PEOPLE'S EDITION **6d.**

God and the Soul

An Essay towards Fundamental Religion

BY

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

London
THE BRITISH & FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
ESSEX HALL, ESSEX STREET, STRAND

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PREFACE.

THE Essay here presented was originally published in the year 1896, and then had the happy fortune to win the good opinion of writers in various quarters of the religious world. It is now offered in a humbler dress in view of the widely extended interest in religious problems shown by those to whom it is of importance that books should be cheap. The standpoint is that of one who heartily and and without after-thought rejoices in every advance of knowledge in every field, and desires to retain in his thought no opinions whatever that clash with or are contradicted by the newer knowledge; one who, nevertheless, believes that the religious element in man is primary and permanent, and that God has direct messages for the human soul, and that the human soul has direct access to the living God.

In one section the argument might have been made much stronger had the book been written a few years later. In the chapter on *The Problem of Evil* there is a paragraph on the sufferings of the animals, comprising an attempt to meet the view which sees in the animal kingdom only a

> Nature red in tooth and claw
> With ravine.

Let that paragraph stand for what it is worth. But a wonderful light has recently been cast on the life of the wood and the plain, the mountain and the stream, by such writers as Prince Krapotkin in his *Mutual Aid*, and such close, patient, and loving observers as Mr. W. J. Long in his *School of the Woods* and other delightful and illuminating works. It is not too much to say that these writers, and such as these, have in the last half-dozen years lifted a night-mare from the heart of religious men, revealing the tribes of living things as dwelling in an habitual atmosphere of happiness and innocent joy. The fear of death or ill, the pangs of hunger, the conflict for life have no such part in the daily consciousness of the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air as we had learned to suppose; and the newest natural history endorses the sentiment of the maker of the ancient mythic poem who conceived that after breathing the breath of life into each fresh manner of living thing, 'God saw that it was good.'

A reader who knows anything of the writings of the late Dr. Martineau will recognise my deep indebtedness to him. Of the three fundamental arguments of this Essay, presented respectively in the second, third, and fourth chapters, the first two are in the main drawn from him, and especially from his *Study of Religion.* Of that work I have published a short analysis and exposition for readers not deeply trained in philosophy, in Messrs. James Clarke and Co's *Small Books on Great Subjects*, No. XVII.

R. A. A.

Liverpool, *April*, 1904.

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GOD AND THE SOUL.

CHAPTER I.

ON TRUSTING OUR FACULTIES.

I REMEMBER, some years ago, hearing a sermon by a very brilliant and noble preacher in which he described the main verities of Theism as not being 'subject to the understanding at all.' 'They never can be disproved or proved,' he said; but they 'can be believed and loved.' And then he proceeded: 'These are the mysteries of the Christian faith. None of them come under the decision of the critical reason. If they are to be held, it is only by faith that we can hold them; for, in fact, the understanding is more against them than for them, and experience seems rather to contradict them than to support them.'

Now I dare say that the great preacher whose words I have quoted would not care to be held exactly to these forms of expression; but the general view put forward of the grounds of religious belief affords me an apposite point of departure for the argument which I desire to state. If it be indeed the case that the understanding is more against the leading affirmations of Theism than for them, still more if experience rather contradicts them than supports them, then all arguments in support of the belief in God and his love and goodness are a terrible mistake, misleading so far as they affect thought at all, and, like all misleading utterances, pernicious and perverse. But my contention from first to last will be that the critical reason, the understanding, so long as you do not put too great a strain upon it, and expect it to do work for you outside the limits of its proper territory, is *for* the trust and love of God, and not against it, and still more that experience—the true scientific foundation of all real knowledge—experience, which is prior to the exercise of the critical reason or understanding—the experience of the mind and soul—is the true foundation of religious belief; that from a man's inward experience the understanding has to take its facts, and thence to reason out the justification of belief in a God whom we may love and trust.

I go further. I say that if understanding and experience were against belief in God, it would be a positive immorality to nurse and foster in us that belief. Understanding and experience are the instruments of our nature for the creation and

consolidation of belief, and we have no right to set our minds to think and believe in contradiction to them. That is to make against all human progress and emancipation. And the great word 'faith' is used in a wrong or degenerate sense, when we are told by faith to hold beliefs which critical reason and experience make against. Superstition, that mother of multiform evil, is nothing else than the clinging to some belief in the misused name of faith in despite of experience and reason. Let us rescue the great word from that degradation. The real faith which is a power for truth and good is not the opponent, but the helper of understanding and experience. Both the critical reason and the experience of the inward man have their times of dulness, inactivity, torpidity, non-illumination. Faith is the unswerving trust, at such seasons, in the enduring verity of those things, which in their moments of power and illumination the critical reason and the experience of the soul have taught us. Faith is trust in our own highest and purest self. To reason and experience then, I shall throughout this argument make my appeal.

To proceed, then, to the main topic of this book:—

All those of us who have from time to time been drawn into a discussion of our religion with persons who have given up religious belief have, I suppose, sometimes been thrown in upon ourselves, quite baffled for a reply, by an antagonist who has roundly told us that we can know nothing at all about God or the soul, that he never believes what cannot be proved, and that as no one has ever seen God or the soul it is useless to try to prove their existence.

And our opponent is only expressing roughly a kind of scepticism, a certain fundamental distrust of our own faculties, which has pervaded a great deal of powerful philosophical writing in many countries and in all times. So that before we begin to try to build up the argument for believing in God and his Power and Goodness and Love, we find ourselves bound at the outset to discuss whether we really have any faculties which are capable of dealing with such matters at all.

There is a wide-spread and still spreading despair of any real religious knowledge whatever. This despair, says Dr. Martineau, he who invites men to trust their spiritual faculties must meet and refute at the very beginning. 'For if it be well founded, every step of advance can only take us further astray; and if it be unfounded, it leaves us, like a victim of the black art, imprisoned within a magic circle, which, though needing but a breath to blow it away, we cannot pass.' 'We cannot afford either to enter a paradise of fools or to miss any Heaven of the wise, and must pause and guard our steps where the ways divide.

Can we then really know anything about sacred things? Have we any real grounds for believing that our spiritual and intellectual impressions represent anything more than our own feelings? Is there any reason to believe that they come from any power outside ourselves, or correspond to any object or fact or truth outside ourselves?

You know how vivid a dream may be, especially in cases of fever. A dream dreamt in fever sometimes produces such an overwhelming sense of reality that we remember it for years and years, and can hardly believe that it was not real. Yet it was all nothing more than a kaleidoscope, as it were, within our own consciousness. There was nothing whatever outside ourselves corresponding to it. The horrible beast, or the dark pit, or the terrific struggle, the supernatural being, or the heavenly plains, or the ecstatic bliss, were nothing whatever but dream, dream, dream,—the tumult and fever of our own irresponsible brain. We were certain at the time that it was all true. We are certain now that there was not a rag or scrap of truth about it. I have sometimes, in a series of dreams, following swiftly one after another, said to myself at each successive stage, 'Now I know that I was indeed dreaming just now, when I thought that I was awake; but this time I really know that I *am* awake.' And yet, presently, it has turned out that that 'knowing' was nothing but dream either, just like that which went before it.

Well, then, may not all religious belief be a dream after the same fashion? Can any one prove that the prickings of conscience are anything more than a phenomenon of which the beginning and the end are in our own fancy? Can any one prove that the peace that comes in answer to earnest prayer or the consolation that fell like dew on the spirit of Jesus in Gethsemane, is anything more than a reaction within the personal consciousness? What argument can there possibly be by which we can confute a person who says that our intellectual and moral and spiritual impressions are all dreams without any objects answering to them outside our own minds?

Now in trying to meet this difficulty the first thing to be observed is this: it is not a difficulty affecting our knowledge of religious matters only, but it affects our knowledge all round, our knowledge of the physical world just as much as our knowledge of the spiritual world. You say to me: 'How do you know that your religious impressions are not all fancy?' I answer by saying to you, 'How do you know that your physical impressions are not all fancy?' In our common arguments in the street or in the parlour we meet plenty of people who say, 'Oh, your talk about hearing God's voice, or feeling his presence, is all fancy;' but our friends do not say, 'Oh, your talk about seeing the houses opposite, and hearing the railway-whistle, and feeling the hardness of the pavement is all fancy.' Our friends—even when religiously they are the most complete Agnostics—are never agnostic about these things. They are as sure that there is a draper's shop opposite, and a tobacconist's round the corner, or that the birds are singing in the wood, or that the ice feels cold and the hearth feels hot, as we are. That sort of scepticism does not turn up in practical life as religious scepticism does. Nevertheless, the argument for it is exactly the same. There are precisely analogous reasons for doubting whether there is any external world at all—whether there are any tables or chairs, any great cities and green fields, any wide waters and mighty mountains, any stars or moon or sun—to those for doubting whether there is any God. In both cases the doubt is simply a doubt whether our own natural faculties are instruments that tell the truth, whether our own apparent experiences may be trusted as real and actual. And so, though in the street and in the parlour it is only the spiritual and not the physical existences that are commonly doubted, in the speculations of philosophers, in the reasonings of mighty reasoners, the one set of beliefs is challenged just as much as the other.

'Well, but,' you say, 'we have the evidence of our senses for the outward world and the things that are in it. We see that table, and seeing is believing. Or if we could imagine that our eyes are deceiving us, we can come to it and give it a thump, and the stinging of our fingers will tell us that it is a real table. If we doubt whether that is a real wall, we can try to walk through it, and we shall very quickly learn the truth.' But are you not going a little too fast? What is it that you really experience? Simply certain sensations—all in yourself! You never get outside yourself. These experiences all proceed from so many nerve-thrills of different sorts. If I choose to say that it is all action and reaction in your own nervous system, how can you prove that there is anything more? Have you never had 'a singing in your ears' which really was nothing more? Are you so very lucky as never to have had a sudden sharp blow just between your eyes, and did you not see a sudden flash of light, and yet know that there was not any flash of light at all? And in those fever-dreams, were not the physical things which you seemed to see and hear and touch, intensely real to you at the time? And yet you know now that they were less than thin air, the mere dance and riot of your own disordered fancies, without any external realities corresponding to them whatsoever. How are you going to prove then that your senses of sight and touch and hearing are not lying to you in like manner all the while, deluding you with trick after trick, or rather with one long treacherous plot, from the day you are born to the day you die?

I have said all this, not because I expect to make you doubt for a single moment the reality of the visible, tangible world, not that I have ever doubted it myself, not that I believe a single philosopher all down the ages, however acutely he argued that it

was all illusion, has ever really for a single instant doubted it; but merely to suggest to you that exactly the same kind of difficulties which trouble so many people about religious truths may in fact be advanced, with just as great a show of reason, against physical truths concerning which no sane man was ever really in doubt.

The fact is that there is no knowledge of any sort or kind in any sphere, great or small, which we can acquire without making vast assumptions to begin with. It is a very hollow science that says that it will believe nothing which it cannot prove, for of the fifty thousand things which it does believe there is not one which it can prove without making several unprovable assumptions at the outset. The man of science is very peremptory—and quite rightly so—in saying that he will believe nothing except on evidence; that experiment or experience must give its testimony before he will believe any newly alleged scientific fact. He is perfectly right—with this proviso, that before there can be any evidence at all, or any experience or any experiment whatsoever, he must of very necessity make some of the most tremendous unproven assumptions it is possible to conceive. For he must assume the veracity and trustworthiness of his own faculties, of his sight, for example, and his hearing and his touch—which he uses continually in his experiments and which play their part in making up all his experiences—and also of his strict reasoning powers, and also of his memory.

Let us glance for a moment at this last faculty of ours which we call 'memory.' For if we examine it carefully, we shall see that it plays an exceeding great part in the structure of all our belief and all our knowledge, and further that our trust in it is a vast and extraordinary assumption, and that we can never by any possibility logically prove that assumption just.

What is memory? It is an impression in your mind at the present time that at some past time you had some particular experience. You are impressed with the belief at the present moment that an hour ago you were walking across Regent's Park, or that this time last night you were having, at a friend's house, much better entertainment than reading this book, or that this time last month you were in the agonies of Russian influenza. The impression of it all at this moment is as clear as the impression of your friend's face before you. But after all it is only a present impression that you have, and there is no possibility of proving that anything in the past corresponds with it. How do you know that the present impression answers to any past fact? The geologists chip the fossils out of the rock and say that they have in them a proof that the rock was formed long ago, and that the fish or the crustacea were embedded in it in such and such a geologic age. When geology was being resisted by the theologians, some of the theologians said, 'How can you possibly tell that God did not make it all just

as it stands 6,000 years ago and put what you take to be fossils in it?' Well, how can you tell that your present impression of what you felt an hour or a day or a month ago has not come into your mind of itself? You cannot really recall the past to test the witness of what you call your memory. Suppose it is all illusion and deception. What proof can you give me that it is not?

'Oh,' you say, 'I trust my memory because it has always proved reliable. I have constantly acted on it from my earliest years, and it has not led me wrong.' Indeed! How do you know that? Because you remember, do you say? But, in saying that, you are taking the very point I ask you to prove, for granted. You say that memory is trustworthy because memory tells you that memory always has been trustworthy. But this is arguing in a hopeless circle, nay, in a down-right spiral, and you cannot get out of it, do what you will. You cannot prove that the faculty of memory is the register of the past which it seems to be, and not a mere delusion; you cannot prove it from any amount of past experience, because you have to start by assuming that you really do remember truly before you can begin to talk about past experience at all.

But if we may not assume that memory is a real faculty preserving to us the consciousness of the past, where are we? We cannot reason at all. For what is reasoning? It is taking one fact or thought into consideration and then inferring from it another which follows from it. But if at the moment of making the inference we cannot be sure that we really remember the thought or fact which was in our minds just before, the inference falls to pieces and cannot be held together. Nay, without assuming the veracity of memory, we cannot think or speak at all. If I say three words to you, by the time I am saying the second, you have no knowledge what the first was,—neither indeed have I. Unless we assume that we have a faculty which, in the present, truly represents to us our past, we cease to be human beings at all, cease to have minds; we are mere surfaces reflecting whatever colour in earth or sky happens to flit past us at the moment.

Now all this about memory I have said, not to make you doubt memory. Our trust in the veracity of memory is ineradicably welded into our nature; and let philosophers reason against it as they will, neither you nor I nor the philosophers can for one moment get away from our belief in our own memory any more than we can walk away from own own shadows, or sit down outside our own bodies. But I have said all this about memory to make you realise that we do and must, in all our thinking, assume as true an enormous amount which we cannot possibly prove; and even if we try to argue about it, we assume it again in the very first sentence of our arguing. It is quite a mistake to think that we can possibly found our beliefs in pure reasoning alone; for we cannot begin to reason without assuming the truth of some of our beliefs.

The late Professor Huxley, however, tried to warn us of the danger of trusting even necessary assumptions. 'It is conceivable,' said he, 'that some powerful and malicious being may find his pleasure in deluding us, and in making us believe the thing which is not, every moment of our lives.' Yes, that is conceivable. But we can none of us really take the warning, nor could even Huxley himself. Whether it be a good being or a bad being that has created our nature, here it is, and we cannot get out of it. We are made to believe memory. We are made to believe other primary faculties of our minds, before any proof. And being made to believe them, we do believe them—and Huxley did so as much as any of us.

Every act of reasoning that the mind of man has ever performed has proceeded from premises which, for the purpose of that act of reasoning, have been assumed as basis. It may be that in the great majority of cases those premises have themselves been reached by a prior act of reasoning. But if so, that prior act of reasoning must itself have started from other premises assumed. And so, though you go back and back indefinitely, there are always prior premises behind every act of reasoning. And so it follows that *at the start* of the *chain* of reasoning, there must have been some initial premises assumed prior to the very first piece of reasoning. Else there could never have been any reasoning at all.

So that the ground taken up by those Agnostics who say that we must believe nothing which we cannot prove is hopelessly untenable. They themselves transgress their own rule every waking moment of their lives. We all have principles of belief implanted in us from which we cannot escape; and the only real question is how many and what these primary principles are which precede reason, and while it is impossible to prove their right to be trusted, yet are trusted always by every sane man.

What, then, is our proper way of meeting the absolute sceptics, the thorough-going Agnostics, who point out to us that we cannot prove the veracity of our own faculties, and urge us therefore not to put our trust in them? Our proper answer is to say to them: 'Why, good friends, you put your trust in them yourselves.' Yes, sceptic, you who tell us that we can know nothing at all about an outward world, you *act* on the belief in an outward world all the time. You assume in every step you take that the ground is solid. You assume every time you sit down to dinner that there is meat and drink before you. Act for a single hour as if you were not absolutely certain that there is this outward world; and we will begin to believe that there may be something in your doubts. No, we shall not believe that they have any reality even then; we shall only know that you are insane.

We must give up the idea that we are to decide whether to believe a thing by considering whether it can be proved or not. For no truth whatever can be proved except by first making assumptions which cannot be proved. But we are not left without practical tests of truth which serve our purpose. What are these practical tests?

The chief of them is: 'does it work?' If a certain belief will not work, try it how we will, the presumption is that it is not true. Suppose a man says that the sea is solid. The test is, does the doctrine work? He steps down from the ship's side and sets his foot upon the wave. In a moment he is submerged; and he has more conclusive evidence that the waters are not solid than he could have got by arguing the matter with a philosopher for a year and a day. Suppose a man says that the granite road is solid; every step he makes upon it day after day, and year after year, more and more confirms his conviction. The doctrine works: and in the long run that will be the surest ground of his belief.

Suppose you receive as a Christmas present from an anonymous donor a machine packed in a packing-case of two feet cube. But there are no directions. What is it for? It strikes you it may be a new sort of roasting-jack. You put it in front of the kitchen fire, hang your sirloin on it, and set the cook to wind it up. But nothing happens except a purposeless buzzing and whirring of wheels. It does not work. Perhaps it is a clock, with the face left out. You make a cardboard face and fix it on, and fasten hands at a likely place. But no; though you wind it up, and the wheels start off again, the hands stop where they are, or jerk round spasmodically an hour or more at a time. Then someone suggests that it is a sewing-machine, which you can wind up and leave to work without treadle or personal attention. What a godsend! You fix the end of a sheet into a holder that just grips it neatly, wind the machine up, leave it, and coming back in ten minutes find the sheet hemmed all round. Then you begin to believe that the machine is a sewing-machine of surpassing excellence. So far, that is the only belief that works. It is true there is a little group of wheels and levers in one part which seem no use at all. They do not move, or they move without apparent effect. And this causes a doubt to haunt you whether, after all, the machine may not be for something else and only accidentally applicable for hemming. But one day, in the middle of the work, the thread snaps at a weak place. You expect the machine to go on drilling useless needle-holes all round but to drop the thread; when, lo! that little group of bars and wheels is suddenly all agog, the severed ends are re-united with a tiny knot, and the machine proceeds undisturbed to complete the job. Then you believe your doctrine without a shadow of doubt—the doctrine that this is a sewing-machine—because it works not only in an ordinary way, but also and with special emphasis in exceptional circumstances or emergency. Using the machine in this way elevates it from a useless tangle of cogs and bars to an exquisite substitute for human muscles and intelligence. You are therefore convinced that this is the way in which it was meant to be used.

Or perhaps a better illustration is this: There is placed before you a volume in a language of which you are wholly ignorant. Long words and short words seem a hopeless jumble. But presently you see that a certain very short word—one letter if it is Spanish, two if it is French or Danish or Dutch, three if it is Greek or German—appears very often, and that it is a frequent occurrence that the words on either side of it bear some resemblance to one another in form. Accordingly you guess that that small but common word is the conjunction answering to our English 'and.' Next you observe that another very short word is still more common and is generally followed by a longer word, and that the short word often begins a sentence. Accordingly you guess that it is the article, our English 'the.' In the next place you see two words beginning with capitals, and though rather oddly spelt, still pretty manifestly Cain and Abel. Between them stands one word. What does it mean? You guess it means either 'hated' or 'killed.' How can you tell which? Why, see here, just at the foot of the page is the same word, and again two proper names which it divides, and these two names are manifestly Saul and David. Well, you know that Saul hated David at one time, but he did not kill him; so you believe that this word means 'hated.' But see, there are at least fifty words on the page ending with the same two letters as that word which means 'hated.' So you surmise that they also are the past tense of verbs. And in this way, step by step, you may go on till you have solved the mystery of the language. If it is some dead and forgotten language, you may not be able to pronounce a single syllable of it. But bit by bit, catching a hint here and a hint there, you have pieced it together, and now you can fairly interpret other books composed in it which fall into your hands. In the gradual process you get a wrong clue now and then. A certain interpretation seems to work well twice, three times, six times, twelve times. But then comes a case in which it fails, producing only confusion and contradiction. Your hypothesis does not work. And so you go patiently back and begin again, till you hit upon a theory which covers all the cases. And at last you have your theory of the language so complete that you can translate the book, on the hypothesis that your clue is right, from beginning to end, and lo! it is a complete treatise self-consistent, lucid, eloquent. Then comes some one and says to you, 'Why, you can't prove that you

have got the real English of a single phrase or word. You can't prove that this means "and" and this "the" and this "hated." It is all mere conjecture in the air. As for me, I am Agnostic, and I refuse to believe that you know anything about this strange tongue.' Then what will you say? You will say, 'My dear fellow, be as Agnostic as you please. Don't let me interfere with your judgment. But as for me, I am perfectly sure that I have gripped the truth. I refuse to believe that the correspondence I have discovered is all chance. I believe that I have the true theory of this unknown language, because in every page and line and word and syllable and letter my theory *works*, and I discover in the book a significant and rational whole.

And just so with the belief in an outward world, just so with the belief in the veracity of memory, just so with the belief in other primary principles of our nature; these beliefs are justified in that they work, they never land us in confusion, they never break down; as the daily haps of life turn up, a myriad an hour, in infinite diversity, these beliefs fit into them all without a jar or a contradiction, while if for a moment we attempt to depart from them, we fall into utter confusion. This is the highest evidence we can have. And therefore the critical philosopher, though he argue ever so cunningly, though he demonstrate that we are piling assumption on assumption, cannot really shake our belief. Nay, he cannot really shake his own. And to apply the principle in the widest sphere and on the largest scale, that interpretation of the problems of the universe which makes a rational whole and gives the highest significance to human life, will have in its favour a presumption practically overwhelming.

