less our duty to see to it that no soul of man is the worse, but rather the better, for what we have done to it.

5. What we have already said will enable us to dispose very briefly of two popular criticisms of the Christian Faith. It is often represented as a 'selfish' thing to look forward to the future. It is said that to hope for personal immortality is to expect a reward, what Hegel is said to have called a *pourboire*, for having lived decently, and that it is surely a worthier thing to do right for its own sake than to serve God for a price. Arguments of this kind merely caricature the belief

against which they are directed. It cannot be said that the Christian belief is not sometimes represented by its popular expositors in a form which gives some colour to the reproach, but these representations are themselves false to Christianity. It is the doctrine of the Church that God is to be loved and served for Himself and not from hope of reward or fear of punishment.[1] And it was not on any promise of a *pourboire* that Our Lord based the command to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Nor, to put the point in the most general way, is the 'blessedness' which Christianity promises to the faithful anything other than the continuance, under more favourable conditions, of a life the same in kind with that we enjoy here, so far as we live for the achievement of the highest human good of which we know. If the Christian Faith is true, we may hope to know more clearly hereafter what the highest good is, and to be able to follow it without distraction by hindrances which are unavoidable in our earthly pilgrimage, but in principle the good life 'here' and the good life 'there' are one. We may no more call the Heaven which Christianity bids us look for a *pourboire*, than we may say the same thing about the promise held out to the beginner in Art or Science that by loyal perseverance he will become a master. And the hope is not a 'selfish' one. It is not the expression of a superior value set by the Christian on his own soul as compared with those of others. It expresses his sense not of the worth of *his* personality in particular, but of the worth of all human personality. It means that as he thinks nobly of himself he thinks no less nobly of his fellows and of those who have gone before or shall come after in the procession of life. It means, in fact, that no imaginary 'Superman' but man himself is the 'meaning of earth' and the 'heir

[1] Cf. the sentiment of the well-known lines ascribed to S. Teresa—

*Aunque lo que espero no esperara,*
*lo mismo que te quiero te quisiera.*

of the ages.' This is no more than what every faith and every philosophy which asserts the reality of *any* human values must mean, and I think enough has been said to show that no such assertion of the reality of *any* human values can logically be retained unless we retain our belief in the value of the human persons who create and maintain those values.

So, too, we may dismiss as irrelevant all the common criticisms on the *naïveté* of the ways in which the popular imagination represents the details of the life to come. It is inevitable that in any attempt to imagine the future our images should be drawn from the present that we know, and that in proportion as our knowledge is defective our imaginations should be crude. An honest ignorant soul who knows of no higher happiness than to sit on Sunday in her Chapel, free from week-day worries, and listen to the sermon will naturally think of Heaven as a place where all the people are resting in their Sunday best, and the sermons 'never end.' An artist would imagine differently, and a man of science differently from both. Each of us will, *of course*, if he allows his imagination to dwell on such things at all, imagine the future in terms of the best activity he knows. But all these imaginations belong not to the Faith, but to the mythology which has inevitably grown up around it, and in principle, the unbeliever's language about the 'quiet sleep' or the 'unbroken rest' of death is just as mythological. He no more *knows* what it is to be dead than the Christian *knows* what it is to be in Heaven. *Trasumanar significar per verba Non si poria*, as Dante says. And it is noteworthy how silent Our Lord was on all the matters which exercise the curiosity of the inquisitive. Beyond the mere facts that there is a judgment of God and that the souls of the saints "live to Him," Our Lord committed Himself to nothing. He was content in His parables to use the frankly mythological language of the common people. He spoke of

the righteous as "feasting" with the traditional patriarchs or resting in "Abraham's bosom," of the unrighteous as criminals undergoing such penalties as are familiar to the subjects of Oriental sultans. Even when He spoke of the Judgment itself He did so in metaphors borrowed from the simple every-day life of the farmer and the shepherd. Only once did He depart from this use of transparent metaphor, and that was to rebuke the Sadducees for resting an argument against the resurrection on the assumption that the relations of men and women in the future, if there is a future, must be conditioned as they are in the present. Even then, He avoided any positive assertion. The acknowledged Creed of the Church maintains the same wise silence, and her practice has always been to discourage all attempts to imagine what is, in principle, unimaginable. She affirms the permanence of human personality, and the continuity of the soul's life hereafter with its life now; on all else she has nothing to say. Of one thing we may be sure, a future life under new and unknown conditions must be very different from the life we know now. If, *per impossibile*, we could now be made to see that life as it is, we might be so struck by the differences that we should fancy that in entering on it we had lost a great deal by which we set store, just as a child, if it could really see what the life of the 'grown-up' is, might think that because it is not, after all, a life of 'doing as you like,' it is a disappointing thing. Yet when the child comes to grow up, it does not pronounce adult life a disappointment because it is so unlike the old childish imagination of it. And so, when the soul which has been disciplined into good in this life passes into the unknown conditions of the life beyond, we must believe, if we would be Christians, that it will find there the continuation and completion of what it has known and loved here and will have this completed life as its own and not another's, but more than this "is not revealed."

All else we discern only dimly *per speculum in imagine*, and this, too, in a Universe which is God's Universe, is, no doubt, as it should be.

6. I have argued throughout on a great assumption, the assumption that the Universe is in the fullest sense reasonable, a realm truly adapted for the development of intelligent personal life. That this assumption is true Science can never show, and thus in making it we are certainly committing ourselves to a venture of faith. But, on the other side, Science can equally never show that it is not true. For Science simply does not deal with our judgments of value at all. Its business is to correlate facts by the discovery of formulae to which the course of events approximately conforms, and it is necessary, if this work is to be properly executed that no question of the ultimate worth and significance of the processes which make up the course of events should be allowed to intrude itself. Where good and evil come in at the door, Science flies out at the window. But life is more than Science, and to live on any coherent plan is to commit ourselves to a working hypothesis about the significance and worth of personality and its achievements. Whatever hypothesis we adopt, it must be one which Science is impotent alike to prove and to refute, and our adoption of it must be an act of practical faith. The hypothesis of the Christian is the one of all others which gives the deepest significance to our conduct, and makes life the most heroic spiritual adventure. Of all hypotheses it rates the gain or loss to be incurred, according as we live well or ill, highest. It provides for the fullest possible preservation of personal and spiritual values, and at the same time makes this preservation something which, for all of us, depends intimately on our personal choice and endeavour. Christianity makes no claim to replace faith by scientific knowledge as a guide to the ordering of our way through life; what it offers is the kind of faith which is—may we not say?—from its

intrinsic character the surest to bear fruit, where it is entertained as a living conviction, in noble living. So long as we confine our view to the earthly story of the succeeding generations of men, it must always remain an unanswered question whether our worthiest endeavour will bear fruit at all, and it must be certain that at best its fruit can only endure for a season. If the Christian Faith be true, and only if it be true, can we be sure that "our labour is not in vain in the Lord" because "in due time *we* shall reap, if we faint not." Is not this reason enough why, though we can have no speculative knowledge, we should live in the spirit of practical adherence to this faith?[1]

[1] Perhaps I may add a word about the fashionable doctrine of 'absorption' in the Deity as the final destiny of the soul. The expression seems to me highly ambiguous. We speak sometimes of a man as 'absorbed' in prayer or in scientific work. But we do not mean that in such moments the man's individuality has ceased to be; we mean that his mind, (*his* mind, and not another or an 'impersonal' mind,) is wholly concentrated on what he is doing. 'Absorption' in the Deity, so understood, would not only be consistent with, but would require individual immortality. The 'saints' so 'absorbed' in God would no more forfeit their individual existence than the stars cease to be when the sun shines. But if by 'absorption' is meant the annihilation of the individual soul, the doctrine seems to me inconsistent with everything for which I have pleaded in these pages. The constant equivocation of some of our Hegelianisers between these radically different senses of the same word does them no credit. And it is intolerable that the teaching of the Church should be confounded with the glaring heresies of such a work as the *Theologia Deutsch*.

# VII

# FAITH AND REALITY

BY

EDWARD ARTHUR BURROUGHS

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Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις
("Faith is that which gives reality to things hoped for").
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

I will show thee my faith by my works.
EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

# VII

# FAITH AND REALITY

## I

"We are saved by hope." That is one of the many sayings of the New Testament which the experiences of the past year have made real in a new degree for all of us. So long as there is good reason for looking forward to the future, we can bear even the worst blows of the present—we can master our circumstances instead of being mastered by them. And that, if we give the word 'circumstances' a wide enough range, is all that we mean by 'being saved.'

But in even the simplest statement of the saving quality of hope we are already falling back upon *faith*. A saving hope must be based on 'good reason.' Once let the suggestion cross the mind that its wish is sole parent to its thought, that its hope is only another name for its desire, and the efficacy of that hope is gone. It can only be recalled by the recovery of some better reason for hoping, a reason on which a man can rely. And in that 'reliance' we meet at once the root idea of faith. Thus to say that 'we are saved by hope'—a statement borne out by the experience of us all—is only a narrower way of saying, again with the New Testament, that we are saved by faith.

Here, however, the assent of experience has not as a rule been nearly so ready or so universal; especially when the word faith is used with any religious or

theological colouring. 'We are to be saved by scepticism' might more nearly sum up the creed on which much of modern life and thought, at any rate till lately, would seem to have been based. And now the situation has become really acute. For, in one sense, the sceptical attitude appears to have been stupendously vindicated by the seeming collapse of all that some of us believed in. The props of our civilisation—our Christian civilisation, as it thought itself—have been found rotten, and have given way beneath us. And yet at the same time the need of faith has become more urgent than ever before, and more widely and deeply felt and recognised. Formerly, self-reliance was for many men so satisfactory an attitude and policy in life that they never felt the need of something higher to trust in. Now the whole future, for the individual, the nation, and the world, would seem to depend on that 'higher something' being still available as an object of faith and a ground of hope; and yet the most obvious reading of the evidence suggests that it too has failed us in our need.

If life in any other than an animal sense is to remain possible, it must have a foundation of hope. To save the future, we are called to ungrudging sacrifice of all we have valued most in the present. How can we face it if we are not entitled to hope that so the future will indeed be saved? If there is no real ground for such hope, hedonism and suicide are the only reasonable courses left open. If you cannot live for the future, you must live for the present: if life in the present is not worth living, then why keep up the struggle at all? The horror which either of those proposals arouses in any sound human heart is the measure of the crucial importance of hope. And so everything hangs on the reality of the object of the faith which is to justify that hope; the reality, in other words, of the spiritual order and of God Himself.

II

The aim of this paper is to justify the attitude of faith by bringing into relation, in the region of personal experience, the terms 'faith' and 'reality.' We have to try and see how 'faith' is, in effect, a condition of our coming into touch with the higher realities. Reality, indeed, to deserve the name, must be something independent of our attitude towards it. But *within our experience* it is always and inevitably related to ourselves, and, in certain higher forms of human experience, depends for its 'realisation' on a certain *co-operation* from our side. It is this 'co-operation' which is here meant by faith. Faith, beginning as a consciousness of the new-found reality, passes into an attitude which accepts it as real, and then into action which 'realises' it. In this sense it is, *for us*, creative. All that is best in our lives is ultimately its product. Science itself, as has been so often remarked, stakes its all on faith,—faith in the unity and intelligibility of the universe. Art and Love, as we shall see later, are equally dependent upon it. And, if this be so, then there is good reason for maintaining, at whatever cost, the attitude of faith under our present trials; not only as that on which saving hope must rest, but as that which alone can rebuild for the future the ruins of the past, and so justify the hope which is to support us in the present.

In the last resort, as has been hinted, the only satisfying object of a faith which is to bear such burdens is an Infinite and Eternal Object—one not conditioned by time or space or material horizons—which is what we mean by God. But because the final Reality, corresponding to the highest degree of faith and really implied where faith is exercised at all, is God Himself, it does not follow that faith is merely a theological term or a religious activity, in the sense which these words ordinarily convey. Ideally, of course, theology is the

widest science under the sun, the master-science of all the rest; and, in a life which was perfectly developed, religion would be the whole of which all other activities were aspects or parts. But in practice the theologian ranks as a specialist, and religion as one rather narrow department of life. So it is necessary, if the term 'faith' is to carry its true and full meaning, to rescue it first from its religious associations.

This, fortunately, is not so difficult, because, unlike such words as, say, 'grace' and 'salvation,' it has retained a purely human meaning and use. And this serves to remind us that, when they entered the New Testament, all such terms were terms of common life. The early Christian writers did not use theological language. To have done so would have entirely defeated their object. They used language which *became* theological, partly because they used it, partly because it so well expressed the ideas they had to convey. Now, however, just because its success led on to sacrosanctity, it has come to obscure almost more than to express those ideas; and a bulky volume on Faith, written some eighty years ago and for long a classic, admits that "the notions annexed to these words (*i.e.* 'faith' and 'believe') appear as unsettled as if the words themselves had now for the first time been introduced into religious language."[1] The remedy is to get back to real life, and ask what 'faith' and 'believe' mean there; for that is certainly what they meant to St. Paul's first hearers, and therefore also to St. Paul himself.

## III

Of all this we shall be kept in mind by relating closely, as in the title of this paper, 'faith' with 'reality.' In its broadly human sense faith may be described, provisionally, as an attitude—natural, in-

[1] Bishop O'Brien on "Faith," p. 4 (4th edition).

stinctive, inevitable—which the human mind and will together take up towards reality in certain of its manifestations and at certain levels of human experience. By 'reality' is meant at this stage 'all that exists.' Faith in the non-existent is inconceivable: when a man believes in an illusion, he believes in something which to him, at any rate, is real, and for himself his attitude is one of faith, though a bystander may, perhaps more correctly, call it credulity or even lunacy. We shall see later that what makes *soi-disant* faith real faith is the reality of its object, while at the same time faith, in a sense, makes its own object real. But it may help to clearness if we anticipate a little by illustrating from actual experience this apparent paradox.

The illumination and ecstasy which are characteristic of the artist-soul face to face with what appeals to it as 'art' depend on there *being something there* for it to apprehend and be inspired by. There must be 'something in' the music, or the picture, or whatever rouses the emotion. At the same time, since another man may gaze at the same scene or listen to the same harmonies quite unmoved, it is clear that this 'something' is not 'in' the work of art in the sense in which (say) hydrogen is 'in' water. The presence of a chemical element can be demonstrated in a way which is equally cogent for all: the presence of a 'spiritual' element can only be detected by those who approach it 'in the right spirit.' For the rest it is, in effect, *not there*; from this point of view its 'reality' depends upon the artistic eye or ear, and the artist is part creator of what he thus rejoices in, even as we speak of the eye 'creating' its own environment. And the attitude of the artist here to that in which he finds inspiration is precisely what we mean, in the broader sense, by faith. It is justified by there 'being something there' for him to rejoice in; and yet the presence of that 'something' *for him* depends on himself.

For the moment, however, we are only concerned with the fact that faith, in order to be faith, is an attitude of the human mind and will towards *reality*: yet not towards all that exists, only towards reality "in certain of its manifestations and at certain levels of human experience."

For the realities surrounding us do make themselves known to us in various ways, and have varying degrees of importance for us. There is, for instance, that most obvious (though unfathomable) manifestation of a 'something there' which is made to us in material objects apprehended by the senses, as when we see the moon or stumble over a stone. The philosopher and the scientist may speculate about sense-perception and resolve matter into units of force, but for the 'plain man' the stone he kicks is 'real,'—a manifestation of reality. Another such manifestation is given in the 'abstract' sciences, like arithmetic and geometry. Here too the philosopher will insist that the universal truths they deal in are not independent of matter and sense-perception,—the laws of quantity, for instance, are based on the observed fact that material things exist in quantities,—but again the rough distinctions of the 'plain man' are enough for our purpose. The point is that we recognise *different ways* in which reality meets us when we set our foot to the ground and when we set our mind to a mathematical problem. Reality 'manifests itself' in various ways.

And among them we find one which is neither 'material' nor 'abstract' but (as it were) mixed. In the two already contrasted the mental element (in apprehending material things) and the material element (in arriving at abstract truths) are, for practical purposes, negligible, and are, in fact, ignored by most of us in our thinking. But in the type we have now to look at the characteristic and essential thing is the close *connection* of the spiritual reality revealed with the material object

which reveals it. The material object is quite obviously not the reality itself: yet the reality, lying as it were behind it, imparts something of its own value to that through which it comes to light. The term which describes this class of manifestations of reality is the much-abused term 'sacramental'; a sacrament being, in the old definitions, an *efficax signum*—a symbol of a reality which at the same time it 'makes real' for the person who accepts it,—or 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace' (*i.e.* bestowal).[1] It is, in other words, a manifestation of reality neither as nor in matter, nor yet apart from matter, but (as it were) by the assistance of matter: so, however, that the matter serving as the medium is not the reality which it manifests, but only its 'sign,' as words are signs of things. For instance, the reality manifested through a great picture or a great symphony is not the combination of forms and colours in itself, nor the sequence of sounds in itself, but something which, to the right kind of mind, presents itself through the medium of the sight or the sound, and seems to come from beyond them.

