

PSYCHOLOGICAL
STUDIES
OF
RELIGIOUS
QUESTIONS

FLOWER

Psychological Studies of Religious Questions

By

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I INSCRIBE THIS BOOK
TO
MY MOTHER

PREFACE

It is perhaps desirable for me to offer a few words of explanation concerning the choice of a title for this book. I have called it a volume of "Studies" because the aim in each chapter has been to present some particular problem or interest and to envisage it, not in isolation, but in the context of man's spiritual nature. I have called the studies "psychological" because I have endeavoured throughout to keep in touch with psychological knowledge and methods, even where I have been dealing with topics which assume the validity of experiences which psychology attempts neither to affirm nor to deny. It will not be surprising, therefore, if some of the chapters are found to be more, and some less, psychological in the strict sense of the term. But psychology throughout these studies has been with me subordinate to a wider and deeper interest—that, namely, in religion. And by "Religion"

in this book I do not mean a psychological "problem," but a way of life, arising from and expressive of a practical spiritual attitude. It is not within the domain of psychology even to consider, much less to affirm or deny, the validity of religious experience and beliefs, but only to deal with them as effects of previous experience and causes of modifications in further experience and behaviour. I have gone far beyond this, and based my studies upon the acceptance of the reality of a spiritual order which underlies and interpenetrates and is the deepest truth of the phenomenal order. In making this assumption, or starting with this acceptance, I have taken my stand not as an empirical psychologist, but as a living person with a religious experience, faith and interests. That is to say, I have written this book from the point of view of a conviction that the mind of man is only just beginning to enter upon its kingdom. I have discussed the nature of its task, and the methods of its operation, in a variety of contexts, personal, social and spiritual, *in the light of* psychological principles. But my attempt throughout has been to display mind not as a mere "mechanism" of adjustment to a material environment, or as a mere

abstract thinker, but as the organ of a spiritual life which is being progressively realized in man.

Two of the chapters, those on "Instinct, Intelligence and Religion," and "Our Selves and Destiny," also part of the chapter on "The Soul of Civilization," have appeared in the pages of *The Inquirer*. My thanks are due to the Editor of this journal for permission to reprint.

I wish to express my deep indebtedness to my wife for her constant co-operation, valuable suggestion, and helpful criticism, which have played a large part in the shaping of the book; also to express my thanks to her and to Mr. Geo. W. Sargent for undertaking the task of reading and correcting the proofs.

J. CYRIL FLOWER.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS

I

MAN'S EVOLUTION FROM THE NATURAL TO THE SPIRITUAL

A STUDY of biological evolution reveals a number of facts of outstanding interest and importance for life and religion. We learn that in all probability life, so far as this planet is concerned (for we know nothing about ultimate origins), originated in the shallow waters of the great ocean beds. It was a humble beginning, but, as the course of evolution has shown, fraught with vast possibilities. From protoplasm to man is a story of amazing and strange adventure—and a story which is gradually and ever more clearly revealing itself to the inquiring mind of the scientific seeker. It is a story of trial and error, trial of constant experiment with some conquests and many eliminations;

of struggle and failure, of triumph and survival. To understand it and appreciate it as one great whole we must needs think of life, not as the accidental quality of matter in a certain state, but as a great originitive impulse; an energy of almost infinite resources on its way to a great achievement.

At a certain stage life—in the various forms it had assumed in its marine experience—set forth on a new adventure; it invaded the land, and the era of the amphibians came about. But the adventurous and restless impulse of living beings was not satisfied—there were yet fresh worlds to conquer; the vaster deeps of the sea, the upper reaches of the air, and the subterranean regions beneath earth's crust. By adaptation and under the spur of vital needs, the species arose as we know them, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field and forest, the fishes and creatures of sea and river and lake. If we ask *how* all this took place, we have to acknowledge that we know very little. How came the living creature whose home was the waters of the ocean to look upon the shore as the promised land? We cannot suppose that it was endowed with conscious purpose. Rather it was something

that happened in experience under the restless constraint of life itself; some adventurous members of a species began to make landings on the shore, and a structure for getting oxygen from the air, as well as from water (and eventually instead of it), gradually formed itself, was perfected, and handed on to the offspring. The earth and the air were conquered by effort and trial and experience.

With the emergence of man we begin to contemplate a new and even more wonderful adventure of life; we watch life, as it were, tackling an even bigger problem than that of physical adaptations to new environments. There is a definite knocking at the doors of conscious mental life, and the unknown territories to which that is the portal. Here we see life, not clothing itself with feathers and developing wings with which to conquer the realm of air, or constructing within itself lungs by which to aerate the blood, but we see life trying to equip itself for a profounder mastery of all elements at once, and for putting itself in touch with deeper and more enduring sources of well-being. How far life, in man, has succeeded in gaining control of the material environment, and using it in the interests of

health and happiness, we become aware if we take the trouble to think about it.

But that is not all. There is another great Invasion that life in man is attempting to carry out; the invasion, namely, of the realm of Spirit. The name by which we know this adventurous attempt at fresh conquest is Religion. Perhaps man, beginning to be religious, knew as little as his remote marine ancestor what it was actually he was seeking. The first amphibian did not say: "Beyond the waters of the sea there is another realm, dry land; I will go and explore." The first amphibian was more likely a creature that just found itself in the new realm, and being there, set about adjusting itself to live there, and to explore its possibilities. So the first religious man, urged on by inner impulses which he did not understand, but could not withstand, adventured into an unknown region, the region of imagination and thought, and tried to adapt himself to it, and to explore its possibilities. Thus began the invasion of the spiritual world, an invasion which has been in progress already for ages—though a short enough period in relation to geological time—and one which is undertaken with any great seriousness and

strenuousness by relatively few. The majority of people contentedly dwell on the confines of a partially controlled physical world, where mind is, in the main, merely an instrument for the successful manipulation of material realities. Thus we get that perfectly true distinction of Paul's: "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . but he that is spiritual judgeth all things."¹

What, then, in simple truth is the spiritual world? Who can answer that question save he who has experience of it? We can only know in truth what the spiritual world is by living in it—as the water creature could only know life on earth by living there. It is—so far as it can be described—a realm of creative imagination, where love is the motive power of originative and transforming activity. To the materialistic (Paul's "natural") man, imagination is equivalent to the unreal or non-existing. For him only the things that he can push about, weigh in a balance, dissolve in an acid, eat, or drink or store in barns, are real. And this is because he himself is not quite real, not fully awake to what he is in his deeper nature, and can therefore become, any more than the

¹ 1 Corinthians ii. 14, 15.

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bit of floating protoplasm was aware of the free air, the vast forests and strange environments in which its remote descendants would live.

To enter the spiritual realm is to discover that it is not material things alone which make up the world in which we actually live, move and have our being; but that it is the alchemy of the mind, with its yet unfathomed possibilities, which gives to the material world its meaning and value.

II

INSTINCT, INTELLIGENCE AND RELIGION

“ INTELLIGENCE at the helm is worth a whole cargo of instincts ” (Prof. John Laird, *A Study in Realism*).

That is a statement well worth making at a time when the word “instinct” is being very widely used to account for human behaviour, not only by specialists, who may be supposed to have some fairly clear idea of what they mean by the term, but also by a large number of writers who quite clearly have no definite ideas on the subject at all, and who accordingly find this a word to conjure with. I do not merely refer to popular novelists, who often know very little of the value of words at all, and therefore at whose naïve abuses of this word we need hardly be surprised. I have in mind people of a somewhat more responsible kind, who really want to make a contribution to the understanding of life. They have heard the doctrines of modern psychology proclaimed

from the housetops, and have caught the oft-repeated dictum that instinct is the driving force of all life, human no less than sub-human. The discoveries, and still more the theories and interpretations based thereon, of the first-hand investigator generally filter into the minds of enthusiastic disciples and followers in a rather exaggerated and distorted form. While the discoverer is very careful to state and emphasize his facts, and to distinguish between them and the tentative interpretations he puts upon them, the over-eager disciple is commonly careless about the facts, but dogmatic about theories which he deduces from what he thinks are the facts. This is what has happened in the matter of the place of instinct. A lot of people have been vastly tickled to discover, as they think, that man is not really rational at all, but the mere creature of instinctive forces; that while he talks an immense lot about ideals and reasons, purposes and aims, philosophy and religion, really his whole life, including all these things, is determined for him by inherited tendencies from which he can never escape.

So we are getting quite a lot of "explanations" of man and his habits, his follies and virtues, and especially of his religions, in terms

of instinct. Everything turns out, in the hands of the instinct magicians, to be a form of instinct. Whether we do a thing or refrain from doing it, whether we have good ideas or bad, whether we are virtuous or vicious, it is equally neatly traced back to omnipotent instinct! We have seen the conjurer with his wonderful hat, a sort of cornucopia; out of it, before our astonished eyes, he draws almost anything we like, from pins and ribbons to rabbits and dogs. There are plenty of word conjurers in our midst who are just as clever; give them the top-hat of instinct and they will draw everything out of it that we first allow them to put into it while we are not looking.

The trouble in this matter—it may seem a curious thing to say—is that there is so much about it that is true. Instinct does play a big part in human life and behaviour; it is the prime motive force. It lies behind the genius and achievement of Shakespeare no less than it lies behind the madness and destructiveness of an infuriated mob; it was as surely an operative factor in the character and teaching of Jesus as it is in the character and conduct of the slave of passion and appetite. But these very contrasts should be sufficiently striking to

call our attention to the trick that the word conjurer is trying to pass off on us. If the motive force of instinct actually leads to such extraordinarily different results, there must be some other factor involved in addition to instinct. Let me illustrate what I am getting at in a very simple way. Electricity, unregulated in its operation by man, is extremely dangerous and generally destructive. When conducted along paths so that the discharge of energy can be controlled, electricity drives our vehicles, lights our streets and houses, warms our bodies, cooks our food, almost annihilates space for purposes of communication, and does a number of other extraordinary things. We could not, if we would, eliminate or escape from the force of electricity; but by learning something about it, we are able to build the fabric of a much finer life upon it. And the whole secret of this success is rational control.

So it is in life. There is no force without direction, and if we can learn how to determine direction, we are master of the situation. Granted that our life is rooted in instinct, and that instinct energy is the same thing as motive power, it does not follow that we can explain, especially in the sense of "explain away,"

which is what is often meant, all human achievement, all art, all religion, all heroic thinking and doing that lights up the dark places of earth with an unfadeable glory. When we behold these triumphs of the human mind and spirit, what we say, ~~if we are anything more than a mere conjurer with a top-hat,~~ is that here is the controlling hand of that in man which links him with the divine; the work of reason which has laid new channels along which the impulsive energy of instinct shall travel, so as to achieve, not destroy—make harmony, not discord—extend the scope and enhance the worth and dignity of life, not cramp it up and imprison it within the narrow limits of appetite and desire.

~~In particular~~ There are people who would reduce religion to an inferior status by deriving it from instinct. Of course there are instinctive roots to religion as there are to every aspect of human life. But the root is not the plant, nor the fruit. A religion which is a mere chaos of instinctive impulses may be called "religion" for purposes of classification to suit the requirements of anthropologists, but it is not religion in the sense which the developing spirit of man recognizes. The same primitive impulses

are doubtless involved in the practices of magic and fetishism as in the worship of one God and Father of all, and the obvious differences in their worth and value are not due to anything intrinsic in the instinctive tendencies. They are due to intelligent control and direction, or, to use a term of current psychology, sublimation. Religion is not mere reason (if "mere reason" exists), but neither is it mere instinct. If the cold-blooded rationalist is not religious, neither is the hot-blooded and impulsive emotionalist. The religious person is he whose warm emotions, native impulses and full-blooded passions are discharging themselves in directions and along channels which lead to life more abundant and rich, and these channels are designed and laid by reason, if at all; they do not come by chance. To be reasonable is therefore as primary a duty in religion as to be passionate, emotional, impulsive. It is not enough to "feel good"—to enjoy the aesthetic and emotional satisfactions and thrills which some forms of religion set themselves out to secure. We must have intelligence at the helm if our cargo of instincts is to be delivered at the harbour of a worthy consummation. The instinctive elements in religion can find

satisfaction, as indeed they often have done, in the mere gush of emotionalism which wastes the energy by discharging it at random. Intelligent religion, on the other hand, demands that the discharge of emotional energy shall serve some valuable purpose. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Thus it is of first-rate importance that we should have intelligent beliefs. It is popular amongst a certain school to say that it "does not matter what a man believes." This is only true if we mean by religion the ability to get into emotional states. ~~Any belief that stimulates an instinctive tendency will, it is true, do for this.~~ But for those to whom religion means something that does not make them "feel good" but be and do good, it is essential to have beliefs which represent the nearest approach to truth we can make, which are, so to speak, outstretched hands grasping the reality of God and bringing to our life and its opportunities the wider vision of a divine purpose to be fulfilled. Types of belief in God exemplify what I mean. There is belief in God which consists merely in acceptance of a tradition or authoritatively promulgated doctrine. This belief is often very comforting,

and gives a satisfactory undercurrent of emotion to life. As against this there is belief which because it is intelligent is not dogmatic, which has won its form through travail, doubt and effort; it has probably shed many of the absolute attributes of approved dogma and is consequently labelled infidelity by the custodians of the "Faith once and for all delivered," but it operates as a real factor; it is not part of the mind's lumber, but an active member of the mental commonwealth, encouraging thought and action, and directing instinctive and emotional energy into the channels of social service. It matters very much what we believe.