Now the main argument of this book will be that we have other primary faculties besides those which I have spoken of, primary faculties of a spiritual order which speak to us of a Living, Loving God; and that a distrust of these faculties is unreasonable and foolish in the same way as a distrust of the faculty of memory or of the reality of an outside world would be unreasonable and foolish. And further, I shall argue that just as all the experience of life fits into the belief in the veracity of memory and the senses, and the reality of the external world, so also the experience of life fits into the belief in a God who is Power, Righteousness, and Love; that as the belief in the veracity of memory and the senses, and in the reality of the external world *works* and never breaks down in the varied experiences of life, so the belief in a God who is Power, Righteousness, and Love *works* and never breaks down in the varied experiences of life. And so as we trust in memory and the senses and the external world, though it is quite clear that we cannot prove their truth without making immense assumptions to begin with; it is reasonable also to trust in the God who is Power, Righteousnesss, and Love, though it is quite clear that we cannot prove the truth of this faith without making immense assumptions to begin with.

If it is seen that the machine or organism which we call a human being is comparatively useless, feeble, and inefficient while it is without God, but becomes useful, strong, and efficient when the love of God is in it, then that is an immeasurably strong argument for the reality of God,—for the love of him being founded in truth, not in illusion. If it is seen that the belief in God gives meaning and force and coherence to the language of life, whereas without it, it is a mere jumble of letters, then that is a stupendously powerful reason for believing in God. My main contention is going to be that the belief in God works, and that therefore we do well to believe.

But there are certain degrees of religious Agnosticism which seem to me quite just and right in spite of all that I have said. When Zophar says to Job: 'Canst thou find out the depth of God? Canst thou find out the end of the Almighty?' I believe that he expresses a sense of the limitations of our knowledge of God which is characteristic not only of the wisest, but of the devoutest minds. All that we can possibly know about God is how he affects us, at what points he touches our consciousness, and how he modifies it, moving us to joy or to deep peace or to bitter remorse or to great longing for a higher holiness. The Agnostics, from Zophar to Spencer, are absolutely right in telling us that we can never know anything of what God is in himself apart from his effect upon us. The philosophical way of expressing this is to say that we can never know him absolutely, only relatively. And this is indubitably true. But then the like thing is true of every other object of our knowledge whatever; and it is inherently impossible that it should be otherwise. You know nothing and can know nothing of your brother, or of the table at which you are sitting, or of a loaf of bread, or of the moon, except how each one of these affects your consciousness. You know each object in its relation to you, but you do not and cannot know it in itself. I have five avenues through which knowledge of the outer world and the things in it come to me. I call them sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. But I meet a man who is blind and always has been. It seems to him that he knows all about the world, except that he hears some unmeaning talk about light and dark, red and blue and yellow. The words have no sense to him at all. And if he lived among a set of men all of whom were blind like him and always had been, and never came across or heard of any one who was not blind, he would suppose that with ears and nose and tongue and touch he knew all that the world had to reveal about itself. He never could possibly so much as imagine a whole set of qualities inherent in every bird and butterfly and flower outside the cognisance of his

four senses. And so, for all I know, there may be in the apple I eat at dinner, or the bed I lie on at night, or any other physical object whatever, a whole range of qualities which I can neither perceive nor even begin to imagine, because I have no sense for them; there is no avenue to my mind which admits that kind of quality. And there may be races of beings in some other planet with six, ten, twenty, a hundred senses, even without any one of the five senses which we possess,—who yet through those senses which they have, get a knowledge of physical nature just as true, and just as limited as ours,—a knowledge, that is, that the world affects their consciousness in such and such ways, but no knowledge at all of what that world is in its own essence.

And so of God: I shall speak in this book of three chief faculties through which we apprehend him; three avenues in our nature through which he touches our consciousness. But I do not for one moment suppose that this which I perceive is all of God. It is only such effects of his as I, a mere man, am capable of becoming conscious of. And I am persuaded that there are infinitudes of being and an untold wealth of attributes in God, which this poor, feeble, limited human nature is unable to perceive.

But I believe in God. I believe in the reality of the physical objects round me, because I cannot but believe that there is something outside of me which gives me these sensations of hardness or softness, of blue or green, of sweet or bitter, of fragrant or malodorous. In like manner, I believe in the reality of God, because I cannot but believe that there is some one other than myself, who gives me these feelings of aspiration or repentance, ineffable peace or black remorse, of a divine protection or inflowing moral strength.

My whole argument in this book then will be a reference to various intellectual, moral, and spiritual experiences of yours and mine, and an appeal to you to trust in the faculties through which they come and believe the truths they seem to teach. I shall put forward first experience, and then reason starting from experience, as the basis of religious knowledge; and then I shall appeal to you to have faith in that experience and that reason and the verities which they declare.

CHAPTER II.

ON GOD REVEALED AS POWER.

IN the preceding chapter I tried to show that there are certainly some primary mental faculties of ours which we are obliged to believe and do well to believe, and some primary convictions which we are obliged to entertain and do well to entertain, although it is utterly impossible that we can ever prove that they are trustworthy. Among these primary faculties is memory, and among the primary convictions is our persuasion that there is an outside world. We can never prove that memory really represents the past, and we can never prove that there really is an outside world. Yet we do well quietly to accept the necessity of our nature which makes us believe these things; and we are daily confirmed in our trust by finding that these beliefs work, that they fit into life at every point and never seem to land us in error or mistake. If, indeed, we do now and then declare, 'My memory has deceived me,' what has deceived us is not, strictly speaking, memory, but a defect of memory, or an impression counterfeiting memory. The true memory deceives no man ever. And I said that there were also faculties in us which in like manner bore witness to spiritual things, and that the main argument of this book would be that these also ought to be believed because they also work.

In this chapter I propose to deal with certain faculties which though they belong to what we call our intellectual nature, yet lead us in the direction of spiritual truths. They do not actually carry us into the palace of religion; but they take us to the porch and lead us to knock at the door.

I have to call your attention to something else which, by your mental constitution, you cannot help believing, although it cannot be proved; and it is this:—'Every event, occurrence, or happening has a cause.' Do you not believe that? I do not know that I can make it much clearer by dwelling on it or labouring over it. Think of anything that ever happened, no matter what it is—the death of Julius Cæsar, the falling of an avalanche, the burning of Chicago, the aching of your little finger—and try to fancy that it happened entirely of itself without any cause at all. You cannot do it. Push the idea of cause out at the front door: it will sneak in again at the back gate. Sometimes, it is true, it is impossible to discover the cause of an event. Then we say, 'What an extraordinary thing! How in the world did it happen? I can't imagine what caused it.' But if someone were to say, 'Well, really, I doubt whether it had any cause at all; I'm inclined to think it happened of itself,' we should put him down for a fool, and rightly so. It is true, again, that we sometimes hear folk pleading as if there really were no cause at all of some disaster. 'It just broke in my hand,' says the maid of the shivered tumbler or the smashed plate. But neither she nor we really believe that it broke without a cause. 'Accidents will happen,' you say. Yes, accidents will happen; but an accident is not an event without a cause. 'How came Thomas to break his leg?' 'Oh, it was a pure accident.' The most that that means is that neither Thomas nor anyone who was with Thomas could have foreseen that such and such a thing would cause his leg to get broken, or it may possibly imply that even now, after the event, we cannot make out what caused it. But we all know that *something* caused it; and we have not escaped out of that ring-fence which is planted round our minds and compels us, whenever we think of any event whatever, to think of it as having a cause.

But what do we mean by a cause? What is this idea, from which we cannot escape?

John Stuart Mill, taking up and extending an old argument of Hume's, tried very hard to persuade us that it really meant nothing more than 'always coming before.' He said that if one thing always happened just before another, they got so closely associated in our minds that we began to think of the first as the cause of the second. But Monday always comes before Tuesday; yet I never heard anyone call Monday the cause of Tuesday. Meat always comes before pudding in well regulated families; but I never heard anyone call meat the cause of pudding. Darkness always comes before sunrise; yet darkness is not the cause of sunrise. When we say that this is the cause of that, we mean something more than that this always comes before that. A very able Catholic philosopher, writing in answer to Mr. Mill, and wishing to give a very forcible example of what we mean by cause, says: 'I am urgently in need of some article contained in a closet of which I cannot find the key, and accordingly I break open the cupboard with my fist.' He says that the relation which exists between his will and the blow he struck is certainly something considerably more than that he willed first and the blow happened afterwards. The willing had something much more direct to do with the striking than that. The willing was *the cause* of the striking. And so this Dr. Ward gives us as the very best and clearest example of *cause* that we can have:—'the influx of a man's mental volitions into his bodily acts.' When we exercise our will, power goes out—we know not how—and flows into our muscles, and the lifting of

the arm, or the beckoning of the finger, or the tramp of the foot, or the blow of the fist, or the bending of the knee and the bowing of the head, is something more than what follows after the act of will. It not only follows *after*; it follows *from*. It is its result, its effect. The act of will is its *cause*.

So that when we say that we cannot help believing that every event has its cause, we do not mean only that we cannot help believing that every event was preceded by something else, but that we cannot help believing that every event is preceded by something from which power flows forth, shaping and making and controlling that event, as our act of will shapes and makes and controls the blow of the fist or the tramp of the foot. We conceive all the events that ever happen or ever have happened to be made and shaped by the flowing of some power into them like the flow of the power of our wills into the movements of our fist or our foot. And, though we may sometimes argue and bewilder and confuse ourselves into doubting it, it is a fundamental and primary fact of our nature that we cannot help thinking of all phenomena—which means all happenings, everything which happens—as controlled by power of this kind coming from some source or other.

But unfortunately we have got into the habit of using the word 'cause' in a very loose way. And loose speaking is only too sure to make loose thinking. And so we have got into the habit of *thinking* about cause in a very loose way. And this leads to no end of trouble. Indeed, I sometimes think that it lies at the bottom of the whole controversy between Theists and Atheists so far as that is a merely intellectual controversy.

And chiefly we make confusion by talking of the laws of nature themselves as if they were causes. We ask why the gas-escape makes itself smelt so quickly all over the room; and we reply that it is caused by the law of the diffusion of gases. We ask why the cannon-ball that is fired off with a decided slope upwards curves round and in a few hundred yards actually strikes the ground; and we reply that it is caused by the law of gravitation. But that is altogether a confused and confusing use of the word 'cause.' The phenomenon is *explained* by the law; it is duly *classified* when it is referred to the particular law under which it falls; but it is not *caused* by the law. For what is a law of nature? It is simply the fact that certain phenomena always happen in a certain way. It is a law of grammar that weak verbs make their past in 'ed' or 't.' But that is not the cause of the past of 'to walk' being 'walked.' It is only a statement of the fact that all verbs of that sort are modified in that way. And it is a law of nature that any two masses tend to approach each other with a force which varies inversely as the squares of their distances. But that is not the cause of the apple falling to the ground or the sea following the

rising and setting of the moon; it is only the explanation of these things. Each dropping of an apple and each rise or fall of the tide is just one more fact going to make up the boundless mass of facts which we gather up and bind together, purely and solely for convenience of thought, under one law.

What we want to know is the cause of this very wide spread fact that bodies do move towards one another in the way stated in the law of gravitation; and stating the law, which is only stating that they always do, does not bring us a hair's breadth nearer to the cause. My nurse, I remember, used to answer my intelligent questions in that way. 'Why does so and so happen?' I would ask. 'Why,' for instance, 'does the lid of the kettle bob up and down when the water boils?' 'Because it always does,' was the reply,—a response precisely as scientific and philosophical and wise as reeling off the enunciation of a law of nature when asked for the *cause* of some natural phenomenon. No; we want something more than that.

There must be something or other like the influx of our will-power into our muscles, when the surface of the sea moves towards the moon and when the apple moves towards the ground and when two drops of water close together on a perfectly smooth horizontal sheet of glass are unable to *rest* close together and actually move up to each other and coalesce in one big drop instead of two small ones. There is a *pull* somewhere like the pull we give when we ring the door-bell. Who or what pulls then? Does the moon pull the sea, the earth the apple, one drop the other drop? No; moon and earth and drop are simply masses of matter. The mind cannot form the idea of their pulling, without for the moment thinking of them as alive and exercising will-power. But they are not, so far as we know, alive. They have, as far as we can judge, no will-power. Who or what pulls then? We are compelled to believe that, apart from the big or minute masses of matter themselves, there is in every case what we call a 'force,' that is, a power like our will-power, which does the pulling, —only that it always does the pulling according to the same rules, whether with big masses or little ones, whether on earth or in the sun or through the vast spaces, which seem so empty, lying between the world-masses which are scattered through the heavens.

It sounds an extraordinary thing to say that whenever science tries to leave the one universal, all-penetrating force or will-power out of consideration, it slips into the old superstition of polytheism. But it is so. The human mind by its constitution can never rest till it has recognised a living force like will-power acting in all the motions of the universe; and if it is determined that it will not acknowledge one such force always and everywhere in action, then it simply breaks up that one force into a multitude of little powers—like the gods and

demons of the ancient peoples. It may give scientific names to these, and try to make out that they have no life, no power like the will-power of man in them. But every time its thought begins to clear, these scientific abstractions begin to take the shape of so many living agents who carry on the worlds amongst them.

So that the real choice, if we are not to fight against the necessary laws of thought, not to try to get outside of our own thinking constitution, is between regarding the whole universe as a republic of multitudinous will-forces scrambling and clashing against one another, and regarding it as the sphere of one supreme, self-consistent will-force which penetrates every atom of the whole, and governs every motion, every thrill and vibration from the wheeling of the comet on the outskirts of the heavens to the tremor of a gossamer or the pulsing of a molecule in the breast-feather of a robin or the stamen of a violet.

But the conception of such a Will-force, uniform, enduring, all-potent, is of unutterable majesty and grandeur, and fills the mind with wonder and awe, even though nothing else be yet realised concerning this Will-force save that it is the source of all the phenomena which make up the history of the universe.

And this conception of one Divine Will-force dominating the whole and every part simplifies all scientific and philosophical thought in the most beautiful manner. Nor need we hesitate at once to call this divine Will-force by the simple name of God. It may be a God intelligent or unintelligent. It may be a good God or a bad God. But the conception of one universal Will-force everywhere and always *is* the conception of God. Mr. Fiske, a very noble American writer, says: 'Once really adopt the conception of an ever-present God, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, and it becomes self-evident that the law of gravitation is but an expression of a particular mode of divine action. And what is thus true of one law is true of all laws.'

This leads us to the consideration of two very different ways of believing in God which belong to two different types of mind. The Deists of the eighteenth century, both English and French, took what may be called a mechanical view of God's relation to the universe; and not only did these men take that view, but it has been largely taken by the Christian Church, and in spite of deeper and more luminous thinking here and there, it has on the whole predominated from very early times, and does still predominate, throughout the Latin and the Teutonic sections of Christendom, including ourselves.

Of course this mechanical view of God is held with varying distinctness and varying modifications, but broadly speaking, it may be stated thus: 'God is a Being apart from the universe. The universe is

an immense and wonderful machine which he made a long time ago. He imparted to it sundry qualities and properties by which it works. All the ordinary events in nature were thus arranged for at the start. But God still watches the machine, and now and then, when he sees occasion, he interferes by a special act of divine power overcoming or suspending the action of natural forces by the introduction for the emergency of his own divine force. This intervention it is that constitutes miracles and special providences which are outside of the regular working of the machine.' Carlyle is satirising this way of thinking of God when he speaks of 'an absentee God sitting idle ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of his universe, and seeing it go.'

Now it is this way of thinking of God which is responsible for much of that miserable and senseless squabble which we call 'the conflict between religion and science.' There is and can be no real conflict or shadow of a conflict between religion and science. Each is the complement and supplement, the natural friend and ally of the other. But there is and always must be a fierce and bitter conflict between science and this kind of conception of God. Neither can afford to give the other any quarter. For just reflect what it is that science is always doing. The whole occupation of science, ever since there has been any science at all, has been gathering up the happenings in the universe, showing that they are not irregular, but regular, classifying them, doing them up in neat bundles each with its label bearing the name of some law of nature. That is what true science always is at, and it is never at anything else at all. It does a perpetual tidying up of our observations of natural phenomena, and it cannot bear to leave any of them lying about unclassified and undocketed. First of all it laid its hands on the motions of the planets and showed that they were all regular. But comets and meteors it left alone for a long while; and the kind of religion I have been speaking of could say and did say: 'Yes, the motions of the planets are part of the constitution of the universe and do not need God; but look at the comet's tail sweeping across the skies, and look at the shower of falling stars. God does not leave the universe alone, you see; here is his hand scattering these irregular lights about.' But science presently stretched our her hand and swept these also into the drawers of her cabinet,—did them up in bundles, labelled them, and showed that they, too, were part of the regular order and not special interferences at all. And that has been the procedure of science all along. Religion (of the sort I have described) has based the evidence of God on exceptional events which she has called miraculous. These she used to find plentiful enough. She could point to them in every department. But science keeps steadily filching away these evidences, one after

another, and arranging them in her own territory as regular, orderly parts of the universe, till it looks as if the religion which relies on the special interferences of God would ere long have nothing left at all, for science will have parcelled out the whole area of phenomena as belonging to her domain.

This is why such religion as is commonly considered orthodox cries out in angry protest at every fresh advance of science. Every such advance seems to this sort of religion to be the substituting of natural forces for the action of God in some fresh sphere. So that the progress of science necessarily seems to be a progress towards atheism. As science shows that natural law covers the history of the heavenly bodies, of the earth, of organic life, each of these seems to be taken away from God. And so a false theology has successively fought against the astronomy of Copernicus and Galileo, the geology of Lyell, and the biology of Darwin, and execrated each of these men as the enemy of God.

But the other way of regarding God's relation to the universe is that to which all that I have said in the earlier part of this chapter conducts us. The philosophical name for this conception is the 'Immanence of God'; and it looks on God not as outside the universe, but ever operating within it; not as having once for all created, and then confined his action to occasional interference, but as continuously creative from the first till now; not as having set up certain laws of nature as substitutes for his own action, or certain forces other than his own will-force, but as himself energising in all the forces of nature so that the laws of nature are only the habits of his own activity. This conception thus does away absolutely with all distinctions between the immediate action of God and natural forces. Natural forces *are* the action of God. Whereas the former conception of God leaves the universe empty of God, this conception finds the universe full of God. Between this conception and physical science there never can by any possibility be any conflict. Science says, 'This is the way the heavenly bodies move.' 'Yes,' says religion, 'that is the way in which God moves them.' Science says, 'That is how the different tribes of living things have come into being.' 'Yes,' says religion, 'that is how God has brought them into being.'

And now the whole universe will seem, not like a machine wound up and set going once for all, but more like a plant which is never cut off from the forces which vitalise it, but is always drawing on them and transfusing them into its life and substance at every part. We think of the divine force or energy, not as applied at one end of the machine as when a man turns a handle or works a treadle, but as flowing equably through every vein and nerve of the whole mass as the sap pulses in every vesicle of the great tree.

The picture which modern science draws of the

universe is indeed surpassingly sublime. This universal force is declared to flow through every atom of matter—solid, liquid, gaseous—throughout the infinite area of the boundless whole. Take the minutest particle of matter which the eye can see. That itself is a whole universe of energy. Within its bounds molecules are vibrating, darting from side to side, with inconceivable velocity all the time. And the like is going on in every particle of matter from the spot on which we stand right away to the stars whose light takes ten thousand years to reach us,—and on as far—a thousand times as far—beyond that. Yes, and motions are continually passing from end to end (if there were any ends) of the universe itself. So that every stroke of the pen I made in writing this chapter and every vibration of the air you make in shaping the spoken words, if you read my book aloud to a friend, goes flying forth on the wings of the ether to those far away moons and suns. It is all one whole, pulsing with one beat, yet ten million beats in every cubic hair's-breadth, transfusing themselves through the total mass unceasingly. Imagination reels before the effort to conceive it all. But take with you the firm conception that every individual motion, be it ever so minute, is in fact the direct expression of a Power akin to the will-force which we know in ourselves,—and have you not truly a transcendent idea of God? He is not in the shape of a man. You can set no bounds upon him. The Zeus of the

Greeks, the Jehovah of the Jews alike fade into insignificance before him. He is the Energy, the Will-power, the Spirit that flows through the whole, conscious at every point, with attention concentrated everywhere.

Let me dwell for a moment on that conception, 'attention concentrated everywhere.' We men and women are capable of but the most limited range of attention. When we were children we were continually told that we 'could only attend to one thing at once.' That was never quite true: we learn by degrees to attend to three or four things at once. The art of the conjuror consists largely in drilling himself to attend unobserved to other matters besides those to which he is obviously attending in the view of the spectators. He is attending closely to his secret manipulations at the same moment that he is also attending to the by-play which is to divert the attention of his public from the machinery of his trick. To the non-musician it seems a miracle that the skilled pianist should be able at once to attend to the score that he is reading and to the swift movements of both his hands and all his fingers on the keyboard, and perhaps to carry on a lively conversation at the same time. But just as the little child who at the first venturous steps across the floor has to give absorbed attention to the planting of each foot and the balance of his body, ere long learns to walk without any attention at all and to occupy his mind with other things while he is walking, so in all the affairs of life we are continually learning to hand over the operations we most frequently perform to automatic action while we turn our conscious attention to other things. Now that is the necessary economy of our limited mental powers; and we can only conceive that these automatic actions are discharged, like our breathing and the circulation of our blood, by the working of those natural forces which everywhere carry on the processes of the natural world. But, on the one hand, God has no natural forces outside and distinct from his own energies to which to hand over areas of the universe removed from his own attention; nor, on the other hand, can his power of attention be conceived as limited in any way analogous to the limitations of human attention. So that while I would willingly find, if I could, some word less anthropomorphic, less man-like that is, than 'attention' to describe the conscious touch of God on every fibre and every atom of his universe; on the other hand I am convinced that we approach much more nearly to the truth when we conceive the attention of God 'concentrated everywhere,' than when we try to imagine any natural processes whatever as carried on apart from his instant and continuous heed. And thus I conclude that when Jesus said, 'Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father,' so far from over-stating, he was immeasurably under-stating the fact, since in every feather of the sparrow, and in every thread of down upon each feather, and in every chemical atom in each thread, the Divine Consciousness and Power are operating at every moment.

And this unescapable philosophical conclusion has incomparable religious significance, since it is the absolute refutation of that objection to religion which consists in arguing that the Supreme God cannot concern himself about aught so humble as a single human soul. It is the irrefutable reply to the cry of the Psalmist, 'What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?' For shall he whose energy is concentrated on each molecule of a grain of sand, for whose care no mote floating in a sunbeam is too minute, be heedless of a human soul looking forth with wonder on the heaven of heavens, or have no care for the heart that approaches him in reverent love and prayer?

But when we look not only at the universe in the present moment, but in its history, the panorama is more impressive still.