## IV

And here it becomes apparent how faith comes in, and with which of the "manifestations of reality" it is concerned. Clearly with neither the first nor the second class. We do not 'believe' material objects lying before our eyes. We may believe certain things about them, as to their non-obvious qualities and the like.

[1] The relation and yet clear distinction between the symbol and the thing signified is admirably suggested by a song of E. Teschemacher—"The Rose":

I met my love at the gate of grief,
Where the ways of sunshine close:
I gave my love at the parting hour
Just a rose.

But he has gone to the silent land:
All faded is my rose.
Still, perchance love proves a fadeless flower;—
God knows!

But then, as likely as not, what we are really believing is the word, and so the character, of some one who is telling us what the objects are. In themselves they are simply *perceived*. So, too, we do not 'believe' the truths of mathematics. They are demonstrable, or they would not come within the sphere of exact science: and what is demonstrated you do not *believe*, you accept it as inevitable without any alternative but that of being thought mad if you refuse.

But with the large intermediate range of manifestations of reality the case is different. Here the reality behind the manifestation can only be apprehended, as we have seen, "by those who approach it in the right spirit"; in other words, in that attitude of mind and will together which is what we mean by 'faith.' It includes at once the consciousness and the acceptance of the reality which is being revealed. The man who does not believe that there is anything to be seen or experienced, beyond what meets the senses, simply does not find it there. Refusing to go beyond the evidence directly supplied by sense, he is forced to stay on the material level. The object before him is only so much matter. Yet to another, who makes 'the venture of faith' (whether he knows it as such or not), the same object may be a stepping-stone up from the dead level of the material to a world rightly regarded as higher and more vital, because more full of meaning and appealing (so to speak) to more of himself.

There, in the phrase 'more vital,' we return to the last words of our provisional definition,—"at certain levels of human experience."

The realities revealed in this last way—the 'sacramental'—are not only different from, but higher than, those discovered by mere sense-perception, or by such inferential processes as mathematical reasoning. That they are 'higher' we cannot indeed prove: but we know it. They mean more to us, and have far greater

value in our scheme and conception of life. And a little reflection will show that just these 'manifestations of reality,' which belong to the higher levels of human experience, are the ones for the 'apprehension' of which the co-operation of faith is required.

## V

Now when we come thus to distinguish 'higher' and 'lower' realities by the place which they hold in the scheme of human life, at its best and fullest, we find a marked disproportion between the *material* substance of things and their human importance. With what one might call the 'life-value' of things extension in space and time has no necessary connection. A thing is not 'real' in proportion as it is large, or solid, or in proportion as it lasts. Throughout the whole range of our experience the 'life-value' of material things or events is apt to vary enormously according both to our circumstances and to our moods. Who, for instance, could say that even such a serious outward happening as the death of a thousand men, or of a dear friend, in battle means the same to us to-day as it would have meant in July 1914? Our circumstances have changed, and with them our whole attitude to 'externals.' Similarly with our moods. At one moment a bit of scenery —a particular patch of heather on a particular moor— starts out from its surroundings and becomes an unforgettable part of our past history: it has somehow 'fitted in,' or become a point of revelation. At another we see without seeing and hear without hearing: things pass before us as in a dream, and are as quickly forgotten.

And it is the same with time, in the sense of duration. It is simply not the fact that, *in our experience of it*, one hour or one day is as long as any other. The 'length' of time depends not on the clock but, once more, on the inner self. "It seemed an age," "It seemed no

time"—these common phrases are admissions of the relative unreality of time as an element in and measure of life in the true human sense. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he hath"; nor yet in the number of years that he lasts. Life at its highest human level, which is the highest reality we know, can only be measured by intensity, not by what one might call 'area,' nor yet by mere duration.[1]

What all this amounts to (if the foregoing argument holds good) is that things are 'real,' in the highest sense of reality—what Plato would call τὸ ὄντως ὄν—in proportion as they partake, not of material, but of 'spiritual' substance, not of time, but of 'eternity.' And we really live, as against merely existing, in proportion as such things bring the spiritual and eternal into our lives. The great days of our past, the days that live in memory and powerfully influence later years, have been those on which 'the real' in this sense broke in upon our inner vision; or, if you prefer it, found an outlet to the surface of our consciousness, on the lines of Browning's protest that

> To know
> Rather consists in opening out a way
> Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
> Than in effecting entry for a light
> Supposed to be without,—

words which but echo those of our Lord, "The Kingdom of God is within you." As usual, in attempting to describe spiritual experience, we are compelled to use a

[1] A digression may be allowed to suggest the bearing of this thought on the Christian conception of "Eternal Life," as the possession of the believer both here and hereafter. Eternity is not infinite extension of time but, if you will, the existence without limit of a state of affairs in which time is forgotten. Imagine a set of circumstances in which, for sheer *joie de vivre*, you 'forget time': imagine that all the factors in the situation thus created, yourself among them, remain constant, or constantly self-adapting to their whole environment, so that no change for the worse at any point can remind you that you have forgotten it, by "calling you back to earth," as the phrase is; and you get some faint idea of what is meant by "Eternity," and "Heaven," and "Eternal Life."

pair of mutually destructive metaphors from the world of matter and sense, if we are not at once to misstate our meaning and give in to unconscious materialism: and this is, after all, but another proof that the true level of our life is the spiritual, and that it is the presence rather than the absence of a material environment which limits our powers of living. We can never be our full and true selves while our whole self-expression has to be done in a substance which is alien to us.

## VI

It remains to justify the use of the particular term 'faith' to describe the necessary attitude of mind and will in the man who would apprehend, and so make 'real' for himself, these higher, spiritual realities, flashing in on him, as it were, through the veil of the material. At any rate our attitude, in the moments when we are profoundly conscious of beauty, or law, in nature or in art, or when we are touched and inspired by the sight or the experience of goodness or sorrow or love, is not what would be called a rationalistic or (in the popular sense) a scientific attitude. For the experience which is the making of such moments is one which we cannot account for either on abstract principles or by the laws which govern material existence. If we could, every one ought to be identically affected in the same circumstances, which they clearly are not. And yet we claim the highest reality and value and meaning for this experience of ours, in the teeth of our prosaic neighbour who "can see nothing in it." Is this not a real pitting of faith against 'reason,' as the latter term is commonly used?

The artists of all ages, and of every kind of outlook in other things, have insisted that art is a thing to live and to die for, though they cannot tell the Philistine what it is. And though the Philistines have the numbers on their side, it is the artists we believe and defer to

still. (Have you ever, for instance, thought of the cosmic significance of a shilling edition of Keats on a railway bookstall?) The lovers have had an easier task than the artists, in proclaiming the same doctrine from another point of view, because they have had secret allies even in those who have called them fools. Yet, from the standpoint of 'rational' principle and material law, the lovers *are* fools notwithstanding, and sentiment is sheer delusion. Artist and lover alike stake everything on the reality of something not demonstrable apart from a man's own experience of it, not necessarily given to all, and the formula for imparting which cannot be certainly predicted in any given case. And they claim that this real thing is of a higher order, and has greater 'life-value,' than anything else within their experience. They are either the initiates or the dupes of *faith*.

## VII

But what about the saints? Our object so far has mainly been to detach the term 'faith' from the purely religious environment to which it is so often relegated, by proving its inseparable connection with *all* the higher manifestations of reality. We have tried to see it as the means by which reality at that level is, and must be, approached and apprehended, as the attitude without which neither art nor love would remain possible. It remains to bring back into the narrower field of theology, as we now regard it, what we have learned about faith in the wider field of life, and see how it fits in there.

As for the connection between the faith of artist and lover on the one hand and the faith of the saints on the other—and, of course, I use the word 'saints' as it is used in the New Testament, of all who really believe and, believing, love—one may, perhaps, put it thus: the

artist and the lover are not, as such, among the saints, but the logical conclusion of both art and love is religion, and what will lead them on to that conclusion is still the same faith carried a step further.

"To make a religion of art," as it is called, is precisely to make art irreligious, by arresting it short of its logical goal. It is essentially idolatry—the worship of the shadow for the substance, the symbol for the thing signified, the creature for the Creator. In the language which we have so far been using, it is to treat as the highest and final degree of reality what is not such, and to deny that there is more beyond. And this in turn is to repeat the error of the Philistine, the artist's natural antithesis, the man who refuses to 'see anything in' the material universe except what his senses alone discover and vouch for. The irreligious (or idolatrous) artist is simply the Philistine gone one step higher. What the one does at the lower stage the other does at the next above it, viz. cries a halt in spite of clamant evidence that there is more to go on to. Both the man who ignores that world of reality for which art stands and the man who makes it his *whole* universe are sceptics, doubters: the fault in each case is lack of faith.

Much the same might be said of the lover. Indeed love is perhaps responsible for more of our modern idolatry than any other cause, and the use of the word 'idol' in the lover's vocabulary is philosophically truer than those who use it intend. "Love is a faith," says Amiel, "and one faith leads to another." That is, it should so lead, if the attitude of faith (an attitude of will as well as mind) is kept up, and the path marked out by the evidence is followed. The religious influence of true love on apparently secular lives is a commonplace of experience, just like the religious influence of sorrow. But somehow the impulses thus given do not always end in religion. The 'feelings,' though acknowledged, are not acted upon or followed up. They are

not treated as pointing to anything 'real' on beyond. In fact, they are not treated with *faith*, and so that ulterior reality, being left unappropriated, remains in effect unreal.

VIII

What, then, is that ulterior reality—the final reality of all, so far as man's mind can judge? We have already seen that any of the higher kinds of reality —those which faith is required to apprehend—are such because they partake of the spiritual and eternal, and not only of that which is apprehended by sense and measured by time. But at once we find here implied a relation to *personality*. That which we mean by 'the spiritual and eternal' only exists (again we must add 'so far as man's mind is aware') in relation to a mind to be conscious of it and a will to act, or refuse to act, upon that consciousness. In other words (and here we get back to a point already made by anticipation) 'spiritual' reality is never, so far as man is aware of it, wholly external: it is partly *in* the percipient, or at least depends on him to be realised. He may either recognise it in his environment or not recognise it. If the latter, he relegates the potential new reality back to the limbo of unrealities again: if the former, it springs into effectual existence as a fact and therefore also an influence in his life, and takes precedence of all lower realities of his merely material *mise-en-scène*. For instance, "the light of setting suns" is, for the man who is conscious of That which "dwells" in it, a 'more real' thing than the supper he returns to after watching the sunset. Thus, in a sense, the consciousness and will of the percipient control the existence *for him* of these higher realities. If they become real to him, it is his faith which has made them so.

And yet, on the other hand, we do not create our spiritual environment: we only go on finding it there

more and more in proportion as we look for it. It is true that some never make real for themselves these higher realities: but the fact that so many do, and that those who do are so powerfully and (in essentials) uniformly impressed by them, is the highest proof that what I am discovering is not my own creation, nor what you are discovering yours, but part of an independent and higher order of reality to which we have both somehow found access, and which proves its unity as well as its reality by the parallel effects it has on us both, and by the indefinable bond which it forges between us.[1]

Here then we find an order of reality, over against us, not determined but only discovered by us, yet appealing strictly to what we call 'personality' in us, and needing recognition and co-operation from our personality if it is to become real for us. It is hard not to conclude that what depends for its realisation on consciousness and will must also proceed from consciousness and will. So close a relation to personality in the whole constitution (so to speak) of the spiritual order forbids us to regard that order as, in itself, impersonal. And to say that the spiritual order is essentially 'personal' is to say that it is the expression of consciousness and will; so that, when we are in touch with 'the spiritual,' we are in touch with *personality*—personality somehow existing over against ourselves, not our own (for we 'find' it there before us), one and unique (for there is essential unity in the effect produced by all its multiform self-manifestations), yet also mysteriously related to personality in us, since (so far as our own universe goes) its *effective* reality seems somehow to depend on human recognition and co-operation.

In other words, the logical sequel of any spiritual impression—that of the artist, or the lover, or whoever

[1] 'The unity of the spirit' is produced by other things than identical faith and love towards God. A common devotion to a cause, or a common reponsiveness to the appeal of a particular type of art, will produce *in the corresponding area of their lives* a real 'spiritual affinity' between otherwise unrelated souls.

it may be—is to bring the percipient face to face with a Personal God. Once on even the lowest rung of the ladder of ascending realities, you are in a position to reach the top: the one thing needful is to maintain the same attitude which has brought you thus far—the attitude of faith, by which alone, at any stage, the spiritual can be apprehended. "Love is a faith"—and art is a faith—"and one faith leads to another," so long as the same attitude persists. Only perversion of *will* can arrest the progress. "Then shall we know, if we *follow on* to know the Lord." 'Logical reasons,' so often adduced for stopping short of the highest, are simply irrelevant in this context. There may be logical reasons for never making the initial leap of faith, for never setting foot on the ladder of spiritual realities at all: there is no logical reason for arresting the ascent at any particular point, when once you have begun it.

On the contrary, there are inherent in our own nature good reasons for going on, at whatever cost. Man is endowed with a strange, sure instinct for reality—urging him to seek it and enabling him to recognise it when found. This instinct, if obeyed, forbids acquiescence in a halt at any stage short of the last: it does so by introducing dissatisfaction. A man may stop where he is; he may say the next rung above him is not where he wants to go: but, if he is honest, he will also tell you that the point he *has* reached is not where he is content to stay. He has the sense of not having 'got there' yet: and till he 'gets there' he remains unsatisfied.

## IX

Now the nearest thing to 'getting there' in the final sense is to reach reality *in a person*: experience shows that what puts a man in touch with the highest degree of reality accessible apart from religious faith is Love. To love and to be loved is the experience which goes

nearest to satisfying; and, incidentally, it heightens the satisfactions derivable from the lower spiritual experiences, such as those connected with art. And yet even this is not final: to love and to be loved is not to have 'arrived.' The poets who make love their religion are the very ones who prove that it does not satisfy as such. The satisfaction is so precarious: it may be ended at any moment by disillusionment or death, and the fear of such catastrophes in the future will dim the present with their shadow too. But meanwhile the transcendent value, even so, of this whole range of experiences at least suggests that in relationship with a Person the further degree of reality felt to lie beyond, the final draught of satisfaction which we patiently believe in our right to claim, must somehow be found. And so the human heart demands, while the human mind endorses, the following out of the progress of faith, the climbing to the top of the ladder of reality. If there is a Person with Whom our relation can be all that the closest relationships of earth have it in them to be;[1] Who will always be able to correspond intuitively, so to speak, with every *nuance* of our inner life and meet every fresh development of our inner need, thus averting all fear of disillusionment; and Who can not only give us for a while that sense of life intensified which enables us to 'forget time' and embark even now on Eternity, but, being Himself eternal and unchangeable, can keep us in that experience always, as "sharers of the perfect life of His Eternity";—if, I say, there is such a Person, then there, by all the indications given by heart and intellect alike, is the final degree of reality, and the supreme and alone satisfying object of human faith.

And to believe that such a Person exists, *and act*

[1] "If God were taken out of my life, I should mourn for Him more than for any one else in the world," says a young officer in a recent letter to the writer, describing the steps by which he had come to a faith in God "on his own account," and with (apparently) little external help. The words are more like those of a seasoned mystic than the naïve and spontaneous expression of a lad of nineteen. But it is their source that gives them evidential value for our present purpose.

*accordingly*, is religious faith, as distinguished from the faith of the artist or the lover, who, as we have seen, mark stages on the ascent. Or rather, it is not so much 'religious faith' as the sum total of true religion. For, given this beginning, all else that is needed will issue from it, as it were, automatically, *provided only* that nothing comes in to alter the original and essential attitude of faith,

an affirmation *and an act*
Which bids Eternal Truth be present fact.