It is a curious thing that there are some people who seek to discover the proof of the validity of religion in referring it back to instinct. They talk about "the religious instinct" very much as a past generation spoke about the Bible. Man cannot help being religious, they say, without doing violence to his nature; according to them we know God by instinct, we know right and wrong by instinct, we are instinctively disposed towards everything, in fact, which they regard as religious. This over-emphasis of a partial truth is as wide of the mark as the other. It is not

instinct that makes us religious; it is we who give religious significance and value to instinct. And this requires clear, honest and strenuous thinking. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy *mind*, and with all thy strength." If we would be religious it is not enough to stand by while the waves of emotional energy break upon the shore of our souls; we must learn to launch the frail barque of intelligent purpose on that stormy ocean, and by skill and insight make its boisterous energies convey us to the far and unknown shores of spiritual growth and discovery. We must keep all our ideas, ideals and beliefs in constant repair, that they may ride the storm and master the wild elements.

III

OUR SELVES AND DESTINY

It is one of the recurring problems of life to effect any sort of harmony between our belief in personal freedom and the value of effort and initiative, on the one hand, and our belief in any kind of divine government of the world on the other. With the growing complexity of modern life, and the widespread acceptance of the idea of mechanical causation, it has become almost impossible for many people to retain the simple faith that there is such a thing as freedom of choice. I have no desire to enter into the discussion as an intellectual controversy, but I want to approach some of the outstanding practical implications of the problem. The terms of the ancient controversy between "free-will" and "determinism" are no longer really relevant, for on the one hand there is nothing clearer than the fact that there is no such thing as an isolated person who can make choices which are determined by nothing, and on the other hand there

is something more in animal, and especially human, life and behaviour, than a mere mechanical response to the push and pull of circumstance.

In the first Act of *All's Well that Ends Well* Helena sums up the essentials of the matter in the following words :—

“ Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to heaven : the fated sky
Gives us free scope ; only doth backward pull
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.”

Act I. sc. i.

This soliloquy expresses her determination not to remain behind in idle acquiescence while Bertram goes away to the Court of France. She loves him, and does not intend that love shall go by default. Now obviously she has a motive for going to France, and in that sense is “determined”—conduct without a motive is impossible even in mental derangement; but equally she takes the point of view that she herself must take the leading part in the determination of her destiny. It is not an external power, whether called Fate, Destiny, Providence or God, which controls. It is the tendencies of mind, heart and will which “in herself do lie” which are the ultimate determinants.

Now this is freedom in its only intelligible sense—to be able to follow the path marked out by inner forces of character, and not to be prevented by outward circumstances. The trouble with many of us is that we often confuse what are really external circumstances with those inner springs of personality which constitute our character, and actually allow circumstances to choke character. Here it is that Helena's philosophy is so profoundly true. However untoward may be the circumstances of our lot, and though we may have to submit outwardly for a while to their hedging us in, the root of the matter, if we are courageous and true to ourselves, is that "Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie." No circumstance can enslave the spirit that refuses to identify circumstance with personality. What we can *do* may be, indeed inevitably is, strictly limited by circumstances; but what we *are*, the worth and independence of our personality, can only ultimately be limited and impaired when, as Helena says, "we ourselves are dull."

But what are these forces which "in ourselves do lie"? Or, what amounts to the same thing, what are "selves"? "Mere products," some will say, "of heredity and environment.

What any one of us is, is determined *for* us and not *by* us. We no more choose our character than we choose our parents." Frankly, I do not understand this doctrine. I do not know what it means, and I have a suspicion that those who proclaim the doctrine are in the same case. If we knew what "heredity" really is, and really involves, it might be true that our character, our personality, is what heredity has made it; but in that case we are ourselves our heredity. There are not two things—a dreadful external thing called "heredity," on the one hand, and a caged-in captive suffering under its tyranny called "self," on the other hand. Heredity can be no fixed and final something which acts favourably or otherwise upon another thing called self or personality: the heredity which we *are* is a progressive and adaptive principle—in a word it is what we mean by personality.

This idea has been worked out with remarkable suggestiveness and imaginative insight by Maurice Maeterlinck in his play, *The Betrothal*. Tyltyl is taken by the Fairy, and Light, and Destiny on a journey first to "the ancestors," and then to "posterity," in order that he may make the right choice of a wife. But the

ancestors and posterity are not outside, but within, Tytyl himself. They live in him, he lives in them. He, indeed, is an individual, a person distinct from all others with whom he is thus linked; but as a person he is a new adventure and expression of the larger unit of the whole family strain. His choice is determined, not by external forces, but by the indwelling vital influences derived from all that has been and all that will be. He is a link in a great chain of personal existents, and is a person with a character just because he is not an isolated unit completely disconnected with everyone else. Personality links back to remote antiquity, and there mingle in the character of each of us strains that are derived from primitive man—and beyond that to animal life as a whole. To be an individual fusion of countless tendencies and strains, ultimately derived from the whole universe itself, that is what it is to be a "self" at all. The peculiar mixing of all these strains into the new individual with its own special aptitudes is the raw material of character. There is no question as to what "it" does to "us," for we are it and it is we. Our life business is to grow—to unfold the best possibilities that are our inheritance.

It will be remembered that Destiny was one of those who took part in Tytyl's journey. And here Maeterlinck's genius flashes with special brilliance. At his first appearance Destiny is enormous, and of overwhelming aspect. He makes much of his inexorableness and irrevocability. But as the adventure proceeds, he dwindles. The things that he commands are always things that have already been conditioned by the inner forces of character. He is obviously a mere encumbrance on the journey; and in fact he gradually dwindles in size, till at the end he is a mere baby and has to be carried. The fact is that destiny itself is as big and powerful as we make it, for it, too, belongs within. There is no inexorable external Destiny. We may allow circumstances to play the part, but if in the end we are crushed, it is our own dullness of spirit that has brought on the calamity.

The bearing of all this on life and religion is of paramount importance. Life is a great spiritual adventure, and the ultimate determining conditions of that adventure are *within*, in our own souls. We cannot, indeed, stand outside ourselves and make ourselves radically

different from what we are by mental and spiritual constitution. We do not by choosing become a Shakespeare or a Dante, for that is not our particular genius. There are definite limits to the possibility of any personal development, and all wise people recognize the fact; but the limits are not externally imposed, but arise from within, and are the negative aspect of the genius which is within our power to express and perfect. Everyone has it in him to make his own unique contribution to the harmony of all souls, and nothing outward will ever prevent his doing so, unless with the consent of a soul turned traitor to itself. We all know that some of the finest persons we have met have been those who have overcome by the force of an inward spiritual life the prison-bonds of circumstances; even when these have prevented their doing all they set their hearts on, they have been unable to prevent their being courageous and triumphant souls, shedding around them grace and beauty and love, and making the world richer and better for their presence.

And the greatest fact of all is that God Himself is within us; and until we know Him and find Him there He will remain to us but a

name, a theory, a bone of contention. This strange self or personality of ours is a soul at all only because it has been loved into life by the love of God, and quickened to spiritual vision and aspiration by the breath of God. To discover that God is not in the fierce winds, the earthquake, the fire—is, in fact, not an external circumstance at all—but is the “still small voice,” or “the sound of gentle stillness,” the utterance of that in which the soul lives—is to change the religion of forms and conventional professions for the vital, all-environing, all-transforming religion of experience. This is the very heart of Christianity, its eternal truth, as distinct from its changing forms. God is our Father, the parent of our souls, the great reality in which we live and move and have our being; and when we have come to ourselves from our wanderings we find that it is our Father’s home, and henceforth “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God.”

IV

THE ESSENCE OF PRAGMATISM

It is impossible to appreciate the importance, or sympathize with the inner significance, of the Pragmatic philosophy, without remembering that it is really a movement of revolt. It was the first-fruits of the emphasis that the more recent psychology has placed upon the emotional and instinctive side of mind as against the purely intellectual. In a time of transition when old formulations had lost their convincingness, it was a great and urgent call to action. The very essence of it may be thus stated: Man is an actor, a doer, before he is a thinker, and indeed his thinking has come into existence as a help to more efficient doing. Man, however, has exalted his thinking, and come to regard it as in itself the key that will unlock the mysteries of earth and heaven. But nothing has become clearer to us than the fact that thinking is not a sort of supernatural endowment from on high, or a special window

into the secret of existence, but is a capacity arising in the course of experience, conditioned by all the limitations of finitude, and able only to deal with the ordinary matters of common experience. The test of everything is practical. It is primarily by and in living that we learn, and every sort of living must ultimately justify itself at the bar of *value*, which is much more than a purely intellectual judgment. Truth itself, according to the pragmatic view, is a value judgment. That is true which makes for richer and fuller life.

It is necessary, perhaps, to point out that this doctrine, like most other living doctrines, is capable of misuse. It has been interpreted as a sort of systematic expediency notion, and has been used to bolster up any sort of belief or superstition. In a crude sense it "pays" to swim with the tide, rather than struggle against it; to accept the opinions of the majority, to conform to the prevailing conventions in morals and religion. The line of least resistance, and often of maximum comfort, would be to will to believe what we are told on authority, and spare ourselves the trouble and pain of trying to find out what we ought to believe. But this is a vulgar misconception

of the message of pragmatism, which is a plea for *values*, not expediencies. The pragmatic test of a belief is not whether it saves us from the trouble of thinking for ourselves, or whether it conduces to self-satisfied contentment, but to what extent it directs our thinking into vitally effective channels, widens our horizon, deepens our sympathies, and makes us live, not more comfortably, but more heroically.

In this, the true sense of pragmatism, there is no more consistent pragmatist than Jesus. There are these two strands running all through his teaching: It is no good having an intellectual conviction that God exists unless you have a faith in God which makes a difference to what you are and do; and,—It matters relatively little whether you are able to form an exact intellectual concept if your behaviour is actually determined by a grasp of real values. The first point is illustrated in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The priest and the Levite presumably had quite good *ideas* of God, but the ideas did not seem to make much difference to their treatment of the man fallen on the road. The second point is quite explicit in the Parable of the Man with Two Sons. The one who refused, but actually went, had the

goods. It was the doing that counted, not the ideas. And again this teaching of the pragmatic principle finds expression in the doctrine, "By their fruits ye shall know them." A tree may be a fig tree, but if all it produces in the fig season is a harvest of leaves, there is something the matter with it—it is not a good tree. So a man may be classified as a son of Abraham—or, in modern terms, a Christian—but if he does not produce the fruits of the religious spirit, no amount of pious protestation will make good the defect.

Is there, then, no objective reality in religion? Is it simply a sort of adventurous and heroic affirmation that whether or no there is a God we will live as if there were one? There are many passages in pragmatic writings, particularly those of James himself,¹ which seem to suggest this view. But it is probably nothing more than a temporary phase—a symptom of the revolt against older dogmas. Intellectualism has failed to demonstrate the existence of God by the methods approved in the exact sciences. Pragmatism, with its intense regard for the moral life and moral values,

¹ See especially Essay, "Is Life worth living?" in *The Will to Believe*, closing passage.

has proclaimed the invaluable truth that the intellect is not the sole arbiter of truth, but that experience depends as much upon emotional and volitional reactions as upon purely intellectual ones. In its essence, therefore, pragmatism is a method which aims at testing truth by the whole of life, and not by an isolated part. If some pragmatists go on to postulate a finite God, or the doctrine that God is purely subjective, they are falling back into the errors of intellectualism. The finite God, whether of James, Dr. Schiller or Mr. H. G. Wells, is merely an idol of thought, quite as much as is the absolute and infinite God of other philosophy and orthodox theology; and the dogma of a subjective God no less. The objective reality of God is a fact which bursts in upon us not by way of definitions, whether of the finite or the infinite character, but in experience. The fact of God, whether we call it God or not, is the one unescapable, all-environing reality. With our intellect we grasp, not Him, but some fragments of His handiwork, with our hearts we feel something of the mighty power of the winds of His spirit; with our wills we struggle to obey such indications of the Divine purpose as are written on

the tablets of the soul. Those who thus lend themselves as a whole to the moulding hand of the fullness of Reality cannot fail to know His real existence, and those who thus perhaps know Him best are least prepared to turn Him into a formula, for "sight cannot bear Thy light, praise cannot express Thy perfection. Thy light melts the understanding, and Thy glory baffles wisdom; to think of Thee bewilders reason; Thy essence confounds thought. Science is like blinding desert sand on the road to Thy perfection. The town of literature is a mere hamlet compared with the world of Thy knowledge. Man's so-called foresight and guiding reason wander about bewildered in the streets of the city of Thy glory. Human thought and knowledge combined can only spell the first letter of Thy love." ¹ Ultimately we can only "will to believe" in God because God is there, and at the deepest levels of personality has made Himself known. "Belief in the Supreme One cannot be produced or destroyed by argument; the Self must be inwardly realized." ²

¹ From Persian Scripture. *Sacred Scriptures of World-Religion*, compiled by Martin Kellogg Schermerhorn (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), p. 8.

² From Brahmanic Scripture. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

V

MIND, SOUL AND SPIRIT

THE terms "mind," "soul" and "spirit" in combination have a somewhat metaphysical flavour, and seem to invite an attempt to skate upon the ice of philosophical speculation. I shall endeavour to withstand this temptation, in conformity with the whole purpose of the present book, which is to try to deal in an intelligible way with practical issues. My concern with these terms, therefore, is similar to the concern of a traveller with sign-posts, or a user of the library with the catalogue. They indicate, that is to say, certain facts of interest and importance about human nature and life. They point in certain directions. They remind us of certain important facts of experience, which in the hurry of living we are liable to forget.

A collection of the names that have been allotted to man from various points of view, and to call attention to special aspects of his

behaviour and character, would total up to a very big list. These three have been selected, more or less arbitrarily, from that list as a sample. What are they for? Do they indicate that man, sometimes called an individual, is in fact anything but individual, but really an elaborate compound of elements of various kinds? Has the Cosmic Experimenter, in His vast invisible laboratory, put together so much "matter," so much "mind," so much "soul," so much "spirit"—and the rest—and thereby achieved the temporary appearance of unity which we know as man? This, without the doctrine of a Cosmic Experimenter, was substantially the doctrine of early Buddhist psychology. The individual human being, in this view, is a fleeting compound of perishable aggregates (*Skandhas*, or bundles), physical and mental. While these aggregates remain in combination, so long is there an individual; when they are dispersed, so also is the individual.¹ Here we are on the boundless ocean of speculation. Let us, therefore, be content to accept as a fact the supposition that these

¹ See Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Psychology*, p. 27; also Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 98-99, and *Early Buddhism*, pp. 50-59.

names refer not to essences or substances, but to aspects and functions; not elements which can be mixed together in order to make personality, but distinguishable ways in which personality seems to manifest itself. Let us be content to say that, whatever man may be in terms of an ultimate or all-embracing philosophy, what we mean by man is something which is characterized by the properties of matter, mind, soul and spirit. The existence of these names fulfils the very important practical function of reminding us that if any of the attributes named are lacking, what we mean by humanity is absent. A discarnate spirit would not be what we mean by man; neither is a mindless, soulless, spiritless body a man.