Let us ask science what she can tell us of the story of the universe. Taking not only the absolutely demonstrated facts of science (if there are any), but also such probable conjectures as seem to be generally accepted by scientific men, the history is something like this. 'In the beginning,' that is, before there was any organised universe at all, there was a thin fluid evenly diffused throughout space;—no suns, no planets, no moons, but everywhere this evenly diffused fluid. Then at certain centres this fluid became thickened, while outside those centres it was further rarified, and the thickening of these centres produced a rotatory motion, till each one of them became a globe revolving on its axis with immense velocity and at a prodigious heat. The rotatory motion led to smaller masses being flung off from each central sun, and these, though first forming rings, like the present ring of Saturn, gradually themselves also became globular, with motion round their own axes as well as motion round the central sun. These again in many cases flung off further films which formed into moons having a treble motion, rotation on their own axes, motion round their planets, and with their planets motion round the central sun. The cooling of these sundry bodies by radiation of their heat into space by degrees has brought, is bringing, or will bring each for a period to a temperate heat such as that now enjoyed by our Earth, suitable for life akin to that on Earth. Science can only guess whether there is actual life on other globes, but it knows that there is on this. It sees atoms of matter shifting into such combinations as at last to constitute protoplasm, the physical basis of life; though why just this combination of atoms should suddenly put on that entirely new set of characteristics which we call 'life,' science can form no sort or kind of guess. There is a great chasm between inorganic or non-living and organic or living matter which no bridge of thought can span. But this protoplasmic matter goes on building itself up into more and more highly organised material, till at last there is one more great leap, and it becomes the seat of a new thing—unknown in the universe before—that which we call 'consciousness.' And here also, however rudimentary, dim, and vague the consciousness, another bottomless chasm is crossed, over which thought can never fling a bridge. After that, this consciousness-sustaining life-substance branches out and pushes on along sundry lines of progression till all the varieties of the animal kingdom are formed, from the simplest skin-bag in the ocean slime, through the molluscs, the crustacea, and the vertebrates, up to regal man himself.

Now some philosophers, trying to get rid of the will-power in the universe on which I have laid so much stress, tell us that the laws of motion impressed on all the molecules of matter as part of their very nature at the beginning of all things could not but work out as they have worked out. They say that they can prove this of the simpler motions at the beginning, and that it is only reasonable to believe that it is so right on to the end. Give us, say they, those thickenings, at certain centres, of the primeval, universal, glowing world-stuff, and we can show that the rotation and the sun-making and the planet-making and the moon-making must follow by the primary laws of motion; and so the universe, even as it is, could not help being evolved, if only you give it time.

Now in my view, as I have said, it is absolutely necessary to true thinking to require actual will-power always, everywhere, in every motion of matter from first to last. But suppose I am wrong there. Suppose that unconscious matter is itself endowed with certain energies and forces which act automatically without the presence of will. Still I find hitches in this so-called scientific theory of the universe. First of all, what about the start? An evenly diffused fluid everywhere and then a thickening here and there. What or who brought about that thickening? Grant that all the universe would follow when once you had got those little unevennesses—that rotating and cooling and hardening would forthwith begin. But how did the evenness turn to unevenness? You *must* have some power there to start the evolution. Evenly spread fluid that had been lying evenly spread from all eternity, —even supposing it had existed from all eternity, and had never been created,—could not by sudden spasm gather into knots and nuclei, unless some power other than itself were applied to it. Push God back and back, if you will; but at the outset, the first start of the stupendous evolution, you must have divine volition, or your even fluid will remain even and unorganised for ever and ever.

And there are at least two more hitches. Let the laws of motion work on the material of the universe till planets with rocks and sea and air have been developed, no evolution can ever carry you from inorganic to organic matter. *Life* is an absolutely new beginning. Who or what gave the magic touch to the first lump of protoplasm made of the ancient elements, carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, and oxygen, so that of a sudden its particles began that quite new kind of shifting and renewal from surrounding matter which we call 'life'? And finally, after this vegetable life had become common on the earth, by what possible evolution did it suddenly become the seat of that quite new and unprecedented thing which we call 'consciousness'? This too was a sheer and clean new beginning, and no possible or imaginable laws of motion or of matter can as much as begin to account for it. Stamp matter, then, with what endowments you will, there are these three points where you can by no possibility get rid of the divine will-force,—the beginning of the whole evolution (if there ever was a beginning), the beginning of life, and the beginning of consciousness.

There are indeed certain deep and ingenious speculations which strive to smooth away these 'hitches' by supposing that both life and consciousness have been in some dim way inherent in the universe from all time, and that the building up of the vegetable and animal kingdoms are but the development and specialisation of the vague life-power which lies in all things, and that this new world of consciousness in bird and beast, and in man himself, is but the brighter blaze in higher organisms of the dim consciousness which stirs even in the humblest atom of inorganic matter. But even if we were to allow this somewhat strained speculation, and so to get life and consciousness out of the universe at the end by putting it in at the beginning, we should still, I think, have to recognise what I have called a 'hitch,' the necessity, that is, of the application of some power other than and above the inherent properties of the universe, in the first rise of *self*-consciousness the appearance of one who is a *person* consciously distinct from all the universe around, and saying to himself, 'I am I.' And this sense of being a separate self, a person distinct in consciousness from all other being or beings whatsoever, is the assurance and conviction that lies deepest, clearest, and most secure in the heart of every one of us.

But, indeed, it is absurd to say that the mere inherent laws of motion or of matter produced just this universe and no other. No sane man can steadily contemplate the whole course of evolution which has led up to the existence of civilised nations of men, without feeling that this is no chance or accidental result, but reveals steady *purpose* ruling and shaping from the beginning to the end. Nature seems always to be working on from climax to climax, each in its turn the goal in some long road, yet each again the path towards other goals beyond.

All inorganic Nature is a pathway of forces working towards the consummation of that which we call Life. The rocks, the seas, the atmosphere are the prior requisites which make possible the seaweed, the green herbage, the great forests, the fragrant flowers, the luscious fruit. These in themselves are ends; but they are also means. For without them the air could be filled with no buzzing and twittering life, the surface of our globe could give no support to beasts and creeping things, the sea would be empty of the vast shoals which crowd its depths. The plants furnish the great laboratory which prepares the food for these;—'only,' says Dr. Martineau, 'that, unlike our chemists' apparatus and processes, their experiments are all silent, their alembics all sweet, their products the grace and beauty of the world, and their very refuse a glow of autumn glory.' And all this conscious life, itself an end, is in turn in a thousand ways, the means towards *human* life; and within the scope of this human life, the appetites, the affections, the sentiments, in ascending scale, step after step, lead up towards the final realisation of the ideal of the conscience. So that from the lowest motions of minerals and gas in the framework of the globe—nay, from the first thickening of the primeval fluid world-stuff,—the controlling Power moves on and on, step by step, vibration by vibration, till it produces the god-like being of the prophet and the saint.

But this steady progress through means after means on and ever on towards a noble end, is the mark not of the clash of purposeless, mindless atoms, but of conscious, self-determining will, 'seeing the end from the beginning, weaving the ages as a work upon the loom.'

Prof. Flint, in a powerful argument on this matter, points out that it is millions of millions to one against the atoms, if left to themselves, producing a universe like that which exists. 'Did the atoms take counsel together,' he asks, 'and devise a plan and work it out? That hypothesis is unspeakably absurd; yet it is rational in comparison to the notion that these atoms combined by mere chance, and by chance produced such a universe as that in which we live.'

A chapter on 'God revealed as Power' might easily be expanded into a volume. The writer's difficulty is to decide not what to say, but what to leave unsaid. As for me, I shall only ask you briefly to consider one more change in the manner of contemplating God which is involved in our modern notions of the way in which the universe has grown.

The famous Archdeacon Paley elaborated a famous argument which stands to this day at the very centre of ordinary English theology. He imagined himself finding a watch on a heath, examining its works, being struck by the evidence of contrivance and design in the making, and immediately inferring that it had an intelligent maker. Then he argued, 'But the world is like a watch; it too shows innumerable marks of contrivance and design; therefore it has a maker, and its maker is God.' The argument belongs to that wrong mode of thinking of God of which I have already said so much. It thinks of God as outside the world, constructing it, and setting it going. It thinks of the forces in the world as something other than God, as the mainspring of the watch is something other than the artisan. But its great vice is that it destroys the omnipotence of God. The artisan who makes a watch has to contrive, to get over difficulties, to hit upon a plan for making the hands go round in spite of their natural inertness. But if in this chapter I have rightly spoken of the divine will as itself constituting the force and energy in Nature and the whole of the force and energy in Nature, then the divine will cannot have to contrive, to get over difficulties, to dodge and baffle adverse forces; and the flooding of the universe with the divine energy is in no way like the construction of the watch. If you insist on likening the world to a watch, then you must liken God, not to the artificer, but to the mainspring, a mainspring living and energising through every part and particle of the whole.

But we shall prefer to cast aside the likeness of a watch, and to think of the universe as a living organism, an organism of which God himself is the life and power, an organism in which the divine will and wisdom need resort to no contrivance, because there are neither difficulties nor adverse forces,—but move, as we have seen, evenly and steadfastly onward from the beginning through all time towards the ever higher and higher purpose that is to be.

But I have often been confronted, when pressing the general argument of this chapter, with an important and most relevant question. 'Is there any distinction,' I am asked, 'between the doctrine of the Immanence of God in nature, as you state it, and Pantheism? And if there is a distinction, wherein does it lie?'

Now there is no doubt that such writers as Theodore Parker and Carlyle, who have both dwelt eloquently on the Immanence of God in nature, have occasionally slipped into forms of expression which are not easily distinguishable from Pantheism. But, for all that, Pantheism and the Immanence of God do not mean the same thing, and belief in the Immanence does not involve the Pantheism.

What is Pantheism? It is, as its two Greek terms imply, the doctrine that All is God, and that God is All, that every existence is Deity and that Deity is every existence, that God and the Universe are conterminous and identical.

Now it is true that I have contended that the divine energy flows through every particle of matter, that every motion, every vibration in the physical universe is nothing else than the immediate action of God's volition. So far I go with the Pantheist; but I do not say but that there are measureless reserves of divine force wholly beyond that which acts in the physical universe. In other words, I hold with Dr. Martineau that the Immanence of God is by no means opposed to the Transcendency of God, that the fact of divine action everywhere and always through the physical universe, affords no inference that there are not spheres of divine existence transcending and beyond that universe.

But I would much rather put it in this way: the relation of the physical universe to God is, within certain limits, analogous to the relation of my body to myself. The movement of my tongue as I speak, of my eyes as I glance at my friend, of my hand as I write these words, proceeds from that stream of conscious energy which you may call my mind, my soul, my spirit, my will, or myself. Instantaneously the command of my unseen self flows through my seen self and modifies its attitudes, its gestures, its several and separable parts. But the intimate connection between myself and my body does not imply that I am my body or that my body is myself, the 'Ego.' If they are in absolute alliance, they are also in absolute antithesis. Nor, even if you went on to imagine my body the absolute product of my own will, and its automatic and reflex action, the breath, the circulation of the blood, the beating of the heart, the growth of the hair and the nails to be the effect of my will, and my consciousness to be perpetually engaged in conducting these processes, would you be one step nearer identifying me, the 'Ego,' the self, with this body. The 'Ego' would be immanent in the body, but it would be other than the body, above and beyond it, transcending it, of a nature belonging to a superior order to it, in another and a higher plane than it. Press that analogy home, and you have a safeguard against Pantheism. The Universe may be thought of as the body of God, but as it is gross to confound the body with the man, so it is gross to confound the universe with God. The soul is in the body only in the sense that its energies flow through the body; a man's soul (that is the man) is not in the body in any physical sense. The body is its organ and its instrument.

But why do we shrink from Pantheism? Not from dread of losing the physical universe in God, but from dread of losing our own souls in God. Pantheism only becomes deadly to vigorous religion and morality when it makes the man's soul, the man's self, a portion of God. Theism claims that the human soul is a free Cause, a separate island of individual will in the midst of the great ocean of the Divine Will. Leave us man confronting God, not absorbed in him, and the conditions are preserved for the ethical life of the individual and also for that communion of the soul with God as another than itself, the very possibility of which is destroyed if a separate personality is wiped out.

On this matter of the *otherness* of man from God, I hope to say more in a later chapter.

So much then of God as Power, or God as revealed in the outward universe. We discover a boundless, intelligent life-force moving through all things that are, always, everywhere. That life-force we sum up under the name of 'God.' We feel that before this living Power, embracing all things, we are feeble and powerless indeed. All the strength of our manhood may beat against his laws, but we cannot break them. We are filled with unspeakable awe. We know that we are in absolute subjection. But that is all. As yet we have found nothing in God to love, nothing to persuade us that his goodness is as infinite as his power, nothing to waken in us the longing to be good ourselves, nothing to strengthen and cheer us in the struggle. We must open and search other chambers of our nature for all this; and we shall find God revealed to us in other aspects by which he feeds the springs of righteousness and religion in our breasts.

CHAPTER III.

ON GOD REVEALED AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

LET us count up our gains and see what we now possess. We have appealed to the necessary laws of our own thought, that natural thinking constitution of ours from which we cannot escape; and we have found that it compels us to believe that 'every event, occurrence, or happening has a cause.' But we found also that the very meaning of the word 'cause' in our minds is a 'living energy akin to our own wills'; and we further recognised that the whole history of the universe is the history of an innumerable chain of events, occurrences, or happenings. So that there is no rest, no pause, no stopping-place for our minds short of believing in a living Energy akin to our wills moving through the universe everywhere. Moreover, the movement has been along certain lines and up on to higher and higher planes, from the evenly diffused fluid world-stuff up to the myriads of spherical worlds, up again to organised life-stuff, from that to consciousness, and from that to human beings with their ever expanding mental and moral powers; so that it is borne in upon us quite irresistibly that in the immense evolution under the stress of the living Energy there has been guiding *purpose* from first to last. And we are landed, under the impulse of the simplest reflections, at the conception of a Living Energy akin to our wills moving through the universe everywhere and moving along certain lines revealing Purpose. We may call this Living Energy 'God'; and this is the idea of God which is yielded by those laws of our minds to which we have already referred, in view of the great and wonderful universe in which we find ourselves dwelling.

But sublime as this idea of God is, it impresses the intellect rather than the conscience or the heart. It is tremendous, but it is not lovable. Still holding our clue, the laws of our own conscious nature, can we go further and find anything revealed to us of God of the kind which prophets and preachers have most delighted to proclaim? Is there anything to obey? Is there anything to love?

We all of us possess—however we come by it—a certain sense of quite a different kind from any which I have touched on in the earlier chapters. We have noted the physical senses, sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. We have noted the remarkable faculty of memory. We have noted our sense of causality. All these—though the trustworthiness of not one single one of them can be proved—we

trust and believe and cannot help trusting and believing; and they lie at the root of vast measures of our knowledge of the world in which we live.

But here is another sense which we all possess, however we come by it. I mean the moral sense. It opens out quite a new book of our nature. Men often try to get rid of it; and they can weaken and dilute it. But I doubt if any man ever yet has killed it. When it seems most dead, suddenly it will flash out in some moment of crisis with awful power. What is this moral sense? And what does it declare?

The senses of sight and touch declare that there is a world outside of us; and we cannot but believe them. The sense or faculty of memory declares that at this present there is a consciousness in me corresponding point by point with certain happenings in the past; and I can no other than believe it. The sense of cause declares that each event occurring has had behind it some propelling energy akin to that one energy I know immediately and call my will; and I can find no way out of believing it. In like manner—though in quite a new field—the moral sense declares that certain kinds of conduct are more worthy or more unworthy than others, discerns and proclaims a distinction of transcendent importance between them, which distinction is marked by the words 'right' and 'wrong.' I am only as yet saying that we have a sense of difference between right and wrong. I have not said what we mean by it or how we get it.

But these are questions which we must ask and answer; and on the answer hang issues of unspeakable interest and moment.

What do we mean by right and wrong? I see Edwin Long's picture of the maiden of Ephesus, called on to offer incense on Diana's altar. Her lover, with burning eyes, urges compliance. Judge and executioners look sternly on. But the delicate white hand is withheld. Loyalty to Christ and Truth prevails. And we know that to-morrow the damsel will be thrust on to the arena where the panther or the tiger will lap her blood. What is this emotion which stirs me? Not only appreciation of the artist's art or even of the lovely light in the maiden's face; but, above and beyond all that, a bounding sense of nobility, of worth, of worthiness, in that fair Christian's loyalty. I am carried out of myself with a sense that here is something which I must honour—which I do honour and cannot but honour, even though it would be hard to show that, apart from the intrinsic nobility of her protest, anyone would have been one penny the worse for her dropping a pinch of the fragrant incense on the shrine.

But now again I am passing down a London slum. I hear a bitter cry. And, turning my head, I see a huge brute with giant strength thrashing a woman or a little child, his unrestrained passion at every blow endangering life. What is this emotion which surges up? Not only pity for the victim; not only an impulse to intervene; but, above and beyond these, a sense that here is something that is unutterably base I am carried out of myself with a sense that this is something which I must execrate—which I do execrate and cannot but execrate while any power of feeling is in my heart.

'Nobility' and 'baseness': these are qualities which I quite instinctively recognise. 'Honour' and 'execration': these are feelings which are spontaneously generated in my heart.

That is about as far as we can get in analysing what our moral sense impresses on us with regard to the conduct of other people. If we wish to have a yet clearer insight into the pronouncements of our moral sense, we must note what emotions it wakens in us concerning the conduct not of others, but of ourselves.

Suppose that I have received great kindness from a friend. He took me to his house when I was homeless, advised with me, sympathised with me, helped me when I was desolate, started me in life, and ever since with brotherly interest has watched over my career. In the confidence of our friendship he tells me a secret of his circumstances, not in itself in any way dishonourable, but such that his prosperity depends on the confidence being sacredly kept. But I know that his rival and competitor will give me fifty pounds for the secret, and I forthwith go and sell it to him and receive the cash. A year afterwards my friend dies, a ruined and broken-hearted man through my betrayal. I meanwhile have greatly prospered. My fifty pounds has become five thousand pounds. But the night after hearing of his death I lie sleepless on my bed, and my conduct all rises up before me vivid in every detail. And the moment that is so, an intense self-abhorrence, an almost unbearable shame seizes on me. I judge myself with a poignancy and an unsparing justice more acute than I have ever applied to others. I try to frame excuses to myself. But they wither and shrivel before I can shape them in thought. I know, without any reasoning whatsoever, that I have been a sneak and a traitor. I do not argue with myself. I cannot. The knowledge overwhelms me. Shame and confusion of face are mine. And it is vain for me to attempt to console myself with the thought that no eye sees me; and that the only man who knew of my treachery is dead. I execrated the conduct of that other man who beat his child. But I felt no shame. This shame, this remorse, this agony of conscience is a feeling wholly different from abhorrence of another man's wickedness; it is a personal anguish of overwhelming sense of unworthiness, of having rebelled, of having broken an obligation, of having risen in insurrection against an authority.

Such is the terrific and most peculiar force of the moral sense when we have done evil. But suppose that, instead of that, I have done well. In great temptation, and to the loss, not only of

wealth, but of dear friends and of that repute among men which seems the very jewel of life, I have done the difficult, painful right. What is my emotion then? Great sorrow at my grievous losses; perhaps even some passing wave of bitterness at the injustice of men; but, deeper down than that, a wonderful satisfaction and peace, a sense of harmony with what is highest and best and most enduring and most inwrought into the eternal framework of things. The suffering and sorrow are great. But I would not undo my conduct if I could. I am so far satisfied with myself. Mr. Lecky laughs at those who speak of this self-satisfaction and compares them to Little Jack Horner, who said, 'What a good boy am I!' But the kind of satisfaction I am speaking of has been felt, sometimes at any rate, by everyone who is trying to lead a good life, and is absolutely consistent with the truest modesty and the deepest humility.

Now if I describe green grass or blue sky all day long, I do not succeed in explaining what green and blue are any more clearly than you understood them to begin with. The sense of greenness and the sense of blueness in objects are absolutely simple; and what is absolutely simple can never be explained. If you are acquainted with blueness and greenness, you wil understand me at once. And if you are not, I might be as great an orator as Demosthenes and as great a philosopher as Plato, but I could not give you an inkling of what I mean.

And in like manner with the terms 'right' and 'wrong,' 'morally good' and 'morally evil,' a 'good conscience' and a 'bad conscience.' If you have the moral sense, you know what I mean before I begin to explain; but if you had it not, no explanation in the world could ever give you the smallest inkling of what it means. I have given examples of the action of the moral sense, not by way of explaining it at all, but by way of leading you to realise that you possess it, and to feel how absolutely different its declarations are from the declarations of any other faculty whatever in the whole repertory of your nature.

I hold that the moral sense deals with a peculiar province of its own which can never be translated into any other province, any more than sight can ever be translated into terms of hearing, or smell into terms of touch. If a man had no ears, you could never give him a glimmering of the meaning of the word 'shrill' by painting pictures for him. If a man had no nostrils, you could never give him a glimmering of the meaning of the word 'fragrance' by making him feel the soft petals of the rose. And if a man had no moral sense, I hold that, in like manner, you could never give him a glimmering of the meaning of the words 'right' and 'wrong,' 'noble' and 'base,' by any talk addressed to his reason or his taste or any other of the faculties which he might possess.

But in this I am stating to you a view which is

vehemently opposed and contradicted by the most popular philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and we must glance at their efforts to dissolve the moral sense into some other faculty and moral truth into some other kind of truth.

The chief opponents of the view which I have laid down are the utilitarians, that is the philosophers who teach that the moral quality of conduct depends on its usefulness and that the moral sense simply declares that one sort of conduct is more useful than another sort. But the utilitarians are divided among themselves (for I venture to use the term, as it may, I think, legitimately be used, to include both those whom Mr. Henry Sidgwick calls Egoistic Hedonists or pleasure-seekers, and those whom he calls Universalistic Hedonists), the more old-fashioned of them measuring the usefulness which in their view makes a line of conduct moral, by its service to the person whose conduct is in question; the more modern, on the other hand, measuring that usefulness by its service to society at large. The former class of philosophers teach that moral conduct is simply conduct based on 'an enlightened self-interest,' and that wrong-doing is no more than doing that which in the long run will tell against your interest. The latter class, on the other hand, teach that moral conduct is conduct that makes for 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number,' or that is 'conducive to general enjoyment.' The latter view is as much nobler than the former as unselfishness is nobler than selfishness. But I believe that the simplest investigation of the facts of our own nature shows that both are alike untrue.