"He that cometh to God," says the writer to the Hebrews, "must believe"—two things: first, "that He *is*," secondly, "that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6). In other words, religion in any valid sense must start from the belief, *involving action*, that God exists and that He is responsible and responsive, *i.e.* includes in His nature those elements of personality which are necessary for the forming of personal relationships. Given that a man wants God—and here comes in that universal human "instinct for reality" which we have already noted—and given that he believes these two things about God with the kind of faith that passes naturally from the 'affirmation' to the 'act,' nothing more is needed. The great relationship forms, and, once formed, can only be arrested from developing, or deflected into wrong developments, by the human partner refusing to follow the light already available and so let it lead him on to more. In other words, a suspension of the harmony between the human will and the divine, a "getting out of touch" on the part of the former, a cessation of *faith*, is the only possible source of failure and sin. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23). When the faith is interrupted, the experience of "Reality at its highest level" is bound to be interrupted too; for, as we have seen, all those higher realities which manifest themselves 'sacramentally' can only be appropriated, made real *for*

*us*, by faith.[1] To repeat a sentence from an early part of this paper which may now be more intelligible, "What makes *soi-disant* faith real faith is the reality of its object, while at the same time faith, in a sense, makes its own object real."

## X

In other words, all that has gone before proves to be only an expansion of the Pauline formula of salvation—*χάριτι διὰ πίστεως*, "by grace through faith." This safeguards at once the objective and the subjective elements which are necessary in any personal relationship, and therefore in religion, which is a relationship between man and God. There must be a giving, or there can be no receiving; but equally there must be a receiving, or no gift can be made. The terms are correlative: and so, precisely, are 'grace' and 'faith.' The grace of God is God's exceeding readiness to give, passing into the act of bestowal: the faith of man is man's willingness to receive, passing into the act of taking. But it is only when the two meet and, as it were, complete one another, that we can speak of a real and objective spiritual gift. Otherwise we are landed in the endless difficulties attending what Harnack calls "the pharmacological view" of the

[1] The recurrence of the term 'sacramentally,' used provisionally on p. 167, makes perhaps desirable a note on what is here implied, in view of the very common and unwarranted narrowing down of its use as a term of religion. By the 'sacramental self-manifestation of God' is here meant, of course, something very much wider than the gift embodied in the Holy Communion, which is not the sole but the *typical* sacrament of that Divine Self-bestowal which is continually and universally operative where there is human faith to meet it. But just because it is typical, 'the Sacrament' (as it is so commonly called) provides as good an illustration as any of what is meant by faith at once depending upon and creating its object. The faith of the communicant would indeed be vain if there were no real gift nor "Real Presence" of the giver: at the same time, "the mean whereby we eat is faith" (Art. XXVIII.)—faith which 'makes real' *for me* what would otherwise not be real *for me*, though it were ever so real to the man beside me. The gift *is there* —but only for those who will *take* it: in this the Holy Communion fits exactly the true definition of a sacrament, and corresponds in its working to all other sacramental things, such as the great picture or the great symphony or the great friend. The reality in question "implies a relation to personality,"—to a conscious *receiver*.

process of redemption. 'Grace,' apart from 'faith' to realise it, is, strictly, as inconceivable as 'faith' apart from 'grace' to be realised by it. It is true, of course, that God exists quite apart even from our existence, let alone our attitude towards Him: but God cannot *be God for us*, in the sense of being a fact which tells in our lives and the factor which saves them, unless our faith first "make Him real." In the highest region of our nature and of our experience 'faith' and 'reality' lie very close together. The most real things can only be approached in the attitude of faith; though it is not till we have so approached them that their reality can be appreciated by us.

## XI

But how does all this tell practically in the world-situation now confronting us? For these are days when the expenditure of time and thought on any subject needs to be justified by some real relevance to the problem which is already, by its weight, transforming all our lives, and is bound, whatever the solution arrived at, to transform our whole theory of life for the future.

The point from which we started out was the imperious necessity for hope; for to lose hope is to lose the future—a more serious loss than that of the present, and one which carries the present with it. Hope, as we saw, must be based on 'good reason,' if it is to have any saving efficacy; and therefore it became needful to inquire into the solidity and reliability of the object of that faith on which hope is grounded.

We have not, of course, found proof for "the existence of God," which is, in the last resort, what people now more than ever yearn to be assured of. For that matter, a 'proved' God would be a God

measured and comprehended, and so on a level with facts vouched for by the senses or mathematical truths, and not one of those higher realities which need faith for their apprehension. In other words, He would not be the God Whom we need, now more than ever, to release us from the tyranny of the present and the actual, and guarantee that it is not the ultimately real.

What we have tried to reassure ourselves of is that, in all the higher ranges of life and experience, the 'truly real' is always something requiring faith on our part to co-operate with it, and vindicating its own reality only in proportion as it is thoroughly believed. It comes to us, in a sense, through objects, facts, events, forming part of the material world-order, to which it is mysteriously related, and which is its 'sacrament'; but it is often as strangely incongruous and incommensurable with its "outward and visible sign." Why should Tennyson's "flower in the crannied wall," for instance, be thus essentially connected with the completed knowledge of "what God and man is"? The real effect on a man, for good or evil, of such external things depends less on anything in themselves than on his own attitude towards them; and a broad and dispassionate view of life suggests that there is no part of the rough ore of material fact in which the pure gold of the real, the spiritual, may not be found. The artist who so wills it can find beauty everywhere; and the saints have set up their Bethel-pillars in the torture-chamber and the lion's den, and found even there the opportunity for the Vision of God. And in each case what has made the difference is the attitude of the seer himself—the attitude of faith in the underlying reality, which he sees where others only see the superficial facts. "In matters of art," says Joubert, "I would wish to be on the side of the artists, in matters of religion on the side of the saints." Of course: the principle in each case is the same.

And it is simply not true to say that the real ground of faith has been in any way disturbed by the events of the past year. Our belief in the value of beauty and the power of art is not destroyed by the eruption of ugliness on a large scale when, say, coal-mines or factories invade a picturesque moor or valley. Nor should our belief in the reality of God and the efficacy of faith be interfered with by this vast eruption of sin and misery from underneath what we were pleased to call civilisation. What has been wrecked is some half-hundred idols of very various kinds; what has been shown up and humiliated is our short-sighted faith in the work of our own hands. The one thing which has been really and consistently vindicated is the Christian view of the world-order, the Christian conception of God, the Christian doctrine of sin. The faith of the believer in God, as God represents Himself to us, and as the highest minds have proclaimed Him to be, is only strengthened by events which prove that, after all, God knows both Himself and us better than we do, and, after all, "without Him we can do nothing." And it is not surprising, but supremely natural, that it is at the Front, in the thick of the horror, but in the heart also of the sacrifice, that men are feeling after and grasping their God, while we at home, with the old sceptical atmosphere still clinging around us, profess to find in the echo of the same events so much reinforcement for our doubts.

Even the worldly had of recent years begun to groan under our growing bondage to things present and seen. The rapture with which so many, who never regarded themselves as idealists, have embraced the new opportunity for the venture of faith, in sacrifice, which the war has brought them is one more proof that, for human nature, 'faith' and 'reality' are vitally connected. "Man doth not live by bread alone"; nor even by the very varied and perfect bake-meats

with which the late age of comfort tried to conceal from him his spiritual hunger. Even at his worst he was not quite deceived: and the call to sacrifice was felt to be a call not to loss but to spiritual satisfaction. It is a very deep saying, as well as a trite one, that we live by faith. And now that we are rediscovering the truth of it, are we to surrender the key of life? Unless we must plunge abruptly into pessimism, and sacrifice even our necessary right to hope, we cannot believe that an order of things which held back so many from attaining true life was so wholly good that its bankruptcy warrants the dethroning of Providence. Nor can we agree that the sudden opening of that path of self-sacrifice which has enabled so many to find themselves, though it were but in time to die, is proof that evil, after all, is supreme. Of course, if we and all our hopes, fears, instincts, and ideals are but so many ingredients in a spiritual chaos, it may be so. But somehow, by all the indications, the spiritual and the material seem to run in harmony together; and the material world at least is admittedly a cosmos of beauty and law. That the spiritual order should be the opposite is *a priori* almost unthinkable; but to accuse it of being so just because its phenomena are vindicating, as never before, our highest knowledge of the laws that govern it, is the extreme limit of unreasonableness in reason's name. All that is happening is the unmasking of ourselves. We have been complacently confusing 'reality' with 'things as they are,' because 'things as they were,' till a year ago, happened to be comfortable, and comfort was the *summum bonum* of the age that is now closed. To-day we are at any rate longing and learning to distinguish the two again; and the mercy of God is leading us to repentance. The present upheaval is the opportunity of a fresh start. The removal of obstacles, though it be as it were by high explosives, is in itself a stage in

progress: the exposure of current falsehoods is a real contribution to truth.

XII

Only—and here is the chief solemnity and menace of the situation—if the higher realities depend for their apprehension upon faith, and we have it in our power in large measure to create our own universe, this opportunity of a fresh start has another side to it. We live by faith, and we are always believing *something*: if not the true, then the false. The good that we do not believe remains unrealised: the evil which we affirm and endorse, though it may have begun as but part of the transient surface of things, will sooner or later take rank with the real. Not that we can ever make the evil which belongs to time and space part of the eternal and spiritual order. In other words, we cannot change or conquer God Himself. But, in relation to ourselves and the present world-order, it does seem as if we could completely frustrate Him, as well as enable Him (be it said in all reverence) to realise Himself. "He could do there no mighty work because of their unbelief" is the necessary complement of "I have strength for all things in Him Who gives me the power." Both spring from that first law of Christ's Kingdom,—"According to your faith be it unto you." And the choice before the world to-day is, Which shall it be?

There is an unprecedented opportunity for the faith which is creative of good by believing in, *acting upon*, and so realising God. There is a great and natural quickening of the instinct to believe. There is also a loud and manifold call, amid all the conflicting uproar, to belief in "the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent."

> Spirits are not finely touched
> But to fine issues;

and in many quarters, especially at the Front, one

hears of a pathetic and wholly Christian belief that so much suffering and sacrifice must bring in 'a new age,' in the light of which we shall not regret it. Is it not simply part of faith in the God of the Christian Gospel to say that so God must intend it? And does not this mean that, if only *we* intend it also, truly and *actively* and patiently enough, it will as surely come to pass? "Faith is that which gives reality to things hoped for," by *acting* without deviation upon the assurance that they are true. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

> Dreamers of dreams? we take the taunt with gladness,
> Knowing that God, beyond the years you see,
> Has wrought the dreams that count with you for madness
> Into the substance of the world to be.

# VIII

# WAR AND THE ETHICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY

CYRIL WILLIAM EMMET

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. . . . Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.

That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

# VIII

# WAR AND THE ETHICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THERE are in this discussion two questions to be faced which are really separate but are often confused. The first is whether war is an evil, that is to say, something we should wish away if we could, something which would not exist in an ideal world, or even in a world where men were to a reasonable degree Christian. In stating the matter in this way it must not be assumed that evil is in all respects synonymous with sin, and there is accordingly still room for the second question. Given the present conditions of international relationships under which war has not so far been abolished, is the individual Christian justified in playing his part in a war in which his country has become involved for what are usually regarded as adequate reasons? Further, is a nation which claims to be in any measure Christian ever justified—again under existing conditions—in drawing the sword as a *pis aller* to prevent worse evils? In other words, is the use of force ever right? Is war *per se* entirely inconsistent with the Christian duties of meekness, forgiveness, and love of enemies?

Before we attempt to answer these questions on the basis of the teaching of the New Testament we must have our material before us; and it is essential that it should be presented in a comprehensive form. For the teaching of Christ, on this as on other points, is by no

means so simple or so easily understood as it is sometimes lightly assumed to be. It can only be made so by isolating one or two sayings and ignoring the balance of the New Testament as a whole. On the one hand we have the journalist who writes as though "forgive your enemies" was a modern invention of "pro-German sentimentalists"; on the other there is a tendency to pick out a few texts from the Sermon on the Mount and treat them as though they explained themselves and represented the complete teaching of Christ. It is as though a casual visitor to a beach should light on one or two rare shells and argue from them as if they were characteristic of its general conchology. Their real significance could in fact only be explained by one who had a full knowledge of the whole subject, who realised their rarity, and could account for it. It is for this reason that the subject of this paper is not confined to the Sermon on the Mount but covers the whole of the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount is neither the whole Gospel nor even an exhaustive representation of Christian ethics; it is inevitably misunderstood unless it be interpreted in the light of the full teaching and example of Christ, and to a lesser degree in that of the rest of the New Testament, which may be regarded for this purpose as the interpretation of the mind of Christ reached by those in closest touch with Him. The two strains are indeed inseparable, since, as we realise increasingly, the record of His teaching, even in the synoptists, is already coloured by the later interpretation and outlook of the Church.[1]

We may take first the passages and aspects which may seem to be inconsistent with war. The Beatitudes (Matt. v. 1 ff.; Luke vi. 20 ff.) obviously emphasise sides

[1] It will be impossible within the limits of this essay to attempt in each case to distinguish between the two elements; we must be content, as a rule, to take the teaching as it stands.

of the Christian character which are the complete reverse of self-assertion and the use of force to attain one's ends. But the crucial passage is found in the fourfold paradox of Matt. v. 38 ff. (cf. Luke vi. 29 ; 1 Cor. vi. 7), followed by the section on love of enemies. In Matt. xviii. 21 ff. the scope of forgiveness is explained as being practically limitless—"till seventy times seven" —while the duty itself is insisted on in general terms in the Lord's Prayer and in other similar passages in the Gospels. The same holds good of the Epistles, the most important passages being Rom. xii. 14 ff. (Render to no man evil for evil. . . . Avenge not yourselves, etc.) ; Eph. iv. 26, 32 ; Col. iii. 13 ; 1 Thess. v. 15 ; 1 Peter ii. 21. This teaching echoes the teaching of Our Lord without adding anything fresh or introducing any very significant qualifications.[1]

This then is a fairly complete list of the passages which may be understood as directly prohibiting war. On the one hand is the somewhat isolated command not to resist evil, which occurs in the most paradoxical section of the Sermon on the Mount ; on the other are the far more frequent injunctions to love and forgive our enemies ; to these we must of course add the insistence on the general principles of love and brotherhood which run through the New Testament. It is indeed not so much proofs derived from isolated texts, as this general spirit of Christ's teaching, combined with His own example of meekness and non-resistance, which constitute the strongest argument against war. And the argument is so direct and obvious that it must be a very superficial Christian who has never felt qualms of conscience in this matter ; certainly we cannot at a time like the present simply run our pen through what strikes us as unpalatable or unsuitable.

We pass on to consider what indications are afforded

[1] In Matt. xxvi. 52 the reference is to resistance to lawful authority (cf. Rev. xiii. 10) ; Luke xxii. 36 is probably ironical.

by the New Testament itself of the existence of another side to Christ's teaching. A somewhat undue stress is sometimes laid on His cleansing of the Temple, since we are not told that He actually used force against any individual; John ii. 15 alone mentions a scourge, and this was apparently only used to drive out the cattle—perhaps a sufficient answer to the extremists who argue that force should not be used even with animals! At the same time the whole incident does show that when Our Lord found Himself confronted with an abuse He did not content Himself with mere rebukes but took active and even violent measures to remedy it, while it is really very difficult to believe that if the Temple police had been alive to their duty and had found it necessary to resort to physical force to expel the intruders He would have disapproved.

Of greater significance is the eulogy addressed to the centurion (Matt. viii. 5 ff.; cf. Cornelius in Acts x.), coupled with the generally sympathetic attitude of the New Testament to soldiers,[1] and the free use of military metaphors. The conclusion is not, of course, that war is a good thing, but that Christ and His followers can hardly have regarded it as always and unconditionally sinful. One who held all forms of betting to be unconditionally wrong would hardly have special and unqualified praise for a bookmaker, or illustrate his religious teaching freely from the procedure of the betting ring without any reminder that he was drawing a comparison from an unholy trade.