The business of life is to be as fully and perfectly human as we can; to develop to the utmost all the essential qualities that make up true manhood and womanhood. Health of body and health of mind are universally recognized as desirable and good. The difficulties begin when we pass on to the question as to what is involved in man as soul and as spirit. Apart from all speculations concerning soul as "substance" and the rest, what in point of

fact do we mean by man as soul? We may learn much, if we will, from common speech and usage. We talk of a person of big or great soul whose conduct and thought are characterized by the qualities of unselfishness, sympathy and love—qualities which are independent of the vigour or frailty of the body, and of the extent of the knowledge attained by the mind. We speak of a soulless person as one who is callous and selfish. We speak of the soul of a nation or people when it is actuated by loyalty to a fine and high ideal; we say that a nation has lost its soul if it surrenders to panic, lust, cruelty. From the inward point of view we know the soul as that something within us which urges us to try to do and be the heroic, and which is ever in conflict with that something else in us which bids us seek only the pleasant. Thus from the purely practical point of view, with which we are here and now engaged, the soul is other than the mind. In the economy of human nature it stands as the rival of the body in seeking to enlist the services of the mind. A vigorous and well-developed mind does not make a good man, for the mind may be the instrument for attaining only the bodily desires

and comforts, and may succeed in frustrating the activity of the soul.

What, then—to complete this descriptive account—is Spirit? Here surely we are in the presence of something which is not a function of human nature, but rather something of which true human nature, as realized in the soul, is itself a function. Spirit, in a word, is God; God is Spirit; and the spiritual is reality in and for God, a reality which transcends all the relative distinctions we make. It is thus the ideal towards which we stretch out our hands, the Vision of perfect Beauty, Goodness, and Truth which dawns upon and enraptures the awakened soul of man. As Plato has said,¹ “What if a man’s eyes were awake to the sight of the true Beauty, the divine Beauty, pure, clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality, and the many colours and varieties of human life? What if he should hold converse with the true Beauty, simple and divine? O think you, she said, that it would be an ignoble life for a man to be ever looking thither and with his proper faculty contemplating the absolute Beauty, and

¹ Symposium: Diotima’s speech. Quoted in *The Spirit of Man*, p. 37.

to be living in its presence? Are you not rather convinced that he who thus sees Beauty as only it can be seen, will be specially fortunate? and that, since he is in contact not with images, but with realities, he will give birth not to images, but to very Truth itself? And being thus the parent and nurse of true virtue it will be his lot to become a friend of God, and, so far as any man can be, immortal and absolute?" This gives us further insight into what we mean by the soul. The soul is man awakening from the dream of the natural and the material to the vision of the true reality, which is the spiritual. When spirit breathes into our dust the breath of life, we become living souls. We can no longer be careless and contented children of nature, satisfied to eat, drink and be merry. Or—to put it in another way—the nature of which we *are* the children reveals itself to us when we have felt the touch of the breath of the spirit as being something greater and more mysterious; it is transfigured in the glow of the new light which the soul sheds, the soul itself being a candle whose flame is kindled from the eternal source of all light, the ever-living spirit. Nature becomes for us an aspect of the vaster whole,

a partial glimpse of the deeper vision of Spiritual Reality.

Our business, it has been said, is to become as fully and perfectly human as possible; and to be fully human means to be souls as well as minds. Mind dominated by the body can be at home in the material world, and the product of such a union is the "self" of selfishness—known only too well to most of us.

"I came out alone on my way to my tryst. But who is this that follows me in the silent dark?"

"I move aside to avoid his presence, but I escape him not.

"He makes the dust rise from the earth with his swagger; he adds his loud voice to every word that I utter.

"He is my own little self, my lord, he knows no shame; but I am ashamed to come to thy door in his company."¹

Mind pervaded by soul re-discovers the material world and re-interprets it in the light of the spirit, which is the source of the soul. The spiritual is not a second order, superimposed upon the lower order of matter. It is the deeper reality, of which the material world

¹ Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* (Macmillan), pp. 28-4.

is a partial expression. How, we may finally ask, are the functions of the soul cultivated? In one sense, they are not to be cultivated at all. The attempt, self-consciously, to "cultivate" the soul for its own sake is both a moral blunder and an intellectual miscalculation. We grow physically and mentally, not by pondering about health and learning, but by exercising our physical and mental capacities on the objective tasks that life affords. It is not otherwise with the culture of the soul. Concentration upon the welfare of the soul, absorption in the states of the soul, and all the subjectivism of pre-occupation with sin which has characterized certain types of people is a spiritual disease; a kind of neurosis of the soul. The life and growth of the soul depend upon the activities into which we are led by the vision of love and beauty. That vision is just as objective as are the perceptions of our senses; indeed much more so, for it is a deeper perception into the real, which gives significance to our perceptions of what we call the material world. The vision comes not that we may amuse ourselves by contemplating it, and gossiping about it; but that we may adjust our lives to it, may discipline our bodies and

minds to its service. A man cannot gain a soul by seeking for it because he regards it as a possibly useful property; but only by forgetting about himself in the glory of the vision of the spiritual city, for whose sake he only asks to labour.

VI

WASTE PRODUCTS OF THE SOUL

TIME was when the soul was considered to be one among other possessions or faculties of man. It was a shadowy double of his body, or a bird-like entity which was hidden in life and released at death. Essentially it was something which a man might be said to *have*. Nor has this conception by any means entirely disappeared to-day. It is not difficult to find it expressed both in authorized creeds and (what is by no means always the same thing) in commonly held opinions. Nevertheless it is characteristic of the higher forms of religion nowadays to reverse the old estimate, and to look upon the soul as being the essence of the man, and rather as possessing (or at least claiming to possess) his body, than as being one item among others in his bodily equipment. As Mrs. Annie Besant once said: "Man is a soul and has a body."

What man is as embodied soul, and the way

he makes use of his bodily equipment, and how he ought to use it to the best purposes—these are some of the perennial questions of religion, and roughly speaking most of the familiar dogmas of theology were originally attempts to answer these questions. The really great religious teachers have not been concerned so much with the soul as the post-mortem recipient of rewards and punishments, as with the soul from the point of view of the moving principle of life and conduct—that which becomes manifest to a certain extent in us as character. It is very much the same thought which is embodied in Proverbs xxiii. 7, “as he thinketh in his heart, so is he,” as that which lends the characteristic colour to the teaching of Jesus: “For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed,” and “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.”¹ In a word, what we do and are is the expression of the soul. A healthy soul means

¹ Luke vi. 45.

a good life; a diseased or sick soul means a frustrated or evil life.

Admittedly this conception raises a number of curious problems, especially for those who are accustomed to regard the soul as a divinely pure inner something which would be perfect and beautiful if it were not for the opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil. These speculative questions are the delight of theology, but are not of first-rate importance for religious experience. It is largely a matter of terms. The total personality of man is by no means simple, and rather presents the picture of a conflict of many forces, among which it is quite arbitrary to select one and call it alone the soul, than that of a single good force which is opposed not from within, but from without. If the soul *is* the man, it is folly to hold a doctrine concerning the soul which flatly contradicts what man actually is.

Plato was essentially right when he drew his comparison between the soul and society in the *Republic*. The soul as known in experience is a society rather than a single individual entity. And the problem of the soul is the problem of order, of balance and harmony; of

adequate and co-ordinated activity and expression in all its parts. We might fruitfully liken it to a big factory, where, in a vast number of departments, all kinds of work is going on. The machinery, and the human directors of the machinery, are ignorant of what goes on in other departments. Even the manager, sitting in his office, has the vaguest and most shadowy awareness of all that is involved in the work of production. No analogy is good for all points, but we may liken the conscious mind of any person to the manager of the factory. Our conscious knowledge, purposes and ideals are the regulators of the factory, but they in turn are enormously influenced by the capacity, the efficiency and the willingness of the unseen workers. Perhaps an even more apt analogy is to be found in comparing the soul with the body. The body is an organism built up by a vast society of living cells, combined in various ways but in a perfect order, so that all in doing their own work contribute to the effective life of the organism as a whole. So we may say the soul consists of many parts, or energies, and it is in the right control and direction of these energies that spiritual health consists.

It is a commonplace of every-day knowledge now that the mental energy of which we are aware in consciousness is only a small part of the mental energy which, in some sense, every one of us is. We must all have had experience of the fact that in the unseen workshop of the soul there are activities of production going on which seem to be quite independent of reason. It is not only the seer or the artist who gets those sudden illuminations which seem to be revelations from another world; in our measure and degree we have all experienced

“ . . . that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breadth of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul . . . ”

described by Wordsworth in the “Lines composed above Tintern Abbey.” We all dream dreams, and see visions which have not been fashioned for us by the conscious exercise of reason, but which are invasions of our normal waking moments from deeper levels of imaginative thought. We have our periods of reverie when the stream of our ideas is not directed by the reason, but flows in channels laid down

by the silent workings of the hidden self. And at night there are few, if any, who do not find that the mental life is for the time being taken over altogether by a different stratum of personality from that which presides over life's practical duties. It was at one time part of religious belief that the dream was a communication from God, and that it was a revelation from Him which could be interpreted by those who understood. To-day, of course, the dream, after falling into neglect for many years, has come to occupy a first-rate importance for mental analysis and therapy, and its study has largely helped to revivify the whole study of psychology. Into the details of that study it is not proposed to enter here; dreaming is mentioned as a striking instance of our experience of the productive activity of departments of the soul life which are not ordinarily within our ken.

A great deal of the productive activity of the soul in this larger sense is wasted. Its energy is dissipated or suppressed. We commonly do not want to be bothered with the unfamiliar, nor do we care to be led into paths which are off the beaten track whereon the

crowd of our associates are wont to walk. The uprisings from the deeps of our soul are therefore disregarded—they would, if we confessed to them, and if we allowed them to influence our conduct, often make us seem queer. Most of us are willing to pay heed to the often absurd suggestions of our particular social group with much more readiness than we are to the visions and intuitions which arise from the soul within the self. We allow ourselves to be cut to the artificial patterns that are fashionable in the way of current opinion and convention. We prefer to be correct echoes of the commonplace rather than living souls. That is one way in which the products of the soul run to waste—its finer enthusiasms, its generous emotions, its penetrating intuitions, which require of us faith, not critical cleverness, are stifled and thwarted.

But the products of the soul, as the "man," are not all of this order. The soul may be the factory of evil as well as good: it is, in the words of Jesus, both a good treasure and an evil one. The products of a disordered, inharmonious soul are waste products in a directly pernicious sense. This fact has troubled man

all through the ages in his pilgrimage—and it has troubled the theologians in particular, because they were committed to the theory that the soul is itself necessarily good; thus Satan in some form or other had to be invented in order to account for the possibility of evil. But in fact the trouble is a much more intimate and personal one, and it cannot be stated, much less solved, on the supposition of a supernatural drama in which Satan first gained the right to defile man, and then was in some fashion persuaded to forgo his spoils. The fact is that man's soul is a sort of energy, and, like all energy, it is in itself neither good nor evil until it gets to work. The old doctrine of original sin contains an element of truth, though it is most easily expressed as a repulsive falsehood. The fact is that we are all naturally disposed neither to evil nor to good, but to activity, and the nature of our activity makes good and evil. The art of religion is precisely the discovery and proclamation of those kinds of activity which are constructive, and open the way for ever fuller activity and expansion of capacity. Hence the significance of big and fine ideals which can enlist all the

energies of the soul and keep them fully occupied; hence also the danger of a dead and formal religion which does not capture the enthusiasm or link itself to the adventurous heroism of manhood and womanhood.

VII

FAITH AND SUGGESTION

SPEAKING broadly, suggestion is the means by which we unwittingly influence other people mentally, and are ourselves unwittingly influenced by our mental environment. We are constantly receiving impressions of which we are not aware, and many of these impressions are of a nature to stir up tendencies to activity within us. Thus to be constantly with a person who has some peculiar mannerism is more than likely to lead, without any intention or even awareness, to a reproduction on our part of the mannerism, more especially if we have a strongly marked attitude (whether like or dislike) to the person in question. We may argue with some person on a given topic and consciously reject all his points and arguments. Later on, without being aware of the change, we may be found discussing the same question with another person, and make use of the arguments and maintain the position which had

previously been consciously rejected. The operation of suggestion is practically universal, and those who think they are altogether above its power are generally conspicuously suggestible. It is probably, as Rivers¹ and Trotter² have argued, an aspect of the gregarious instinct, or group of instincts. Somewhat cynically, but with a great insight into the truth, Trotter has pointed out that the majority of people have very strong opinions on just those subjects which they know least about, and that they get more excited about such purely irrational "convictions" than they do about any scientifically supported judgment. This is due to the fact that the need of the herd as such is for agreement, common action and attitude, and gregarious instinct has rendered the individual peculiarly sensitive to the "voice of the herd," so that its findings tend to have undisputed sway over belief. Thus suggestion is a psychological adjustment with a definite biological function—group preservation. Thus, roughly speaking, wherever we find (whether in ourselves or others) opinions held as sacrosanct, as

¹ W. H. R. Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1922).