Do we mean, when we say that John's conduct is praiseworthy, that it is for his own truest interest? I have no doubt that praiseworthy or moral conduct *is* for a man's true interest, because I believe that God has constructed the world on a moral basis. But when I say first: 'John has acted for his own true interest,' and next, 'John has acted rightly,' do I mean the same thing? Do these two expressions stand for one idea or for two ideas? When the question is put so, it seems impossible to doubt the answer. These are two ideas as truly as 'brown' and 'square' are two ideas, when we say, 'the box is brown and square.' No doubt, the brown box may be square, and the square box brown. It may all be one and the same box. But the two adjectives do not stand for one and the same idea. And so John's act may be for his own best interest and also right. Prudence and morality may coincide. But they are not the same thing. Sometimes a man's interest *seems*, at any rate, all to pull one way, his duty the other. Perhaps, indeed, they may not really. But we think that they do. And just because John's conduct seems to go right in the teeth of his interest, we are enthusiastic about his nobility. Whereas if self-interest were the measure of morality, we ought to be enthusiastic about

his conduct just in proportion as self-interest guides him.

But Archdeacon Paley reminds us that self-interest must be measured by an eternal, not a temporary measure. There are heaven and hell to look to, says he; and the only sanction of our moral sense is that heaven and hell lie behind it. But, says Dr. Martineau, let Paley visit the Cornish miners and pit his teaching against Wesley's. Which touches the quick of the moral nature? Paley preaches: 'Be sober, honest, and chaste, or you will go to hell.' How many hearts will he touch? how many consciences quicken? But Wesley preaches: 'Be sober, honest, chaste, because it is a shame to be otherwise, because you are laid under a great obligation, because you are called by a divine authority, because it makes all the difference in your intrinsic worth,'—and the rude Cornishmen feel the breath of a new spirit, their moral man is regenerated as by a magician's touch. So that regard for even the most tremendous and enduring interests of self is not identical with morality and righteousness.

But much more alluring is the doctrine that morality, goodness, righteousness, is that conduct which makes for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, conduces to the general enjoyment; and that moral approval is a sense that the person approved has so acted as to make for this.

Yet even here a simple inquiry, what is the conduct which we praise, admire, revere, what the conduct which we blame, loathe, despise, shows that there is something else in goodness than this ministration to enjoyment, and something else in approbation than recognition that conduct makes for enjoyment. No doubt, good conduct generally promotes happiness and bad conduct generally promotes pain. I believe for my own part that, if we could trace their workings far enough, we should find that on the large field, and in the long run, it always is so. But I am quite sure that that is not the whole of what I mean when I say that this conduct is noble and that that conduct is base. I have told you that the conduct of that maiden at Ephesus comes home to me as surpassingly noble. Yet it certainly made against the happiness of her lover, and I am sure you will not say that its nobility arose from the cruel pleasure it would give the populace in their brutal holiday; and if you insist that the girl believed that she would be snatched up to eternal bliss the moment the wild beast's fang should pierce her heart, then we all feel that that rather detracts from than adds to the moral splendour of her faithfulness. So that it is absolutely clear that the high morality of her loyalty did not consist in making for the enjoyment or happiness of any persons whatsoever.

But there is one extraordinarily striking instance in literature of the impossibility of holding steadily and consistently by this doctrine that morality lies

in conduciveness to happiness. The great apostle of that doctrine in our time has been John Stuart Mill. He has advanced it with a persistency, an ingeniousness, and a strength of conviction which no other writer has surpassed. And yet the first moment he gives himself a free rein and forgets his theory in the fervour of his own moral feeling, he runs clean away from it.

Mr. Mill for the moment has forgotten his theories and his whole soul is aflame with abhorrence of the doctrine preached by some,—and, as he thought, by Mansel, the famous Bampton Lecturer, —that God governs on principles which the highest human morality would not sanction. 'Convince me of it,' he says, 'and I will bear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this and at the same time call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say in plain terms that I will not. Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do; he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go.'

'To hell I will go': that means, I will incur all possible pain and woe. It is obvious that Mill is here laying down a principle which he would have all men accept. Rather than that men should worship an immoral God, he would have them one and all accept misery and torment for ever. Our hearts and consciences respond to the nobility of the sentiment. Unquestionably Mill felt that he was uttering himself in the spirit of the highest and purest morality. Yet what a demolition of the whole of his philosophy of morals! The most moral conduct, he teaches, is always that which conduces most to the general enjoyment. That is what we mean by morality,—so he argues with all his astonishing dialectical keenness. But when it comes to the test, in the name of morality itself he protests that under certain conditions all men ought to sacrifice everlasting joy and embrace everlasting pain. And we know that his theory is wrong and his sentiment right. 'When a crucial case really comes before him,' says Dr. Ward, 'his better nature compels him to decide sternly, peremptorily, effusively, indignantly, against his own doctrine.'

But if the idea 'right' cannot be identified with the idea 'making for happiness,' and the idea 'wrong' cannot be identified with the idea 'making against happiness,' neither can these moral conceptions be translated into terms of any other of our faculties. The more perseveringly we try to identify the qualities in conduct which the moral sense perceives with qualities perceived by some other sense, the more shall we be forced to the conclusion that in reality the moral idea is an absolutely unique idea, incapable of translation into any other. 'Right' and 'wrong' are simple,

unanalysable conceptions, given to each of us as part of the natural furniture of our minds, not derived from any reasonings, but appealing to a special faculty or sense within us. If you had no conception of right and wrong, I could never give it you; though if you have it faintly, I may nurse it into clearness; just as if you had no eyes, I could never give you vision, though if your eyes were very short-sighted, I might doctor them into clear, strong seeing.

All our simple perceptions—all those perceptions of ours, that is, which cannot be analysed, taken to pieces, explained into something else—are given to us directly as part of the endowment of human nature. They are not and cannot be derived from some other perceptions of ours, for if they were, they would not be simple, but could be taken to pieces and analysed into their elements. But this moral sense, this perception that there is a morally right and a morally wrong, that the one is noble, the other base, that the one is to be approved and praised in others, the other to be disapproved and blamed in others, this sense of peace in ourselves at the one and of shame in ourselves at the other;—this moral sense which we all have, but cannot explain, is simple; therefore it is given to us in our nature, not derived from any other sense or senses. It is part of the original make of human nature, like the sense of causality, or memory; and though we can never prove it, we cannot help believing it.

But when I say 'given,' the question starts up, 'given? given by whom?' And of this element in us, as of our bodies and our senses and our mental constitution generally, we can only say 'given by the action of that Living Energy akin to our will which we have found moving through and controlling all the universe.' We can believe no other than that our moral nature is given us of God.

I am not conscious that in saying this I am saying anything contrary to the great doctrine of Evolution rightly understood. An endowment may be given, yet given gradually only. No one supposes that it is any objection to the doctrine that a man's physical strength is given him by God that it has slowly grown from very small beginnings in the feeble body of a baby. Nor is it any the less open to us to suppose a mental or moral endowment of our race to be given us by God because it has been developed in us from primordial beginnings through the slow processes of a countless succession of generations.

But if given us of God, its tenour cannot but be consonant with the divine thought. It is inconceivable that God should weave into a man's soul a moral sense which does not answer to his own nature. If God has made me feel by an inward sense that avarice or meanness is base and to be condemned, while generosity is noble and to be approved, it is impossible but to suppose that God himself—however vast the difference between

his consciousness and mine—in some kind of manner also views avarice or meanness as base and views generosity as worthy. If God has quickened in the human mind an instinctive moral sense with power to inspire men to the loftiest heroism for the sake of right or to plunge them in maddening remorse on account of wrong, then it seems quite impossible to think that God himself is passive and indifferent to right and wrong and has in his own divine nature nothing corresponding to our moral judgments and the emotions which beat with such vivid light about those judgments.

And so by this long, slow path which through this chapter we have been pursuing, a path thorny, stony, difficult, on which I have painfully felt myself but an indifferent guide, we have, if you have followed me, suddenly arrived at a great and splendid truth which was worth a long climb to reach. The great and splendid truth is this: 'Whatever be the mode of God's own life and consciousness, whatever the inscrutable mysteries of his nature and being, he is a moral God.' This does not mean that he, like us, has a battle to fight against temptation, and moral victories to win; but it means that to him as to us moral good and moral evil stand dissevered; that to him as to us they are good and are evil; and that good and evil mean to him that same simple, unanalysable, but clear, solemn, and momentous thing which they mean to us. And from this it follows that he is himself a God of righteousness;

that whatever there may be in the universe to puzzle, to bewilder, sometimes to confound us, that purpose which threads together the ages, cannot but be a righteous purpose,—that, as Matthew Arnold puts it, 'this Power not ourselves,' which we call God, 'makes for righteousness.'

The moral sense, then, conducts us to the recognition of God as God of Righteousness. But it does so also by a shorter and quicker path than that which we have just been traversing.

Our moral sense is a sense of obligation. Do what we will, we cannot empty our moral perception of this strange and unique characteristic, that it is always the perception that there is a bond binding us to, an authoritaitve power calling us to, a certain sort of conduct. Tens of thousands of young men have tried to break up this sense of an authority, a bond. They have said: 'It will give me more pleasure on the whole to lead a gay life for a year or two, than to plod on in the dull routine. I will do as I please. Why not?' And they have done as they pleased. But the balance of pleasure which their calculations promised them has been broken and marred by this unescapable sense of a bond, an obligation, an authority. Their revels have been haunted by the sense of a debt unpaid. Their intervals of inaction have been darkened by a sense of shame, as before one who has an inalienable right to look in upon the soul and chasten it. But every phase of this feeling, the sense of bond, obligation, debt, the sense of shame, the sense of shrinking as before a gaze of fire, implies that there is another Being than the man himself towards whom these relations are sustained. If I owe, I owe some one. If I am bound, I am bound to some one. If I am ashamed, I am ashamed before some one. And any faithful reading of the emotions of a stricken conscience spells in them the name of God; the Living Energy who has made me what I am, and himself has wrought into my spirit that moral sense which he calls on me to make my guide through life.

This is the cardinal point of Dr. Martineau's ethical philosophy. But no one has put it with more beautiful and striking force than Cardinal Newman. 'If,' says he, 'on doing wrong we feel the same fearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us on hurting a mother; if, on doing right, we enjoy the same sunny serenity of mind, the same soothing, satisfactory delight which follows on our receiving praise from a father, we certainly have within us the image of some person, to whom our love and veneration look, in whose smile we find our happiness, for whom we yearn, towards whom we direct our pleadings, in whose anger we are troubled and waste away.'

The moral sense or conscience, as we may now term it, teaches us then that a divine Being calls on us to do the right, to shun the wrong. It teaches, too, that that inward voice which speaks to us has intrinsic right everywhere and always to the obedience of every creature. We can imagine no created being, capable of receiving it, with a right to put aside and ignore its behest. We recognise it then as the voice of that Spirit which governs always, everywhere,—the Supreme and Everlasting God.

Now though I believe that the reasoning in this chapter is philosophically sound, yet I can well imagine that I have failed to carry with me some of my readers. The premises seem slight to sustain so tremendous a conclusion. And you may well ask me to put my belief in a God who concerns himself with righteousness, and that in the case of each individual man, woman, and child, calling on the individual by an inward voice, which is his own, day by day and minute by minute to do right and shun wrong,—you may well ask me to put this amazing and stupendous belief to the test I myself have suggested: 'Does it work?'

'Does it work,'—this belief that God is in each man's breast urging on to good or calling back from evil, approving or disapproving, wakening the delight of peace with himself or the shame of broken obligations? Does it make efficient men and women, strong, brave, true? The question only needs to be put to find its answer. Almost all that is great and noble in human life, that marks mankind off from the lower orders of creation, that beats down the coarse, the selfish, and the brutal in us and nourishes the pure, the spiritual, the god-like, is the direct working of this belief that we are under

the call of God, that he speaks in the voice of conscience, that there are bonds binding us with unique authority to do his will and obey his law. Cut this thought right out of the human heart, and who will dare to say how terrible will be the fall of man and the breaking up of the bonds of human society? The moment a man feels that God is there, his conduct takes the highest line. It is the one lever beyond all others to lift mankind to pure, effective, and noble manhood.

It may indeed be contended that there are many men in our day who have given up all belief in the Living God, and yet are living noble and strenuous lives. It is true; and we may even add that there is something peculiarly grand in the manner in which a Clifford or a Huxley continued to live for the noblest ends and to hold his manhood on the highest levels of character, when the old helps to goodness had passed from him altogether. But Miss Cobbe has well pointed out that, whatever the personal opinions of such men may be, they have been born into an atmosphere of belief in God and the solemn religious sanctions of morality. They enjoy the heredity of a moral character formed under the influences of Christian faith. And, however lofty the ethical standing of a few picked individuals who have ceased to feel God round them, that can give us no security for the like ethical elevation in a generation trained in an atmosphere of atheism and born into no Christian heredity. Nor have we to look far abroad to see how many lose moral grip and swerve below the high level of a noble life when faith in God grows weak. Nor again, I think, can any of us doubt that we ourselves have been most nearly what we would wish to be at those times when Faith in the Heavenly Father has shone brightest and clearest in our hearts.

But at this point it will be well to notice one seemingly formidable argument which has driven hundreds of intelligent persons to doubt whether the voice of conscience can indeed be the voice of God. 'Look,' they say, 'at the different ideas of right and wrong in different ages, different countries, and even among the same people at the same time. Are not half the disputes that keep the world astir disputes as to what is right? How then can you pretend that God gives a sovereign verdict in each man's breast?'

And indeed the objection seems staggering. The Greeks thought it a duty to expose to death every weakling child. We condemn the neglect of children as a hideous crime. Nay, forty years ago devout and excellent ministers of religion were found to defend negro slavery. And to-day some of the best of men are found to defend the practice of vivisection, while to others among us the practice seems no better than consummate devilry.

To take the last first. The explanation is very simple. No thinker has ever said that God usurps the individual's judgment about particular acts. It

is at most contended that he intimates that certain kinds of conduct are good and certain other kinds are evil. Now vivisection is regarded by some as highly benevolent, because it is supposed to lead to the mitigation of human suffering, while the awful animal suffering which it inflicts is quite unrealised. It is held by others to be unspeakably cruel, because it puts dumb creatures to excruciating pain. Now what God's voice in conscience does is to extol benevolence and to condemn cruelty. It is obvious then that according to whether an individual happens to concentrate his thought on the alleged benevolence or the actual cruelty in vivisection, conscience will be enlisted on the one side or the other. And which way a man's thought fixes itself is a question not decided by conscience, but by accidents of education, association, tradition, and circumstance, by actual acquaintance with the facts, or by too easy a reliance on the pleadings of professional apologists. So again in so complex an institution as American slavery, two men might equally love justice and hate injustice, and yet the one had been so saturated with the point of view of the better class of planters, and the other saw so clearly by the light of the abolitionists, that they would diametrically differ on the right or wrong of the institution in dispute.

But when we take that other example—the exposure of children among the Greeks—we touch on other facts of vast importance. Conscience is the gift of God, but like every other gift of God in our nature it has been, as I have hinted, gradually developed. It began, in some very dim, dull way, in those days when, as Fiske tells us, man was less different from the ape than from Plato or from Paul; and age after age, under the stress of life, like the reason itself, the moral sense cleared and strengthened and was illumined. There is in the human breast a great range of springs of action, from the lowest animal passions to the loftiest promptings of religion. But man began with the lower ones only; and in the evolution of society and of mind and thought and feeling, the higher ones one after another stole on to the arena of the soul and entered into competition for the guidance of the man's conduct and the rule of his heart. And what conscience, that present speech of God, has always done is this: it has declared with ringing clearness as each higher spring of action for the first time took its place, its superior worth and holiness to its less lofty predecessors. The education of the race is always going on, and even in our own time, for example, desire for the good of the world at large is only slowly forcing itself into action and making itself felt as higher than desire for the interest of our own country. Many folk still deem world-philanthropy or pure humanity a fanatic's dream beside patriotism; but a hundred years hence it will be a moral axiom that the race comes before the nation.

So those old Greeks had arrived at patriotism as a spring of action, and that was the highest that they knew. And if the puny, puling child seemed likely to incommode rather than help the State, the highest duty seemed to demand its slaughter. But then came the Man of Nazareth and opened out a higher spring of action still,—reverence for the individual soul as the temple of God. And that spring once quickened in the heart, the thing which had seemed a virtue slid into the place of a vice in men's conception. The infallible voice of God, when once this new motive had been quickened, pronounced that to be the higher and declared that therein lay the right of guidance and control.

And so from age to age new fields of character have been opened up and received their consecration from conscience. Purity, humility, truthfulness, spiritual reverence,—each of these has had its epoch in which it has first shown its face and pleaded with men to love and serve it. And over each as it has taken up its place that voice of God which we call Conscience—the moral sense—has pronounced its benediction: 'This is my beloved Son; hear him!'

CHAPTER IV.

ON GOD REVEALED AS LOVE.

WE have now traced in outline the revelation which God makes of himself to men along two separate lines. From the necessity under which we find ourselves to think of every happening or phenomenon as having a cause, together with the fact that what we mean by 'cause' is something akin to that living power in ourselves which we call our will, we arrived at the revelation of God as the Living Cause behind all the phenomena of the outward universe from the very beginning of evolution. And along this line of thought we come to conceive of God as the Living Energy by which alone the worlds and all that in them is are sustained in their perpetual thrill and everlasting tremor of motion. If we try to realise what that energy is, our imagination is instantaneously baffled, overwhelmed, confounded, by its velocity as well as by both its minuteness and its immensity of operation. On the one hand it has been estimated that the gas in the air which we

breathe consists of molecules of which there are nineteen million, million, million in a single cubic centimetre, and that each of these molecules dashes backwards and forwards through all the seconds of all the years at the rate of five or six hundred yards a second. On the other hand we can set no boundaries whatever to the universe. No telescope was ever yet contrived so strong but that at the furthest limits of its range, chiefly, however, in one plane, star-clusters seem to blossom out; and who can say how far beyond there may be star-clusters more again? Light starting to-night from the nearest of the fixed stars, at a speed of 186,000 miles a second, cannot reach us for three long years; and light from some of the nebulæ faintly gleaming there in the space-distances has taken thousands of years on its long, sure journey thence to our eyes. What we see is the star, or rather the light about the star, as it was long before Babylon was built or the Pharaohs arose in Egypt. The star as it is to-day will shed its light on the eyes of our children when a longer history has been written from to-day than the history since first the antique men scratched their strange records on the rocks. Such is the scale of that universe, throughout which pulses that ceaseless Energy which is the manifestation of the Living God.

And then we have seen how God reveals himself also along the line of the Moral Law. He has set in us a mysterious sense by which we know that certain kinds of conduct are worthier than other kinds. We know by some necessary law of our minds that reverence is more noble than conceit and that compassion is more noble than vindictiveness. It is a constantly recurring experience with us that, when two lines of possible conduct present themselves to us, we know that we *ought* to pursue the one and not the other. And we are convinced that that is God's judgment as well as ours, and that God *makes* us judge so because he judges so; and that the same springs of action which are nobler for us are nobler also for all beings everywhere before whom the like choice is presented; and not only that, but that whatever beings God may have impressed with a moral consciousness in the remotest past or shall so endow in the remotest future, with them also the like moral law has held and shall hold good. The moral law, we are persuaded, is as universal in space and in time as the physical laws of gravity or the refraction of light. 'The rule of right,' says Dr. Martineau, 'the symmetries of character, are no provincialisms of this planet; they are known among the stars; they reign beyond Orion and the Southern Cross; they are wherever the Universal Spirit is; and no subject mind, though it fly on one track for ever, can escape beyond their bounds.' Yes, and we may add: that was so from an Alpha ere ever the planets broke from the central sun and shall be so to an Omega when all the worlds now astir with life shall be dead worlds floating dark through space.

Language has no words, imagination has no pictures, in which to set forth the sublimity of this infinite and eternal range of the one Causal Energy and the one Moral Fiat which are two of the self-utterances of the Living God.

But I have now to try to expound how God is revealed to us along one other line of thought and feeling.

We have seen how by its very constitution the human mind forms a multitude of judgments independently of and prior to any reasonings or arguments, judgments that we cannot help believing to be true, though we are for ever incapable of demonstrating or proving their truth.

If anyone says that there is no world at all outside us, we cannot prove that he is wrong, and yet we know that he is wrong. We trust our senses.

If anyone says that the consciousness now in my mind that I was very tired when I had to trudge from St. Paul's to Piccadilly last Saturday for want of an omnibus, is a mere delusion, I cannot prove that he is wrong, and yet I know that he is wrong. I trust my memory.

If anyone says that the idea that there is any cause making the minute-hand move round the face of the dial, or making the sun set in the west, is a groundless fancy, I cannot prove that he is wrong, and yet I know that he is wrong. I trust my natural belief that every phenomenon has a cause.

If anyone says that my conviction that I ought not to nourish vindictiveness against John Smith for that ill-natured remark he made yesterday, and that I ought to tell the truth about that absurd and disagreeable little mistake I made on Monday rather than hide it by a lie, is a baseless superstition, I cannot prove that he is wrong, and yet I know that he is wrong. I trust my conscience.

Now here is a philosophical word which we shall have to make use of in connection with these things: the word is 'Intuition.' Intuition is merely Latin for 'a looking at' or 'a looking into.' And an Intuition in philosophical language is the knowing that a thing is true by simply looking at it. If I say to you: 'The square drawn on the side of a right-angled triangle opposite to the right angle is exactly equal to the two squares drawn on the other two sides added together,' you will very properly ask me to prove it before you believe it. You may look at the figure in Euclid for half-an-hour, but mere looking at it will never make you sure that it is true. But if I say to you: 'The whole of this straight line is longer than half of it,' you know that what I say is true, the moment you look at the line and the place where the half of it is marked off. Nay, you know it with your eyes shut A mental look is enough. I only have to conjure up in your thought a whole line and the half of it, and the knowledge that the whole line is longer than the half is there in your mind along with the thought of the whole and the half without an instant's pause for reasoning or even for reflection. That is a truth known just by looking at it. So that piece of knowledge is an Intuition. Some philosophers use, not only the noun 'Intuition,' but the verb 'to intue'; and such a philosopher will say, 'I intue that the whole is greater than the half.'

Now it is only fair to say that some thinkers deny that we have any intuitions at all. Even, say they, if it be true that you really do now see some truths at a glance, it is only that by constant practice you have learnt to work them out in your mind instantaneously. There is suppressed reasoning, or rapid, unconscious reference to experience. You have always found that the whole is greater than the half. You never in all your life came across an exception to the rule. And that is why, the moment you think of 'whole' and 'half' now, the idea 'greater than' pushes into your mind at the same moment. Other philosophers admit that individual experience alone will not explain the intuition, but they contend that the experience of the race will.