It will be felt, however, that arguments such as these, though perfectly valid up to a certain point, only touch the surface of the problem. A consideration which goes to the root of the matter is found in the fact that force and compulsion of some sort are distinctly assumed in the teaching of Christ as an element in God's dealings with man and as a method which He Himself will

[1] Luke iii. 14 may be discounted as pre-Christian.

ultimately employ. It is, of course, the same throughout the New Testament, notably in the Apocalypse, and indeed no one questions that the fact of punishment of some kind is uniformly taught by Christianity. No doubt various questions arise as to its nature and duration, and how far it will be in every case remedial. These fortunately do not concern us here since they do not affect the main issue which is that God—the God of love—is represented as driven to the use of force and coercion under certain circumstances. Now it may be said boldly that what is right for God is in principle and under proper conditions right for man. To take up any other position is ultimately to fall back on those immoral views of God, exemplified in unethical theories of the Atonement, hell, or Old Testament morality, which have worked such havoc with faith. Such theories have always been based on the argument that our sense of what is right and wrong cannot be applied to God since He must be regarded as 'super-moral.' The answer is, that if goodness as predicated of God does not mean what it means of man we really have no means of knowing God at all, or, ultimately, any ground for belief in Him; any other position cuts at the root of all religion. If then it is consistent with the character and the love of God to use force in overcoming sin and evil, it cannot be wrong in principle for man to do the same under proper conditions.[1]

In support of this position we may appeal to two indications derived from the teaching of the New Testament. The first is that in the very context of the Sermon on the Mount in which Christ lays down the principles of non-resistance and forgiveness He appeals explicitly to the character of God as the type and pattern for man—"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your

[1] This was clearly the view of the early Church in adopting the principle of excommunication, including miraculous physical punishments (Acts v.; 1 Cor. v.; 1 Tim. i. 20; 2 John 10; cf. Matt. xviii. 17).

heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48), or, in St. Luke's version of the saying (vi. 36), "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." Such words exclude absolutely the idea that there is in God's dealings with man a principle and method which can find no counterpart in man's dealings with his fellow-man. Mercy in God cannot be essentially different from what it is in man; the very term 'father' applied to God implies the essential identity of goodness in both. Again, in the two passages (Rom. xiii.; 1 Peter ii.) where the authority of the State is explicitly discussed, it is distinctly laid down that the 'sword'—the symbol of force—is borne by the State as God's vicegerent. As God from time to time in history, and finally at the end of the world process, uses methods to crush evil which are not those of mere moral persuasion, so does the State in its punishment of evil-doers.

We pass to the question of Christ's attitude to sin and sinners as illustrated in such passages as Matt. xi. 20 ff.; xvi. 4; xxiii.; Mark vii. 6; John viii. 44; x. 8 (cf. His anger in Mark iii. 5; x. 14). We recall phrases such as "a wicked and adulterous generation"; "ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves"; "ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" Now it is quite possible that some might wish such passages away from the Gospels. They have, in fact, been made the ground of attacks on Christ as failing to practise what He preached,[1] and we are probably justified in saying that as they stand they represent the later disputes of the Church with its Jewish opponents, rather than the actual words of our Lord. At the same time they must go back in substance to one side of His teaching; the point of view they present is too widely spread in the Gospels to

[1] See Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels*, ii. p. 519. Whether we can regard the 'woes' as justifiable on ordinary grounds of ethics will depend on the last resort on whether we can accept the picture of the Scribes and Pharisees drawn in the Gospels as substantially correct, and can agree with Christ's diagnosis of their spirit.

allow of our eliminating it altogether. It is clear then that He Himself regarded forgiveness and love for enemies as not inconsistent with a bitter contempt for and scathing condemnation of certain types of offenders. Here again it is sometimes said that this attitude of Christ is in a class by itself and is in no way an example for us; He was God with, it is held, a full knowledge of man's heart and with the right and power of pronouncing an unerring judgment. We have already seen that this view cannot be maintained even when applied to the Father Himself; still less can it hold good of the incarnate Christ. In the first place it rests on the dichotomy, really heretical, which represents Him as doing some things 'as God,' and others 'as man';[1] secondly, it cuts at the root of the whole idea of our Lord as an example for us. If it was right for Him on earth to adopt this attitude towards sinners, it is also right for us in some degree, remembering always our own guilt and the imperfections of our judgments.[2]

Finally, considerable light is thrown on the practical application of the hard sayings of the Sermon on the Mount by our Lord's attitude towards life as shown in the parables. We there see love and forgiveness in action (The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, The Two Debtors, etc.), but never in any extreme or impracticable form. There is, in fact, no parable which illustrates the virtue of non-resistance, and it is remarkable how again and again Christ assumes the ordinary discipline and penalties of life at work. It is taken for granted that the master dismisses the slothful servant or the steward who has defrauded him; their offences are not met indefinitely with indulgence and forgiveness, nor are they given the rest of their master's property to squander.

We have tried to put together the evidence afforded

[1] See on this point Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, p. 96.

[2] St. Paul and other New Testament writers, including "the Apostle of Love," do, in fact, adopt a very similar attitude towards enemies of the faith.

by the New Testament which bears on the subject before us.[1] Our survey shows beyond doubt that if this is regarded as a whole the commands which seem to prohibit any employment of methods of coercion must be supplemented by considerations which imply the use of force in certain cases and which justify an attitude of clear hostility and the taking of perfectly definite and even severe measures of repression against some classes of offenders. How far war itself can, in fact, be brought under these principles we must consider later on. It may be remarked that we have not based our argument on the impracticability of the hard sayings. There is a perfectly legitimate prejudice in favour of assuming words to mean what they say, and we have therefore tried to show from the evidence afforded by the New Testament itself, and without the introduction of any extraneous considerations, that this principle of literal interpretation is not sufficient in the cases before us. It becomes obvious, simply from a comparison with other passages, that their meaning requires such qualifications and their application so many exceptions that they cannot be taken simply as they stand *au pied de la lettre*, unless we are to admit the existence of glaring contradictions.

We are then justified in asking whether there are any canons of interpretation to be found which may help to ease the difficulty. We are at once reminded of the fact that our Lord habitually adopted a method of teaching by sharp, clear-cut, proverbial or aphoristic sayings, and that, to the Oriental in particular, one-sidedness and over-emphasis are so usual in this style of speech that no one mistakes them. "If any man . . . hateth

[1] It is hardly necessary to consider the various passages with only the slightest bearing on the question which are sometimes pressed into service on either side, *e.g.* the obviously metaphorical, "I came not to send peace but a sword," or "My kingdom is not of this world," which merely prohibits the attempt to advance the Church by methods of violence, a procedure which is quite distinct from ordinary international war. Again, in the refusal to call down fire from heaven the question is only of punishing a personal affront.

not his own father and mother and wife . . . he cannot be my disciple." "When thou makest a supper call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen." "Call no man your father upon earth." The list might be considerably extended, and as soon as any one with a taste for verbal literalness throws sayings such as these in our way, we are at once ready with our explanatory glosses. These are perfectly legitimate, and indeed inevitable if the teaching of Christ is to mean anything at all to us; no one has ever yet been a consistent Christian in the sense of carrying out *all* these commands to the letter.[1] To a certain point this canon of interpretation is, of course, an accepted commonplace, but we must learn to apply it consistently. Let us then ask, with a perfectly clear conscience, with regard to those sayings with which we are particularly concerned what is their true application, and what kind of things our Lord and the New Testament writers really had in mind? Now it is hardly open to question that in one class of sayings—those relating to forgiveness of enemies—the primary reference in the context is simply to private quarrels;[2] where the scope widens it is in order to include persecutors and opponents of the Church; "bless them which persecute you." There is indeed nothing to suggest that, with one minor exception to be mentioned shortly, Christ was thinking in any way of international relationships, let us say of the attitude of the Roman government to Parthian or barbarian invaders.

[1] It is not out of place to point out that those who insist on the letter of such commands as "resist not evil" or "swear not at all" do not refrain from heaping up treasure upon earth, or go about innocent of coat and cloke alike in order to satisfy the requests of casual tramps. It is not that they have been in any way lacking in generosity, but that they have realised that the letter cannot be applied consistently.

[2] It is worth noting, though the point must not be pressed too far, that the word for enemy in the New Testament is ἐχθρός, which emphasises the feeling of personal hostility, not πολέμιος, those with whom you are at war. The latter does not in fact occur in the New Testament, and very rarely in the Septuagint, outside the Apocrypha.

The fact is that the question of wars between nations in the ordinary sense and of the duty of the citizen to defend his country is never raised at all in the New Testament. The explanation is not that Christianity is necessarily indifferent to these things, but that they did not come into view owing to the historical circumstances of the time. The Roman Empire had killed independent sovereign States with a foreign policy of their own, and questions of international politics in the modern sense did not exist. The Jewish Christian in particular was in a peculiar position with regard to his own nation. From the worldly and religious standpoints alike the one thing which the true patriot was at that time bound to discourage was any idea of asserting the national independence of Israel by the sword; it was at once futile and wrong, representing the attempt to establish the Kingdom of God by force of arms, which Jesus definitely rejected and against which He protested continually. Both Jesus and St. Paul were patriots in the sense that they loved their native land, witness the lament over Jerusalem and St. Paul's pathetic outburst in Rom. ix.; but they were patriots on whom there fell, as there fell on Jeremiah, the heavy burden of discouraging the natural hopes and aspirations of their countrymen. As the century wore on the position of the Jewish Christian only became harder. He found himself more and more in opposition to the general outlook both of the leaders and of the great mass of his nation, and he saw that nation hurrying ever faster down the fatal slope which led to its final ruin. He might love his country still, but all the ordinary outlets for patriotism were closed to him.

Even the case of the ordinary Gentile, whether Christian or not, was entirely unlike that of the citizen of the modern State. Whether he was an Asiatic, or an Egyptian, or a Greek, his own country had no independent existence, but was merged in the Roman Empire.

The question simply did not arise in New Testament times as to what he was to do if Achaia was attacked by Macedonia, or if Galatia should attempt to seize or oppress Cilicia; such events were outside the range of practical politics. Nor could the Empire itself ever stand to him in the relation in which the modern citizen now finds himself with regard to his country. To the Gentile believer it was not only alien, but also definitely non-Christian, even if not actually hostile and persecuting. Every form of service to it was connected with emperor worship and the participation in idolatrous rites.[1] We are, therefore, not surprised to find that references to the State in the New Testament are cold and reserved in tone; *e.g.* "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," and the passages already quoted from Romans and 1 Peter. Certainly they enjoin obedience and due submission to authority, but they fall far short of the enthusiastic devotion and self-sacrificing service even unto death which are called forth by the modern State. It is perfectly true that there is nothing in the New Testament about love of country in this sense, but it does not follow that it is therefore alien to the spirit of Christianity. The silence is fully explained by the historical circumstances of the day.

This absence of references to patriotism is, however, only one illustration of a principle which has the widest bearing on the interpretation of the New Testament. It is becoming more and more clearly recognised that neither our Lord nor His followers ever directly contemplated or provided for the actual historical developments of Christianity, which have brought about, amongst other things, the existence of a number of nominally Christian States, independent of each other. The discussion of the eschatological question in recent years has forced us to realise the extent to which the New

[1] It is, of course, familiar ground that it was for this reason that the lawfulness of Christians serving in the army was questioned in the early days of the Church.

Testament is dominated by the conviction of the speedy return of Christ and the end of national history as previously understood. The place of this was to be taken by a new Kingdom of God, whether on earth or in Heaven. To some extent our Lord Himself shared this view,[1] and we have to face the difficult question whether the form of His ethical teaching was in fact entirely determined by it. Was it really what is called an *Interimsethik*, a teaching adapted only to the short and peculiar period before the end? Is it the case that the sayings of the Sermon were never intended to apply to a world ruled by normal social conditions, but only to the brief interval until the coming of the Kingdom, an interval during which one could ignore the ordinary claims and duties of life, especially those connected with the future, the welfare of and provision for family and coming generations? For if the 'end of the world' was to take place, beyond all doubt, in a few months or years, it is obvious that all such duties could be laid aside. In other words can we assume that what Christ taught would not have held good a hundred years earlier or a hundred years later, if His expectation turned out to be mistaken? The solution is in some ways a tempting one but it cannot be accepted, at any rate in its extreme form. We are struck at once by the fact that the shortness of the time is, in fact, never emphasised in the Sermon on the Mount, or in many other parts of Christ's ethical teaching.[2] He does not say, "give away your coat, for there will never be another winter," or, "do not trouble about the needs of the body since the time is quickly coming when they will all be superseded." On the contrary it is, "realise the true values of the earthly and the spiritual in all conditions of life, and

[1] Precisely how far and in what sense is still keenly debated; we can only leave the question open here.

[2] The one real example of *Interimsethik* in the New Testament is found in 1 Cor. vii. 25 ff., where the command not to marry is directly connected with the belief in the nearness of the end. The communism of the early Church in Acts ii. is probably another example.

trust your Heavenly Father," And so we find, in fact, all through Christ's teaching that "where the eschatological motive, with its stress on the shortness of the time is prominent, the contents of the teaching are commonplace ('repent'), and in no way affected by this idea. On the other hand, where the contents of this teaching might be regarded as determined by the eschatological outlook the eschatological motive is conspicuously absent."[1]

Christ then is not laying down rules for a peculiar period, but whatever His teaching does mean, it is intended as the statement of principles of general validity, which can be, and must be, however imperfectly, applied under varying social and political conditions. But we do need to remind ourselves that He did not directly foresee these conditions, and therefore did not define the way in which these principles were to be worked out, or the qualifications which they might require. If then, as we have seen, this side of His teaching demands, on the clear evidence of the New Testament itself, very considerable qualifications and exceptions, even in the case of the individual in his private relationships, we may expect to find that it will require even more when it comes to social and international relationships.

Throughout this somewhat extended preliminary survey we have really been trying to get at the true point of view, and have been contending for the right to interpret our Lord's teaching in the spirit rather than in the letter, to treat it as a broad statement of principles instead of as a code of laws or fixed rules. And we claim that this right is based on a necessity derived from the New Testament itself. We are bound to find room for complementary, even apparently contradictory, principles, and to allow for the proverbial form in

[1] I venture to quote from a paper, "Is theTeaching of Jesus Interimsethik?" read by me at the Leiden Congress for the History of Religions, and published in the *Expositor* for November 1912, to which I would refer for a fuller treatment of the point.

which Christ clothed His teaching, for the historical conditions of the day, in which international relationships in the modern sense were unknown, and for that peculiar outlook on the future, the foreshortening of history, which colours the whole of the New Testament. Do we then, as St. Paul might say, make void the law of Christ? Nay; we establish the law. In no other way can we give His teaching a practical meaning for our age and for society as a whole. We have so far avoided raising the well-known objections derived from the results of applying that teaching literally, since we have wished to base our argument not on these, but on the proportion required by the New Testament itself. Yet the impracticability of that teaching, if regarded as a set of iron rules, can hardly be exaggerated. The important point for our purpose is, that if it forbids war, it no less certainly forbids all forms of legal redress or of punishment, whether in the state, the school, or the home, all forms of trade and commerce (it is obvious that these cannot be based on the principles of giving to all who ask, and of a complete surrender of all rights), and any holding of property, whether by the state or individuals. As we have seen, no one has ever succeeded in being a consistent Christian in this sense, and the logical results of the attempts which have been made have been obscured by the fact that they have been confined to a small minority. We are prevented from seeing the economic effect of a system of charity which attempts a literal obedience to Christ's commands, because it is only practised on a small scale. The non-resister enjoys, even if it be against his will, the protection of the policeman of whom he disapproves, and of the 'un-Christian' army and navy. If we were bound to apply the Sermon on the Mount *au pied de la lettre*, there would be no escape from the conclusion that it is entirely inapplicable to society as a whole, and could only be intended for small groups of enthusiasts,

such as the first band of disciples. This conclusion we repudiate; in appealing to the spirit rather than the letter, to the right to interpret the New Testament under the guidance of the living Spirit of Christ, we are not eviscerating His teaching of all real meaning; on the contrary we are vindicating its permanent appeal to the modern world, as applicable to all the relations of life and society, though the method of applying it will vary greatly in different spheres. The hard sayings are in fact all variations, put in the form of vivid and extreme illustrations, of the primary law of love—a readiness to surrender one's just rights, a refusal to seek for personal revenge, and a desire to work for the real well-being and happiness of others. How these ends may best be attained under the complicated conditions of modern life it must be for the enlightened Christian conscience to decide. Christ never meant to spare His followers the responsibility of thinking for themselves.

We have now reached the stage where we can discuss how far these principles can really be consistent with war, not on the basis of isolated texts, but in the light of the general teaching of Christ and His successors. It is obvious that in so far as war arises from and breeds hatred, cruelty, and revenge, indifference to the rights of others, and selfish ambition, it is un-Christian *au fond*. But is it necessarily so when it is undertaken in resistance to unjust oppression and attack, in defence of the weak, or even to secure the fulfilment of pledged promises? War is no doubt the appeal to force on the part of the community, but we are at once faced with considerations other than those which arise in the case of the individual defending his own rights. We may put aside the question as to how far this itself is sometimes legitimate in the case of the Christian, and consider only the new factors which are introduced when the interests of others are involved. What, we

may ask, would have been the duty of the Good Samaritan if he had come up before the robbers had completed their work? In spite of Tolstoi, it is hard to believe that Christ meant to forbid His followers ever to use force to protect others.[1] Again, while it is possible that a bachelor may properly feel called upon to give away all that he has, it is very doubtful whether it is right for one who has wife, children, and employés dependent on him; and it is perfectly certain that it is wrong for those who are trustees of other people's property. Now the State is always a trustee for others, both for its actual members and for future generations. The responsible rulers of a State must always be faced with the difficulty that though they themselves might be willing to suffer any conceivable loss of influence, territory, or material prosperity, or even death itself, rather than go to war, they have no right to enforce these sacrifices on others who may be quite unwilling to make the surrender, or to benefit their enemies at the expense of their friends.