² W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (T. Fisher Unwin).

altogether beyond discussion, so that any question raised about them is a kind of "wickedness," we may be fairly sure that we are dealing with opinions conveyed by and rooted in suggestion, and not by and in reason. People with reasonable convictions are always open to discussion, tolerant of differences of opinion, and more concerned about sincerity and honesty in thinking than about exact agreement in regard to what is thought.

Suggestion may thus be envisaged as the rough-and-ready way by which nature has arranged that members of a social group shall have similar and consonant ideas in general, and this is obviously a most useful and necessary thing if social life is to be possible at all. But it is a false conclusion that we may therefore surrender ourselves to the guidance and control of this psychic mechanism, without any attempt to improve upon it. The function of personality is not to revert to the primitive determinations of the native psychic equipment, but to learn to control and utilize the psychological mechanisms in the interests of progress and freedom. For instance, the formation of habits is a clever device for enabling us to perform

certain necessary routine actions without thinking about them, but the device destroys its value if it comes to monopolize the whole field of conduct, and fails to encourage the released intelligence to break new ground. In a similar manner, suggestion is a clever device for easily and speedily providing us with a general stock of ideas likely to be useful and helpful, but the whole device is stultified if we allow it to become a substitute for our own mental and spiritual activity. There are two main things we have to learn to do: (1) to direct our general suggestibility into channels in which it is likely to be most effective and helpful, and (2) to overhaul all our ideas periodically to make sure that those which may have been admitted by suggestion do not become mere hoary prejudices or verbal pretences.

This leads directly to Faith—and we shall be able to see at this point how it differs from suggestion, while yet it has a definite relationship. We are not here and now concerned with the attempt to give any full account of faith, but only to emphasize its relationship to suggestion. From this point of view we might almost define faith as the conscious direction of

our suggestibility into channels through which we expect to derive the highest values. Faith is essentially a conscious process, and an active one, in which the personality asserts itself and makes a choice. To have faith in God means (among other things) to adopt an active and thoughtful attitude towards all the attributes of Love, Beauty, Goodness and Truth which will tend to increase our susceptibility to their influence—or, in plain words, make us suggestible to these things. To exercise faith as a fact—not merely to profess it as a theory—is to constitute that in which we have faith as one of the outstanding interests of life, and suggestion ever operates along the lines of interest. Thus faith at once narrows down and at the same time concentrates the force of suggestion. All of which is old enough. It has been known and taught by religion all through the ages, in various terms but with a common reference. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve. . . .” Choose . . . choose—this is the burden of religion, because what we choose as our ideal, our aim, our God, will determine our character and outlook. It will become a most potent centre of suggestion. But let not this

be forgotten; it is possible to imagine we have faith in God, or some other ideal, when we have never really made this active choice, this affirmation of personal loyalty; we may have assimilated at second hand by suggestion old opinions about God and destiny, and have confused this purely passive reception from our environment with faith. From this there never issues what I have called the conscious direction of suggestibility. It neither narrows down the scope nor concentrates the force of suggestibility. It merely keeps us the victim of suggestibility in a region of experience where above all others we ought to be active, alive, alert and progressive. We know only too well what happens to those whose God is the product of suggestion, and not the affirmation of faith; at the first shock of the grim realities of a world that has its harsh, wild, crude and untamed aspects, their "God" withers up and fades away. The process is sometimes called "loss of faith." It is not loss of faith. It is the loss of an opinion lodged in the mind by suggestion.

We do not make progress by reverting to and relying upon our lower or more primitive mental equipments, any more than we can make pro-

gress by pretending that we have no such "primitive" equipment, but that we are all reason. We progress by understanding and controlling the whole of the forces and energies which make up the complex of personality. By reason we make the attempt to understand; by faith we can secure control. At this time, when there is so much reversion to magic and superstition by people whose religion is the product of suggestion, there is need for the revitalizing of faith—which is not blind credulity, but an act of choice, a will to believe, in which all the personality is involved: intelligence, will and emotions. Suggestion is an instrument of mechanism; faith is the instrument of freedom and initiative. Whenever religion has become dominated by mechanism it has inevitably degenerated into the tyranny of superstition; and this is the danger of some of the modern cults. Our faith must be attached, not to the idea of the mechanical efficiency of rites and ceremonies or forms of words, but to those great ideals which have been made intelligible by reason, and which act as a perpetual challenge to loyalty and fidelity of life and conduct. Religion does not once and

for all do something for us in an occult and mysterious fashion; it does something for us which enables us to be something and do something valuable for the world and significant for God.

VIII

FAITH AND FANATICISM

EDMUND GOSSE, in his *Father and Son*,¹ quotes the following passage from the writings of Archbishop Leighton in reference to matters of religious faith: "This a natural man may discourse of, and that very knowingly, and give a kind of natural credit to it, as to a history that may be true; but firmly to believe that there is divine truth in all these things, and to have a persuasion of it stronger than of the very thing we see with our eyes; such an assent as this is the peculiar work of the Spirit of God, and is certainly saving faith." Gosse quotes this passage as expressive of the difference between his father and himself. I do not wish to dwell on the particular bearing of the point in the development of the relations between these two, but rather to refer to what seems to be an enduring and important distinction in the realm of religious experience.

¹ Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son* (Heinemann).

There is, undoubtedly, a difference between the sort of faith in things unseen which holds to their reality and effectiveness with a loyalty and assurance in advance of that which is given to matters of sense experience, and the sort of belief which just gives a kind of natural credit to the existence of the unseen. And the difference is one of central importance. The one may indeed be called "saving" faith; the other may be the kind of intellectual attitude described by the Apostle who wrote, "Ye believe in God; ye do well; the devils also believe and tremble."

But there is not only a difference in the quality of the attitude which is of importance in religion, but there is also a difference in the kind of object with which the attitude deals, and upon which it is directed. It is not until this has been taken into account that we are able to declare that the faith attitude, as indicated, is really in the deepest sense "saving." It may easily be a form of fanaticism, which only leads to sectarianism and persecution. Those who are familiar with the book will remember the hopeless cleavage made between father and son by reason of the fact that this was the father's attitude, and that the object of the attitude was a jealous God, who was

supposed to have made a special revelation of Himself to the few elect. And it is a universal fact that this kind of absolute faith, when directed towards some limited and stereotyped religious object, is the source of nearly all bigotry and sectarianism, and is one of the outstanding causes of the failures of religion. Gosse's words in the book referred to are simply and dreadfully true: in the last chapter he says: "Let me speak plainly. After my long experience, after my patience and forbearance, I have surely the right to protest against the untruth (would that I could apply to it any other word) that evangelical religion, or any religion in a violent form, is a wholesome or valuable or desirable adjunct to human life. It divides heart from heart. It sets up a vain, chimerical ideal, in the barren pursuit of which all the tender, indulgent affections, all the genial play of life, all the exquisite pleasures and soft resignations of the body, all that enlarges and calms the soul, are exchanged for what is harsh and void and negative. It encourages a stern and ignorant spirit of condemnation; it throws altogether out of gear the healthy movement of the conscience; it invents virtues which are sterile and cruel; it invents sins which are

no sins at all, but which darken the heaven of innocent joy with futile clouds of remorse. There is something horrible, if we will bring ourselves to face it, in the fanaticism that can do nothing with this pathetic and fugitive existence of ours but treat it as if it were the uncomfortable ante-chamber to a palace which no one has explored and of the plan of which we know absolutely nothing."

The fact is that in the present stage of religious progress we have to face a task of genuinely difficult reorganization and reconstruction. On the intellectual and moral side our views of God and the unseen world have greatly advanced—or at any rate greatly changed—in comparison with the views that were held seventy to a hundred years ago. There are fewer people in the world to-day who have the "absolute certitude" faith in a God who is a jealous God, and who is only revealed to the elect who accept orthodox dogmas. But there are probably also fewer people who have the same quality of faith in regard to any unseen reality at all. A more catholic, more moral, more humane view of God prevails, but withal a much vaguer view; and the kind of faith this God inspires is usually rather of the

“natural credence” type than the passionate conviction type. What this means in life is that with a larger view of God there tends nevertheless to be less suffusion of all practical life with an all-penetrating religious faith and joy. What is needed to make religion a more active force in life is the effective combination of the broader view with the old intensity of faith in the absolute importance of that which is believed.

This is only another way of pleading for a deeper understanding and more strenuous application of the essential spirit of the religion which Jesus taught and lived. A comparison of the general picture presented in the Gospel stories with that left by a glance at the essential doctrines and practices of the majority of the Jews of the time reveals an extraordinary advance in the matter of faith, together with an intensification of its quality. The “jealous Yahweh” becomes a parent, the minutiae of religious and ceremonial law become incorporated in the one all-sufficient law of Love. The God in whom Jesus believed, with whom he communed, and whose nature he expounded in parable and story, is one in whom to have faith of the absolute kind means power, strength,

and an ever-increasing charity—but no bigoted and repressive fanaticism. The unseen world in which, by faith, Jesus lived, and of which he sought to make all men citizens, is a world which does not remove us from the interests and cares and joys of this one, or make us neglectful of the natural affections, but suffuses this world in its joy with a new beauty, and in its sorrow with peace and confidence. When the spirit of Jesus pervades our religion we shall have an effective, absolute and dominating faith in God—not as the shadow of our dearest prejudices, but as the source and substance of the Love which redeems and unites.

IX

SENTIMENT AND SENTIMENTALISM IN RELIGION

WE use the term "sentiment" in a good many different contexts, and with a good many different shades of meaning. When we meet a man who feels deeply, thinks clearly, and acts honourably, we say that he is a man of fine or noble sentiments. But when we come into contact with someone who is emotional without the discipline of clear thinking, and whose actions are uncertain, now expressive of kindly emotion, and again of unkindly emotion—impulsive and unstable—we are apt to speak depreciatingly of "mere sentiment," and we employ the adjective "sentimental" to describe such a character. In truth it is a pity we do not always use the substantive "sentimentalism" in such cases, in order to preserve the word sentiment for its better usage, more especially as psychology has now adopted and defined the word sentiment in this better sense. Incidentally, perhaps, the almost opposite

meanings given in common usage to the term provide one more indication of the fact that nothing is so much good in itself, but is good in proportion as its use is good.

The fact is we all have sentiments. They are the mechanisms with which we equip ourselves to face the issues of life. They are groupings in our personality of certain ideas, emotional tendencies, fidelities and loyalties, which are joined together, as it were, in the service of some more general interest. A man's love for his country is rightly described as a sentiment of patriotism; that is to say, it is a whole system of ideas, memories, gratitudes, loyalties, intentions, which when brought into play may take the form of endurance, of pugnacity, hard work, courage, unselfishness, and so forth. So a man's attitude to the universe as a whole when it is tinged with wonder, awe, reverence, is rightly called a sentiment of religion. A sentiment, then, is an integral part of that something in personality which we call character; it is the perpetual readiness of the person to behave in a way consistent with the call that is made by that cause about which the sentiment centres. It is not primarily a product of the reason; rather it is an organization of instinctive

and other innate tendencies with acquired tendencies for the service of an ideal, and it includes among its motive forces powerful and varied emotional dispositions.

The value, or validity, of a sentiment, depends upon the measure in which it enables us to face up to the real issues of life; to make the most of opportunity, to deal courageously with difficulties and disappointments; in a word, to bring harmony and unity into our life. This means that our sentiments need to be under the direction and control of reason, and that they shall all be of a harmonious nature; not in mutual conflict. If our sentiments break loose, so to speak, from the control of reason, and, instead of being our instruments, become independent, and function on their own account, we are on the way to sentimentalism in its worst forms. The essential difference between the person of sentiment and the sentimentalist is precisely this: the man of sentiment is a man of self-discipline, with reason at the helm, while the sentimentalist is without adequate discipline, and becomes the victim of the impulses and emotions of the moment.

Mr. F. J. Gould, in an article on "Miss Sybil Thorndike's Church," in the *Literary Guide* of

September 1923, gives the following interesting quotation: " ' Miss Sybil Thorndike is perhaps the best known woman Anglo-Catholic in the world '—so I read in a recent issue of the *New Age*, and this eminent actress has been explaining why the Anglo-Catholic Congress at the Albert Hall was attended by so large a proportion of women. Put briefly, the reason is that the Church provides beautiful symbols which, by artistic appeals to feeling rather than to reason, carry worshipping souls into high regions of joy, of consolation, and of universal fellowship. Actual life in 1923 does not realize the profound desires of the heart, especially women's hearts. Hence, says Miss Thorndike, ' the Church affords a wonderful outlet for the instincts of people with lives unfulfilled, who find there an expression for that which otherwise would have to remain unexpressed. ' " This extract affords an instructive indication of the danger there always is that sentiments may become sentimentalized, particularly in connection with religion. A true religious sentiment, whatever in detail may be the ingredients of it (and these will differ with different temperaments) should always be an organization of mental and spiritual energies which brings them

to bear on the real issues and problems, joys and sorrows, of life. Thus loyalty to the good means actual participation in concrete doings of good (not just "feeling good"), appreciation of the beautiful, as part of religious sentiment, means the attempt to increase beautiful things in the world, love of truth means an honest willingness to learn from experience, not to dictate to it. A sentiment, to be religious, must, in a word, render our energies available for doing and being good, for working for a kingdom of God on earth, not dreaming of a kingdom of heaven in the air. Any religion, therefore, which merely provides "outlets" for the energies of people with "unfulfilled lives," irrespective of where the outlets lead, is actively promoting sentimentalism, not helping to organize true religious sentiments. Beautiful symbols, with artistic appeals to feeling rather than to reason, are well enough so long as they do not become substitutes for reality. If their contemplation makes one a better comrade to one's fellows, increases one's practical charity, makes one more active in opposition to all the unnecessary ugliness, squalor and misery of life, they are helping to form and stabilize a

sentiment which is genuinely religious. But if they only provide an imaginative refuge from the grim realities of a world that is too hard and bad to be endured without such occasional flights away from it in fancy, if they are merely a sort of moral and æsthetic holiday which makes no difference to one's actual conduct, then they are directly promoting sentimentalism—a very poor substitute for religion. And the fact is that this is a very real danger, against which the Puritan movement (in spite of its excesses) was, in its time, a healthy reaction. It is much easier to find pleasant "outlets" for our emotional and instinctive tendencies than it is to take them in hand and organize them, and make them of use as motive power for the engine of progress. It is much easier to evade than to face the serious challenges of life; but such flight from reality, whether in the form of liquor intoxication, or of fantasy intoxication, is a neurotic symptom; and it is difficult to discern much intrinsic difference oftentimes between the attempt of an "unfulfilled life" to discover an "outlet" through the self-forgetfulness of intoxication for repressed instincts, and that of another who

makes the same attempt in an orgy of emotionalism. There is no doubt that the tendency of certain forms of religion to sentimentalize—to dwell upon beautiful symbols, to present unintelligible mysteries, to love dim lights and shadows, to dismiss the difficulties and tragedies of this world and dream about a blissful and unperturbed hereafter—in one word, to withdraw from reality, has actually alienated a very large number of people, who conceive that emotions, ideas and will would be more nobly employed in redressing the wrong balance of the real world than in fabricating a fantastic palace of pleasures.