But in the case of memory, at any rate, it cannot be that it is previous experience that makes us judge the moment we look into our minds, that makes us 'intue,' 'Yes, this impression in my mind now of having shivered in the snow-storm corresponds with what actually happened to me last winter'; for I have to 'intue' that memory speaks truth before I can refer to my past experience at all. Nor, again, with the moral sense, can we admit that the judgment 'it is nobler to defend a weak woman from a brute than to stand by and laugh' is a rapid reasoning or a reference to the experience either of the individual or of the race. It cannot be a rapid reasoning; for even slow reasoning could never prove it to one who denied it. And it cannot be a judgment founded on experience; for no experience could persuade us that it was nobler, if we did not feel it so the very first time any such case came up for judgment by our conscience.

We do 'intue' then. We have 'Intuitions.' But it is quite possible that with the general advance of the mental and spiritual capacity of the human race, they may arrive at new classes of intuitions which were not within the compass of mankind in earlier and less highly developed stages of its existence. Indeed, when we come to think of it, if the teaching of Darwin be true, this must be so. We are descended, he tells us, from the lowest forms of animal life,—nay, animal life itself is descended from organisms that were not even animals. But if that be so, then just as we saw in a former chapter, that there must have been some point in the long evolution when the first faint consciousness appeared in connection with a physical organism (unless indeed that speculation be true which holds that there is an elementary consciousness in all the matter of the universe), so there must have been a point of time when the first spark of memory lighted up the consciousness, and a moment when the necessity to refer all phenomena to some kind of cause first made itself felt in the mind. And just as there was a moment when for the first time the rays of light found a seeing eye to strike on, so there must have been a moment when the universal moral law first struck upon a moral sense in the breast of man. This erect forked creature that we call Man, may have been physically fairly complete ages before the first of those intellectual and moral intuitions, which make up the permanent fixtures in the furnishing of the mind now, had worked into life and taken command of his thought and feeling.

And so even now there may be some new class of Intuitions—of beliefs the nature of which it is in each case to be matured the moment the terms of the belief are presented to the mind—which are kindling into life in the human soul to give it a new dignity and a new hold on God.

And indeed I believe that this is so. I believe that by a new range of Intuition, select souls, at any rate, if not all the run of common men, know when they are touched by some exceeding beauty that then and there they are in the presence of the Living God, and that thereby God touches them, that therein God speaks to them.

To guard against any misunderstanding of what I wish in this chapter to press upon the reader, let me here say that of course the sense of beauty itself is not new in the human mind. It has been there through all historical time. It is a quite specific sense, having its own laws and its own objects just as much as the sense of cause or the sense of right and wrong.

Quite as many and as ingenious attempts have been made to analyse what we mean by 'beautiful' as to analyse what we mean by 'right' and 'wrong.' Yet in the end all that we shall be able to say about our sense of beauty is that it is a certain specific kind of pleasure which we derive from the contemplation of certain objects. These objects may be perceived by us through the eye or the ear or any of the physical organs of sense, or they may be objects of pure thought in the contemplation of which we take delight. What it is in the objects which excites the special feeling that we have when we say, 'How beautiful!' is a question on which philosophers from Athenian Plato to Burke and the Scoto-Irish Hutcheson have debated much. Some have contended that the essence of beauty lies in utility, so that when we say, 'How beautiful!' we merely mean 'How useful, how admirably adapted to its purpose!' Others, again, think that you cannot draw the line between the sense of beauty, and the sense of right and wrong, so that when you say 'How noble, how praiseworthy was the conduct of Casabianca on the burning deck!' you merely mean how beautiful it was. But I think that we must all feel that though adaptation to its purpose, or utility, often enchances the beauty of a vase or a building or a living organism, yet the pleasure we feel in beauty is something

other than the pleasure we feel in usefulness, and the perception of beauty is something other than the perception of usefulness. And I think that we must all feel likewise that, though undoubtedly noble conduct is beautiful, yet to say that it is beautiful is something else than to say that it is good or righteous, and that the delight we feel in contemplating it as beautiful is at any rate not quite the same as the reverence it awakens in us because it is noble.

The nearest that we can get to defining what it is in an object of our contemplation that makes it beautiful and kindles in us that specific pleasure which things beautiful create would seem to be to say that it is a certain unity in variety, a certain harmony of the constituent elements. That harmony may be harmony among the colours in the object, as in a beautiful sunset (though in a beautiful sunset there is much more as well), or it may be harmony among the different elements of its form, as in a beautiful Greek temple, or it may be harmony between the form and the ideas with which the object is connected, as a Church spire pointed to the heaven where we imagine God to dwell;—the most tapering spire would not be beautiful, but ugly on a factory. I have seen a factory-chimney shaped like a spire, and it was hideous. Or it may be harmony between the outward form and the high thought and pure feeling which belong to a sweet or noble character, as in the face of a young girl or of a great and good man. But whatever be the qualities in objects that excite in us the sense of beauty, the sense is here in us, known to us all, though perhaps not excited by the same object in my mind and my neighbour's ; and it differs from every other sense that we have. It is the source of a unique pleasure to us different from any other pleasure, and capable of rising into a delight most pure in quality and most intense in degree.

Now I have expressed the belief that a new kind of Intuition is in our time coming into being in the soul of man which consists in this : that when he is under the strong spell of exceeding beauty,—when this sense of the beautiful is excited in him to the highest degree—he knows that a Holy Unseen Power is there touching him with its presence and, through the beautiful thing that he is contemplating, addressing him soul to soul.

The clearest cases of this Intuition occur when the object exciting the sense of beauty is beautiful natural scenery. Now there is no doubt that, in the West at least, the sense of a divine beauty in natural scenery is in the main a new endowment of man. There is little trace of it in its modern form in classical antiquity. Vergil indeed startles the reader of the second Georgic by a passage which reveals a true sensibility to the spiritual impression which the loveliness of Nature may convey; but that passage is rather a prophetic foregleam of modern feeling than a characteristic illustration of Roman sentiment. To Scipio and to Hannibal the Alps were but the vast buttresses or barriers of Rome. Even to so late a writer as Dr. Johnson the mountains of Scotland presented no æsthetic charm. And while in early English poetry there is often a recognition of what is picturesque in Nature, we rarely meet with passages revealing that in sublime or lovely scenery the soul has been caught up as into the presence of God. But we in our century have virtually added a new delight to life. The ravishing sense of beauty in the great harmonies of nature in the glorious sweep of earth and sky has possessed the latest generations as it never possessed their predecessors. It is not then by mere chance that in our time also has been developed, as never before, that Intuition which, under the sense of great beauty, 'intues' the living presence of God.

Of this new Intuition Wordsworth has been the priest and prophet, and it is worth while to recall at length the classic passage in *The Excursion* in which he has exhibited it. He has just described the boyhood of his friend, the Wanderer, now an old man wise and good and sweet. He tells how even as a boy the Wanderer 'had felt the power of nature,' and was prepared to receive 'the lesson deep of love' which nature has it in her to convey. Then he proceeds :—

Such was the boy—but for the growing youth
What soul was his, when, from the naked top

Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass beneath him lay
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces did he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him: it was blessedness and love!

A herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
Was his existence oftentimes *possessed.*
Oh, *then* how beautiful, how bright appeared
The written promise! Early had he learned
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die;
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
Responsive to the writing, all things there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving: infinite;
Their littleness was not; the least of things
Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw.*
What wonder if his being thus became

Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place; yet was his heart
Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind
And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
Wisdom, which works through patience; thence he learned
In oft-recurring hours of sober thought
To look on nature with a humble heart,
Self-questioned where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.

Now this passage is not poetry only, but, like so much of Wordsworth, a close psychological study. It is a precise statement of a unique experience of the soul. These are the central and dominating statements: 'In their silent faces (those of the clouds) he *read* unutterable love'; 'Rapt into still *communion* . . . . . his mind was a thanksgiving to the power that made him'; 'In the mountains did he *feel* his faith'; 'Nor did he believe,—he *saw.*' 'Read,' 'felt,' 'saw,' 'communion,'—these words are all efforts to express the immediateness of the spirit's consciousness of God under the stimulus of beauty. The sense of *God there,* of visitation from the living God, was not a reasoned thought or chain of thinking. The result of that is belief; but this was more,—it was immediate sight; and I can have no doubt that the true reading is as I have given it, 'nor did he believe,'—not, as you will find it in some editions, 'now did he believe.' He did not merely believe,—he saw. It was not any argument, 'this is so beautiful and wonderful that God must have made it.' It was an immediate and direct perception, an Intuition, a seeing of God there by the immediate sensibility of the spiritual organ.

And though rarely perhaps is this spiritual sense so clear and powerful as in Wordsworth, yet there are few of us who have not known something of it. Different organisms are sensitive to different sorts of beauty. To some *sublime* scenery, to some quiet meads and streams, to some the ever unresting sea, to some the marvel of the nightly stars, to some a wayside flower,—to some again the mysterious charm of music or of song, to some a poem, to some the face of a little child, to some a face beautiful with the story of a long and faithful life, has most quickening power. But I hardly think that there can be any of us who have not known the mystic influence of one or other of these media of divine grace. The spirit of the man has been disturbed by the frictions or worries of life. All has seemed at cross purposes. The weight of care has seemed too heavy to be borne; when by some blessed chance the spirit has been submitted to the action of beauty—sublimity or loveliness—in one or other of these forms, and with the sense of beauty has instantaneously broken forth in the soul the sense of a divine and gracious presence before which care and worry have been dissipated like mist before the mid-day sun. It is an overwhelming sense of a spiritual presence, strong, tender, holy, which on the moment bursts into life; and even when the vision is past, it may leave a vividness of impression on the memory which for years may sustain in a man a more vivid assurance of God than either the revelation of God as the universal Cause or the revelation of God as the Source of the moral law. In moments such as these we recognise with passionate conviction the supreme truth of the great Johannine declaration that 'God is Love.'

'But,' you will say perhaps, 'after all, these impressions that you describe are mere impressions—often evanescent impressions—and you cannot prove that they are not all pure fancy.' If you are a philosopher you express this by saying that the impression may be purely subjective, and there may be no objective fact corresponding to it.

I admit your argument, but I set beside it precisely parallel arguments, exactly as forcibly, exactly as feeble.

My impression of green grass and brick walls may be all subjective; there may be no objective existences corresponding to them. Yet I believe in the grass I see and the wall against which I knock my head. The impression of cause may be all fancy. I cannot so much as conceive the beginning of a proof of its reality. Yet I believe that my will is the cause of the smashing of the cupboard door with my fist, and that the divine will is the cause of the circling of the planets round the sun. It may be a mere subjective impression that the behaviour of Jesus in Gethsemane was nobler than the behaviour of Judas. I cannot begin to prove it. Yet I know and you know that so it was.

And so when, under the midnight heavens, or in the bosom of the everlasting hills, or in the thrill of the melody of perfect song, the impression that God is laying hold of my spirit and that I am in veritable communion with him shines out vivid in me, I cannot prove that it is not self-deception, but neither can I doubt that it is real and vital fact.

But still formidable objections are put forward. It is quite true that men sometimes trust impressions which *are* delusions, though they seem so self-evidently true. When I had once advanced an argument similar to that which I am now pressing, a friend of high intellectual and religious character wrote to me: 'You speak of the starry heavens restoring to your soul peace and consciousness of God: I have found a cup of coffee have the like effect. Do you not think that a dose of opium or haschisch, if of right amount, would open up heaven to you?' Is then what I have described a veritable Intuition, or is this action of the beautiful upon the soul the mere working of a drug, the delusion of which will pass away when the effect is worked out of the system?

Now it is quite possible that even a cup of coffee may upon occasion help to clear and quicken the faculties, for the interdependence of mind and body is a fact of our present constitution which we can neither escape nor deny. But the argument of my friend is clearly intended to suggest that what I have thought to be a true Intuition originating in our sensibility to beauty is really a sort of feverish or intoxicated illusion such as arises from the stimulation of drugs. There seems to me to be one very practical test whether this is so or not, whether Wordsworth's Wanderer was under a hallucination akin to that of an opium-smoker or whether he was really drawn into communion with God. So far as I know, all illusive states of consciousness, whether in fever or under the action of intoxicants or narcotics, are followed by reaction. The false exaltation gives way to a corresponding depression; the vivid assurance is succeeded by a period of blank doubt and darkness. But this is not the case when the pure sense of beauty has quickened in a man's spirit the sense of the God-presence. The actual vision, the actual sense of contact with God, that indeed passes away. But after it has passed away and is a memory only, the man finds himself not less, but more sure of God than he was before the vision. There are many men whose faith, a faith sustaining and inspiring all through life, rests mainly on the recollection of such seasons of direct vision. There is no reaction. And that is the token that these moments of direct vision are not moments of the disease of the soul, but of its true health; and that the vision itself is not a phantasmagoria presenting a lie, but an actual insight presenting a truth.

I knew a man some thirty years ago who was troubled in spirit through grievous things, and the world seemed dark to him and almost without God. And in his care and pain he went out at night on to a lonely common and stood beside a great stone quarry. And the stars were in the heavens and in their eternal silence looked down upon him. And there and then he knew that God was with him and felt that living touch of God upon his spirit. And rarely since then has he felt God quite so near. But the memory of that moment of vision has remained with him always, and it has made him more sure of God than any argument; nor when he has recalled that moment, has he been able to doubt that that was a true revelation of the Eternal to him in his weakness and his need.

And if we put that other test which I have so often advocated, 'Does it work?'—I do not think the answer can long remain in doubt. If a man thinks that under the awe and the solemnity of the mountains or the stars or the sea he has seen God with the eye of the soul, does the belief work? Does it make this being, Man, a more efficient creature and open up fresh powers in him? After an opium pipe or a dose of haschisch, I suppose a man will think himself endowed with the genius of a Shakspeare. And at the moment he may indeed produce verses above what he could have written without the drug. But flatness soon supervenes, and so far from his being a more efficient poet that

day week than he was before, his nerves are all ajar and he cannot concoct a decent verse. Not so with the man who in soberness of soul has believed that God touched him when the sheer hills rose before him, or Mendelssohn's 'Hymn of Praise' flooded his being, or the human eyes of one revered and beloved looked into his own. The vision passes, it is true. But it leaves the man the stronger and the purer. 'Such high hour of visitation from the living God,' as Wordsworth puts it, is indeed an hour only. But like that meat in the strength of which Elijah went for forty days, it does not drug, but feeds the man, entering into his mental and moral fibre so that all his efficiency for what is good is augmented and not deteriorated.

Such then is the revelation of God to man through man's sensibility to beauty. Philosophers distinguish three main elements of our conscious life,—the Intellect, the Will, and the Emotions. They point out that we think, we act, we feel. Nor can you lay your hand on anything that passes in your consciousness but it groups itself under one or other of these three modes. Other beings in other worlds may possess other categories of consciousness, other modes of mental life. But to us they are inconceivable. There is no fourth kind of consciousness known to us. It is true that the intellectual life, the life of thinking (which covers understanding, reasoning), and the moral life, the life of acting (which covers willing, choosing), and the emotional life, the life of feeling (which covers loving, hating, enjoying, suffering), are so woven together that you can perhaps not find a single waking moment in your life in which each is not present in some degree. Thought sets Emotion pulsing, and Emotion wakes the Will. The Will falls back on Thought for guidance, and its own action quickens the currents of Emotion. But still, as the white light is really constituted of the three primary colours, so is conscious life constituted of these three elements of consciousness.

And this is what we have now arrived at, and surely it is striking and momentous. In connection with each several one of these three, God makes himself known to such as patiently and faithfully interpret their own minds. Thought cannot take a step without encountering the demand for Cause,—and as the one all-encompassing Cause it encounters God. Will cannot take up the work of life without finding its obedience claimed by the Moral Law, and in the Moral Law it discovers the command of God. Emotion finds itself touched, as soon as it has come to the fulness of life, by the power of the Beautiful, and the Beautiful, in one or other of its multitudinous forms, proves to be the vehicle by which God impresses himself on consciousness as God of Love. These three, I believe, are the modes—and at the last analysis I am inclined to think that they are the only modes—by which that Divine Power and Righteousness and Love to which we give the name

of God makes itself apprehended by the human soul and through the long ages works upon human character, helping Man slowly to conquer and put away the inheritance of his grosser animal nature, and by steps which are centuries and flights of steps which are æons to mount up into true and perfect sonship to him, the Father. There have been prophets, redeemers, inspired men in the story of the world, but to none, I suppose, has inspiration ever come save in one or other of these three forms in which God communicates himself to the human mind.

There is one practice of supreme importance which helps man in the long task which God has set him. I mean the practice of Prayer. A young man, consulting me not long ago concerning the conduct of life, observed to me that he understood that modern science had shown prayer to be a superstition. He only put bluntly and crudely what many are feeling vaguely—an uneasy apprehension that since the chain of cause and effect runs link by link all down the ages, there can be no room left for the appeal of the soul to God. We are but cogs, it is thought, in the great wheel-system of the machine of the universe. As reasonable for us to think to deflect its action by our petition to the Supreme God, as for the cog to ask that the engine shall be reversed. Or, if you will, we are as a fly upon the wheel, but a fly glued on so that he cannot escape. What of that fly's prayers to the power which turns the handle? And so, I fear, thousands whose fathers never began nor closed the day without solemn appeal to the Father of all, have dropped away from the habit of worship or the recourse to prayer in the trials and difficulties of life. Let us then inquire, do the principles which I have tried in these chapters to expound make for or against prayer as an element in the religious life? Do they accentuate or remove the difficulties and objections which have been advanced relative to prayer? To find the answer to that, I ask you to recall the conceptions of the Divine Being to which I have given expression.

I have repudiated the idea which has generally prevailed in Western Christendom that God is a Being outside the universe who has set it going, and only interferes with the working of the machine on occasion. If I be right, then all that kind of praying which consists in asking for interferences is, indeed, ruled out as futile. But if you deem that a loss, I claim that our gain is greater far. So long as men held God to be thus aloof, they kept being assailed by ever fresh doubts whether their prayers could really reach him; and they kept turning to ever fresh intermediaries who were to be their messengers to the far-off God—Christ, Mary, the saints; and each of these tended gradually to take the place of God, and to become not only the messenger but the object of prayer. But whatever else the God I have asked you to believe in be, he is not far off, and there can need no messenger from us to him. In one chapter I have maintained that his Living Energy is actually

working now in every atom of the physical worlds, including our own bodies, the very lips with which we frame the words of prayer, the very eyes with which we look up to heaven. In the next chapter I have maintained that that haunting sense of moral obligation, of 'ought' and 'ought not,' which is so familiar to us, is the actual whisper of God in us; that conscience is his present, living word. And in this chapter I have maintained that when and where beauty moves us with the rarer emotions which it does sometimes awaken, then and there God is touching the soul, revealing himself as Love, and we are in actual present communication with him.

God then is not far off, but Tennyson speaks truth:

> 'Speak to him, thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit
>   can meet;
> Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and
>   feet.'

Nor, again, as we have seen, is it possible to maintain that God is too great to concern himself with the joys and sorrows, the wants and woes of such small creatures as human beings. He finds it worth while to be active in the filament of a nettle or the throbbing of a molecule. It cannot be less worth while to be active in a human being. His perpetual presence and activity in conscience is the pledge of his concern in the little choices we have to make hour by hour. His communion with us under the stress of beauty is the evidence that he will mingle his spirit with ours, as a friend with a friend or a father or mother with a child. So the fear that we are too small and that God is too great for our prayer vanishes in presence of the facts.

And, indeed, if a man be once moved to the love of God, and be persuaded that God loves him, then the communion between God and man, which we call on the man's side prayer or worship, seems to be only the natural and necessary outcome of the situation. For consider this one universal experience, to the truth of which we can all bear testimony. Wherever there is love, it seeks to find some means of communication with the beloved. It has entered into our very proverbs, this universal experience. 'Love laughs at lock-smiths,' says the adage. The minstrel wanders through the lands till the notes of his flute strike through prison bars to the ear of his captive king. The lover binds his letter to the arrow's shaft, and shoots it to the chamber on the tower top where his lady is immured. The heart of friend turns to friend, and even though a thousand leagues may lie between, the missive finds its way from land to land, and did so even before the days of mail steamers and cheap postages. The hands of the betrothed find each other out unseen that love may communicate its thrill from heart to heart. The child flings his arms around his mother's neck, and prattles the words that well up from the depths of his childish being. The husband leaves his work that for a moment he may go and look in his wife's

eyes and read again the mystery of their union. Love craves communication with the beloved as the first need of life. Business may stand still, the thirst for knowledge be forgotten, the keenness of ambition be blunted, but affection needs to express itself to the cherished object, and the communion of friend with friend is a universal necessity of life.

And so, unless we are to say that the love between God and man has nothing in common with the love between human beings, that it in no way resembles the love between father and children, we should expect—tremendous and overwhelming and wonderful as the thought may be—we should expect the thrill of actual communication between him, the Infinite and Eternal, and us, his creatures, whose insignificance in comparison with him no words can express, save only that he, out of his love of love, has given us hearts able to love him, our Father, and himself, in all the Eternal Majesty of his being, loves us who are his children

The difference then in our praying will not be that it will be less vital or less real for our modern knowledge, but that it will pass from petition into communion; that it will be a seeking not of gifts, but of consciousness of the God-presence. And as consciousness thereof is won, the intellectual life will be cleared, the moral life will receive the sap of a new vigour, the emotional life will pass out of anxiety and trouble into peace and a quiet, abiding joy, till all our worship merges in thanksgiving.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

WE have been engaged throughout the last three chapters in laying down the lines along which God is revealed to men through their Intellect, their Moral Nature, and their Emotions, as Power, Righteousness, and Love. Whatever hindrances there may be just in the present conditions of thought to the recognition by all men of God as thus revealed, I am persuaded that the day will come when it will be as impossible for men really to doubt him as to doubt the outward world which they see and touch, and as impossible for them to be deaf to his voice in conscience as to be deaf to the thunder-clap or the bugle-note, and as impossible for them to be insensible to the love with which he penetrates them as to be insensible to the light that floods the day.

But many good and earnest people dare not trust these revelations of God, dare not believe fully in his righteousness and love, even though they believe in his power, because of one great and awful

fact which presses upon them and which it is impossible for them to ignore.

It seems to them that they would be deceiving themselves in supposing that there can be a God both All-powerful and Good, seeing that the fact cannot be hidden that in this world there exists great, varied, and terrible Evil. In the awful accounts of outrage and massacre which have recently burnt themselves into the consciousness of Englishmen, some of the best of men, within my knowledge, have thought that they saw the refutation of faith in a Heavenly Father. Their devout trust in the Divine government of the world has received a staggering shock from the horrors of Armenia; and, with poor Cleg Kelly, their hearts have cried out, 'It's all a dumb lie; God's dead.' Terribly impressive is it to observe how this despair of God as a Power making for righteousness in the history of nations has uttered itself in the recent writings of one whom some of us have looked on as the most promising English poet of the time. That profound faith in God or some underlying fundamental Good which gives strength and nobility to all the greatest poetry in the world seems, for the moment at least, to have been scorched clean out of the verse of William Watson.