We hold then that the community is bound to appeal to force to protect either its own members or weaker nations, and to uphold its just rights; it cannot abandon them as the individual might do. No doubt we shall be met at once with the familiar argument that 'force is no remedy,' that love and persuasion are the only means of changing men's hearts and of destroying evil. It appears, however, from what has been already said as to the part which compulsion plays in God's dealings with man, and therefore in man's dealings with his fellow-man, that this can only rank among half-truths, and that for two reasons. (1) Discipline may often be remedial, opening the heart to the appeal of higher motives. It is becoming more and more recognised that this should always be an element in all forms of

[1] It is very difficult to see what Tolstoi means when in his *Letter on Non-Resistance* he says: "None of us has ever yet met the imaginary robber with the imaginary child" (*i.e.* the robber who is supposed to be killing the child).

human punishment, and we cling to the hope that it is true of all God's discipline of souls hereafter, believing that somehow this too will be remedial, and will bring the soul into a condition in which it may respond to love. It is in the light of this principle that we may interpret the commands to love and forgive enemies, combined with the apparently very different attitude which Christ adopted towards certain sinners. The prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" is not a mere excuse, or an attempt to shut the eyes to sin, or a surrender of the duty of righteous indignation, at any rate when wrong to others is concerned. It gives the ground of hope for the future, a hope which alone makes forgiveness possible. It is a prayer for the opening of the eyes of the sinner, that the time may come when he shall know what he does—"that it may please thee to forgive our enemies . . . and to turn their hearts." Love[1] and forgiveness imply the absence of all malice and the desire for personal revenge; they do not mean that the offender is to be allowed to go his way unchecked by anything except good advice, particularly when the result of his sin is to bring suffering and misery upon others. Indeed, to give him a free hand is often the worst service which can be done to the man himself; there is room for coercion and punishment in its various forms in order to arouse the better self which love remembers is always there, since he too is a child of the one Father.

(2) The element of coercion is necessary for what is at first sight the somewhat paradoxical reason that God

[1] Love cannot here imply the personal affection which exists between relations and friends; it clearly means 'the desire for their true good.' This meaning, however, is in the context; it seems impossible to follow the tempting theory which suggests that it is inherent in the word ἀγαπᾶν itself. "The remark that ἀγαπᾶν is a colder word than φιλεῖν and less intimate will hold good for profane Greek." But "in the New Testament ἀγαπᾶν is purged of all coldness and is deeper than φιλεῖν, though the latter remains more human" (Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, s.v. ἀγαπᾶν).

respects man's personality and does not compel him to do right against his will. For his actions affect his fellow-man, and if he refuses to respond to the motives which bid him consider the rights and happiness of others, he must in the end be prevented by force from injuring the world in which he finds himself and from poisoning the springs of life from which his neighbour drinks. Just because God cannot force man to do good, He must in some cases force him to refrain from evil; and just because it is true that we cannot make men good by Act of Parliament, we are bound to use law, backed by the sanction of force, to prevent them from doing harm indefinitely.

The objections to war, therefore, which are based simply on the fact that it is an appeal to force, cannot stand. But it must be admitted that these considerations do not remove the fundamental difficulty, which is not that war invokes force to check evil, but that it does so in an entirely crude and ineffective fashion. The amount of suffering and loss caused by war is out of all proportion to the good attained;[1] punishment falls on the innocent as much as, or more than, on the guilty; there is no guarantee that the final result will be the vindication of right and justice. The attempts made to justify it on biological grounds as leading to the survival of the fittest are really nothing more than variations of the formula that might is right. No doubt the confidence which comes from the belief in a just cause is a real asset, but this is often shared by both sides and it is not in itself sufficient to outweigh disproportionate strength in other directions. Again,

[1] I do not forget that there is another side in the heroism and sacrifice it calls forth, but the same may be said of a pestilence, and we do not neglect our drains that grace may abound. Again, war has its value as a judgment from God, purging life and rousing the world from indifference and materialism, but the obvious corollary of this truth is that we should set ourselves to remove the sins which necessitate such a discipline. The fact that God brings good out of evil does not make the evil good—and it is always woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. The estimate of the value of these 'by-products' really comes under the head of Providence rather than under that of the ethical justification of war.

it is true that we may trust God to bring about what is ultimately best, but both religion and history forbid us to assume that this always includes victory for the side which deserves to win; *i.e.* force as applied in war does not always in fact establish the right. The argument which justifies war by the assumption that God's overruling providence will always correct its inherent irrationality would also justify drawing of lots, or duelling, or trial by ordeal, or any other illogical means of securing justice.

War is, indeed, in the last resort cruel and silly, a spectacle to provoke the ironic laughter of gods and devils, and yet in spite of all there are cases where the Christian must choose war with all its crudity and irrationality. For the individual is sometimes really helpless; he is the victim of circumstances and of ages of wrong and folly. This is peculiarly true with regard to war. From the dawn of history it has been the final method of arbitration between States, and civilisation has so far devised no better. In the present war we may with good cause regard one nation, or a group of men within that nation, as primarily responsible, but from a deeper point of view the responsibility rests on no one State or on no single generation; it is a legacy left us by the accumulated folly of the past. So far as England is concerned not the most extreme Pacifist has been able to show how, given the actual circumstances of August 1914, she could honourably have avoided war, or how, if she had stood aside for the moment, she could have done more than postpone the inevitable. The real problems of ethics do not turn on what we might do in a different and ideal state of things, but on what is right under certain given circumstances, for which we ourselves may have only a very limited responsibility. As Martineau says in the opening paragraphs of his *Types of Ethical Theory*: "The

fitness of actions must depend not simply on the internal springs from whence they issue, but also on the external application to the sphere of their display. The feeling suitable to a certain imaginary universe may be quite out of place in this."

No doubt it will at once be said that at any rate the individual Christian should recognise the claim of the ideal in his own life and refuse to be drawn within the whirlpool of external circumstances. If he realises the folly of war and the claims of love, should he not abhor the unclean thing for himself whatever others may do? The difficulty at once arises that he can only do this at the cost of his duties as a citizen, duties which a Christian should be the last to ignore, and at the risk of calling down great suffering upon those for whom he is responsible. Given the fact of war, each individual who stands aside weakens the hands of his fellow-countrymen, and by his action makes their defeat more probable. In the present case he has to ask himself what a German victory (which logically he ought to desire, unless he is prepared to be a gainer by the 'sin' of his country) would mean not merely for himself, but for the women and children of England and for its hopes for liberty and progress. Is he prepared to see the price of an effective[1] policy of non-resistance paid, not only by himself, but by others?

We see then that the attitude of the Christian citizen with regard to war cannot be the same as it might be on such a question as slavery. Slavery was at one time part of the established social system, and it was not generally realised that if Christ's teaching was con-

[1] As has been pointed out (p. 200), this policy is not in fact effective so long as it is confined to a small minority, and it is perhaps true that under these conditions such an attitude, mistaken and one-sided though it be, has a moral value as calling attention to an element in Christian ethics which is always in danger of being forgotten. It must at the same time be remembered that the citizen who does not fight is in fact adding to the strength of his country if he is doing any useful work; he is therefore helping to secure the victory of which he disapproves, and will share in its benefits.

sistently applied it ought to be abolished. But the individual whose conscience objected could to some extent break through the system without injury to others or treason to his country. If he freed his slaves the price was paid by himself and his family alone.[1] The same holds good to-day with regard to such matters as drink or gambling ;. the individual can in fact refuse to have anything to do with them. On the other hand he cannot as an individual escape from playing his part in our social system of capitalism and competition ; he may disapprove of it and work for its alteration, but so long as it exists he is in a true sense the victim of circumstances over which he has no real control, and the right and wrong of his actions will be decided by those actual circumstances, and not by the different ideal conditions which he would wish to see in their place. The position of the Christian who finds his country engaged in war is very similar. His decision to play his part in it cannot be described as the choice of the 'second best,' if that implies that any other better course is actually open to him at the time. The 'second best' in this sense is always a fall from grace. He chooses the best which is *de facto* open to him under existing conditions. The ideal is undoubtedly a state of society under which war should be impossible, but so far the ideal has not been realised, nor can it be realised at the moment. War is a most imperfect means of securing justice between nations, but so long as it is the only means, the Christian can only minimise its imperfections by throwing his whole energy on the side on which he believes justice to lie.[2]

[1] Dr. Rashdall reminds me that Roman Law limited the number of slaves who might be manumitted; no doubt similar regulations would always have been enforced wherever there was a danger of swamping the social system by too great an influx of freedmen. The fact illustrates further the principle that the individual cannot always be allowed to indulge his conscience in one direction at the expense of some other set of duties.

[2] There are few harder ethical questions than to define the point at which the Christian will part company with his country on the ground that it is engaged in an unjust war. It will for obvious reasons not be the same in the case (1) of a

In conclusion, Christian principles may be applied positively in two directions. (1) They will affect the methods of war in such things as the care for the sick and wounded, the attempt to minimise cruelty and suffering, and in their protest against the spirit of hate and revenge. They will also compel men to bear steadily in mind its true objects, which can only be the punishment of injustice and the final re-establishment of brotherhood and trust between nations; love and forgiveness have their practical meaning even in war when they are able to make these its paramount aims. The fact that nominally Christian States have often forgotten these principles does not make them necessarily impossible of application.

(2) Those who take Christ's teaching seriously are bound to do all they can to eliminate war for the future. We have justified the Christian's participation in war on the ground that it is a legacy from a past over which he has no control; many will interpret this as an admission that war is inevitable in the future. This is precisely what we refuse to admit. We cannot change the past, and we must deal as best we can with the concrete problems of the present under the conditions in which they come before us. But we can affect the future, and work for the alterations of the conditions which have hitherto made war their necessary corollary.

There are really two ways in which this may be attempted. The first is that of the non-resister who relies on the infection of his own example as upholding the ideal in the midst of a sinful world. It is true that it has a certain value in this direction, but, as we have seen, it implies the abandonment of his immediate duties as citizen, while there is grave reason to doubt whether he will after all best help the cause he has at

soldier already under orders, (2) of a private citizen who has still to make his choice. But neither can say absolutely 'my country, right or wrong,' though the average man may not unfairly accept the view of those who may be supposed to have the best opportunity of forming a right judgment.

heart. For the principles which he attempts to embody are not yet applicable to States. They are the climax of the Christian character, implying a high stage of moral development, and can only be in place when they are of a piece with the rest of the life.[1] This is true even of the individual. Refusal to resist a wrong can only make its appeal when it is perfectly clear that it does not arise from laziness or cowardice, pride or hypocrisy, or the desire to curry favour. It is not really an example of Christian meekness when Sancho Panza, smarting from the bruises inflicted on him by the carriers, exclaims "I will on no account draw my sword either against peasant or against knight, and from this time forward I forgive all injuries any one has done or shall do to me, or is now doing, or may hereafter do me, whether he be high or low, rich or poor, gentle or simple, without excepting any state or condition whatever." The martyr may give his body to be burned and yet be profited nothing. And it has been well said, with regard to the Bishop in *Les Misérables* who defends the convict he has sheltered by pretending that he has given him the stolen candlesticks, that "you must be that bishop to be able to do such a thing." Very few Christians have, in fact, risen to this level in their private lives; the Churches emphatically have not in their dealings with one another. Least of all have States. The law must come before the Gospel in the sense that the principles of justice, honesty, truthfulness, and regard for the fair claims of others must be consistently applied before it is possible to think of non-resistance or a surrender of rights. To attempt to begin with these is not only futile but ethically wrong, since it is building without the necessary foundation.[2]

[1] See on this point Canon Scott Holland, "Notes of the Month" in the *Commonwealth*, April 1915.

[2] Our treatment of the Boers is a good illustration of these principles. We have (1) a mistimed magnanimity (after Majuba), inevitably interpreted as weakness; (2) the appeal to force, opening the way for the proper exercise of magnanimity, based on mutual respect.

We come then to the second and more promising method of progress, which is that the Churches should in the future insist more definitely than they have hitherto done on the full recognition of the claims of the primary virtues in the affairs of nations. It would be to pass beyond the limits of our subject to discuss at length how this may be done, and the difficulties which attend any solution are sufficiently obvious. But we may instance the growing feeling in favour of some form of international tribunal, with compulsory arbitration between nations, corresponding to the settlement of private disputes by regularised process of law instead of by the crude methods of the individual. The ultimate sanction would still be that of force, working primarily through public opinion, but having behind it some power to make a recalcitrant nation obey its rulings. But it would be that of force scientifically and rationally applied to secure the triumph of that which has been so far as possible impartially decided to be the right. The nation would no longer be sole judge in its own quarrel, nor would the verdict depend on a strength which has no necessary relation to the merits of the case. To war under such conditions Christian ethics could take little exception. It must always, however, be remembered that in the last resort the working of any possible scheme will depend upon the moral standard of the individuals who constitute the nation. Exactly in so far as the teaching of the New Testament, in its proper proportions and based on the firm foundation of the elementary principles of morality, holds sway in the conscience of each member of the community will it be possible to apply it to the relations of States to one another. It is the creation of this atmosphere, rather than the elaboration of schemes or the settlement of intricate questions of international politics, which is the real task of the Churches as such.

To sum up our argument: War in a good cause is

justifiable simply because it is inevitable under the conditions which have come down to us from the past, and the Christian may play his part with no prickings of conscience. But we do not shut our eyes to the fact that the existence of these conditions does imply a failure on the part of the Church to secure the adoption of the principles of Christ in a nominally Christian civilisation. We cannot here attempt to discuss the reasons of this failure or to apportion the blame. The essential thing is to determine that it shall be remedied. Christianity has given to the world many paradoxes; let it add yet one more, in that while the Christian shows himself the bravest and most formidable of soldiers, he stands out as the most determined enemy of war for the future, because he will by the faith which can remove mountains and the love which dares the impossible set himself to remove the conditions which have made it inevitable and to develop in the individual and nation alike a temper of mind in which it shall become unthinkable.

# IX

# WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN NATION?

BY

MICHAEL GEORGE GLAZEBROOK

# IX

## WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN NATION?

VICTOR HUGO in *Les Misérables* tells a beautiful story of a bishop whose only treasure, a pair of silver candlesticks, was taken by a burglar. When the police caught the burglar red-handed, the bishop saved him from punishment by declaring that he himself had made him a present of the treasure. However we may judge the deed from the point of view of public justice, we cannot but admire such an example of charity and self-denial, and rejoice to know that it caused a real change of heart in the burglar. The deed, we say, was worthy of a Christian bishop. Are we to praise or to inculcate similar conduct on the part of a nation? In a sermon which attracted much attention last March the headmaster of Eton, after urging that we should "behave as a Christian nation," proceeded to apply the principle in a manner which required England to act very much like Victor Hugo's bishop. The controversy which arose thereupon among Christian writers gave occasion to the enemy. Mr. Robert Blatchford wrote in *The Clarion* of April 2: "Dr. Lyttelton has fallen into a confusion of thought; his critics have fallen into a confusion of thought. They both make the same mistake." And then, by a curious irony of fate, he proceeded to make the same mistake himself. Not indeed the same mistake which he attributed to them, of supposing that Christianity is consistent with patriotism, for in that they were right; but the mistake which

they really did make, which (as we shall see) is of quite a different nature. His words are worth quoting. "We are not a Christian nation. There never has been a Christian nation. There never will be a Christian nation, because any nation which faithfully acted on Christian principles would cease to be a nation. Christian principles are the principles of Christ. They bid us love our enemies, pray for them that despitefully use us, turn the left cheek if smitten on the right, and give to him who robs us of our coat our cloak also. They may all be expressed in one phrase, non-resistance."