The danger is not confined to the "beautiful symbols" of an ornate ritual. It inheres in even the simplest form of religious worship. We may get into the habit of using the term "God" as simply an outlet for feelings of justice, love, reverence, which ought not to be "let out" except in the form of directed energy. If the so-called worship of God becomes a substitute for the service of man, it is as much a promoter of sentimentalism as an æsthetic pleasure in beautiful forms and symbols alienated from life. What the world needs is men and women whose unfulfilled lives shall

find fulfilment not in purely substitutive channels of subjective emotionalism, but in practical devotion to social justice and fellowship, to such effect that the kingdom of God may come, the will of God be done, *on earth*.

X

FANCY, IMAGINATION AND BELIEF

THERE are two characteristic ways in which it is possible to approach life; we may try to see it as a whole, or we may be satisfied to see it as a mosaic of parts. The result of these two ways of approach is astonishingly different in each case. Thus, for instance, if we begin by regarding man as a sum of parts, a compound of faculties, capacities or functions, we may easily end by losing the real man altogether; finding in his place a residuum which bears no more resemblance to the actual man and woman whom we love, hate and react to in daily living, than does a mathematical formula to a poem. An interesting illustration of this is to be found by comparing the attitudes of David Hume and John Ruskin to the Imagination. Hume, in the *Enquiry*,¹ says :

Nothing, at first view, may seem more unbounded than the thought of man, which not

¹ Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section II.

only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality. To form monsters, and join incongruous shapes and appearances, costs the imagination no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects. And while the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain and difficulty, the thought can in an instant transport us into the most distant regions of the universe, or even beyond the universe, into the unbounded chaos, where nature is supposed to lie in total confusion. What never was seen, or heard of, may yet be conceived, nor is any thing beyond the power of thought, except what implies an absolute contradiction.

But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience . . . all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.

John Ruskin, discoursing on "Power and Office of Imagination,"¹ puts a very different point of view in one pregnant sentence :

Fancy plays like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy; but Imagination is a

¹ Ruskin, *Frondees Agrestes*, Section II. § 14.

pilgrim on the earth—and her home is in heaven.

No one will deny the extraordinary skill with which Hume makes his analysis of the fragments which he regards as constituting human understanding. Granted his preliminary assumptions, his reduction of all mental processes to a few simple activities is indisputable. But in order to reach this conclusion we have to be prepared to sacrifice our interest in man as a whole. The assumptions include such details as that there is no "man" at all, but only a series of perceptions, impressions, ideas and sentiments which somehow "occur," for—

The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. . . . The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented, or of the materials of which it is composed.¹

Now the majority of us have a massive common sense which is fairly fool-proof, and though when we read, or make, these clever

¹ Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Part IV.

reductions of ourselves to nonentity, we may be in difficulties to give a convincing rational reply, we actually reply in the most effective fashion possible, by going on living; and to live is to reject speculative abstractions. We may never have attempted to work out in intellectual terms what it is we mean by imagination, but we go on imagining, and thereby penetrating to meanings and attaining beliefs which would be disqualified if we attempted to take Hume's analysis seriously. True imagination, in the sense in which Ruskin uses the term, in the sense in which the poet or painter exercises the power, is no mere business of "joining incongruous shapes and appearances" or compounding ideas which are feeble copies of sense impressions. It is the exercise of a mental and spiritual activity upon experience which actually transforms, even constitutes it. Meaning and value are not inherent in sense experience; they are the product of human interest working upon such data—and in interest imagination is involved. That it is possible to combine memory images in new ways, and invent what are called imaginary situations, we all admit; but, with Ruskin, I should prefer to call this the business of "fancy," not imagination.

Admittedly, the terms are not of primary importance; but the distinction is, and the real question is as to the validity of the distinction, as to the real existence of an imagination which is much more than fancy, playing "like a squirrel in its circular prison" of reproduced sensory impressions. Is there no activity of the mind or spirit beyond that of playing a game with memory images, merely re-arranging them in a novel order? Is there no imagination in Shakespeare, for instance, that goes beyond "joining incongruous shapes and appearances," depicts imitative puppets dancing on the stage? Directly we take this mutilated fragment of the human being and his powers, the product of a sort of mental dissection on the part of the philosopher in his study, and compare it with the living acting human being, we find that the mutilated fragment is not a satisfactory substitute for the reality, and that there is actually very little resemblance between the two.

Imagination is much more deeply rooted in the very soil of human nature than is recognized by Hume. Before man was a rational animal he was an impulsive animal; he had, and indeed still has, inwrought in the very fabric of his soul, certain strong tendencies

urging him to press on towards certain goals, of the nature of which he was at first wholly unconscious, and in regard to many of which he still remains largely unconscious. What young man or maid in the glow of intense love is conscious in any full measure of all that the experience of love means, or of what marriage involves? The attraction of man to maid, and maid to man, is not the work of reason; not the result of conscious calculation or intention; it is non-rational human nature triumphantly asserting itself in experience. Now, in man many of these great primary impulses are not exhausted in experience. There is an available excess of impulsive energy, which in its spontaneous overflow is fantasy, but in its directed flow may become imagination. It is not primarily rational at all: it is primarily impulsive energy, which may be diverted to harmful ends, or may become the very mainspring of healthy, successful and heroic living. When we are in love, and the flow of the original impulse is directed by something more than animal appetite, our human nature's deep impulse challenges, claims, transforms, both ourself and the other. Precisely that happens when the overflow of psychic energy wells up

as imagination; it challenges, claims, transforms the whole world. Here is the great distinction between fancy and imagination; fancy is a child of the reason, and it plays with memory images, and pretends that they are differently arranged and combined. It is purely manipulative. We know all the time it is "make-believe." Imagination is the child of the very soul itself—soul of which reason is but one partial manifestation—and it brings with it its own light, and in that light we view our sense experience, indeed all our experience. It transforms and modifies. It sees through the outer seeming of things, and reconstructs them by its own vital alchemy. That is the work of all genius: the difference between the poet and the versifier, the literature of imagination and of fancy: the one an interpreter of life, unfolding its deeper reality, the other a peepshow, amusing the multitude.

And, in fact, the world as we know it is much more largely the product of imagination than it is of what philosophers of Hume's school used to call "sensations" or "impressions." The very name "universe" is itself the term for an imaginative construction: it implies that we are not mere bundles of "faculties" or "func-

tions" somehow let loose in a chaos of chance "sensations," but that we are members of a system characterized by order, and in some sense under unified control. That is the affirmation of imagination—not the result of compounding feeble copies of sense impressions by fancy; and the great affirmations of imagination are the basis of our beliefs. In fact the two are inextricably intermixed. Imagination and belief act and react one upon the other. Wordsworth feels :

"A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."¹

This imaginative grasp means that Wordsworth has actually perceived nature differently, detected a fuller and richer meaning there, than has been the case with the man (and there are many like him) who only sees the sunset as the sign of another day over, or as an annoying interference with his stroke at golf. And the

¹ "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey."

imagination is both directed by his belief, and at the same time enlarges and gives precision to belief.

There is a certain kind of person who is always urging us to try to see the world as it actually is, and to limit our beliefs to the circular prison of sensory experience; to give up all our "prejudices," all our traditions, all our interpretations alike of joy and sorrow, love and hope, made in the light of faith. The answer to him is very simple: the world is not actual at all until it *is* seen in the context of our interests and our faiths. Lord Balfour has said, truly enough: "We all live by faith, our inevitable beliefs far outrun any reasons which we have as yet been able to find for them."¹ What this troublesome person really means when he bids us "see things as they actually are" is that he wants us to see as little in the world as he sees, by reason of the fact that his imagination dwells in the realm of machinery, rather than in that of growth; he sees a plant as a mechanical device reacting to stimuli, and man as a complicated machine, a cleverly constructed engine. What is to be the test of the kind of imagina-

¹ Arthur James Balfour, Earl of Balfour, *Theism and Thought* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1923), p. 64.

tion preferable: the "fancy" type or the constructive and interpretative type? There is only one valid test; and it is this—What type of imaginative insight and belief reveals to us the fullness and richness of life, brings us into touch with its realities, not as conceived in a laboratory, but as lived in full-blooded human relationships? A belief which we are constrained to deny in every significant and important transaction of our actual living is hardly worth talking about. We actually do clothe the world we live in with meaning by the fact of continuing to live in it; we believe in the divine light behind the shadows, in human goodness behind human evil, in the eternal significance of the age-long witness of right and truth, because the world in which we live is no fixed and final pattern which reproduces itself in the mind, but is raw material which the mind fashions, challenges, transforms; in this it is like the Kingdom of heaven, which "suffereth violence," and it is men of imaginative violence who take it by force. To *live*, and not merely to exist, we must have not only the will, but also the imagination to believe.

XI

THE CHILD HEART

THE Apostle Paul, in one of his most famous chapters, tells us that when he became a man he put away childish things. Admitting the very great distinction between childish and childlike things, one is yet tempted to think sometimes that the great Apostle to the Gentiles seems to have put away a good many childlike things along with the childish ones, the retention of which might have kept him a little less theological, a little more human. It is in Chinese Scripture¹ that we read: "The truly great man is he who does not lose his child heart. He does not think beforehand that his words shall be sincere, nor that his actions shall be resolute; he simply always abides in the right." The typical utterances of Paul concerning childhood and children in addition to the one cited, seem to be: "So long as the heir is a

¹ *World-Religion Sacred Scriptures*, p. 28 (Chinese Scriptures, Selection III. 10).

child, he differeth nothing from a bond-servant," and "Children, obey your parents."¹

These are utterances of the theological arguer, the moral disciplinarian, rather than of the lover of children who himself retains the heart of a child. The utterances of Jesus, on the other hand, concerning children are so intimate, tender and maternal that they have become immortal. There is no picture more moving in its humanness and simple beauty than that of the carpenter of Nazareth, struggling with the problems of human sin and suffering, devoted to his ministry of prophecy and healing, yet rebuking those who would spare him the supposed annoyance of having the children thronging to him. So it is that we recognize Paul as a great theologian—for it was he who impressed upon the early Church the doctrines that have been professed by the main stream of Christianity ever since—we recognize him as a great thinker, theologian, missionary and controversialist; but we think of Jesus as none of these especially, but simply as a great man. Paul may stimulate us intellectually, to agreement or disagreement; Jesus appeals to the heart of mankind because he is so perfectly

¹ Galatians iv. 1; Ephesians vi. 1.

human, moving naturally and sympathetically among men, women and children, whom he loved more than any code of law, tradition of the elders, or theological speculation.

To be a child is one thing; to be a man or woman and to be childish is another; to be a man or woman and to retain the child heart is still another. Childishness in a man or woman is a perpetuation of characteristics natural and desirable in a child, but inappropriate in a mature human being. Childlikeness, or the child heart, on the other hand, is an essential condition for those who would enter "the kingdom of heaven." The child heart is the heart that is young, fresh, generous, the perpetual home of hopes, faith and trust, of ever new mental and spiritual vitality.

The essential characteristic of the child from this point of view is his almost inexhaustible capacity for making the best of his environment—the magic play of spontaneous imagination upon facts, transforming them into the material of a world of charm and interest. Everything is worth while. There is nothing so common or ordinary that it cannot be shot through with a joyous light. The happiest children are not those who are surrounded by an abundance of

elaborate and superfluous toys, exact and perfect in their imitation of what grown-ups are pleased to call "real things." They are the children who possess in their own hearts the magic wand which transforms bits of stick and stone into gold and silver, or things more priceless still, which cannot be translated into the unimaginative language of disillusioned adults. There is nothing sadder than the child whose imagination has been destroyed by the unlimited possession of imitative toys, ready made by someone else: that is the child who grows peevish and irritable, for ever asking the question, "What shall I do now?" The best gift for a healthy child is the gift of those things which foster in him the creative, not the possessive impulse; which encourage him to transform the ordinary environment by the magic of imagination. Give children space, some real measure of freedom; let them have the raw material of the earth, the garden, and we might profitably destroy more than half the toys and toy-shops of civilization, and in the destruction help to produce a generation of men and women more interested in creation than in possession.

We are told ¹ that on a certain occasion the

¹ Matt. xviii. 1-4.

disciples came to Jesus with the question: "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus, ever ready to use concrete incident rather than general precept, "called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." As a religious and educational principle this saying of Jesus means that the forgetfulness and total loss of certain essential characteristics of childhood inevitably indicates that we have missed our way, and lost the road to the kingdom of real values. And what was, in particular, in the mind of Jesus, concerning the invaluable childlike characteristics which we cannot afford to lose, is clearly indicated by the context in which the sentence stands. Childlikeness, that is, is directly contrasted by Jesus with the attitude of these disciples who flock around him in agitation concerning the question of position and importance. Man tends—and these disciples were no exception to the general rule—to become enormously interested in questions of reward. What he is going to *get out of* work, *out of* thought, *out of* morality, *out of* religion—these are too often his predominant considera-

tions. The assumption is that nothing is really worth while except in the measure in which it leads to some material and substantial advantage. The question as to who is going to be greatest in the kingdom of heaven is a typical one—the disciples who discussed it were not peculiarly coarse or materialistic; they were just ordinary, exercised about just the kind of utilities and reward calculations that all of us tend to be interested in.