Even Tennyson, the poet of trust and hope, in one of his moods declares that 'Nature, red in tooth and claw with ravine' shrieks against the creed that 'God is Love.' 'Pain, grief, disease, and death,' says Winwood Reade, 'are these the inventions of a loving God?' Huxley, writing on 'The Struggle for Existence,' decides that the Power ruling the world cannot be benevolent. And John Stuart Mill was expressing his own view as well as that of his father, when he said that his father 'found it impossible to believe that a world so full of evil was the work of an Author combining infinite power with perfect goodness and righteousness.' Indeed there are philosophers so impressed with what they deem the prevailing sadness of all life that they argue that the central principle of the universe is bad, and educe their whole philosophy from the root-idea that conscious existence is itself an evil.

And though, if I must tell you the real truth, I shall have to confide to you that I believe the pessimistic philosophy of Byron, of Schopenhauer, and of many another had its real origin not in hard thinking at all, but in a bad temper or a bad digestion, yet I acknowledge to the full that it is often the most generous, the most sympathetic, the most chivalrous natures that are most shaken in their faith in God by the spectacle of the vast and terrific evil which confronts them in the world.

Let us then frankly consider the whole matter. The argument against Theism is absolutely simple, seems absolutely clear. 'There is great evil in the world. If God cannot prevent it, he is not all-powerful; if he can, yet does not, he is not all-good.' Is there any escape from this dilemma?

Can we get out of it by denying that there really is any evil? Some have tried that way. But it can be adopted only by denying the meaning of words or refusing to acknowledge facts. There is evil. Let us see then what the evil is.

It is of two kinds, closely connected together no doubt, but still two kinds: Pain and Sin. Some have acknowledged that Sin is an Evil, yet tried to get out of recognising Pain as an Evil. Now I shall argue presently that Pain is often the means to good. But it is useless to say that in itself it is not an evil. Our horror at the sufferings of the innocent, even more than our own shrinking from it, is the evidence that we do all consider Pain in itself an evil, however often it may be the means to good.

And I venture to stand by this opinion notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Gladstone, in his recently collected studies of Bishop Butler, has described the doctrine that pain is in itself an evil as to his mind 'false, fearfully prevalent, and most dangerous.' I shall myself presently contend that pain in its effects is the source of the highest good, even that the world would immeasurably suffer by the total withdrawal of pain. But it seems to me a mere abuse of language to deny that pain, apart from its results, in itself considered, is an evil. Speaking at Liverpool, in the autumn of 1896, Mr. Gladstone declared that the recent massacre of Armenians in Constantinople had been far less terrible than the previous massacres among the Armenian hills, because these last named had, what the others lacked, the accompaniment of outrage and of torture. But if torture is no evil, where lies the force of the contrast? If pain is no harm, why are we indignant at its infliction? Or will you say that it is 'harm,' but that 'harm' is not necessarily 'evil'? This seems to me, I confess, a fantastic jugglery with words. The meaning of language can only be deduced from the common consciousness of mankind. And the doctrine that pain is not in itself an evil seems to me an attempt to escape from the common sentiment of our race in the interest of a particular philosophical or theological theory.

Pain then and Sin are the evils of the world. But it is important to decide which is the greater. Let the choice be between a great pain and a great sin. Which is the better choice? If we honour heroes and revere martyrs, that is a proof that we consider pain a less evil than sin. If sin were a less evil than pain, we should call the man who of the two chooses pain, not a hero, but a fool. If suffering were a greater evil than faithlessness, we should call the man who of the two chooses suffering, not a martyr, but at the best a fanatic.

There are two evils in the world, then, Pain and Sin; but of these two Sin is the greater evil and Pain the less.

And what are the chief divisions of pain?

Some tender hearts have been most haunted by the pain of the dumb animals. It is this that is

gathered up under Tennyson's celebrated phrases when he describes Nature as 'red in tooth and claw with ravine,' and as 'so careful of the type,' 'so careless of the single life.' I shall have more to say about the sufferings of the animals presently. Meanwhile we have nothing but sympathy to express with those gentle hearts who sorrow over all the pain which is scattered through the world of beasts and birds and creeping things.

But others are touched most by the pains and sorrows of the innocent and helpless among our own kind—especially by those of children. And they who go in and out among the slums of London or Liverpool or who read the reports of such societies as that for preventing cruelty to children, know what a terrible mass of suffering this is. Only let me just point out in passing that, while those who read or hear of these things often have their faith in God shaken by them, somehow or other those who are working at their alleviation seem never to have their faith in God shaken by them, but, so far as I know, are generally all the more assured of the divine love, and seem to see God right through the misery and the anguish. Account for it as you will, that is a most remarkable and impressive fact.

And then, thirdly, there is all the pain which men bring on themselves by their sin,—the disease of the debauchee, the rags and hunger of the idler and the drunkard, the isolation from all human sympathy of the selfish, the remorse which tortures the heart whenever the reality of its sin flashes in upon the consciousness, the great, awful mass of physical and spiritual woe which is the direct, visible fruit of the sins of men.

So much for the Pain in the world; then for the Sin. It appals us by its magnitude, its blackness. There is no need for me to draw it out in detail. We have all been oppressed by the contemplation of it. We have all marvelled at its proportions. We have all known the sting of some of it in our own bosoms.

Yes, the mass of Evil is appalling—first Pain, and then, more and worse, Sin. Can God be omnipotent, and at the same time good, that he lets these things be?

Before we can answer that question, we must decide what we mean by 'omnipotent,' which is of course simply Latin for the English almighty or all-powerful. I am going to tell you what will sound a very trivial, almost a profane thing. But it is neither the one nor the other, for it is the very most solemn and profound thought of which a very little boy was capable. I do not know how old I was, but I cannot have been far out of babyhood. I had been taught that God was very great and that he was almighty. And I remember quite distinctly thinking of him as an immense man with a square paper cap like a baker's, and wondering whether he could *open and shut a window at the same time.* If he was almighty, I supposed, he must be able to do that. And I imagined the opening and the shutting more and more quickly of one particular window in my father's house. But still I never could get them in my fancy absolutely at the same time. What was my mistake?

My mistake was in not seeing that 'opening and shutting a window at the same time' was not merely very difficult, but an absolute contradiction, and that almightiness or omnipotence does not mean ability to accomplish a contradiction; for a real contradiction cannot be. The word 'contradiction' means the combination of incompatible conditions. No doubt some things that to us seem contradictions would be seen not to be so really, if we could look at them from God's point of view. But if two conditions really are contradictory, then not even omnipotence can bring them both to pass together. Not even omnipotence could make the earth a sphere and a cube at the same time. Not even omnipotence could make a triangle of which the side AB is longer than the side BC, and BC longer than CA, and CA longer than AB. All that we have a right to mean by omnipotence is power to do everything that is in itself possible, that is not in itself contradictory. If then it should appear that the idea of a world in which there is provision for moral goodness is in itself contradictory to the idea of a world where there is and can be no evil, then we are not denying God's omnipotence in any real sense if we say that he could not both provide for moral goodness in the world and shut out all evil from the world.

And there is such a contradiction. For what is moral good? Moral good consists in *right choosing.* It is *right choosing* that makes what we call *character.* Human goodness is made up of right choosings massed into a habit and making the tone and substance of the character. Right *choosing:*—but if there is to be *choosing*, there must be two courses to choose between. If God had made me so that I *could* not tell a lie, I could not *choose* to tell the truth. I should tell the truth automatically as I breathe, and sneeze, and cough. But that would not make character. It would not be moral good. To get moral good out of me, to make character, I must have a free choice between a better and a worse;—it must be open to me to tell the lie, or there will be no morality in telling the truth. But God cannot at the same time leave it open to me to tell the lie, and shut me off from telling the lie, any more than he can at the same time open the window and shut the window. Both alike are contradictions; and omnipotence does not mean power to do contradictory things, but power to do all possible things.

And as, if his object with men is to get moral good out of them, to make character, God is obliged to leave the lie open to me as well as the truth, so also, throughout all the range of morals, he is in like manner compelled, omnipotent though he be, if he would have moral good evolved, character (which is made up of right choosings) developed in men, to leave open to them the wrong as well as the right, the disobedience as well as the obedience, the sin as well as the virtue. And so, *if* moral good, character, righteousness, be the supreme purpose of God with man, then even omnipotence had to leave open the door to Sin, the greatest of the evils.

But, say you, why could not God make us all virtuous to start with? Why could he not endow us with character ready-made? Because virtue is right choosing, and if there be no choice there is no virtue. Because character is built up of right choosings, and that which is ready-made is not character. Once granted that the purpose of God with men was goodness, character, the human will had to be left free to choose at every moment between the better and the worse; and it had to be left dependent not on God, but on Man, whether there should be sin in the world, and if so, how much, and how long it should be ere sin should be conquered and righteousness be set up in its place. If character was to be the purpose, then all that the omnipotence of God could do—since it could not do a contradiction—was so to order the conditions of human life that good should be sure *in the end* to overcome evil, and righteousness to blot out sin. We shall inquire presently whether God has done that.

But meanwhile someone may say, 'Granted that if character was God's purpose with man, even his omnipotence had to leave the door open to sin; but he need not have made character his purpose.'

No; that is true. God might have made a world in which moral good, character, was not the purpose, in which therefore sin was shut out, and virtue did not exist. Might have? He *has* made such a world. The animal world is such. The lion, the cat, the sparrow is guided by instinct, knows nothing of these moral choices that are presented to us at every turn. But, let me ask you, if it depended on your vote, should you be prepared to vote that our life should be assimilated to theirs, and that the whole of the moral life, the whole power and trust of choice between good and evil should be cut clean out of us? I cannot conceive that any sane man will deliberately and sincerely answer 'yes' to that question.

The attack which Mill and those who agree with him make on God is that if he could prevent evil and does not, he cannot be all-good. But we have seen that to get goodness realised in men, it was necessary to leave the door open to evil. So that this is the shape the argument will have to take, 'If God were all good, he would not make goodness his chief purpose with men.' So that, again, you are forced into the position of charging it as a blot on the goodness of God that his purpose is the goodness of man. But surely the very meaning of calling a being 'good' is that he loves goodness beyond all else. It is precisely by making goodness his first purpose with men, and through conscience teaching them that it is his purpose, that God makes us know that he is good. And if once we came to think that he was indifferent to human goodness, we could no longer mean anything by calling him good.

Such considerations as these—considerations from which it is impossible to find any real logical escape—cut the ground from under our feet when we would lay it as a charge against God that he has left the door open to sin. The fact does not militate against his goodness, since it is the very manifestation of his goodness that he has called us to be good. It does not militate against his omnipotence, since omnipotence does not mean power to realise a contradiction, and to make human life a training school of character, yet shut out the possibility of sin, would be to realise a contradiction.

But we saw that there was one thing which it might still be legitimate to ask of God before we should be content to call him both omnipotent and good. Mr. Gladstone, indeed, in his earnest essays on the writings of Butler, protests strongly against any demands being made by us on the character of God or any attempt to vindicate his ways with men. He would have us simply bow down in absolute and unquestioning trust. But trust cannot spring up to order. It must have sure and certain grounds on which to rest. And we cannot trust God while our minds are tortured with apprehensions of injustice or cruelty in his government of man. It is the best and noblest part of our nature, and no idle or captious fancy, that insists on the vindication of his goodness. It is then legitimate to ask whether God has so ordered the conditions of human life that good should be sure *in the end* to overcome evil, and righteousness to blot out sin. If he had made goodness his purpose with man, but had not placed man in such conditions that goodness must win in the end, we should still have to think him good, since why else should he have made goodness his purpose with man; but we certainly could not think him omnipotent, since we should see his good purpose in risk of ultimate defeat.

But the conditions of life *are* such that goodness must prevail in the end. Sin is sooner or later self-destructive, while goodness is reproductive of good. But if that be so—if in the world two forces confront each other, the nature of one of which is to eat itself away, and the nature of the other of which is to reproduce its like, to grow, to spread—then the battle between them may be very long, but *in the end* the former must necessarily disappear and the latter must necessarily occupy the field.

But is this so, or am I assuming what experience fails to warrant? Why do I say that the force of moral evil is self-consuming, self-exhausting, while the force of moral good is self-increasing, self-sustaining?

Here is one reason. He who practises moral evil seeks his own personal end. But he who practises moral good seeks an unselfish end. Now if ten men seek an unselfish end—say the carrying of some reform, or the establishment of some hospital—they can all work together in perfect alliance, and the whole sum of moral force devoted to that end is exactly ten-man power, without a fraction of deduction. But suppose that ten men seek each his own selfish end, they may indeed enter into temporary compacts of alliance, but as their final object is not common to them all, but the real final object of Brown is Brown's pleasure, and of Jones is Jones's gain, and of Robinson is Robinson's profit, and so forth through the ten, their respective forces inevitably at certain points work against each other, and weaken or cancel each other, and the total force applied to the common end will not be nearly ten-man power, but only ten-man power minus several fragments of individual power. And so the ten good men will wield a total force indefinitely greater than the ten bad men; and if the world were left to the ten good men and the ten bad men to manage, the force making for good would with certainty sooner or later overcome the force making for evil. And this is how it is that all confederacies of men for good ends exercise a continuous and solid influence for good; while all conspiracies among men for bad ends have in them the elements of their own disruption and decay, and the mischief they can do is sooner or later exhausted.

Then, again, here is another reason. Every good man, sooner or later, awakens sympathy or enthusiasm on the part of others for his efforts after good, and so generates new forces in other human centres making for the like things. But every bad man, sooner or later, wakens aversion and repulsion on the part of others, and so, not only becomes more and more isolated, but actually generates opposing forces in other human centres making against his own ends.

And here is yet another reason. Every man who practises good grows stronger and stronger. Temperance strengthens his body and mind. Disinterested service braces and invigorates his character. And at fifty, therefore, he has more power for good than he had at thirty. But every man who practises evil grows weaker and weaker. No doubt, there is a certain infection in evil as well as in good. But intemperance weakens the body and the mind. Selfish conduct enfeebles the man-power, makes it flaccid, vacillating, spasmodic, deadens effectiveness. And at fifty, therefore, the bad man usually has less power for evil than at thirty.

And what is true of individuals is true also of communities, of nations, of races.

Nations that are temperate, brave, and conscious of a high ideal grow stronger and stronger, play a larger and larger part in the world, exercise wider and wider influence as long as that character endures. But nations that are intemperate, luxurious, and

unconscious of a high ideal, decay, break up, and disappear. A handful of Athenians overcame a host of Orientals; not primarily because their generals were cleverer, but because they were morally more sound. And even after a temperate, brave, and noble race has ceased to be so, its dead heroes, its thinkers, its moralists, its artists exercise an undying influence on all future time. But a race that has always been corrupt endures but a brief span, and leaves little influence behind. Athens and Israel are among the most potent influences in the world to this day. But Assyria has been blotted out of the history of the world.

We all believe that if England roots out luxury, intemperance, and selfishness, she will endure, and her people and her thought will become the dominating influence in the world. But if she lets the evils grow, she will pass away like many a by-gone power, and it will be left for purer races to guide the destinies of man. But to believe this is to believe that good is stronger than evil, and that God has so ordered the conditions of human life that good is sure *in the end* to overcome evil, and righteousness to blot out sin.

Walt Whitman gives voice to all that I have just been trying to make clear when he writes, after reading Hegel :—

> Roaming in thought over the Universe, I saw the little that is Good steadily hastening towards immortality,

> And the vast of all that is called Evil I saw hastening to
> merge itself and become lost and dead.

Now we saw before that if character was to be God's chief purpose with man, then all that even God's omnipotence could do was thus to order the conditions of human life. That he should so order them was all we could legitimately demand before recognising that God is good. He has so ordered them. Therefore God is good.

So much for the existence of Sin. Of the two Evils in the world Sin is the greater, Pain the less. It remains to consider Pain.

First, let us take all that mass of pain—that immense area of suffering and sorrow—which is the direct outcome or effect of Sin. The shattered nerves, the aches and pains that come of intemperance, the wretchedness which the selfish man inevitably brings upon himself, the ruin of the gambler,—take in any form you will the pain that is the direct issue of sin: no doubt, viewed by itself, all this pain is evil. But viewed as the direct inevitable outcome of sin, can we venture to call it evil still? We have seen that in a moral world the door had to be left open to sin. Would it be better, that being so, that sin should bring no penalty? Would it be better if a man could be selfish all his days and never lose a moment's happiness thereby? Would you be more inclined to think God good if, when a man degrades himself and blots out the image of God in him by sensual indulgence, he could

count on never having a headache or a pain in consequence? No, we all hold and often loudly express the very opposite. Do we not? Sometimes it seems to us (though always falsely) that some man's sin is not bearing penalty, not bringing him any loss or pain. What do we say then? We cry out against God's injustice. If the wicked man flourishes like a green bay-tree, we count that a defect in the making of the world. When the oppressor, the cruel man, the inflicter of suffering on others, comes up smiling and jaunty, and we are deluded into the notion that he has succeeded in sinning without retribution, ***that*** makes us inclined to doubt God's goodness. But if that is our way of thinking, then we cannot also lay it as a charge against God that he has so constructed the world that suffering does inevitably result from sin. The suffering indissolubly attached to sin is one great and potent instrument for training men out of sin into virtue.

But I think that some will say, 'Yes, we agree that God does well so to constitute the world that a man's sin should involve that man in pain. But it involves too often not himself alone, but others also, in pain. Why should God constitute the world so? The sins of the fathers are visited on the children; the sins of the rich upon the poor; the sins of the dead upon the living. Can this be the law of a God who is good?

And here indeed you touch a problem which has broken down the faith of many—and chiefly of the good, the sympathetic, the chivalrous. Yet let me say again *not* often of those who are actually working to mitigate this pain in daily intercourse with it. *They* see God through it all. Such is the mystery of service.

But can we, looking on at the great drama of the world, justify to ourselves this fact that the innocent suffer through the sins of others?

Well, it is part of a greater fact and inseparable from it. What is that greater fact? That all the universe is one whole, and that the nearer its parts are to each other, the more intimately they act and re-act on each other. This applies to human beings no less than to the molecules of the physical universe. It has been stated so far as regards human beings in ancient words of sublime simplicity, 'We are members one of another'; 'whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it.' For my part, I grieve indeed over the pains of the innocent; but I cannot bring myself to think that this would be a better world if the pains incurred through sin were limited to the sinner himself. This fact of mutual membership involves great sorrows; but it involves also all the purest gladness, happiness, and joy that there is in the world. If one man's conduct affected no one but himself, all the beauty and nobility of human life would be sapped at the foundation. The world would not be a colony bound together in fellowship of gladness and sorrow. It would be a vast prison, in which each man, woman, and child had to serve a life-term of solitary confinement.

And further: if my suffering from my sin is God's way of recalling me to a better mind, much more is my child's suffering from my sin God's way of recalling me to a better mind. If every wrong-doer brought trouble on himself alone, the forces making for the destruction of sin would be infinitely less powerful and effective than they are. The force that holds back the hand from striking is far more often the image of the pain which the wrong will bring to others than the image of the pain which it will bring to the man himself. The fact that his sin would break his wife's heart has much oftener kept a man true and pure than the fact that it would bring trouble on his own head. The more carefully you think out what human life would be if the sins of men brought pain to themselves only and left the innocent perfectly happy, the more distinctly, I believe, will you discern that it would be an infinitely sadder and less holy thing than it actually is under the conditions in which God has set it.

And then comes in a consideration of enormous weight, which has been felt most vividly by the best and devoutest. There are qualities in pain and sorrow which render them incomparably the most potent instruments in the making of character. If we theorise about this, we get wrong. Logic would seem to say, 'If God brings great pain on a man, it must make the man revolt against God.' But observation of facts compels us to say, 'No, on the contrary nothing exercises so extraordinary an influence in making men love God as the suffering of great pain at his hands.' Scientific thinking deals with facts as they are, not with *a priori* notions of what we should expect. And in this matter, the fact as it is, is that goodness is evolved from pain more richly than from any other source. This is what Dr. Martineau says: 'The truest piety is to be learned only in the school of suffering; and, strange to say, its usual characteristic is in a certain brightness and restfulness of spirit, free from the plaintive tones of painless religion; its faith is not shaken, but confirmed, by the shock. It is the observer that whimpers, while the victim sings, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."'

And I say all this after being permitted, by the kindness of the anonymous author, to read in proof an exceedingly clever and earnest little book called 'Evil and Evolution.' In that book the author contends that a bright and unclouded existence is at least as good a school of character as a life chequered with suffering. I find it impossible to agree with him. Perpetual prosperity seems never to fail to breed selfishness in the heart, and the battle with difficulty seems the indispensable condition for the making of human greatness. Take away all suffering and all wrong, and surely heroism would be blotted out of the history of humanity. It is not a sickly and monastic saintliness that springs from the soil of pain, as this writer would seem to think, but all that we include under the term, 'manliness.'

Among moderns, Mazzini seems to me the very type of the nobility thus educed — Mazzini, 'the suffering Messiah of the nineteenth century.'

It is clear then about Pain, first that in a moral world it was much better that Sin should have Pain as its consequence than that it should not, and secondly, that Pain has a great and sacred function among men, namely, the training of them in character. These two facts go an immense way towards solving the difficulty we feel in believing that God can be both omnipotent and all-good, seeing that he permits Pain to exist.

But still the matter, it may be said, is not cleared up wholly. There is much pain in the world which is neither the outcome of human sin nor yet conducive to the training of character. I doubt myself whether there can be shown to be any human pain which may not in one way or other conduce to character; but I readily admit that there are vast areas of human pain which are not caused by human sin, and also that in the animal world, at any rate, there are vast areas of pain which do not and cannot conduce to the making of character.

Let us look at both these facts:

Vast areas of human pain that are not caused by human sin; by what then are they caused? By the standing, enduring, universal laws of nature,—the regular action of the primitive cosmical forces.

Take an example: the cosmical laws which run through the whole physical creation include the fact that the earth slowly cools, and, cooling, contracts and hardens at the surface. This involves in its process an occasional local spasm in the earth-crust. These spasms (called earthquakes) have tens of thousands of years ago become comparatively slight and comparatively rare, leaving the globe, on the whole, well calculated to support human life. But here and there, now and then, a bad earthquake still turns up, because the cooling and hardening and settling are not yet complete. A few millions of years more, and the earth will be too cold to sustain human life. Just now it is, on the whole, admirably adapted for a thriving and vigorous humanity. Ought God to have waited to set any human beings on the earth till the very last earthquake was over? Who will dare to say so? That would have diminished the total number of happy human lives from first to last by thousands of millions. And yet that is exactly what you do say in effect when you point to the destruction which the earthquake wreaks as sign that God is not good.