Most of us when we hear such utterances (whether the speaker be a friend or a foe of Christianity) brush them aside as a defiance of common sense without stopping to examine the argument. But a minority are so seriously affected by what seems a double appeal to their Christian loyalty that, even if they cannot bring themselves openly to oppose all war, they are paralysed by a distressing conflict of emotions. It is to this minority that the following pages are addressed. For their sakes it is worth while to explain the confusion into which both Dr. Lyttelton and Mr. Blatchford have fallen; to show that they are the victims of a very common logical fallacy, the fallacy of personification. The matter is so important that, at the risk of being tedious, I will try to make each step of the argument abundantly clear.

Personification is one of the most familiar and most effective ornaments of poetry and rhetoric. It involves a process in two stages. First a number of individual persons or actions are grouped together under an abstract or a collective term. For instance, all Israelites are grouped together as Israel, all cases of dying as Death. Then this new term is treated as if it were the name of a person; and we get such statements as "Israel is the servant of Jehovah," or "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." Such expressions are not merely picturesque, but have a great practical value; for they supply a kind

of shorthand, enabling a writer to say a great deal in a few words. When St. Paul wrote[1] "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," he compressed into a dozen words a whole theory of human life, which it would take many pages of ordinary language to expound. But there is a corresponding danger. Sometimes these personified abstractions forget their humble origin and claim an independent existence, as if they were real persons. We see something like an approach to this in the famous passage in *Paradise Lost*, where Satan meets Sin and Death at the gate of Hell.

> Before the gates there sat
> On either side a formidable Shape.
> The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
> But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
> Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed
> With mortal sting. About her middle round
> A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
> With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
> A hideous peal . . .
>
> The other Shape—
> If shape it might be called that shape had none
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
> Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
> For each seemed either—black it stood as Night,
> Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
> And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

Milton was a poet, and knew what he was doing when he employed personification so vivid. But many of his readers did not understand; and so his words have helped to spread a personal conception of Sin and Death which has exercised a baneful influence upon popular theology. Arguments based upon a literal treatment of personification are as common and as fallacious as those which depend upon a literal use of metaphor or parable. The moment we forget that the personal term is little more than a convenient summary

[1] Romans v. 12.

of a number of individual cases, we are preparing ourselves to draw false conclusions.

A similar danger threatens those who speak of countries in terms of personification; and it is the greater because for most of us 'the nation' is something more than a summary of individuals. There are some Christians, indeed, who are so completely individualists in religion that they refuse to recognise country, and regard the name England as meaning simply a number of men and women who happen to live in the same island and speak the same language, but have no nearer relation to each other than to any other fellow-men. They are interesting as a practical answer to Scott's question:

> Breathes there the man with soul so dead
> Who never to himself hath said,
> This is my own, my native land?

But it is as curiosities that they are interesting, for their pathetic pedantry is not likely to prove infectious. For most civilised men are acutely conscious that a nation is not only a collective term, but one which implies a certain unity of thought and feeling, the mysterious result of contiguity, consanguinity, and community of interest. This consciousness, whether latent or explicit, has at all times made men's minds very ready to receive both the truths and the fallacies involved in the personification of a country. The origin, however, of such personification must be sought elsewhere. In fact it is derived from two sources, which are so different as to require separate discussion.

I. The religion of Israel before the exile was not monotheistic in our sense of the word. The people were continually reminded that they must worship Jehovah alone. But the fact that they were also forbidden to worship the gods of other nations was an admission that those gods had a real existence and power. The accepted theory of all the ancient world before Deutero-Isaiah

may be stated thus: Each nation had its own god, who was all-powerful on its soil, its champion in war and its patron in peace. They were his people in a very definite sense. They claimed a quasi-physical kinship to him, which was maintained by sacramental meals; and through him they knew themselves to be very closely united to each other. The whole nation was thus one large family. Not only were its members all of one blood: the old system of morality, which was tribal, not individual, bound them together by a mutual responsibility, the act of any one being accounted the act of all. So religion and morality, united with race and politics, fostered a natural tendency, making it inevitable that men should think of their nation as a single personality, with a continuous life, whose merit and reward, sin and punishment, repentance and faith, were not individual but collective. Nowhere is this more clearly implied than in the opening words of Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy:

> Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,
> saith your God.
> Speak ye tenderly to Jerusalem,
> and proclaim to her
> That her bondage is accomplished,
> her atonement accepted;
> That she hath received from Jehovah's hand
> double for all her sins.
>
> Isaiah xl. 1, 2.

Those words were written near the end of the exile, when Cyrus was thundering at the gates of Babylon; and their spirit continued to animate the Jews for centuries afterwards. Scattered over the world by a series of captivities, Israel ceased to be a nation, and became a race of diverse customs and languages, whose members could describe themselves (when they met for common worship) as "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in

Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." Yet, though thus dismembered, and divided by a veritable Babel, Israel remained, in the fond fancy of his sons, a real unity, a great personality, the favoured servant of Jehovah. What was the reason? Stronger than the plain facts of the age was the sentiment which every pious Israelite imbibed as he read the prophets. When he looked into the pages of Amos and Hosea and Isaiah, he returned in spirit to the great past, when the personification of the people was no mere literary survival but a living power. We Englishmen have in a large measure inherited that tradition. Familiar for centuries with the personal forms of speech which are used in the Old Testament about Israel and Babylon, Moab and Ammon and Amalek, we forget that such language depends for its meaning upon polytheism and tribal morality, and we import some of the old prophetic style into our own tongue. We personify England and France and Italy; and we find words addressed to Babylon by psalmist and prophet which seem to express our feeling towards a personified Germany.

II. The Bible, however, is not the sole nor even the principal source from which the modern habit of personifying nations has been derived; for we find it hardly less confirmed in Roman Catholic countries where the Old Testament is almost a dead letter. It is not the influence of the Bible, for instance, which has changed Italy from being 'a geographical expression' into a glorious personality, the object of passionate devotion, the queen to whom immortal odes are addressed, for whose rehabilitation thousands have shed their blood, and millions more are even now ready to die. That transformation is the fruit of the

new principle of nationalism which was planted by the French Revolution. The might of Revolutionary France was derived from the national consciousness which took the place of dynastic obedience. The challenge of France gradually roused a similar national feeling in Spain and Russia, and later in Germany. United with the much older nationalism of England, these proved too strong even for the genius of Napoleon. And ever since the peace which followed its first triumph, the principle of nationality has been gaining in power. It divorced Belgium from Holland in 1831, Norway from Sweden in 1905: it has made the permanent annexation of Alsace-Lorraine an impossibility: it promises to rescue the Slav states from alien rule and to reconstitute the Kingdom of Poland: and it is the chief impulse which has driven Italy into war with Austria.

And yet who can tell exactly in what nationality consists? A natural frontier, a common race, a common language, are elements of national unity, but no one of them is indispensable. Italy has not a common race; Roumania has no natural boundary; Alsace and Lorraine are French in spirit though their language is German. The one indispensable thing is such a flame of passionate feeling as can weld a people's diverse elements into one whole. That man is a patriot in the modern sense for whom the name of his country is no mere collective term, but represents an ideal for which he is willing to live loyally or to die devotedly. Now an ideal readily clothes itself in the forms of personality. The appeal of a country, personified as father or mother, is almost irresistible. So soon as Italy had been represented in poetry and sculpture as a mother robbed of half her sons, the reunion of the whole country and people was only a question of time. And I venture to prophesy that, so soon as a poet has created a personal figure which

can worthily stand for the whole British Empire, the vast and miscellaneous countries and peoples, which are now held together by a common loyalty and by the mutual attractions of kinship, interest, and enthusiasm, will grow into a solid whole, a living organism such as the world has never seen.

This fashion of speech, then, at once ancient and modern, which attributed a kind of personality to each whole nation, is justified alike by history and tradition, by poetry and common sense. But its use is justified only within limits. As we found in the case of Sin and Death, so in the case of England and France, an argument based upon the personification, like an argument based upon a metaphor, is pretty sure to be misleading. Such a fallacy will be exposed by a simple test. Take any sentence in which England is personified, and substitute for the word England some phrase expressing its real meaning, such as "the mass of Englishmen." If the sentence remains sound, however ugly, there has been no serious misuse of personification. If the change produces nonsense, there is a fallacy. An example of each kind will make my meaning clear.

When we say that England keeps her pledge to Belgium we mean exactly the same thing as if we used the longer phrase "the mass of Englishmen (acting through their representatives) keep the pledge which has been given in their name to the Belgian people." There is no difference between the two sentences except that one is brief and picturesque, the other long and clumsy. Here, therefore, the personification has been rightly used. But suppose, following Dr. Lyttelton and Mr. Blatchford, we say, "England is a Christian nation, and therefore England must not resist evil." Will that sentence bear translation? Leaving the first clause for later consideration, let us test the second.

"The mass of Englishmen must not resist evil." What evil? The Germans are our best commentators. Submission to an insolent and cruel enemy does not mean merely or chiefly that each man who might fight and refuses to do so suffers in his own person. It means that the aged, the women, and the children are delivered up to outrage. It means that when the fighting men of a nation "turn the other cheek," the cheeks which they offer to the smiter are not their own but those of the tender, the helpless, the innocent. The sentence, therefore, "England must not resist evil" is proved to be nonsense: or, if it has any sense, it is one which outrages the best feelings of all decent men. Here, then, we may be assured, personification has been abused. By pointing out the fallacy we can give peace to those good people who thought patriotism and Christian duty were opposed. We can show them that the cause of the distress which accompanied their resolve (for most of them did resolve) to take part in the war was not a failure in loyalty to Christ's teaching, but a failure to understand the rules of logic. They, like those whom I have quoted, were victims of the fallacy of personification.

But, after all, the exposure of a fallacy gives but a negative kind of satisfaction. Useful and necessary as it is to show that there is no real meaning in the proposition that "England must not resist evil," it is perhaps more important to examine the other clause of the sentence, which says "England is a Christian nation." What is a Christian nation? It is well to consider the criticisms of an opponent: so I will begin by quoting Mr. Blatchford once more. "Let us try the effect of a little plain speaking. Did Jesus ever say a word for patriotism, or for love of country? Did He ever excuse war? Did He ever counsel self-defence, or the defence of property, or of home? Never,

He taught non-resistance, and He put His precept into practice." I quote these words the more willingly, because they only express, though rather coarsely, a thought which troubles many timid Christians who are as ignorant of history as Mr. Blatchford himself. How are we to reply to these questions? We may begin by admitting that the right answer, so far as the records tell us, is 'Never.' And yet we can show that the conclusion, "therefore Christianity and patriotism are opposed," is wholly false. The proof lies in a review of the political condition of the Roman Empire in the time of Our Lord. During the first century of our era the Roman Empire included all the civilised parts of Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia. Within that vast area there were no nations, but only provinces of the Empire. The subject communities were often allowed some degree of autonomy: they might, if highly favoured, collect their own taxes and administer their own police: but they had neither army, nor foreign policy, nor any of the characteristics which mark sovereignty: except for memories of past independence they were no more nations, in the true sense, than is the Isle of Man. Such had been the condition of the Jews ever since the return from the captivity. Except during the short interlude of Hasmonaean monarchy, they had been for five hundred years not a nation but a church. However strong the bonds of race and religion which held them together as a social community, politically they were individual subjects of the Roman Empire, bound by Roman laws and punished (for their serious offences) by Roman magistrates. If further proof were needed that they lacked the character of a nation, it would be found in the tragic futility of the revolt which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem. Still less could a claim be made that the Jews of the dispersion were a nation. Then, as now, they were a racial church, scattered over

all the world and enjoying a considerable social influence. No doubt they had on their lips the traditional phrases of the prophets, which referred to Israel as a nation: but such phrases had ceased to bear any substantial meaning. There was no Jewish nation.

What good could come of preaching patriotism to such a community, or of 'excusing war'? Such talk could have, at best, but an antiquarian interest to them, and to most of them it would be interpreted as advising the senseless revolt of a brave mob, which ruined the whole country in the year A.D. 70. To reproach Jesus with having made no such appeals is to show complete ignorance, both of history and of His mode of teaching. The greatest of teachers, like the prophets who went before Him, took for granted the main facts of the age, and adapted His teaching to the capacity of the hearers. He needed not to discuss the foundations of social order, for they were settled by the Roman law, which punished murder and theft, and secured the family and property and personal rights. Still less was it for Him to speak of political ideals which were beyond the horizon of any subject of the Roman Empire. It was not by political talk or by discussion of laws, but by an appeal to the individual conscience, that He wrought the greatest revolution in the world's history.

We have now to consider only that part of our Lord's teaching which bears upon the matter in hand. The law secured, or aimed at securing, the punishment of the evil-doer. The prophets, taking this for granted, made the championship of the weak and defenceless (the widow and the orphan) a main test of character. Jesus, Who proclaimed Himself a successor of the prophets, accepted their tradition, and supplemented it with a new and more exacting requirement. This has never been better stated than by Sir John Seeley in *Ecce Homo*:

"It has been already shown that Christ raised the feeling of humanity from being a feeble restraining power to be an inspiring passion. The Christian moral reformation may indeed be summed up in this—humanity changed from a restraint to a motive. We shall be prepared therefore to find that, while earlier moralities had dealt chiefly in prohibitions, Christianity deals in positive commands. And precisely this is the case, precisely this difference made the Old Testament seem antiquated to the first Christians. They had passed from a region of passive into a region of active morality. The old legal formula began '*Thou shalt not*,' the new begins '*Thou shalt*.' The young man who had kept the whole law—that is, who had refrained from a number of actions—is commanded to do something, to sell his goods and feed the poor. Condemnation passed under the Mosaic law upon him who had sinned, who had done something forbidden—the soul that sinneth it shall die;—Christ's condemnation is pronounced upon those who had not done good. 'I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat.' The sinner whom Christ habitually denounces is he who has done nothing. This character comes repeatedly forward in His parables. It is the priest and Levite who passed by on the other side. It is Dives, of whom no ill is recorded except that a beggar lay at his gate full of sores, and yet no man gave unto him. It is the servant who hid in a napkin the talent committed to him. It is the unprofitable servant, who has done only what it was his duty to do."

In the vision of the last judgment, strange as it may seem to us, nothing is said of ordinary sinners, misled by passion, but all attention is concentrated upon those who offend against the new Christian law of active benevolence. The fate of saint and sinner alike is determined by the answer to the question, Have you relieved the distresses of sufferers who were within

your reach? Those who cannot affirm that they have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the prisoner, are condemned at once. If such be the judgment pronounced upon those who were too selfish to relieve the minor distresses of their neighbours, what penalty could be dreadful enough for those who did not use their power to prevent the most hideous outrages from being wreaked upon the innocent? The greater the distress the more urgent the duty. Does any one urge that if he cannot check the aggressor without hurting him, the Christian is bound to hold his hand? Such paltering would reduce the scene of the last judgment to a mockery. The motive which prompts the objection is not Christianity but cowardice. Every Christian man, then, is bound not merely to relieve the distresses of the innocent, but by all means in his power to prevent them.

In a normal modern State each Christian citizen has a double character. He is an individual, bound by the law of Christ: and he is a part of the vast body of voters whose collective will determines the policy of the State by electing and supporting the government. What is his duty in the latter capacity? Government has two main functions: to promote the well-being of citizens within the State, and to maintain good relations with other countries. For what the government does in both these spheres every citizen has a share of responsibility. Let us consider the two cases separately.

Except in a Tolstoian Utopia, the first duty of a government is to preserve order, to maintain the security of life and property. This means continual coercion. It is not merely that actual thieves and murderers are punished: the more important fact is that the fear of such punishment prevents a much larger number of crimes. Even in a small community all this requires organisation. Magistrates must be chosen for their character and abilities, trained in

administration, and paid for their services. Policemen must be enlisted, disciplined, and paid. The larger the community the more elaborate is the necessary organisation. But, be it large or small, the policeman who arrests the evil-doer, the magistrate who condemns him, the executioner who kills him, are simply instruments of the collective will of the citizens. Is it the part of a Christian to will such action? St. Paul may answer for us. He writes of the civil magistrate, "He beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." In other words, the collective will of Christian citizens demands that their representatives should punish or prevent outrage at large, just as they themselves would in individual cases.

About the other function of civil government—that of social betterment—little need be said, for there is no dispute. Plainly the Christian citizen will desire, more than the rest, to remedy the evils of poverty and disease and ignorance and class rivalry. He will expect his government to do scientifically for the whole country what he can only do imperfectly for a few individuals.

Now the citizens of all civilised countries favour both these objects in a large measure. Those who are Christians will sympathise with the rest; only they will conceive the objects more nobly and pursue them more unselfishly. If they predominate, the result will appear in a higher standard of national life.