We need not, then, envelop ourselves in a cloud of sentimentalisms about childhood to understand and appreciate the point Jesus was making. The childlikeness he is here advocating is *something which is the antithesis of the attitude manifested in this and similar instances by the disciples*. With healthy children it is natural for them to take a direct and adventurous interest in the world and experience, just for the sake of "letting off steam," and of finding out about things. They play games, not in order to equip themselves to become shopkeepers, mothers, soldiers, sailors or what-not, but for the fun of the thing; because they are full of energy, physical and mental, and must find an avenue along which to discharge it. Many of their games, it is true, are imitations

of the occupations and concerns of adults, but this is only because their environment provides them with this set of suggestions, not because there is anything intrinsically appealing in these things to the exclusion of others. We all know that children left to themselves will invent games, and act dramas, which have nothing to do with any of the occupations of their elders. Spontaneous interest in the world, and in exploring the world, not for the sake of what can *be made out of it*, but rather for the satisfaction of *making something with it*, is the characteristic of childlikeness which Jesus is here opposing to the self-interested and rather grossly utilitarian point of view of his disciples.

It is a principle which very much needs to be written upon the heart of our modern civilization. Admittedly it is no easy matter. The world in which we live is a very complex one, and man's manipulation of it heretofore has not tended to its simplification. An ever-increasing population has to find shelter, food, protection in a world which does not yield these things for the mere asking, and the resources of which, though vast, are not unlimited. It is no wonder, therefore, that men and women are

very much concerned about the material results of their work and thought. We cannot, if we would, altogether eliminate utilitarian considerations. It is a question of emphasis and predominant tendency. There are two questions that arise: (1) Is it a good thing for man to become wholly utilitarian? If so, of course, we need go no further, for utilitarianism holds the field, and those who would see room made for another principle are almost a negligible minority. On this assumption the disciples were right, Jesus was wrong, the only intelligible reason for working for the kingdom, whether of heaven or of anywhere else, is that we may secure a good—if possible the first—place in it. And, as we know well enough, religion has often accepted this principle with no less eagerness than worldly wisdom, and has adjusted its teaching concerning heavenly rewards accordingly. Only if we are inclined to answer this first question in the negative, as Jesus did, does the second question press forward with urgency. (2) Is it possible for mankind to combine with the unavoidable element of utilitarianism which is thrust upon it in the nature of things, something of the childlike characteristics of

regarding the world as a big playmate, and of taking an interest in what can be made *with* it, as well as *out of* it?

There are two main instruments designed to make this possible; religion and education. But not all forms of religion are instruments capable of helping to bring about this consummation, for many of them are still based on the utilitarian theory and aim at promoting interest in that which can be *made out of* goodness. Nor are all types of education better fitted to this end, for much that passes under the name of education is tied more definitely even than the forms of religion referred to, to the apron-strings of utility. But all religion—and it is found in every sect, and is the peculiar property of none—which is a movement of the human spirit towards freedom, towards more life and fuller; and all education which aims at opening the doors of personality for the outflow of creative mind, are striving to do battle with the encircling forces of materialistic utilitarianism. And it is in them that the hope for anything in the nature of emancipation resides. For success in this stern conflict it is a fundamental necessity that the Childlike Principle shall be saved from becoming a mere formula, and that

it shall be first applied seriously and effectively at home. That is to say, religious people and teachers must themselves be constantly turning from the ideas and practices which are all around us, penetrating our atmosphere like a dense fog, and become again by effort and self-discipline as little children. It is the merest cant to teach or profess the beauties, glories, lovelinesses and all the rest of the childlike mind and heart if we bring to the children, or to grown-up people either, nothing but the world-weariness of disillusioned old age of the mind and spirit. People will go on being cynical about all values save those that can be entered in a ledger, and children will grow up again into utilitarian materialists, forgetting the spontaneity and zest of their natural child attitude, unless we can provide them, at home, in school, in church, with an environment which preserves and expresses the childlike attitude and relates it to reality, and so give it a chance to survive and develop in the inevitable struggle for existence it will have to undergo with material necessity.

XII

PERSONALITY AND GOD

It is a common doctrine of many religions that God is personal. What that doctrine means is another matter; and theology has engaged in many controversies on this very issue, without, however, reaching a more definite conclusion than that here is a very great mystery, which must ultimately be accepted by faith. Many ordinary folk, who are not troubled by the refinements of theology, quite simply believe that God is personal in a sense essentially similar to that in which human beings are personal. They have believed it for a long time. To conceive God in the image of man has been one characteristic movement of thought ever since it left off seeing God exclusively in nature. And that God is possessed of the highest qualities of personality as we know it, no believer in Theism will doubt or deny. But that He is something very much more than "personal" is witnessed to in the varied and manifold manifestations

of energy with which we have contact in the universe. God is no doubt in the stick or stone that the untutored savage makes into a fetish, He is its substance, the force which ceaselessly makes its coherence. "There is not a leaf rotting on the highway but has force in it : how else could it rot ?" quotes Carlyle,¹ and adds, "Nay, surely, to the Atheistic Thinker, if such a one were possible, it must be a miracle too, this huge illimitable whirlwind of Force, which envelops us here; never-resting whirlwind, high as Immensity, old as Eternity." But God is not therefore a stick, a stone, a leaf rotting on the highway or a whirlwind of force. The part is not the whole, though it may manifest something of the nature of the whole. The pool of sea-water that the child imprisons in a hollow on the seashore is not the ocean, though many of the characteristics of the ocean can be learned from it. But it does not reveal the secrets of the unplumbed depths, the coral caverns, the teeming life of the vast ocean. It would be absurdly incorrect to say that the ocean is the pool. Is it not equally incorrect to say that God is a person? The Infinite will not be reduced without remainder to a finite equation.

¹ *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Lecture I.

Yet human personality is rich in suggestion of the Divine. It is an apt vehicle of expression for the Universal Soul. In itself one of the profound mysteries in a universe of strange mystery, it is a fitting organ of expression for some part at least of the Supreme Mystery. "A man's life of any worth is a continual Allegory," wrote Keats,¹ "and very few eyes can see the mystery of his life."

It is worth while, therefore, to ask what it is that we mean by personal and personality. A living body alone does not constitute it, the jelly-fish has, or is, a living body, but we do not regard it as a person. A tree is a wonderful manifestation of life, and may figure as an important element in history—as, for instance, the Bo Tree of Anurādha-pura in Ceylon, which was planted about 254 B.C.;² but again we do not consider a tree as a person or personal. Whether there are the germs of personality in everything that lives or not is an interesting question which would lead far afield into the realm of speculation.

¹ Quoted by Sir Robert Bridges, *The Spirit of Man* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1916), p. 128.

² This tree is an offshoot from the Bo Tree under which Gotama the Buddha attained Enlightenment, and is the oldest historical tree in the world.

The outstanding characteristic of personality as we ordinarily think of it is self-consciousness, which by the powers of memory and anticipation, imagination and will, links up past and present into the continuity of *personal* experience, and relates it to the future. Any being which can thus gather up the various parts of its experience, unify and in a measure control them, recognizing them as in a peculiar sense its own, is personal. To be a self, somehow impenetrable by other selves, and to know it, is to be a personal existent. But if such self-consciousness is an important distinctive mark of what we mean by personality, it is not the only one which is characteristic of developed and strong personality. There are many fully self-conscious people, with good memory and powers of anticipation, who are strangely lacking, as we say, in personality: it is a common phrase. We speak of personal magnetism, charm, power. There are great speakers who have the power of attracting and holding large audiences, who never say anything remarkable or original; they have some secret of "personal power" or charm. What this is, this something which makes certain people into strong commanding personalities, is largely an unsolved mystery;

though Psychical Research and Psychology have both endeavoured to unravel the secret. And they have succeeded at least in providing some hints which are deeply suggestive. The outstanding result of investigations into the secret of personality may be said to be the general recognition that conscious mental life is only one aspect of personality. Beyond the conscious there is an active emotional and mental life which is ordinarily quite outside the range of awareness, but which profoundly influences the whole course of life.

The very ordinary experience of dreaming—ordinary only because we are accustomed to it, extraordinary in fact—is one of the manifestations of this larger mental life which is ours, though we are not usually aware of it. That we can go to sleep, put our ordinary waking consciousness out of existence for the time being, and then awake to another consciousness in an altogether new world, which has its own, quite different, standards of reality, is convincing evidence that there is more than the ordinary conscious life involved in our personality. But this is the mere fringe of the evidence. Phenomena of hypnotism, of dissociated personality, of memory aberrations, and of various kinds of

mental disturbance and disease, which have been exhaustively and scientifically investigated in the interests of psycho-therapy as well as of psychology—and in particular by Freud and the Psycho-analytic school—show beyond all possibility of doubt that there exists a much greater mental life in every person, below, above or beyond the level of everyday awareness.

From the evidence which has thus been accumulated it seems clear that dominant and forceful personalities, submissive and weak personalities, are largely produced by the interaction of the conscious and the unconscious mental life. In particular, inspiration, whether of artist or prophet, is largely conditioned by the effective and relevant upwelling from the unconscious mental life into the light of consciousness, of ideas, feeling and purposes which can be directed upon the problems and realities of the world of every day. In the deeper and hidden "chambers of imagery" of the prophet there is elaborated the passionate protest against wrong and injustice, and as this emerges into consciousness it comes as a voice from beyond; the prophet is not "his own master"; he speaks not his own words, but the message that is given to him; nor can he resist the

compulsion that is laid upon him : " If I say I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in mine heart, as it were, a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain." ¹ Neither can the creative artist " contain." He does not consciously fabricate his vision, whether he be poet, painter or sculptor. It is much truer to say that the vision dominates him, and he is under necessity of self-expression, because there is so much more " self " than he consciously knows. The creative genius is not usually keener in the matter of conscious mental processes than the rest of us ; he differs from the more prosaic type in that there is a greater interplay between conscious and unconscious forces, and a larger measure of harmony. The seen and the unseen of his personality are more closely unified in one constraining interest—in the terms of an earlier chapter (VI), there are fewer waste products of his soul.

Generalizations are dangerous, especially in the domain of psychology, but at least we may go so far as to say that personality is not only mysterious in its depths and unplumbed potentialities, but that it is always more than what

¹ Jeremiah xx. 9.

is known to self-consciousness, or outwardly revealed in behaviour. At the present stage of knowledge it seems as if the true personality of any one of us is only partially incarnate, and still more partially conscious. It may well be that Bergson is right, and consciousness, in its characteristic development among us as intellect, is the mere by-product of the *élan vital*, the source of our real personality; a by-product evolved for the purpose of adjusting us to the superficial conditions of a material environment. The roots of personality reach out into the unknown, and perhaps link us to the source of all being. Those, then, whose full effect of conscious life is directed entirely to material ends limit and hedge in their personality: choke the channels which should conduct the flow of mental and spiritual life between the conscious and the unconscious. Such a self-imprisonment is inimitably described by the great Indian poet and thinker, Rabindranath Tagore: ¹

He whom I enclose with my name is weeping in this dungeon. I am ever busy building this wall all around, and as this wall goes up into the sky day by day I lose sight of my true being in its dark shadow.

¹ *Gitanjali* (Macmillan & Co.), No. 29.

I take pride in this great wall, and I plaster it with dust and sand lest a least hole should be left in this name; and for all the care I take I lose sight of my true being.

But those who are not satisfied that material things and values are the true home of personality, who cherish spiritual aims and ideals, encourage the hidden forces of personality to surge into consciousness, and to swell the stream of spiritual aspiration and intuition which carries them to the joy of Robert Browning's triumphant certitude :¹

"But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know."

It is in personality of this victorious kind that we may fruitfully look for God, may discover God in personality; may re-interpret the old ideas of Divine inspiration. The waves of the ocean send a ripple throughout the whole extent of the waters: the movements of Divine love agitate the waters of all life and communicate themselves to consciousness in human love and fellowship. Not in the limited and maimed personalities that have been content with an

¹ *Abt Vogler*, stanza xi.

adequate adaptation to their material environment shall we feel nearest to God. We shall look rather to those who have given play to the impulses and imaginations of their deeper life; to the aspirations which surged up from the beyond in their souls, to the piercing truths which flashed in upon them from the starlit darkness. We look to the great and good for revelation of God: men and women whose personality is greater than their consciousness, more than the things they do: poets with their vision of beauty, prophets who are bond-slaves of truth, moral teachers in love with humanity, quiet, unknown people, uncelebrated, revealing in the ordinary round of life and relationship a perception of truth and a genius for fellowship which is divine, embosomed in a profundity of peace and simple goodness which draws for us the veil and shows us God.

XIII

LOYALTIES

IN John Galsworthy's play *Loyalties*¹ we are presented with the central theme in two remarks of Margaret Orme. Mabel Dancy, the wife of Captain Dancy, who has actually committed the theft which provides the nucleus of the plot, says to Margaret: "I hate half-hearted friends. Loyalty comes before everything." Margaret replies: "Ye-es; but loyalties cut up against each other sometimes, you know." This remark is elaborated in what Margaret says shortly afterwards to another character: "Prejudices, Adela—or are they loyalties?—I don't know—criss-cross—we all cut each other's throats from the best of motives."

One is inevitably reminded, both by the title and by the substance of the play, of Prof. Royce's book on *The Philosophy of Loyalty*.² Loyalty for Royce is essentially "the willing

¹ John Galsworthy, *Loyalties* (Duckworth & Co.).

² Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, pp. 16, 17.

and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause," a devotion which, he adds, must express itself in "some sustained and practical way." He is, of course, compelled to face the problems which are presented dramatically in Galsworthy's play, and he seeks to vindicate loyalty as the foundation principle of morality and life by insisting that loyalty to a particular cause must be consistent with loyalty to loyalty. We must learn to respect and value every other person's loyalty, even if it is to what we think a mistaken or wrong cause. It is a question whether this is not really playing with words; what Royce means has already been given a name, which has grown rich in more essentially spiritual associations: *charitas*, of 1 Corinthians xiii., translated charity in the Authorized Version, love in the Revised. But the word is not the real issue. The real issue is met with in the facts of experience, faithfully enough represented in the play. The conflict of loyalties does not always, or perhaps even often, centre around so dramatic a situation as it naturally must do in a play; but no normal person can live long without being brought face to face with the crucial issue—Which Loyalty?

We may for the moment fruitfully follow up the suggestion in Margaret Orme's uncertainty as between "prejudices" and "loyalties." If it were possible to distinguish among contending "loyalties" some things which would be more truly described as prejudices, it might considerably help to clear the decks for action. The trouble is, as Margaret feels, that perhaps all great loyalties are essentially prejudices, at least in their origin if not in their outcome; and that if they were not prejudices they would lack a great part of their driving power. If we attend, not to what we think logically or ethically ought to be, but to what in point of fact is, we are aware that most of us are prepared to endure and suffer more for our prejudices than we are for our purely intellectual convictions (if there are any "purely" intellectual convictions). The reason for this is not far to seek. A prejudice is a conclusion reached in advance of rational evidence. It represents an emotional and instinctive demand made in the interests of living, not of theory. We do not wait for the theologians and philosophers to "prove" the existence of God before we believe in Him. We believe in Him first,

because it gives us something to live by and for; and then we are prepared to consider and accept "proofs." The theologian is a product of the fact that man believes: he is in no sense the cause of man's belief. The great believers in God, whose lives and teachings have made history, had a tremendous loyalty because they had a tremendous prejudice—a vital conclusion for the regulation of conduct far in advance of rational evidence; only it so happens that it has become customary to call this type of prejudice "faith." It is an affirmation in which the will, the imagination and feeling take a primary part, and reason comes in afterwards to "prove," defend and justify. In just the same way our lesser loyalties, to our friends, our town, our college, our university, our nation, or what not, arise independently of reason, and only summon reason to give an account after the event. On the whole, the more purely "rationalistic" we are, the less do we respond to such loyalties.

I do not wish, however, to give the impression that I am advocating the "gospel" of irrationalism, which in some quarters is popular. Irrationalism only tends to deepen the

confusion, rather than clear up the tangled issues that life involves. I have not, in this chapter, been advocating at all, but endeavouring to describe. It is no use to pretend that pure logic and metaphysical ethics represent the way in which we habitually do our thinking and our behaving, and the first step forward to a self-directed advance towards rational control and progress is to recognize the features of the actual situation. We must start from where we are, not from where we wish we were but are not. That is one of the special values of Galsworthy's play; and the failure to recognize it is the prevailing vice of a good deal of well-intentioned religious and ethical teaching. So far am I maintaining a doctrine of irrationalism, that I wish now to assert uncompromisingly that the only way to effect a harmony between the conflicting loyalties of life, or to decide which are to be sustained and which rejected, is by a very much more thoroughgoing and drastic application of reason than most of us are in the habit of making. The fact that pure reason does not initiate our great loyalties does not put them beyond the jurisdiction of reason. Indeed the truth is that before reason

has given its vote, no prejudice (in the sense indicated) is worthy to be called a loyalty. What we ordinarily mean by a prejudice in the bad sense is precisely an unreasonable and unreasoning loyalty, a limited, partial loyalty which will not face wider issues, nor submit to the supremely rational test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." I referred to the fact that the great believers in God ever displayed a loyalty based on prejudice. But a structure is not what it is based on; else we need do no more than lay the foundations for our houses; and a vivid insight into the practical consequences of their faith, or "prejudice," and a growing conviction that God as the object of loyalty could alone give harmony and completeness to the world, is no less characteristic of the great believers in Him, the supreme loyalists of the kingdom of God.

From the emotional and instinctive regions of personality there arise many urges to loyalty, ranging from loyalty to mere self and its pleasures and comfort, to loyalty to God, involving all manner of self-discipline and the enduring of hardness. In themselves the strongest urges are often, if not usually, precisely

the selfish ones. To the irrationalist it must seem an amazing thing somehow to be explained away, that nevertheless the advance of man and of all that is best in civilization has come about by the subordination, or even often the rejection, of these morally and socially lesser loyalties in favour of wider and greater ones. And the whole secret of the advance is here: while we do not generate sympathy, charity or loyalty by reason, we do infinitely extend their range of operation, and we do inhibit other prejudices that would limit or destroy our better sentiments: prejudices of suspicion, hatred and intolerance. And there is no other way in which this can be done except the way of reason. There is in the world to-day an adequate measure of goodwill and charity to secure the triumph of international order and peace; to do away with the larger part of the injustices and abuses which lay waste our manhood and womanhood at home, but this is largely unrealized energy, remaining a mere potential, till its force is released and directed into the channel of efficient action. It is energy which can only become available for use, for work, when reason is at the helm. It is blind prejudices that wreck

fellowship and peace, and are the undoing of the nations. If we can but give to the generous "prejudices" of human faith and charity and good-will the seeing eye of reason, there is no limit to the victories for righteousness and good fellowship that may not be achieved.

XIV

THE TYRANNY OF OPINIONS

OPINIONS may roughly be divided into two classes : one's own, and other people's. Some people have opinions of their own by right of personal assimilation. Some reflect the opinions of other people, and can only be said to have opinions in the sense that their thinking and doing is dominated by opinions which to a large extent possess them; in a word, they are under the tyranny of opinions. It is the lot of few to initiate, or create, absolutely fresh opinions; those who do are the great original researchers and thinkers. But it is the privilege of every intelligent person who owns himself to adopt his opinions with some measure of personal originality. To make an opinion our own, though we recognize that we are indebted to the inspiration of others for its raw material, is a different thing from passively accepting opinions from the world at large.

It is a matter of simple observation, which

none the less is often overlooked, that the most stable and persistent opinions of the majority of mankind are not their own, in either of the senses just indicated; but are other people's, which they have received without intelligent insight or choice: while the intelligently adopted, or the originally formed, opinions are essentially unstable, liable to modification and growth. The cocksure dogmatist is nearly always the person who has no opinions that are genuinely his own, but who expresses the opinions which have been embedded in the soil of his mind by the prolific sowing of tradition, environment, authority and what not. On the basis of this fact a vast business has come into existence; an agency for saving people the labour of forming opinions for themselves by supplying and lodging them ready made. One of the most successful branches of this business is a certain section of the Press—and probably in the modern world this is the most important and influential of its branches. The main facts in this matter are that opinions, generally speaking, may be disseminated in two ways. They may be offered for rational consideration, or they may be urged by suggestion. By far the easier and more fruitful method

(from the business point of view) is that of suggestion; and consequently the art of the advertiser, which is almost wholly based upon suggestion, tends to be adopted by that section of the Press—a large one—which aims not at providing information primarily, but at injecting hard-and-fast opinions. A skilful suppression of facts which do not support the opinion which it is proposed to suggest, a “snappy” account of mutilated facts, a clever headline, constant reiteration in slightly varying terms, and an appeal to people’s immediate self-interest, are among the more obvious principles, or methods, of the trade of opinion purveying. It is one of the most extraordinarily successful business undertakings of the modern world, as many recent events have shown in a remarkable fashion. Of all the labour-saving devices invented by the wit of man, it seems as if the device for saving the labour of forming first-hand opinions is one of the most profitable—profitable to someone: to owners, shareholders and vested interests; profitable, also, in one particular sense of the word. But is it profitable for mankind at large?

It is not profitable to the mass of men and women themselves for mankind to be under

any form of tyranny, and the tyranny of opinions may be in the long run as disastrous as the older-fashioned tyrannies of monarchy or oligarchy : indeed, more so. The Cromwells of history can arise and smite the tyranny of divine-right kings hip and thigh with the intelligent direction of enough force. But who shall deliver us from the body of *this* death, the death of the mind, of the spirit, which makes it possible for the purveyor of second-hand ideas to pull the wires which determine the dance of the marionettes? Who shall smash for us the tyranny of opinions? Here is no military or political problem, to be solved either by force or diplomacy. Of what avail is it to have a government in the form of a democracy if the "demos" consists of men and women who have no opinions of their own, but are the receptacles for opinions rationed out to them by the profiteers of opinion, men and women who actually prefer to purchase the labour-saving device rather than undergo the discipline and make the effort necessary to forming opinions for themselves? Under such circumstances we are in the hands of the most successful purveyor of opinions as much as, or more than, the serf was in the

hands of his overlord. It makes no practical or beneficial difference that the majority of people are not aware that they are living under such a tyranny; that unawareness is indeed one of the most sinister and difficult of the features of the situation. To promote the illusion on the part of the multitude that the opinions served out to them are actually their own is an essential part of the business of the successful opinion purveyor, and as long as people are furious if the statement is made that the prejudices and anti-social, anti-human opinions with which they have been saturated by suggestion are not their own, the task of the reformer, the humanitarian and the rationalist is exceedingly difficult.

The problem is essentially a spiritual one: how to achieve the inner personal release and victory over an enemy who cannot be disposed of by bashing him on the head, but can only be overcome by self-knowledge and mastery. To escape the tyranny of opinions we have to learn to make them into our servants, and not allow them to become our masters, to ensure that they remain malleable instruments for progressive thought and understanding, and do not develop into sacrosanct symbols which

stir our emotions and make us into the slaves of maxims. We have to learn to be suspicious of opinions (especially those we think are our own) which are fixed, which are too stable, which can never change with changing circumstances; for such opinions are in all probability old-fashioned machinery, no longer adapted to the purposes of advancing life. A man who has the common-sense, and the mental elasticity, to change his opinion is much more truly reliable than the man who spends his life serving opinions which have been injected into his system. The popular love of "consistency" in some of its aspects is precisely an opinion held at the bidding of suggestion, and serving the interests not of progress but of stagnation.

The issue is perhaps one of the most vital that is before us in the spiritual realm to-day. It is not a new issue. Time was when the business of opinion purveying was mainly, if not solely, in the hands of the great ecclesiastical corporations. Through centuries of effort and struggle and sacrifice the great pioneers of religious liberty have succeeded in overcoming—or very nearly overcoming—the tyranny of opinions as exercised by religious dogmatism.

It is increasingly recognized to-day that a religious community must be organized on the basis of Truth and Liberty; that its chief aim is the encouragement of the adoption and formation of first-hand personal opinions about God, the universe and man, that shall be instruments for good living, not tyrants, driving us like sheep. But we must harbour no illusions about the extent of the liberty that has been achieved. We are in danger of a tyranny of precisely the same order, for the mantle of ecclesiastical dogmatism has fallen on other shoulders. We may be free in theology, but the veriest slaves in regard to the moral, social, political and other conventions that form our unescapable mental environment. Freedom is no limited liability company; and we are not religiously free in any valuable sense by merely exercising the right to differ from others and among ourselves on matters of theological opinion. We are only religiously free when we have learned, in the ringing words of F. W. Robertson that

The first maxim in religion and in art is—
sever yourself from all sectarianism; pledge
yourself to no school; cut your life adrift from
all party; be a slave to no maxims; stand

forth, unfettered and free, servant only to the truth. And if you say, 'But this will force each of us to stand alone'; I reply, 'Yes, grandly alone! untrammelled by the prejudices of any, and free to admire the beauty and love the goodness of them all.'¹

For religion is not a departmental interest—it is a way of life. Man has yet more fetters to break if he would be free; he has to achieve for himself rational opinions as to his relationship to society and civilization, and no longer be content to accept the suggested opinion of vested interest, that it is his business to be content with the place allotted to him by providence—or evolution. There are many universally accepted formulas which will have to be challenged, many new adjustments which will have to be made, if man is to throw off the tyranny of opinions.

¹ Quoted in *Thoughts Worth Thinking*, compiled by H. R. Allenson (H. R. Allenson, Ltd.), p. 33.

XV

IDOLS AND IDEALS

AN idol may roughly be defined as a material image. An ideal may be still more roughly defined as a mental image. A number of interesting questions arise as to the relation between idols and idolatry, and ideals and idealism, on the basis of this distinction.

The Greek word (transliterated *eidolon*) from which our English word idol is derived means originally something seen, a shape or form or phantom; also something visualized by the mind, a fancy, image, or idea. It also came to mean a statue, or material image, and so a false god. The most frequent value of the English term is : material image of a god. Now it has always been a matter of curiosity and surprise to me that idols and idolatry have received such wholesale and emphatic condemnation, particularly from the Hebrew prophets and from Christian preachers. The surprising thing about it is that there seems to have been so little imagination displayed by the critics and denouncers of this "heathen" and "sinful"

practice. It seems always to have been taken for granted that the image made with hands is literally identified by the worshipper with the supernatural power or powers with which religion is supposed to be primarily concerned. Yet if the practices and beliefs of these denouncers themselves were analyzed and judged on the same naïve assumption, the conclusion would not be very different: they too would have to be condemned as idolaters. The only difference in their case would be the fact that their idols were for the most part constructed of different material from that of the "heathen"—made, that is, of mental stuff instead of material. An idol made of ideas and slavishly worshipped does not seem to differ intrinsically from an idol made of wood, stone, silver or gold, if it is used in the same fashion for the same purpose. If it is asserted that this is unjust, for after all the idea is only the mental sign of a Divine object to which it refers, the retort is obvious that precisely the same may be—and often has been—true of the material image.¹ The savage who performs his ritual

¹ See an interesting and valuable article by S. Radhakrishnan, "The Heart of Hinduism," in the *Hibbert Journal*, XXI. No. 1, October 1922.

to propitiate a god who is supposed to be present in the form of an idol, and who gets angry when the god is unresponsive, and casts down the idol and beats it, is behaving in a very similar fashion to that of the superior people who are most forward to condemn and despise him. They bow before ideas and words, they celebrate them in hymn and ritual and then, if something happens which they think their idea of God ought to have prevented, they cast it down and castigate it with words. It does not seem any more fundamentally irrational or foolish to beat an idol than to harangue, cajole, and finally pour insults upon an idea.