These cosmical laws sweep through all time and space. Through them, and through them alone, has any universe at all been evolved. For us to stand up and find fault with gravitation or the law of the refraction of light does indeed seem a monstrous specimen of conceit. While to ask that these laws and the like should be suspended whenever a human being is in the way is to ask that God would substitute disorder and confusion for that perfect and universal order which is the very foundation of all society and civilisation and progress and human happiness.

When we pass from the human to the animal, from the moral to the unmoral world, then, however, Pain seems to wear a new aspect, and we are afresh startled at the sufferings of such multitudes of innocent creatures in a world over which we are told that a good God rules.

It is impossible here to say all I should like to say about animal happiness and pain. But I would urge everyone on whom this problem presses to read with the closest attention the last four pages of the second chapter of Wallace's 'Darwinism.' Wallace, the enthusiastic disciple of Darwin, and himself the greatest living British naturalist, clearly points out the errors involved in estimates like Tennyson's and Huxley's of the volume and intensity of the woes of the animals. He shows with absolute lucidity that the phase 'the struggle for existence,' though an excellent scientific expression, gives a most misleading impression of the troubles of animal life. And he—the highest possible authority in this matter—thus sums up: 'The popular idea of the struggle for existence entailing misery and pain on the animal world is the very reverse of the truth. What it really brings about is the maximum of life and of the enjoyment of life with the minimum of suffering and pain. Given the necessity of death and reproduction—and without these there could have been no progressive development of the animal world,—and it is difficult even to imagine a system by which a greater balance of happiness could have been secured.' (*See Preface.*)

There are, however, pains inflicted on animals by mankind which, to my knowledge, hardly less than the awful catalogue of man's atrocities against man, have tended to shake the faith of many earnest persons in the goodness of God. Some of these are inflicted in sport, in wantonness, or in mere recklessness; others, and these amongst the most terrible, on the plea of the advancement of science or of mitigating human disease. A tender heart can hardly refrain from longing that God had put all this out of the power of mankind. But it is not easy to conceive how this could have been done without arbitrary and destructive limitations on the physical capacity or the moral freedom of men. God certainly has 'laid upon us a mighty trust'; and when we abuse that trust, we do produce real and essential evil; and the torture of animals *is* real and essential evil. We have yet to rise into a far higher and nobler conception of our fellowship with the animal world. Meanwhile, they who artificially increase the sufferings of races helpless against the might of man, take on themselves a responsibility which it seems impossible to measure.

It seems proper here to say a word about that very ancient mode of solving the Problem of Evil which consists in supposing that, as all good proceeds from God, so all evil proceeds from a personal author and lover of evil; the more so that this time-honoured method of dealing with the matter is revived with wide culture and devout enthusiasm by the writer of that essay on 'Evil and Evolution' to which I have already referred. On the surface such a theory seems at once to dispose of the whole difficulty. God and Devil are contending with each other over the whole area of the universe. All the good is to be put down to the credit of God; all the evil to the account of the Devil.

But, after all, a little reflection suffices to show us that our problem remains exactly where it was. Suppose there be indeed a Prince of Evil. Is he or is he not the creature of him whom our recent essayist constantly speaks of as 'the Creator,' or 'the Supreme Being,' or simply 'God'? Is the Devil created by him, and by him endowed with power to bring about whatever evil is in the world?

Let us first suppose that this question is answered in the affirmative. The Devil is God's creature. It is God who has made him and endowed him with his capacity for evil. Where then do you find any relief from the difficulties which you felt before? You complained that God could not be altogether good if he sent pain into the world and permitted sin in the human heart. But how does it mend matters to suppose that he has done it all through the agency of one single evil spirit? Is it any better to suppose that he has created a single being in whom is concentrated all the malignity which darkens the world, than to suppose that in all his children he has, by the tremendous endowment of Free Will, left open the door to sin? Is it any better to suppose that he has endowed one angel of evil with the power to infuse woe into myriads of human lives than to suppose that sorrow and pain are conditions inseparable from a moral world? Some evolutionists try to get rid of the idea of creation by dividing up the spiritual endowments of the present world into an infinite number of infinitely small accretions of spiritual power. This Satan theory is the reverse of that fallacious contrivance. It gathers up an infinite number of individual sins and lays them all in one vast lump to the charge of one single creature of God, in the hope of slipping evil into the world without making God responsible. The device is equally vain. A hundred million small acts of creation are creation still, just as much as one all-covering act. One single admission of colossal evil into the world presents precisely the same difficulties to the Theist as a hundred million admissions of fragmentary evils.

Let us then suppose that the Devil is not the creature of him whom our essayist calls 'the Creator,' 'the Supreme Being,' or simply 'God,'—that he is an independent being, and that God is in no way responsible for him. What then becomes of God? Why, he is God no more in any transcendent sense. He is not the universal Creator; he is not supreme. He is after all only a demi-god, or a god in the sense of the Greek mythology,—a celestial hero, contending against evil powers for the happiness and the virtue of his human children. To such a being, such a champion of our cause, our hearts would no doubt rightly go forth in loyalty and allegiance. But he is not *God.* We have to peer into the darkness behind him for some other being, the true Creator, the true Supreme, the great Eternal, the First Cause, whence have sprung both Spirit of Good and Spirit of Evil, both Ormuzd and Ahriman. And then with him we have to begin again the same great argument. Why did he admit evil into the world? Can he be both all-powerful and all-good? And so from this ancient expedient of a Devil, this *Deus*—or *diabolus*—*ex machina* solution of our problem, this audacious cutting of the Gordian knot, we are forced back to some such slow and patient argument as has formed the substance of this chapter.

I conclude, then, finally that neither the existence of Sin nor the existence of Pain—and these two things include all that we mean by the dread word 'Evil'—is in any way inconsistent with the view that God is omnipotent and all-good in any rational and real sense of those two words. Rigid reasoning disposes of the Problem of Evil, and leaves us free to revere and love God as all that the best and holiest have declared him to be. But our judgment is ruled more by warmth of feeling than by rigid reasoning. And in view of some terrible woe or wrong the rigid reasoning will often vanish out of our minds, and the very warmth and fervour of the sympathies which God has kindled in our hearts will shake for the moment our faith in God's goodness. The safeguard against *that* does not lie in rigid reasoning, valuable as that is, but first in engaging ourselves habitually in ministering to the sorrows of the world and trying to lead men towards goodness, and secondly in steeping our spirits day by day in communion with God through those several avenues by which, as we have seen in the earlier chapters, our access to him lies ever open.

In this chapter and in that on the Moral Law I have said much about goodness for its own sake being the proper aim of men and the apparent aim of God for his children. It is, I am convinced, of primary importance that we ourselves should seek first to be good rather than to be happy. But I fully admit that it may sometimes sound harsh to insist that God makes any other purpose paramount in his dealings with us over our happiness. Let me then add a few words which may perhaps be felt to soften and mitigate such a view of the ways of our Heavenly Father with us, his children.

The elder and coarser philosophical teachers taught that pleasure was the chief aim of life. We have all learnt, I suppose, to translate this word 'pleasure,' into the less gross term 'happiness,' a word of purer and brighter radiance. Let us now

carry our translation one step higher still. Let us clarify and exalt the idea of 'happiness' into the idea of 'blessedness,' and it seems to me that this great controversy of the highest good falls away and is solved in the larger unity. And I think that we may truly say that in the eternal heart of God the 'blessedness' of his children lies as the eternal purpose towards which, under his shaping hand, the whole creation moves.

I ask you to consider if this be not truly so.

On the one hand we have to confess that the purpose of God is our goodness even more than our happiness. But what is goodness? It is nothing less than life in harmony with the laws of God implanted in the universe and in our own spiritual nature. He who lives wholly in such harmony is wholly good. But again what is 'blessedness' save this,—a state of feeling—a balance of the emotions—in harmony with those same eternal conditions which flow forth from the spiritual structure of the universe? To feel no desires save God's desires, to feel joy in all that gives joy to God, that is to be in perfect blessedness. Someone has said that happiness is 'harmony with our surroundings.' That is true. And blessedness is harmony with those wider and more spiritual surroundings, those all-encompassing and interpenetrating spiritual conditions, of which the soul becomes sensible only as it advances in the life of goodness.

And so the great paradox would seem to be solved. Goodness is the life of harmony with the eternal conditions which spring from the being of God; and Blessedness (the pure and perfect happiness) is the feeling of that harmony in the life. And so Blessedness and Goodness are but aspects of the one condition. And that manner of conceiving God which contemplates the one as the Supreme End for which he has created life and love, contemplates the other therein no less. And the two ideas—which in their lower phases set the philosophers at war—in their highest coalesce and are no more divided.

Only by us it is to be remembered always, that the goodness, the *life*, is the thing for which to strive and pray; that the blessedness, the *feeling*, can only come to such as have forgotten to make search for it and are wholly given over to the purpose of living in accord with God.

And so it is a beautiful and holy world; a world in which, if only we carry up our controversies and our difficulties high enough and contemplate them in the pure light of the shining presence of God, they fade out and are gone; a world in which with high and happy hope, with deep and undoubting faith, with full-orbed, self-forgetful love, we have to put our hand in God's and go whither he by his Holy Spirit leads the way.

CHAPTER VI.

ON MYSTICS AND MYSTICISM.

WE set before ourselves at the beginning of this little book the question: 'How may men know God?' In the first chapter I tried to show that we must not expect to be able to reason the whole answer out by pure syllogism without assumption, because none of our knowledge in any department can be reasoned out by syllogism without assumption. All reasoning proceeds on assumption. 'All science starts with hypothesis.' Syllogism cannot begin without premises to build on. The assumption necessary to reasoning about God is the assumption that our own natural faculties are veracious. The premises necessary for syllogisms about God are those truths which are given in the deliverances of these faculties. My whole contention has been that in normal human nature there is provision for theistic belief,—that assuming the truthfulness of human faculty, it follows that God is real and good and lovable.

You will no doubt have observed that throughout this long argument I have never once appealed to any authority whatever outside our own faculties. My appeal has been to the common reason, the common conscience, the common emotion. I have cited famous reasoners and teachers; but only to put what they have said to the test of this common reason, conscience, and emotion. Have their utterances stood this test, I have adopted them; have they broken down under it, I have rejected them. I have in no case said, 'This proposition must be true because it is vouched for by this Church, by this Book, or by this Man.' Herein I have departed from the almost universal practice of such as write or speak in the name of the Christian Religion. However free and able their reasonings upon that which is given them by Creed or Bible or Prophet,—nay, even though in some portions of their argument they venture to go behind Creed, Bible, or Prophet for their premises, seeking them in our common human nature,—all that vast class of writers of whatever school who are called Christian Apologists, do base some part of their argument on premises borrowed from Church, Book or Teacher, or at least when they have constructed their argument, deem it incomplete till they have shown that Church, Book, or authoritative Teacher teaches just that same thing.

Now, though I shall have more to say about this in the next chapter, yet I may explain at once that my departure from this procedure is not due to any undervaluation on my part of that consensus of wise and pious men which may constitute the Creed of a Church, or of that gathering together of the words of the great and good which may invest a Book with the dignity of a Bible, or of that insight beyond the insight of ordinary men which makes the Prophet or the Seer. But my position is that the very existence of the Prophet and the Seer, the very existence, too, of Creeds and Bibles so far as these are representative of the wisdom of the Prophet or the Seer, is based on the normal human faculty which the Prophet and the Seer share with the rest of us, though in them it is greater in degree, more luminous, powerful, and distinct.

For, indeed, it is in this fact that all the authority of the inspired man lies. His apprehension of divine truth is keener than yours; and that which you only apprehend when it is suggested to you, he apprehends in the fulness of his insight without human suggestion. The authority with which Jesus of Nazareth is said to have been felt by ordinary hearers to speak lay in this, that when he declared religious verities, they felt inwardly that what he said answered to the dim and hitherto unrealised monitions within their own breasts. It was as when a note is struck on a great organ or blown from a trumpet, it sets athrill in a neighbouring piano or violin the same note in tremulous response. This last is the violin's own music, wrought of its own faculty. Yet it would have been silent but for the call of the larger and mightier instrument. Or it is as when some noble singer is singing glorious music, but he does not so clearly articulate that you can gather all the words. Then a friend, who knows the song well, repeats the words to you; and next time the noble singer lifts up his voice in the same great hymn, you hear every word distinctly, and marvel at the previous dulness of your ears. If a man is about to do wrong, and another *argues* with him, he may altogether fail to touch his conscience. But let the remonstrant fling out the force of his own conscience: 'You *know* it is wrong,' and the man of feebler moral fibre, whether he heed it or not, *feels* at once the quickening of his own conscience in response.

I believe, then, for my part in no other Revelation, no other Inspiration, no other spiritual Authority than that the seat of which lies in the Divine Word voiced in the common faculties of man.

Churches, Bibles, Prophets are media of Revelation, are vehicles of Inspiration, are of Authority to us all, just in the measure in which they quicken in us an answering inward sense of the verity of that which they allege. Whensoever and in whatsoever they fail to awake in us such response, they may or may not be true, but for us they are not and they cannot be media of Revelation, vehicles of Inspiration, Authoritative teachers.

Although, then, these Societies, Literatures, and Individual Teachers may be and often are helpful to us beyond all measure as quickening our own moral and spiritual sense, although without them we should be in comparative darkness and ignorance, yet they do not affect the real bases and sources of fundamental religious belief, which lie in the normal faculties which are ours as well as theirs.

And accordingly in these faculties I have asked you to put your trust. I have maintained that by our sense of Cause we know God as Power; that by our Moral Sense we are filled with awe of him as Righteousness; that through the sense of Beauty we perceive him as Love.

Now, amid all the official orthodoxies of the world which have enticed or constrained men to rest their faith on authoritative documents or teachers, there have always again and again sprung up men who have reverted to these innate faculties of their own and sought to know God through them. Some have relied wholly on intellectual methods, and these have been the world's philosophers. But others have chiefly relied on the more spiritual faculties, and from these have emerged those profoundly interesting groups of men who are known as Mystics.

The word 'mystic' is no relation whatever to the word 'misty,' though many loose talkers seem to think that that is what it means. It is in its original Greek of the same stock as 'mystery.' But, though cousins, the two terms, as used in modern English, have formed quite different connections and can hardly be said to be speaking acquaintances. The best definition of the mystic known to me is in the first chapter of Dr. Charles Beard's Hibbert Lectures. 'The mystic,' says he, 'is one who claims to be able to see God and divine things with the inner vision of the soul—a direct apprehension, as the bodily eye apprehends colour, as the bodily ear apprehends sound.' And he goes on: 'His method, so far as he has one, is simply contemplative: he does not argue, or generalize, or infer: he reflects, broods, waits for light.'

Now, if this is a true account of mysticism, then wherever there is spiritual religion, there in its measure is mysticism. When Mr. Beard says that the mystic does not argue, of course he only means that the arguing does not belong to the mysticism. But a man may be a mystic and a philosopher, too. He may claim to see God with the inner vision, so being a mystic, and then he may proceed to defend the claim by reasoning, so turning philosopher. Some mystics have done this and some have not. But wheresoever men have revolted from the claim of Church or Creed to dictate the terms of their faith, and have struck direct for conscious contact with God, have declared that they heard him immediately in the voice of conscience, saw him immediately in spiritual contemplation, felt him immediately in the rapture, the ecstasy, the solemn awe, the deep peace of the soul, there there have been mystics and mysticism. And there is never any pure and unspoiled religion, but some element of mysticism lies at its root and gives it its sweetness and beauty.

The Bible is full of mysticism. A text starts up in my mind, as I write, from each of the Testaments carrying the very essence of mysticism in it. 'Be still and know that I am God,' sings the Psalmist, and we are reminded of that form of mystic piety called 'quietism,'—an absolute stillness of the soul in which the sense of being wrapped in God steals over it. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' says Jesus. And the text serves for a condensation of half the mystical writing of the fourteenth and following centuries.

You will perceive then that, in my view, the term 'mysticism,' so far from being rightly used as a term of reproach or scorn, really represents the central and ever-abiding principle of true religion. But just because I believe and feel this so strongly, and have indeed in these chapters urged on you much that is in the true sense mystical, I hold myself bound to warn you against both the intellectual and the moral dangers into which an enthusiastic mysticism is apt to run.

The intellectual danger of mysticism is that it should pass through and beyond the *contact* of man with God and God with man into the *identification* of man with God and God with man. Passing by the mystics of the ancient East, I suppose the first danger-signal in Christian mysticism may be found in such expressions of the Fourth Gospel as that in which Christ is made to pray for the disciples 'that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be in us.' This bears, indeed, quite well the interpretation that all that is sought is complete *harmony* between man and God. But it also runs the danger of being interpreted as a seeking of actual *unity*, amounting to identity in personal essence of man and God. And so in the fourteenth century we have Eckhart, a great Master of Mystics, so describing the coalescence of man and God, that he says, 'While God makes himself man in us, he makes us divine in him.' This and the like are so beautiful, poetic expression so readily runs into similar forms, that we are apt to be lulled into unconsciousness that we are passing the line between harmony and unity. To be *at* one with God is one thing; to be one with God is another thing. Madame Guyon allures us in her exquisite hymnody into the like danger. If we take the following as poetry, it is as pure religion as the soul of man ever breathed forth. But if we take it as a literal expression of fact, we have passed the border line, and our mysticism has become the destroyer of our own sense of separate personality.

Madame Guyon writes:

> I love my God, but with no love of mine,
>   For I have none to give:
> I love thee, Lord; but all the love is thine,
>   For by thy life I live.
> I am as nothing, and rejoice to be
>   Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in thee.

Such rapturous utterance entrances the religious mind. But it is absolutely essential to the balance of truth that we keep our grasp through it all on the fundamental fact that the man's Ego, the human self, *is not* God's Ego, the Divine Self, however fully the soul feels itself penetrated and permeated by the God who encompasses and sustains it.

To put the intellectual danger of mysticism into the language of philosophy, we shall have to say that the danger is lest the distinction between subject and object should be lost. The union of man with God must be like a marriage. The more perfect the union of will and feeling between man and woman in marriage, the more perfect is the marriage. But the very essence of marriage consists in the separate personalities of the two thus joined together. It is the sense of union, not with self, but with another than self, that constitutes all the beauty and solemnity of marriage. And in like manner it is the sense of union with Another, even with God, always other than self, however self be penetrated by God, that constitutes all the truth and holiness of religion.

In the most famous and influential of all the more recent modes of philosophical thought—that which is broadly known as Hegelianism—the mystic tendency has received a great development, and the human soul—together with the outward universe—seems to be absorbed into the being of God to such a degree that man is deprived of any proper individuality at all and of any freedom of will. And some, who are by no means Hegelians, such as my friend, Professor Upton, in his most admirable and luminous Hibbert Lectures on the Bases of Religious Belief, while fighting hard for the real freedom of the human will, yet are greatly allured by the idea of a certain flowing over of God into the human soul, so that a man is *partly*, or in some aspects, a separate individuality, but partly also, or in other aspects, of the very substance of God and not an individuality distinct from him. The chief intellectual temptation that leads thinkers of a very different school from Hegel's to make this concession seems to be that they may thereby be able to account for the wonderful fact of conscious communion between God and man. But I cannot help thinking that they deceive themselves in supposing that such a conception will really help them at all. The bridge by which one consciousness passes over to another consciousness is one that the thought of man can never conceive or even begin to understand. And it does not surely in any way make it easier if we say that there is a divine, universal, or God-consciousness in me as well as an individual-consciousness. The puzzle of how one of these passes into the other is not one whit mitigated by a juggle of words which declares them both to be comprised in my own person. The fact is that there are a multitude of these 'bridges' in the physical and spiritual universes, in which we are

obliged to believe, but which we cannot even begin to explain. Such is the bridge between a prick of my finger and a sensation of pain. Such is the bridge between a volition of mine and the lifting of my fist. Such is the bridge between the contagious emotion of two kindred souls. Such is the bridge by which gravitation acts between two distant bodies. Efforts are always being made in philosophy to figure forth or explain these 'bridges,' but such efforts are always and necessarily vain. They bridge over chasms which human thought cannot bridge.

It is really no easier to conceive of gravitation acting through a 'medium' than through a vacuum; and it would seem to have been pure dogmatism on Sir Isaac Newton's part to describe such action through a vacuum as absurd. And it is really no easier to conceive of God holding communion with the human soul by supposing God to be in part a constituent of that soul, than if God and the soul are absolutely separate and distinct persons. Neither science nor philosophy has any claim to state that God *cannot* institute such communion; and experience has every claim to state that God *does* institute such communion.

And certainly the voice of experience goes strongly for saying that the inflow of strength or peace or gladness in answer to the soul's passion of prayer is *not* an inflow from another element of one's own nature supervening on the weakness or the grief of the properly individual element. On the contrary, the whole force and sacredness of this experience lie in the consciousness that the stream of hallowing grace comes, as I have said, from Another than oneself,—One with whom the soul is brought, not into indentity, but into communion, not into unity, but into union. If a man have no clear sense of this in his own spiritual experience, let him read the story of that archetypal prayer, the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane. Surely that cry of the Master was not to an element in himself, but to One above and beyond; and that influx of spiritual might was no mere shifting of the elements of his own soul, but the coming of the Father to the rescue of his Son.

But the danger run by mysticism is a moral and spiritual danger as well as an intellectual one. The strength for a noble moral life which religion gives lies in the bestowal of a Companion, a Friend, on the lonely soul of man. But God cannot be felt as a Companion, a Friend, unless the man retain a vivid consciousness of his own individuality, a vivid consciousness that he is a separate person with a personal centre of his own capable of its own volition, its own emotion, its own personal life other than that of any other person human or divine.

And indeed history supplies us with some melancholy demonstrations of the danger in question. Mr. Beard very beautifully says of the mystic: 'He prepares for divine communion by a

process of self-purification: he detaches his spirit from earthly cares and passions: he studies to be quiet that his soul may reflect the face of God.' Yes, but this very temper often holds a man off from the stirring duties of active life which no man may with impunity shun. 'The morals of mysticism,' says Mr. Beard, 'are almost always sweet and good.' Yes, but as he allows, not *quite* always. When a man has arrived at that degree of mysticism in which he thinks that all his feelings are divine, the time comes when evil feelings also are taken to be of God—to be indeed God's feelings; and terrible sensualities have sprung out of this fatal error. Mysticism has sometimes toppled over into anomianism, which is Greek for lawlessness. Men have first said, 'I am filled with God; my emotions are all of God'; and then they have proceeded to ignore all moral law save these feelings themselves; and a distorted piety, an exaggerated pietism, has silenced and destroyed that other voice of God which we know as conscience.