What attitude does the Christian citizen take toward the external policy of the State? Clearly he will demand that the government who represent him shall deal fairly with other States, whether large or small, never trying to gain an advantage by force or fraud or threatenings. Nothing could be more abhorrent to him than the formula of German professors which asserts that while the law of Christ ought to rule our private life, the conduct of State affairs must follow

the principles of Machiavelli.[1] Neither would he permit those principles to triumph in the policy of a foreign nation towards his own. Since he is consciously his brother's keeper, he would not feel it right that his government should suffer the lives or higher interests of his fellows to be destroyed by foreign aggression. So the collective will of the mass of Christian citizens demands that their representatives shall act with the same fairness and firmness which any one of them would show in his dealing on behalf of private friends.

Thus we are brought face to face with the problem which has vexed so many consciences. What is the right attitude of the Christian citizen towards war?—not aggressive war, which none but the Germans now pretend to justify, but war which is genuinely defensive. When a powerful and insolent nation demands a cession of territory from a neighbouring country, the latter has two alternative courses, and only two—submission and war. What submission involves we may learn from the history of the last century. The Austrian rule of northern Italy (which was not

[1] Witness the words of Professor Foerster of Munich, which were published last March in *Die Friedenswarte für Zwischenstaatliche Organisation*:

"Two decenniums before Bismarck's rise the political writer Bollmann wrote the following prophetic words: 'Germany is not to be saved unless a reforming, warlike prince arises in Prussia, such as Machiavelli described. This prince will, in internal matters, hold the welfare of the people as holy, but over against foreign Powers he will know neither mildness nor savagery, neither faith nor breach of faith, neither honour nor shame, but only the united greatness and independence of the Fatherland.' We all know how completely Bismarck, as a force-politician, has made this standpoint his own; how he, in his thoughts and reminiscences, has confessed himself an adherent of a thorough-going Realpolitik. One of his unqualified adherents, the national economist Schmoller, wrote in this sense the following words: 'Without a certain coldness and hardness a great statesman is as little to be imagined, as without the art to deceive men under certain circumstances, and unscrupulously to avail himself of good and bad means for the highest ends.' Bismarck's standpoint was raised to a formal political philosophy by Heinrich von Treitschke in his Lectures on Politics. In this work is a chapter, 'The State and the Moral Law,' in which in principle the State is placed outside the moral law. The essence of the State is power, and therefore the first duty of the State is to create for itself power. It is my conviction that this materialisation of the principle of power, this freeing of the State from all thoughts of law, has worked thoroughly corruptingly upon our generation." I quote from the July number of *Goodwill*, p. 153.

conquered but ceded) up to the year 1860, and of Venetia till 1870; the German rule of Poland and of Alsace-Lorraine up to the present day; the Turkish tyranny in Bulgaria and Armenia — these make it perfectly clear. The conquerors behave on a large scale just as lesser criminals do in their petty sphere. The inhabitants of the subject land are the victims of insolent violence, of lust and rapine, at the hands of the dominant soldiery, who are all actual or possible criminals. Submission, therefore, involves the people as a whole in just that kind of suffering which debases and degrades. No man, who has the power to avert it, may rightly be excused for failing to do so.

If submission be wrong, the only alternative is prevention; and that means war, or at least readiness for war. Let us approach the question from the point of view of the individual. We have seen that, within a civilised State, the Christian citizen's duty requires him to punish crime, and as far as possible to prevent it; and that he cannot do either without employing, or being ready to employ, physical force. Now within such a community the actual or possible criminals are comparatively few and unorganised. When they are very numerous and organised, is the duty no longer imperative? None but a cynic would put forward such a plea. The duty, then, remains the same; but the mode of fulfilling it may well be different. For protection against civil crime a small organisation suffices. It would be absurd for every citizen to be his own policeman: for such duties are more securely, more economically, and more justly performed by deputy. In the event of war it is otherwise. The number of those against whose violence provision has to be made is limited only by the number of men of military age who can be armed by the enemy. The service, therefore, of every citizen may be needed. It is every man's duty, then, to be prepared; and that for two

reasons. He ought to take his share in the protection of his own people. And he ought not to allow his country, by obvious weakness, to tempt a neighbour to aggression. The present war is a hideous commentary upon the old text, *Si vis pacem, para bellum.* Had not England been notoriously unprepared, there would have been peace in Europe to-day.

What is it to be prepared? In the old days of Athens every citizen had been trained in the very simple drill of the time and possessed the simple weapons which were in use. There were no engineers, no artillery, no commissariat; and the ammunition consisted merely in a store of arrows. When war threatened, a single proclamation summoned all who were liable to serve; and in two days the necessary army was constituted, each man carrying his own provisions. In our own day readiness implies infinitely more. The mere provision of material supplies demands a large and ever active organisation. The training of men is a long process, and their numbers are so great that immense care and forethought are required to secure efficiency. But the essential principle remains, that every man is personally responsible for the protection of his fellows. The man who thinks that he does all his duty by helping to pay a professional army has yet to learn what the Christian duty of service means. All who have learned the lesson will require the government which represents them to organise the whole nation for defence; for only thus can each one of them fulfil his duty to the weak and the innocent.

If this reasoning is correct it enables us to give an answer to the question which stands at the head of this essay. That answer must consist of two parts, one positive and the other negative.

Negatively we may reply by repudiating current fallacies. A Christian country is not 'a magnified non-natural man,' who is bound by the laws of conduct

which were made for individuals. Reasoning based upon the belief that personification represents reality is nonsense, and pernicious nonsense. Nor is a country Christian whose members, individually or collectively, have subscribed to a particular form of the Christian creed; for the Christianity of a country consists not in creed but in conduct.

Positively we may describe a Christian country as one in which, broadly speaking, a citizen feels that his duty as a member of the State harmonises with his duty as a servant of Christ. Without attempting to go into detail, we may point out that this will be the case only if two conditions are satisfied. The guiding principle of all internal legislation and administration must be the greatest good of the whole body. And external policy must be firm and fair, refusing either to practise or to suffer aggression. How can a government be secured which shall act in accordance with these principles? Only in one way. It must represent a people among whom the dominant voice is Christian, for in the long-run the government is no more than the manifestation of the people's collective will.

Is there such a nation in existence to-day? Has there ever been such a nation? Assuredly there is not, and never has been, one which can claim to be Christian in the full sense. We need not speak of Germany, which has frankly reverted to the worship of Odin and Thor, to a gospel of force and hatred, to an avowed policy of fraud and outrage. Which of the Allies can be described unreservedly as a Christian nation? Yet the fire of trial, which is burning away much dross, has begun to reveal in each of them an unsuspected proportion of pure gold. In each there is being liberated a force of Christian sentiment—sometimes concealed under strange names, such as socialism or agnosticism—which promises to control the action of the future. The citizens of each, growing more conscious day by

day that the cause for which they are fighting is neither more nor less than Christian civilisation, are slowly learning the truth which the nineteenth century had obscured, that the spiritual is more than the material. The stern discipline of a death-struggle, prolonged for another year, bids fair to make men understand, as they never understood before, the meaning of the command, "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven." Out of the ashes of this conflagration, which is consuming the old order which made the life of nations a sordid struggle for material wealth, we may hope that there will arise regenerate peoples, Christian in deed and in truth.

# X

# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AFTER THE WAR

BY

HERBERT HENSLEY HENSON

DEAN OF DURHAM

# X

# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AFTER THE WAR

## I

On the morrow of the Great War the nations of Europe will find themselves confronted with domestic problems of the utmost difficulty and importance. Their institutions will be subjected to a searching criticism, and judged by new and higher standards. Something will have been learned, much will have been unlearned, in the hard school of experience, and men will perforce apply at home the truths they have learned abroad. Of all the national institutions the Churches will, perhaps, be the most severely criticised, and the most sternly handled, for, unlike the rest, they will have themselves been brought into judgment by the war, and in some respects condemned.

Organised Christianity does not come well out of the world crisis. For if we ask what is the primary purpose, nay the very *raison d'être* of the Christian Church, we cannot but answer that it is the expressing of the principles of the Gospel in human life, the bringing them to bear effectively on human society, so that they may become therein as the guiding light and the saving salt. The events of the last few months seem to disclose an almost complete failure to serve that purpose, and to fulfil that programme. The outbreak

of the Great War implied an immense loss of prestige to organised Christianity, and the behaviour of the Churches during its progress deepened rather than mitigated the painful impression of practical futility, which their initial failure had created. Men awoke to the discovery that Christendom was really swayed by motives which had no pretence of being Christian, and that the Churches had become parasitic, bestowing their facile consecrations on every national ambition, and failing to rebuke any national crime. In this country, perhaps, the portentous significance of the discovery has been obscured by the general and (as the present writer must needs think) well-founded assumption that, in the case of the Allies, the interest of righteousness was one with the national policy, and therefore that there was no obligation to criticise or resist the stream of popular feeling. To go with the multitude is always so easy a matter that no moral impressiveness attaches to it even when the multitude takes the right road. When the call is to swim against the stream men are able to discern moral issues, and to recognise fidelity. It is not without significance that the perfervid and indiscriminating advocacy of the war by some clergymen has been observed to provoke among our soldiers a perceptible restiveness, and even a measure of repugnance.

This criticism of the Churches will be unique both in its motive and in its purpose, for it will spring, not, as heretofore, from anti-religious feeling, but from a new perception of the value and power of Christianity, and it will be directed, not to the humiliation and the discomfiture of the Church, but to its better equipment as the instrument of applying the Gospel to modern life, national and international. The very failure of the Churches has disclosed the preciousness of the Religion which they have failed adequately to express, just as, in a shipwreck, the treasures of the cargo are

only then perceived when they are cast overboard. Prussian policy and Prussian warfare have forced on an outraged world the necessity of that Religion, of which both were the explicit and insolent contradiction. Driven back on first principles, men can discover no tolerable alternative to those which the Gospel offers. They see that Civilisation, if it is to be in any genuine sense progressive, must be leavened by the Christian spirit, and directed towards the Christian ideal.

In some respects, it must not be forgotten, War is a bad training for religious reformers. Soldiers have no good record as theologians and as ecclesiastical statesmen. Their knowledge is too limited, their habits are too formal, their methods are too simple. The military life disgusts men with that tolerance of individual vagaries which is the very essence of ecclesiastical wisdom. "Quench not the spirit" is a hard saying for soldiers. Their natural preference is for a simplification of all human action into the simple category of discipline as they have known it: "I also am a man under authority having soldiers under myself, and I say to this one, go, and he goeth; and to another, come, and he cometh: and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it." It is not without significance that the founder of the Jesuits was an ex-soldier, nor should we ignore the suggestive fact that the modern sect which has appealed most successfully to the non-intellectual classes of society is modelled on the army. Was it not the Duke of Wellington himself who spoke of the "marching orders" which the clergy had received? In the soldier's eyes the Bible appears most naturally as a Code, and the crude simplicity of literalist 'schemes' makes a strong appeal to him. All this compels a certain apprehension as to the effect which may follow from a general application to our national religion of military ways of thought and life. In this connection, however, it must not be forgotten that the British

armies are mostly composed of men whose mental and social habits have been formed under the conditions of civil life. The war will have widened their outlook, and stirred their consciences: it will not have emptied their minds, or shrivelled their sympathies.

Some effects of the war, perhaps, are fairly certain, and may be taken for granted. The war has stimulated patriotism, and at the same time disclosed solidarity. Men will be more regardful of natural and historic differences, and, at the same time, more impatient of national and sectarian limits. They will have seen Christianity under many forms, uttering itself by many modes of worship, and the while they will have perforce recognised in it an evident and genuine unity. Thus they will have gained a new and richer conception of tolerance than that which has inspired a supercilious contempt, or an undiscerning disregard, of the shibboleths and fashions of religious men. Confronted with the elemental facts of life and death, reading Faith ever in terms of moral conflict and victory, they will henceforth have no mind for the relatively frivolous issues which have heretofore distracted and divided the religious world, and dissipated so great a volume of human devotion. They will have moved beyond these things for which they will no longer be able to find any sincere concern. Faber's tender lines, often heard perhaps in the trenches as a Mission Hymn, will be seen to utter the core of their Creed:

> For the Love of God is broader
> Than the measures of man's mind,
> And the Heart of the Eternal
> Is most wonderfully kind.

With St. Paul they will have been led to know that "the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Now this inevitable reduction of religious theories and systems to their moral expressions is wholly to the

good. It conforms to the Dominical standard of religious judgment: "By their fruits ye shall know them." It is an evident return to Apostolic Christianity, which, as every candid student of the first age and the Apostolic literature perceives, was pre-eminently moral, a new 'way' of life for men. The considering soldier, framing in the light of his observations a description of Christians, might well adopt the words of an early Apologist, and find the salient difference between Christians and other men in their moral independence. Nowise eccentric, they are never conventional: always conforming to the circumstances of their life, they never yield unquestioning obedience to terrestrial authority: "While living in Greek and barbarian cities, according as each has obtained his lot, and following the local customs, both in clothing and food and in the rest of life, they shew forth the wonderful and confessedly strange character of their own citizenship." To have escaped from the confusing sophistries of controversy, and returned to the simpler issues of prae-controversial Christianity, implies the possession of a new point of view from which to regard the existing theories and systems which combine to represent Christ's Religion in modern society. How far do these assist men to live by the Christian standard? How far do they shape the relations of men in society after the pattern of Christ? Such questions have a conventional sound, but they will no longer carry a conventional sense, for in accepting Morality as the test of Faith, men will have ceased to be conventional, and will be invoking as the "Judge of Controversies" no less authority than that of "the aboriginal Vicar of Christ," the human spirit itself. They will have returned, after so many ages of controversial aberration, to the prophetic doctrine: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

It is, indeed, a happy circumstance that no sectarian capital can be made out of the war. The line between the combatants does not follow any religious or ecclesiastical division. The division falls rather between those who accept, and those who repudiate, the morality which is the core of Christian civilisation, and which finds its supreme exposition and illustration in the Gospel. It is the case in this conflict, as in every previous conflict, that apart from the grand issue of war, on which nations are ranged, is the issue of individual fidelity, which has no necessary connection with the larger fact. It implies no judgment of individual Germans to say that Germany, by the perfidy which began the war, and the hideous violence which has marked its conduct, is waging war, less against other States, than against the Christian Tradition itself. So plainly is this perceived that the general conscience of civilised men has been stirred to a unique and most impressive agreement. Germany and her Allies are condemned to a moral isolation at once confessed and complete.

Christianity stands to gain by this new concentration of mind on its moral implications. For in these is its genuine originality disclosed, not in its theology, still less in its institutions. Theology and institutions (sacraments, hierarchies, casuistic systems) belong to the common stock of religion, and bear a family likeness under all descriptions of Faith, but the characteristic morality of a Religion reveals its quality, and gives the measure of its originality. In the Religion of Christ morality and faith are so closely held together that, where the first is apparent, the last is necessarily implicit, albeit neither realised nor confessed. It is no poet's fancy, but a just summary of the teaching of the Gospel, which says

> There dwells more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the Creeds,

when the words are spoken of one who, though "per-

plext in faith," can truly be said to be "pure in deeds." "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" asked the Lord. The answer He returned to His own question is one of the most illuminating utterances of the New Testament: "He stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." This wide reach of Christian discipleship as including all who, with whatever limitations of knowledge, and under whatever denominational descriptions, are striving to "live by the spirit," will be much more clearly perceived after the war, and much more frankly recognised. Christ's words to the intolerant son of Zebedee will come home to the consciences of His professed followers with a new power, as they in their turn have to determine their treatment of eccentric zealots and unorthodox believers: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against you is for you."

Precisely because Christianity will henceforth be seen and judged in its moral expressions, rather than in its theological and ecclesiastical developments, the Religion of Christians will be far more closely held to the Person of the historic Founder than in the past. What was written in the Gospel will be seen to disclose the secret of Christian survival in a world of challenge and denial: "Because I live, ye shall live also." For the conception of human character, duty, and destiny, which is embodied for all time in the Person of Jesus, as presented by the Evangelists, will be seen to have its supports, not merely or mainly in the tradition of Apostles preserved in documents of unassailable authority, but always in the never-failing and eager response of the human spirit itself, recognising its true greatness, and embracing the ideal which Jesus offered, and which Jesus satisfied. Very justly did a British artist, purposing, on the completion of a whole year of conflict, to sum up the inner

significance of the war, draw a picture of "The Two Ideals"; on the one hand, that suggested by a roadside Calvary in Belgium, inexpressibly tender and mournful, yet with light gathering about it in the heaven, and, on the other hand, that presented by the armed and shrinking Kaiser, whom men must needs hold to be the responsible author of the vast tragedy. Not a few devout folk only, but the manhood of civilised Europe sees the war thus, and draws to the Crucified:

> Is it not strange the darkest hour
> That ever dawned on sinful earth
> Should touch the mind with subtler pow'r
> For comfort than an angel's mirth?
> That to the Cross the mourner's eye should turn
> Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn?