But once warned of the intellectual and moral dangers of mysticism, let us revert to its virtues. 'Mysticism,' says a very great living philosopher and scholar, Dr. Otto Pfleiderer, 'overleaps all those channels by which religion is at once interpreted and obscured in the dogma and the worship of the Church, in order to find its life directly in religion itself, to experience the revelation of God in the heart of the individual, and to possess salvation now and here, in the sense of most intimate union with God.' 'As the kernal of religion,' he adds, '*does certainly consist in this*, it cannot be without direct advantage for the philosophical comprehension of religion in general to sound these depths of the mystical consciousness as a guide to the innermost features of the religious life.' Those philosophers, like Mill, who will recognise no inlets of knowledge whatever in man except the avenues of the senses, naturally treat mysticism with impatient scorn. But every one of us who believes that we have faculties of direct apprehension apart from and prior to the senses, is a mystic just in the measure in which he holds that those faculties can directly apprehend that Eternal Power and Love to which we give the name of God.

If we desire an exemplar of the just extent to which mysticism may go, we have but to turn to the great Teacher who has given the world Christianity. No religious genius was ever more sensitive to the presence of God, or more vividly and joyously conscious of his touch upon the soul. None who has worn our flesh has ever lived with spirit more penetrated by the divine spirit. The communion which to most of us is the precious experience of our rarest and most sacred hours, would seem to have been to him the bright and invigorating experience of every day, the source of illumination and strength in every difficulty and every temptation, the uplifting consolation in the deepest and darkest sorrows.

Yet no language can be more pronounced or emphatic than that in which, at any rate in the Synoptic (and, as I believe, more historic) Gospels, he speaks of,—yes, and speaks to—God as other than, separate from, himself. He gave enduring currency to the one symbol which best expresses this dualism between man and God—this fellowship without merging of the distinctive personalities—when he himself called him and taught his hearers to call him 'Father.' No term could have been coined more distinctly illustrating at once the perfect closeness of converse and communion open to man with God and the absolute distinction of the personal centre of the human worshipper from the personal centre of the Divine Being. I have been accustomed to think my own thoughts about much which Jesus is alleged to have taught. But I find nothing in literature which seems to me to comprise in brief so perfect, so irrefragable a philosophy of religion as the Nazarene's term 'Our Father' as summing up what God is to man and all the relations between the Eternal Source of all things and the human soul.

A controlled and sober mysticism then, a mysticism that retains the full sense of the human personality as endowed with a centre of its own apart from the divine personality, yet by vividness of conscience feels God and by purity of heart sees God, nurtures a potency of manhood, an effectiveness of moral and spiritual character which nothing else can. It is men with a vivid sense on the one hand of their own personal being as responsible moral agents and on the other hand of God's actual touch with the soul at every point who everywhere make the renovations of humanity by their clearness of vision, their moral vitality, their sense of the smallness of conventions beside divine verities, their absolute fearlessness of men, their perfect faith in the power of man to realise his sonship to God. Such men are always condemned as heretics, generally rebuked as atheists. It is because their burning sense of the God-presence makes them indifferent to historic modes of stating it, impatient of conventions which deaden or conceal it. Of such on very different planes, but still always of such, have been, for example, Jesus, Paul, Luther, Wesley, Garrison, Mazzini, Theodore Parker. And it is a mark of such men that, while rousing the deadliest antagonism of some, they kindle in others passionate enthusiasm and regenerate the lives of these. In the proportion in which the tremendous twin truths of your own responsible personality and your power of communion with the personality of God possess you, will you rise to the like power and influence with such men as I have named.

To the above plea for the absolutely separate personality of man, let me very briefly add a vindication of the use of the term 'person' as applied to God. Human persons, it is true, are limited beings, limited in power, in consciousness, in understanding, in faculty of every kind. But the essence of personality does not lie in such limitation, but in the consciousness of selfhood, of a self-determining will and self-contained capacity of thought. Nor have I, I must confess, ever been able to understand why so many even of the most spiritual interpreters of the universe assume that 'an infinite person' is a contradiction in terms. At any rate, 'person' is the highest entity of which we have knowledge and of which we can conceive. And while I do not doubt that the Being of God comprises that which infinitely transcends the loftiest attributes of which we are able to frame an idea, I hold that we approach nearer to the absolute truth by describing God as 'person' than by refraining from such description. He surely has whatever 'person' has, even though he do not lack what 'person' lacks. 'In any case,' as I wrote several years ago in my 'Man's Knowledge of God,' 'if a religious man denies the personality of God, it is that he holds God to be *above* Person, not *below*, *more* than Person, not *less*.' And I rejoice to add to this, words with which I was not then acquainted, written by Prof. Joseph Le Conte in his truly admirable book on 'Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought.' 'In our view of the nature of God,' says this clear thinker and lucid writer, 'the choice is not between personality and something *lower* than personality, viz., an *unconscious force* operating Nature by *necessity*, as the materialists and pantheists would have us believe; but between personality as we know it ourselves and something inconceivably *higher* than personality. . . . . Self-conscious personality is the highest thing we know or can conceive. We offer him the very best and truest we have when we call him a Person; even though we know that this, our best, falls far short of the infinite reality.'

Before bringing this chapter to an end, it will perhaps be useful to refer in a few sentences to the method of reasoning which I have followed in this book. I have throughout ignored entirely certain great and momentous philosophical controversies which touch the very foundations of thought. I have, indeed, told you that some thinkers aver that the very idea of 'cause' is a self-deception of our own minds, that it is a form of thought to which we are condemned, but which corresponds to no objective reality. But I have not told you that the same is the case with the idea of space, with the idea of time, with the idea of matter. The most illustrious of all modern philosophers, Emmanuel Kant, taught that 'space' and 'time' are 'forms of thought' and forms of thought only. He meant that they are a kind of mould in our own minds into which we are obliged to pour our ideas of the universe and the objects and events therein, but that our being obliged to think in that shape is no guarantee that space and time are real. Again, there are others who teach that matter has no real substantiality in itself, but is perhaps merely a name we give to bundles of forces

which are not material at all, but purely spiritual; while others again teach that matter also is purely and solely a 'form of thought'—a mould through which we are obliged to pass our ideas of the existences around us. And yet I have throughout calmly talked of space, time, and matter as if they were as indubitably sure as the Ego which a man is himself, and God—the only two existences of which Cardinal Newman, even as a boy, felt sure.

Is it, then, that I think the contention that space, time, matter, are only forms of thought unworthy of notice? Far indeed from that. The suggestion is to me of profound philosophical interest. And again, with regard to matter, even without going so far as to reduce it to a mere form of human thought, I am pretty sure that our current conception of it (if, indeed, we have any current conception of it!) is delusive, and I am very much taken by the suggestion that what we call 'atoms' are in reality vortices of pure force; though I feel that that too would be a dangerous hypothesis to insist on as abstract truth, inasmuch as a 'vortex' implies both time and space, and it is difficult to conceive of force save as acting on *something*, and that something is pretty hard to distinguish from 'matter.' To parody the old Latin proverb, you may thrust out matter with a pitchfork, but it always turns up again. But, whether it be true or false that space, time, and matter are *only* forms of thought, or that the idea of matter is to be dissolved in the idea of force, at any rate space, time, and matter *are* forms of thought—necessary forms of human thought; and, therefore, you and I, who are human, can do no other by any mental legerdemain than think them. If they are forms of thought built into the structure of our minds we must think in those forms, and it is vain to try to escape.

Does that, then, invalidate our reasoning? Far from it. Some thinkers strive to think of the universe and reason of it outside these forms. The result is inevitable philosophic confusion and darkness. Here and there they seem to get outside of the conditions of space and time and matter in their reasonings about the universe, but at the next turn they inevitably drop back into them; and there is and can be no consistency in their language or their thought. He who thinks by cleverness to transcend his own intellectual nature necessarily meets with the like fate to the man who half-way up the ladder tries to pull the ladder after him that he may mount to a loftier height.

Whether you prefer to say that our faculties are the direct gift of God or that they are the product of evolution by survival of the fittest, we shall get nearer to truth, you may be sure, by faithfully using them than by any struggle to get outside them. Space, time, matter may be ideas corresponding to fact, or they may have in them elements of illusion. But either way they are guides for our thinking. In some higher state of being we may be able to escape from them and think a philosophy that dispenses with them. But the philosophy which we think now and here can only in the end prove translatable, transposable into that purer language of thought if we have patiently thought it out along the lines of our existing mental constitution.

In all things these minds we have now can at best think relative truth, not absolute. Only remember that relative truth *is* truth. Truth for us consists in truly apprehending, not existences in themselves, but the relations existing between existences. I judge, when I find in my mind certain unescapable forms of thought common and necessary to me and to all men, that it is within the boundaries of those forms that I can most truly apprehend these relations which for me are the sum of truth. Therefore I put in a plea for the canon of Common Sense in philosophy, the canon which bids us think along the lines of the intellectual constitution common to our race and constituting its *sense* in the realm of thought.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT THEN OF THE BIBLE?

IN this little book I have tried firmly to base the fundamental elements of religious belief on the deliverances of our own nature. I have contended that we have within ourselves, if we properly interpret and wisely trust our own faculties, incontrovertible testimony that we and the world in which we live are the offspring of God, that he is our Father, that we are his children, that he cares for us and loves us, that we may enter into actual communion with him in prayer, drawing from that communion peace, gladness, and moral strength, and that he will bring about in the end the triumph of good over evil, of righteousness over sin.

Whether I have been in any measure successful in that contention it is for others, not for me, to judge. But I desire once more to point out that, in this course of reasoning, I have followed a route quite other than that which is commonly pursued by the defenders of Christian faith. Indeed very many of those defenders of the faith would, I am afraid,

straightway condemn my little book as one of vain speculation, and myself as a vain speculator substituting the questionable imaginations of human reason for the certainties delivered once for all to men in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. This would without doubt be the attitude, for instance, of so learned, liberal, and persuasive a disputant as Mr. Gladstone, who recently followed up his splendid edition of the writings of that famous theologian, Bishop Butler, with a volume of 'Studies' subsidiary to that author's works. For Mr. Gladstone takes the volume known as the Holy Bible, together with the solemn ecumenical pronouncements of the Christian Church in the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds and elsewhere, as the very starting-point for any religious inquiry. These and these alone to him represent certainty, solid ground where one may plant one's feet firmly without fear of error; while the use of reason outside that certified territory or the adducing of considerations that are not based on a text or a creed, he regards as at best a dangerous business, and one the results of which must be rigidly tested by comparison with Bible or with Prayer Book.

The position taken up by Mr. Gladstone and by a host of less illustrious controversialists is that in the Scriptures (to pass by the later declarations of the Church) God has once for all revealed to us such measure of religious truth as it is meet for us to be acquainted with, and that any excursion into outside speculation is legitimate only if it holds itself in readiness at all points to be checked, corrected, and condemned by reference to this supreme authority.

According to such thinkers, no doctrine resting on other foundations can ever claim the same certainty or take the same rank as belongs to those which are found upon the Scripture page. These have a divine seal which is impressed on the utterance of no secular philosopher, the writings of no unauthorised theologian.

Thus, for example, Mr. Gladstone lays it down as an absolutely unquestionable fact 'that our Lord preached to certain disembodied spirits, and that these were the spirits of the men who had been disobedient in the days of Noah,' and founds a far reaching argument on that event, the ground of his certainty being that the statement occurs in the so-called First Epistle of Peter. But he rebukes very severely those—with Tennyson among the number—who from general considerations of the character of God, argue that he will at last win the souls of all his children to himself, because there is no text in the New Testament which, in so many words, gives us that assurance.

Thus then the attitude of this distinguished man and a host of lesser writers is this :—Whatever is stated in Scripture is to be accepted absolutely, because the Scriptures are a Divine Revelation; whatever is not stated in Scripture is a mere human

speculation and, if incompatible with any declaration of Scripture, is to be ruthlessly rejected, no matter what reasons may be adduced in its support. Hence the one sole ground of real religious knowledge is, we are taught, the Bible,—together, say some, with the authoritative pronouncements of the organised Church.

Now such a view is in absolute contradiction to the view which I have advocated, the view, that is, that our religious belief is to rest on our own innate faculties. On the one hand, we have the view that religious belief is to rest on and make its final appeal to reason, conscience, and the immediate flash of God upon the soul. On the other hand, we have the view that the only secure basis for religious belief is in a Divine Revelation comprised in that particular book or collection of books which we call the Bible.

There could not be a more far-reaching divergence in first principles. What then are we to say to this tremendous claim put forward for the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures,—this claim that they shall take superior rank to reason and conscience and be the paramount authority for our beliefs about God and Man and eternal life.

There seems to me to be one thing to be said, which is absolutely fatal to this extraordinary claim. That one thing is this : The claim itself can only be established, if at all, by the use of those very faculties which this Divine Revelation is to supersede.

If you cannot trust our reasoning powers to begin with, then neither can you trust them to establish this prodigious claim for the Christian Scriptures. Even if it were true that these Scriptures were an infallible revelation of the religious truth, they could only be proved to be so by the marshalling together of an immense and protracted argument entering into countless details and resting on an enormous mass of minute and varied learning. All except the picked scholars of the world, all the ordinary mass of mankind, must simply accept the alleged authority of Scripture on the word of others, whose learning and whose reasoning they have no possible means of putting to the test. But that is an act of intellectual suicide;—and seeing that God has given each one of us reason and conscience of his own, to hand these over, bound and gagged, at the command of those who can give us no guarantee of their authority, would seem to be as gross and flagrant an act of infidelity as it is possible for the mind of man to conceive.

Let us consider for a moment, by way of illustration, how many propositions of an intrinsically disputable nature Mr. Gladstone has to take for granted before he can build up that theological argument of his on the basis of the propositions that 'our Lord preached to certain disembodied spirits, and that these were the spirits of the men who had been disobedient in the days of Noah.' The text on which this is based runs thus: 'he went and preached

unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.'

Mr. Gladstone has to assume (and cheerfully does so) that (1) this Epistle is by the Apostle Peter, who (2) wrote under an inspiration which guarantees his accuracy in all matters of fact; that (3) the passage cited has always formed an integral part of this Epistle, and (4) is therefore rightfully included in Canonical Scripture. Further, he must assume that (5) the Church is right in interpreting 'prison' as 'hell' in which the spirits of the unsaved survive in a disembodied state, that (6) the story of the flood as told in Genesis is substantially correct, and that (7) of the whole population of the world eight souls only were saved from death by drowning.

All these propositions, then, must be accepted before we can go one step with Mr. Gladstone in his argument. But on most of these propositions the learned and scientific world is divided, with a steadily growing weight of opinion on the adverse side. Yet every text upon which Mr. Gladstone can build involves, if it is to be treated as of absolute authority, a similar array of assumptions the legitimacy of which only the learned can decide. In how lamentable a dilemma, then, does the unlearned man find himself if he submit to Mr. Gladstone's leading! Faith, hope, trust in God, the blessed life of religion, must wait till the learned have decided all these things, and decided them too in a sense contrary to the existing trend of opinion, and convinced the unlearned of the authority of their decision.

The great facts of religion are the Power, the Wisdom, and the Goodness of God, the reality of communion between the human spirit and the Divine, the conquering power of Good over Evil. It is given to us to know these truths from our own reason and our own experience. To remove them from this natural basis on which God has set them and stake them on the theory that a particular set of books written from seventeen to twenty-five hundred years ago, and selected some fifteen hundred years ago by a particular group of ecclesiastics to the exclusion of all the rest of human literature, contain and constitute the sole authoritative revelation of God to man, would be as insane as to attempt to root up the Great Pyramid from the platform of rock on which it has rested for seventy centuries in order to balance it on its apex on the crest of one of the slim and slender palm-trees that rear their graceful forms between the desert and the Nile. The doctrine that the Bible and the Bible only comprises the revelation of God to Man was invented to make religious faith secure; as a matter of fact, it cuts off religious faith from its true and broad foundation to rest it on a slender Eiffel tower of propositions of questionable soundness in themselves, and but loosely bolted together, which only the learned can test, and which most of the learned emphatically reject.

We have then to accept the position that reason and conscience are not to be tested by the statements of the Bible, but the statements of the Bible are to be tested by reason and conscience.

Is then the Bible, that ark of so many sacred associations, the Bible which has gathered round it the affections and the reverence of such multitudes of the best and noblest of our race, to be incontinently cast aside, as a literature whose pretensions have been exposed, a scripture having no value for enlightened religious men?

That is far indeed from being my opinion.

There was a time in the history of human thought when the writings of Aristotle were taken almost as a Bible of the intellect. It was enough to show that such and such a philosophical theory had been put forward by Aristotle. If that were so, then it was thought that the theory in question was sufficiently established. There was no more to be said about it. But with the light of the New Learning some four centuries ago, men began to feel that, great as Aristotle was, he was not infallible, that he had only used with exceptional power and ingenuity that reasoning faculty with which God had endowed the sons of men generally, and that, if one were to accept an Aristotelian doctrine, it must not be merely because Aristotle had laid it down, but because it stood the test of thoughtful reasoning and inquiry. Did men therefore fling Aristotle aside? On the contrary, he was thenceforth studied with a more mature intelligence, and by the intrinsic merits of his writings, their balanced wisdom, their admirable method, their marvellous outlook on human nature and the world, they have held their own from that day to this as classics in the realm of thought; and they are woven inextricably into all the best and wisest reasoning, enter into the structure of the daily thought of multitudes who never heard the name of Aristotle, and have helped to discipline the mind of modern Europe.

And in like manner that truly wonderful literature which we call the Bible, though we no longer approach it as the one infallible treasure-house of divine truth, yet has entered into the very structure of our faith and trust, has fed and disciplined our spiritual life, has helped to make vivid in our hearts precious trusts and hopes which have never been expressed in loftier strain or with truer touch on the deepest truths which God writes in our souls. The old Greek story of Pygmalion always seems to me most happily to illustrate the difference between the manner in which the old way of regarding the Bible affects men and that in which under this new way it touches our hearts. You remember that Pygmalion wrought in marble the figure of a nymph. Stately and beautiful was her form, but she had no life in her. Then at his prayer the statue descended from the pedestal and became flesh with all the glowing warmth and loveliness of a living woman, and a woman's heart beat within her bosom. In like manner the Bible has indeed come down from the pedestal on which it stood, but not to be dishonoured, but to be quickened with the life of our humanity, and to be the companion, the comforter, the inspirer of our daily life.

Open such a volume as Mr. Moncure Conway's Sacred Anthology or the more recent collection of passages from the Scriptures of all nations made by Mr. Coupland. Turn over its pages. You shall find a great wealth of beautiful selections from the sacred books of the Hindu, the Parsee, the Chinaman, the Arab, and many others. But it is the Hebrew and the Christian excerpts that arrest your attention and go straight to your heart. For this Hebrew people among whom this literature arose, had the very genius of religion; and there is nothing in the rest of literature quite to equal or to parallel, on their own lines, the lofty pæans of the later Isaiah, the ethical glow of Micah, the seraphic gladness of some of the Psalms, the noble pleadings of Paul, and, above all else, the Beatitudes and Parables of Jesus, the Master.

But the condition of arriving at a true appreciation of the Bible is that we let it take its place among the literature of the world, that we do not fence it off or separate it or guard it in any special way. When I have been visiting the sick and have offered to read to them from the Bible, I have sometimes asked, what passage I should select, and received the answer that it is all equally good. That is idolatry, not appreciation. The chronicles of the Kings of Israel are not 'equally good' with the twenty-third Psalm or the magnificent fortieth of Isaiah, nor the story of Ananias and Sapphira with the great speech ascribed to Paul at Athens or his own sublime account of charity or love. We must set down this great literature of Israel among the other noblest products of human genius, the writings of Homer, of Plato, of Dante, of Shakspeare, of Milton, of Tennyson. Some things in each of these are worth ten times more than some things in the Bible. But the Bible as a whole is worth more than all these put together. Remove all artificial restraints and barriers, and the power of the writers of the Old and New Testaments over the hearts and consciences of men will assert itself victoriously, whatever be their theories of inspiration and of theological authority.

And if to the due appreciation of the Bible this freedom of estimate be essential, much more is that so with the central and transcendent person in whom it culminates. Those who have most endangered the ascendency of Jesus of Nazareth over the affections and the loyalty of men are those who have most insisted on theological definitions of his nature. There is at the present moment a considerable movement in certain Evangelical circles, while acknowledging that the Bible as a whole can no longer serve as the ultimate basis of religious belief, to assign this function without qualification to the words of Jesus Christ. No writer has pleaded for this position more persuasively than Dr. John Watson—better known as 'Ian Maclaren'—in his essay on 'The Mind of the Master.' Such writers would seem to forget, indeed, that the actual words of Jesus are not preserved to us in any contemporary monuments, and that the Gospels themselves must necessarily be subjected to a like criticism with other Bible documents; so that it would be hard to draw up a catena of the utterances of Jesus with that absolute and indubitable certainty which would be necessary were they to be made the one sole basis of our religious faith. But, waiving that difficulty, let us rather insist that the authority of the beautiful sayings of Jesus rests on the fact of the response which they awaken in our own moral and spiritual nature; and that the authority of our moral and spiritual nature does not rest on the sayings of Jesus. To say this is exacted from us by loyalty to God; and it assuredly involves no disloyalty to that wondrous Son of Man. He is pre-eminently a man among men. It is as a man among men that his moral and spiritual power becomes transcendent. Set him down, this peasant son of Mary, among the millions of his fellow-men. Let him find his own place in the company of the world's heroes, prophets, martyrs, saints. Have no fear for him. Let us meet him eye to eye and clasp his hand in ours. Let us talk with him on the way, kneel with him on the mountain-side, move with him among the crowd, hear the cordial of his speech to weary men and stricken women, watch him at the last through the shadows of Gethsemane and the gloom of Calvary, and you need have no fear but what he will assert his power over our thought, our imagination, our emotion, our life.

The religious life is the life in which a man knows God as the ever-present Father, hears and obeys his living voice in conscience, and holds intimate communion with him in prayer. But though that life be open to us all, yet our realisation of the God-presence is apt to faint and fail, and in the tumult of human affairs we are apt to lose living touch with the Heavenly Father. Then is it a help beyond expression to lift up our eyes and behold the face of him, the great Teacher, or to listen to the words that fall from his gentle lips. For then we see and know the life of the human child with God in its fullest realisation. It is not because Jesus has told me so that I believe that the Eternal God is my Heavenly Father, but because God himself has told me so in the hours of rapt communion But when I lose my way in life, and through the dimness of my spiritual vision know not how it behoves a child of God to acquit himself in this turmoil of strife and struggle, then, if I look up into the face of Jesus, I see the answer to my bewilderments, and my heart goes out to the Brother who, of all whom I have ever known, helps me the most and leads me the truest way.

THE END.

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