Keble's familiar lines come readily to the mind as it ponders the world in agony, and interprets its protest.

The "back to Christ" tendency, which has marked the saner theological thought of recent years, will be reinforced by the general experience, and extended far beyond the formal limits of Christian profession. Civilised mankind, appalled at the catastrophe into which it has been plunged, echoes the Apostle's confession: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

The war will compel a new simplification of life, a general curtailment of superfluous expenditure, a practical recognition of another scale of values than that which had come to be too widely accepted in the prosperous, self-indulgent society, which the war will have disallowed, if not destroyed. But, if we have interpreted rightly the effect of the war on the minds of men, the necessity, which circumstances will have created, will be met by an inner preparedness, bred of the experiences and suggestions of the conflict. The new situation will not be wholly uncongenial, certainly not unintelligible, to those who have been led to seek

wisdom, not in "the tradition of the elders," but at the feet of Jesus. For truly the range of Christian liberty, and the nature of Christian asceticism, will be perceived best as both are exhibited in the example of "the Son of Man." In the life of Jesus, as the Evangelists record it, moral liberty is freely and joyously exercised. No ascetic shadows mar the perfect beauty of that ideal humanity. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking" was His own summary of His way of living, and He drew upon Himself thereby the sour regards and crude calumnies of His religious contemporaries. "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber: the friend of publicans and sinners" was their brutal and bigoted comment. But the fortunes of the "Son of Man" correct a misunderstanding which His manner of living might too easily have suggested. The *dénouement* of that gracious career was the Cross, and the key to the Cross is the solemn mystery of Sin. Fidelity to the Higher Law implies in such a world as this a stern and difficult choice, and from that necessity "the Captain of our Salvation" was not exempt. Moral liberty is seen to be conditioned by moral conflict. The redemption of the world is no light matter. "Apart from shedding of blood is no remission," says an apostolic writer tersely. Men will not be led by the war into a facile hedonism, but into a resolute acceptance of the whole content of Life's Paradox, its potencies of freedom, and also its necessities of sacrifice. The problem of rebuilding civilisation in Europe, of creating a saner, juster society on the ruins of that which will have perished amid the horrors of war, will no longer connect itself in men's minds with the conflict of classes, as too often in the past, but, more reasonably, with the working out of principles implicit always in the Christian creed, but never realised until the stress and anguish of the conflict forced them into prominence.

II

How far will the Church of England be able to sustain the new and more exacting criticism which will be applied to its theory and practice? Can it admit the larger conception of Christianity which has been forming in so many minds during these terrible months of war? Can it become the instrument of the spiritual energies and enthusiasms which are present in so many lives? The mere framing of these questions must needs suggest many misgivings, yet perhaps it would not be wholly excessive to say that there are some features of the Church of England which might seem specially favourable to the considerable process of self-adaptation, which is plainly indispensable. As a National Church it conciliates the patriotic sentiment which the war has stimulated, and escapes the aspect of sectarianism which the war has made repulsive. The name of England will emerge from the world-conflict with fresh titles to human veneration, dearer than ever to the thought of Englishmen, more richly freighted than before with associations of public service, and glorious memories of personal heroism. The Church of England will catch a certain lustre from its historic character as a national institution. Men will be disposed to give it a fair trial, willing to admit its right to express the Christian religion to and for Englishmen. The ancient churches, where the flags of the regiments have been treasured, and whose walls will carry many names of comrades sleeping on the battle-fields abroad or beneath the ocean, will seem the natural homes of religion to the soldiers and sailors returning at last from the long war. A new link between the Church and the nation will have been forged in the furnace of affliction.

This sentimental advantage does not stand alone. The national status of the Church of England has given a distinctive, and on the whole a beneficial

character to the Church itself. To this cause must be ascribed that tolerant habit for which the English Church has been widely and not unjustly celebrated. An Established Church can never be quite so self-centred as a 'Free' Church, or quite so susceptible to party pressures, or quite so dogmatic in method, or quite so exclusive in temper. Its theory compels it to have regard to national, rather than to merely ecclesiastical interests: it is perforce concerned rather with civic morality than with individual orthodoxy. If it be the case that this circumstance may induce a certain lack of fervour, and may even foster a quietly mundane temper, yet it is also the case that it enables much public service, and promotes a broad conception of clerical duty. In the case of the Church of England, of course, it may be argued that its tolerance of divergent opinions within the ranks of its ministry is rather an undesigned consequence of its history than the proper result of its political situation, and that the practical paralysis of its legislative machinery, and the notorious impotence of its judicial system, have enabled a measure of individual liberty, both of opinion and practice, which is properly unreasonable, and could never have been deliberately approved. All this may be admitted, and yet the substantial fact remains unaffected. In the National Church, as Englishmen have received it, they possess the most tolerant Church in Christendom, the least professional clergy, the largest liberty of teaching, the least stereotyped of systems. All this may be to the good.

Patriotism and tolerance are precious things, but they may easily degenerate. Patriotism in religion may become the motive power of insularity and imperialism: and tolerance may pass into an anaemic indifferentism, which denounces no creed, because it believes none, and is patient of all worships, because it has no real use for any. Assuredly it cannot be said

that the Church of England enjoys an immunity from the risks of such degeneracy. Indeed, the very circumstance which might protect a National Church from becoming either insular or imperialist may, by an unhappy confusion, assist the process of decline; and it is certainly true that formal securities against indifferentism can but too easily be transmuted into the buttresses of bigotry. Of both these lamentable perversions the student of Anglican history would be at no loss for examples. Nevertheless, it may fairly be contended that the Catholic system of the Church of England is capable, if justly and generously interpreted, of securing both the patriotism and the tolerance of a national institution from becoming depraved into anti-Christian qualities.

Christianity will have been purged of insularity and every other provincialism by a war which has brought into long-continued personal contact the members of many churches and of none. Reluctantly or gladly, as the case may be, men of every Christian type have been forced to realise the true independence of polity and system which is the prerogative of Christ's religion. Christianity, they see, is not Roman, or Anglican, or Presbyterian, or Orthodox, or Congregational, or anything that can be summed up in an ecclesiastical description, but something which consists with all these, and yet is essentially none of them—a Divine Energy uttering itself variously as men's temperaments or circumstances determine, and yet recognisably one in its moral effects on character and life. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit." Beyond all question there is involved in this larger conception of Christianity for many Englishmen an immense sacrifice of inbred prejudices. Old facts are seen in new lights, and seen to bear new senses.

The English protestant, at home perhaps a "Wycliffe Preacher," or some other manner of itinerant gospeller, sees Roman Catholic priests and nuns moving about amid the scenes of death on blessed ministries of comfort and mercy, and learns for the first time that the 'Confessional' and the 'Mass' are instruments of that same Divine compassion which he had always held to be the core of the Gospel. How could the 'Crucifix' ever become again to him an exasperating symbol of popish superstition after he had seen it standing forlornly beside the peasants' war-wasted fields, or erect as if in solemn triumph in the ruined churches, or lovingly clasped in dying soldiers' hands? How much strength will bigoted theories about schism and heresy retain in the man's mind, however hitherto bound by them, who has witnessed the sublimely simple faith of illiterate Salvationists and Methodists, hallowing the difficult warfare of the trenches, and rising grandly in desperate moments of conflict? The old arguments which seemed so convincing remain, and are what they were, but they have now to be correlated with a new kind of evidence, and read in a new spirit. Like the Hebrew Patriarch, shaken by extreme affliction out of religious complacency, and taught by trouble, thousands of strong denominationalists, brought under the discipline of the Great War, might sum up their own experiences in the words: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." If the Church of England, when the war is over, shall be found to have learned nothing, and forgotten nothing, by the experience which will have affected the soldiers so powerfully, a cruel situation indeed will have been created. Yet for the Church also learning must mean sacrifice. To "know the day of her visitation" must imply large surrenders of prejudice.

Alone of the Reformed Churches the Church of England carried its administrative system through the crisis of Reformation without structural alteration. The church ceased to be international, and became national. Whatever changes were incidental to that momentous revolution of ecclesiastical status were made, but there was no attempt to subvert the hierarchical system. The diocesan and parochial units continued. Even the ecclesiastical courts and the Canon Law survived, though under novel and drastic conditions. The really considerable change was made, not in the region of polity, though that was important, but in the region of doctrine and discipline. Henceforth the Church of England professed 'the Protestant Reformed Religion,' though this religion was expressed through ecclesiastical arrangements which were ancient and Catholic. It preserved the episcopal government, and the liturgical worship, but the first was severed from its time-honoured dependence on the Papacy, and the last was drastically simplified in the interest of spiritual religion. Thus, in a sense, it is true to say of the Reformed Church of England that it bridged the chasm between the Unreformed Church of Rome and the Reformed Churches; and it is legitimate to build on this view some hopes of mediatorial service in the future. But before any effective steps can be taken towards a reconciliation of the Churches, the famous terms 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' must be purged of many exasperating associations, and brought back to their essential and irreducible significance. Both, moreover, must be correlated with that wider spiritual knowledge which Christian experience has long been accumulating, and which the Great War has dramatically disclosed. What is the spiritual core of Protestantism? What is the spiritual core of Catholicism? Is there any essential incompatibility between them? Do they not rather answer to divergent types of individual, perhaps also

of racial, temperament? Are they not in great part labels on the distinctive results of historical processes? Or, at least, do not these things enter so largely into their actual forms as to make it extremely difficult to vindicate for either a separate existence? Assuredly there are many Catholic Protestants, and many Protestant Catholics. Their ecclesiastical distribution seems to be independent of personal choice, or intrinsic truth, the consequence of a thousand accidents of time, place, and circumstance.

Archbishop Temple was once asked by an anxious friend at what point in the process of making concessions to the 'Ritualists' the cause of truth would be really endangered, what, in fact, was the core of Protestantism which could not rightly be surrendered even in the interest of conciliation. The Archbishop replied at once and with emphasis, "Private Judgment." That was in his view the core of Protestantism, and he was right. Is "private judgment" properly inconsistent with ecclesiastical order, and that "authority in controversies of Faith" which "the Church" is expressly said by the 20th Article to possess? Perhaps the real question is hardly less formidable than this, Can mutual toleration within a single communion co-exist permanently with the advocacy of mutually exclusive doctrines? Must not the future of the Church of England really depend on the answer which this question receives?

Warburton charged the Puritans with holding what he called "that wretched principle," viz. "that error is not to be tolerated without the guilt of partaking in other men's sins." This made them, when in a minority, refuse to acquiesce in ecclesiastical arrangements which hurt their consciences, and, when in a majority, refuse to tolerate forms of worship which they held to be erroneous. They should have reflected that honest error has a natural right to toleration, and that the very essence of persecution is to make the "private

judgment" of one man a rule for another man's conscience. It would appear that an indispensable condition of the future unity of a Church which combines contradictory elements within its membership, and enshrines paradox in its very system, is an *ex animo* repudiation of this Puritan heresy. After the war there must be a solemn stocktaking (to borrow a phrase from the usage of commerce) of Christian experience. If this process could be suffered to cover the whole ground of our ecclesiastical system and methods, and could proceed in an atmosphere of spiritual agreement, is it not permissible to hope that many obstinate difficulties would vanish from the path of religious harmony, many confident claims would be laid aside, many avenues of co-operation would open to view? We should realise what Dr. Hort called "the futility of endeavouring to make the Apostolic history into a set of authoritative precedents to be rigorously copied without regard to time and place, thus turning the Gospel into a second Levitical Code"; and we should not limit this conclusion to the Apostolic history, but extend it to the history of every later age. Why should the "first six centuries," or the sixteenth century, or "the Restoration Settlement," lay the "dead hand" of its ecclesiastical and theological systems on the living Church of our own time? Why should we not acknowledge, and act on the knowledge, that there is no finality in these matters: that, to quote Dr. Hort again, and again extending his words to all the ages of Christian history, "the Apostolic age is full of embodiments of purposes and principles of the most instructive kind: but the responsibility of choosing the means was left for ever to the Ecclesia itself, and to each Ecclesia, guided by ancient precedent on the one hand, and adaptation to present and future needs on the other. The lesson book of the Ecclesia, and of every Ecclesia, is not a law but a history"? Liberty has been often on the lips of English Church-

men during recent years. It has been the formula of an energetic agitation for 'Reform': and it has been boldly represented as the true object of those who would 'liberate' the National Church "from State Patronage and Control." But liberty in the religious sense, the only sense which, when the case of a Christian Church is in question, has any relevance, has comparatively little to do with changes of legal system, or of political status. Any political system will serve well enough, if the spirit of liberty be in the hearts of Churchmen, and direct the administration of the law. Far removed from ideal perfection as the legal arrangements of the Church of England must be admitted to be, they bring no real hindrance to the spiritual efforts of any sincere and devoted clergyman, who has a single eye to the work of the ministry. Such difficulties as are felt do not for the most part arise from faults in the law, but from other causes over which the law has no control. That liberty of self-adaptation to the novel needs of the time, which all considering men covet for the National Church, could be theirs to-morrow, if they could but change their point of view so as to get the facts of the national life, and of the Christian Church in its many-sided activities throughout the world, in a true perspective, and would judge both with simple loyalty to the principles of the Gospel, and in the full exercise of their liberty to move beyond the precedents and decisions of history. One consequence of the Great War in the political sphere will be a juster conception of the rights of nationalities, a deeper consciousness of the wickedness and folly implicit in arbitrarily over-riding national aspirations, and ignoring distinctive national idiosyncrasies. The best hope of permanent peace lies in this revolution of political opinion. In the general repudiation of the older Imperialism we discern the foundation of a genuine cosmopolitanism. Ought not corresponding

changes to take place in the region of ecclesiastical opinion? Ought we not to see in the variant forms of ecclesiastical order, and the variant methods of devotional expression, not so many violations of the Divine Will, and so many rendings of the seamless coat of Christ, but rather the legitimate and necessary consequences of the richness of human potency, the proper historical fruit of the many-sided Wisdom of God, ordering the courses of the world? Liberty in Church as in State would become, not a synonym for confusion, but a principle of harmony, a power of mutual self-respect and common action.

After the war men must face again the old questions which perplexed them before, but which the strain of the crisis drove from mind. The great conflict has but interrupted the intellectual revolution which has been preparing since the Renaissance, and has disclosed itself everywhere since the scientific development of the last century coloured the whole process of human thought, and increased indefinitely the sum of human knowledge. With the return of peace men will have leisure both to read and to think; and they will assuredly find themselves again confronted by the old 'obstinate questionings.' The traditional theology will be again seen to be plainly inadequate to express the truth of religion as they must needs perceive it. Again they will find themselves reduced to the embarrassing necessity of glossing, and even explaining away, statements in the creeds, which they will be required to subscribe as the formal expression of their religious belief. Jubilant denunciations of 'German' criticism may escape rebuke in the general disgust of all things German, but they cannot silence for ever the inquiries of self-respecting thinkers, or bring any real assistance to a faith which is harassed by inevitable doubts. The difficult duty of ecclesiastical rulers will have to be fulfilled in the teeth of a strong temptation. Why not sacrifice the few to

the many, the interest of Christian liberty to the clamour of the unthinking multitude, and purchase thus a solution of the most pressing and obdurate of religious problems? The answer is obvious: such a solution could be but temporary, and it would be purchased at the price of much present injustice to individuals, and of a future harvest of discredit and enfeeblement to religion. Yet some limits must be set to individual handling of the tradition of Christian Faith, some security must be provided against false doctrines which, whatever may be the assurance and belief of those who advance them, are surely fatal to the truth as it is in Jesus. One lesson of the crisis, through which European Civilisation will have passed, ought at least to make possible a large tolerance of individual self-assertion. Just as our forefathers perceived in the mediaeval doctrine of the Church the source of spiritual servitude and the spring of religious error, so we perceive as much of the Prussian doctrine of the State. It means political servitude and civic degradation. But what is the true antidote to both poisons, to tyranny in the State as to tyranny in the Church? Surely none other than that high doctrine of individual responsibility, which is the spring of intellectual activity and the pledge of self-respect. Christ's Gospel, says Cranmer in the famous but too little considered preface, *Of Ceremonies*, "is a religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the Spirit."

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