But let us go a stage further. The motive behind the condemnation of idols and idolatry is, of course, the recognition that there is grave danger that the material object shall become a substitute for the reality for which it is only a sign. If we petrify God, who is living, we tend to forget the Lord of Life, and to consider that our religious duty is fulfilled if we perform the prescribed ceremonies, make the necessary sacrifices, celebrate the ordained ritual in the presence of the idol. The danger is real, and the warning is timely. But it has

a large range of application—far beyond the limited field of conventional religious protest. It is true of all symbols and images, of whatever stuff they are made. Wherever a symbol or an image is accepted as the reality in place of the something to which it points and of which it is a reminder, the evil of petrification has begun. It is meaning and value that are the essential things, and to confuse these with outer form and appearance is to be like Plato's cave-dwellers, mistaking the passing shadows of things for realities: it is to be an idolater. A great painter's masterpiece is not a piece of decorated canvas handsomely framed. This part of the business is the receptacle of a value, a meaning, a vision which we can only share by an intellectual and spiritual act. Painted canvas is an image, merely pointing us beyond; if we cannot get beyond the handsomeness of the frame, the brightness of the colours, the costliness of the pigments, any appreciation we have for the picture is idolatry—a substitution of the form for the substance. The same thing applies to mental symbols, whether called idols, ideas or ideals. There is no more virtue in reciting a creed about God than in carrying a wooden idol in triumph through the streets.

The two things are of essentially the same nature. At worst it is in both cases crude idolatry, which regards the recited creed or the wooden idol as being themselves charged with a sort of magic virtue; at best it is in both cases symbolic idolatry, which recognizes the explosions of breath or the piece of wood as signs and reminders of something beyond.

The essence of idolatry, then, as a pernicious thing, is the worship of the creature, or creation, to the exclusion of the creator. But we do not eliminate idolatry by the wholesale destruction of such material images as we happen to disapprove of. We must make a more careful classification, and recognize that there are two main forms of idolatry: (1) material idolatry, and (2) ideal idolatry. The first is not, perhaps, an immediate or pressing danger, though there is a good deal more of it practised than we always realize. Our real difficulty in the modern world is, not so much to avoid falling into ideal idolatry—for practically all religion has done this—but to find the way out; to purge ourselves of it. Ideal idolatry underlies every form of religion based on external authority, and it is explicit in every claim put forward by rival ecclesiastical corporations

that we can only know God through some creed, sacrament, or mediator approved by them, that we can only serve God through some ritual or practice prescribed by them. There could be no more definite instance adduced of making the image or symbol a substitute for reality. Where we are required to adore and worship God as petrified in a creed—ancient or modern—or else be damned everlastingly, we are being urged, in somewhat emphatic language, to substitute an image approved by others for the symbolic representation that we have to make for ourselves of all really inwardly felt experience.

We cannot escape from imagery in religion—or indeed anywhere else. But we can escape from the follies of the crude identification of our images with the realities which they are pictorial and fragmentary attempts to represent. All bigotry, intolerance and fanaticism are born of this idolatrous practice. The demand becomes, not that we must seek God and be faithful to the vision He imparts to us, but that we must worship this or that particular image of God—an image which may have been a good and effective pointer to the eternal reality for a particular time and a particular people, but

which may not fit our needs or meet the intimacies of our personal experience. The only reason why ideals are superior to idols as representations—or mental images superior to material ones—is that they are more fluid and elastic. Old and partial ideals can readily give place to new ones which embody more and deeper experience. A substantial and well-made idol lasts generation after generation, and tends to stereotype, to confine, and to restrict spiritual vision and growth. What shall we say, then, of those who try to destroy the fluidity and elasticity of the medium through which we seek to symbolize the Divine? If idolatry be a sin, this form of idolatry is surely less easy to forgive than that which is the result of ignorant credulity. Our experience in the realms of nature, of science, and of spiritual life should be impressive enough to teach us at least humility, and to make us realize with profound awe that the ultimate reality of God is vaster, deeper, broader than anything that we can represent with the limited range of our finite understanding. And therefore what our ideas and ideals are good for is to become links in the long chain of mental and spiritual revelation in which, we believe, God in His fullness is

progressively uttering Himself. The world—and God Himself—wants our deviations from the past, our rejections of yesterday's orthodoxy, our own authentic representations, however poor and inadequate, for these, as well as the great truths which are the common possession of the race, are contributory trickles and rivulets flowing into and swelling the ever-widening river of revelation.

XVI

THE SOUL OF CIVILIZATION

THE word "civilization" is one which we often use, but the precise definition of which would probably give any one of us a good deal of trouble. It stands for ideas which are many and involved; ideas which are both abstract and concrete. Probably the most prominent feature in the mind in our ordinary use of the term is the material aspect of things. When, for instance, we speak of the "advance of civilization," what we have in mind probably is the enormous increase which has taken place in the facilities and conveniences of life as a result of the practical application of scientific knowledge. Railways, telegraph and telephone systems, shipping, motor transport, aeroplanes, roads, towns, hospitals, factories, and an almost indefinitely long list of similar things indicate the material side of civilization; or rather indicate one aspect of the material side of it. Prisons, gambling dens, lunatic asylums, criminal investigation departments, houses of

ill fame, and other sinister institutions represent another. It is no doubt owing to a special sensitiveness to this side of civilization that some people have come to regard it as a gigantic evil from which mankind needs to be saved, a disease of which man needs to be cured. It is, of course, an idea, arising from a purely one-sided emphasis, with which clever minds can make effective play and score brilliant epigrams. Some there are who achieve fame by resolutely looking only at the dark side of the picture, and throwing into relief against that dark background their own brilliant schemes for reform and a new world. They are about as helpful to the cause of social progress as are those who refuse to see the dark side at all, but restrict their outlook to the pleasant prospects of their own favoured environment.

But the material aspect of civilization does not exhaust it. There has been a moral and spiritual evolution in human society as well as what may be called a material evolution. And though at times the moral and spiritual aspect of civilization gets ignored in the calculations of those who profess to be expounders of it, the fact remains that the real worth of any civilization, past or present, can only be

estimated in terms of spiritual values. The ultimate test, which history has already applied to the departed civilizations of Greece and Rome, is quite simply this: To what extent, and with what effectiveness, did or does it contribute to the development of free creative personality among the greatest possible number of human beings? Material comforts, inventions of conveniences and the like are to be estimated, not in terms of the transient pleasure some individuals may have derived from them, but in terms of the release they have effected for higher human faculties to be developed. Man begins as an animal that walks upright, but is the creature of immediate necessity; primarily a seeker after food and shelter. He becomes increasingly a spiritual being, who makes his animal nature the vehicle for the expression of a bigger and wider search: he asks no longer for mere food, but he asks for the Eternal, seeks no longer for the shelter of a safe cave, but knocks at the doors of Infinity. Civilization is, from this ultimate point of view, the instrument which man has devised to enable him to control his material environment, and make it into the background of spiritual achievement.

It may well be objected, at first glance, that this is an absurd exaggeration of the facts. Civilization, the objector may say, has obviously not been intelligently devised at all, let alone with the lofty aims in view which have been claimed for it. It is a monument to the folly as well as the wisdom, the evil as well as the good, the blundering as well as the foresight of the human race. As a whole it would be truer to say that it had grown up and established itself in spite of man and his vaunted intelligence rather than because of him, and it has quite obviously become largely his master and tyrant : in the modern world it often seems that man exists for civilization, not that civilization exists for man. To a certain extent this objection is true, and it serves to call attention to facts that we can only neglect at our peril. The evolution of society and the growth of vast unwieldy social groups such as the modern state and empire, has probably made the task of real self-determination extremely difficult, if not at times quite impossible. The Greeks in their little city states were far nearer to it than were, say, the English people five hundred years ago—perhaps even than the English people to-day. But it is futile to try to think in short

periods when we are seeking to estimate the significance of world movements, nor is it a valid principle to assert that a spiritual growth is only going on when it is fully and definitely present to the minds of the people. We may admit that much of what we call civilization has grown up without the definite intention of a directive human consciousness, but the outstanding thing is that even in his blundering man works towards ends which open up pathways for ever greater advance. The very chaos and confusion and pain are often in the nature of growing pains, and lead on to fairer vistas of achievement. Throughout there has been a guidance which has ever brought man to issues and hopes beyond his intentions and removed from his contriving.

I do not propose an easy optimism on these grounds. I offer these facts as a substantial basis for an intelligent and indomitable faith, which may be the inspiration to heroic endeavour. In the "advance of civilization" it is evident that what has happened is a much more rapid advance of the material side than the spiritual. Man has discovered ways of manipulating his environment, of harnessing natural forces for particular and immediate

and often fragmentary purposes much more quickly and thoroughly than he has conceived any big and comprehensive purpose which these things might serve. In other words, the soul of civilization is the soul of an infant in the body of an adolescent.

We do well in thinking about these things to remember that the ultimate stuff of civilization, the material out of which, in last resort, it is made, is civilized men and women. Civilization is the result of the behaviour, in its widest sense, of civilized men and women. So that if we have reason to believe that the soul of civilization is infantile, the real meaning of it is that concrete individual men and women are on the whole more appreciative of the material goods of civilization than they are of its spiritual values; and while men and women are careless of the spiritual side, the lop-sided development will go on—towards a mature body and a starved soul. The next great step forward in the pilgrimage of man will come through the awakening of a conscious realization in the minds of an ever-increasing number of people that the instrument, or body, of civilization is a racial menace unless it is providing the atmosphere and harbouring the resources

which make for the development of free creative personality, for the development of a better and finer race of men and women.

Capek, in his well-known play, *R.U.R.*, has presented the situation in the form of a dramatic parable. The plot is arranged around the theme of the invention of an artificial man, a perfect mechanical slave, which is to release mankind from all the hard and uninteresting drudgery of life. The Robots are improved to such a pitch that at last they reach the capacities of self and class consciousness. Meanwhile man, under conditions of ease and luxury, has degenerated, ceased to breed, and is rapidly becoming extinct. The final overthrow of man, however, is brought about by the revolt of the Robots; thus man falls a victim in a double way to the mechanical perfection of his own invention—it undermines his manhood in the first place, and then it actually crushes him to physical destruction. The parallel between the Robots and man's actual mechanically developed civilization is obvious. Material progress, invention and the rest are very excellent in their place and way, but they involve a complication of life which needs the fullest development of mental, moral and spiritual

powers to face and master. There is only too much in the present situation to suggest that the body of civilization—its material and mechanical side—is so much stronger than the soul of civilization—its moral and spiritual side—that we are in danger of falling victims to the unmanageable machine we have ourselves invented: it tends to run us, rather than we it. If man is to become master of the situation, and in any full sense the determiner of his future, men and women will have to learn a new philosophy of life—new not in its formulation, but new in the sense that it has never yet been held and practised on any considerable scale. It is the philosophy stated in one sentence by Jesus, when he laid down the far-reaching principle, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."¹ The material accompaniments of civilization, like the sabbath, exist for the sake of man; not man for the sake of them. Progress, in the mere sense of a speeding up of the rate at which we live, is a false value; the only thing which is progress in any true sense is man's mastery of his environment to such purpose that the possibility of a free and full life increasingly

¹ Mark ii, 27.

opens up to him; not to the few who enjoy special privileges, but to the many who share the common privileges of humanity. In so far as the end of human well-being is subordinated to economic and financial considerations—in so far as success is estimated in terms that leave out of account its reaction on human lives—we are not merely allowing, but encouraging, the soul of civilization to die.

The great practical question, overshadowing all merely party, political and sectarian religious issues that occupy so much time and interest is how to bring about the awakening of the soul of civilization. There are two agencies—already referred to in Chapter XI—to which we look in this matter: Religion and Education. We shall look in vain, as many have realized with bitter disappointment, to either religion or education which is a mere institution, existing to safeguard and perpetuate whatever is, on the ground that what is, is sacred. Religion which simply aims at making people feel good over sacred names and symbols, and education which simply aims at shaping children to become smoothly working cog-wheels in a vast machine, may survive for a time; but their influence will steadily dwindle

—is steadily dwindling. It is religion and education which reveal to men and women and children what a spiritually vigorous civilization would mean in terms of more life and fuller, that will increasingly win the loyalty, and awaken the soul, of men, women and children. A civilization which only understands and values material things can only respond to man's cry for bread with a stone. The more purely material it is the more it crushes personality and enslaves the spirit of man. There is only one way of release: not by revolution and the overthrow of civilization, but by breathing upon it the breath of life and making it a living soul. When the civilized men and women who *are* civilization discover their own souls, and develop them, and learn to put their souls into their work, their politics, their domestic and social relations, we shall have a civilization with a soul.

XVII

CIVILIZATION AND ENERGY

ONE aspect of the growth of civilization is the progressive mastery of man over the energies of Nature. From one point of view we may regard Nature as a kind of vast generating station, where enormous energies are produced. Many of these energies, left alone, run to waste; some work destructively; some work for that kind of evolution which we regard as purposive and progressive. There is, for instance, an immense amount of energy produced, yet from a mechanical point of view running to waste, in the great waterfalls of the world, in the rising and falling of the tides. Civilized man has begun to realize what great purposes can be fulfilled by controlling, directing and converting these energies. Again, man has just begun to realize something of the stored-up energy in coal. This energy is wasted not merely by leaving the coal in the ground, but by burning coal in its raw state in millions of houses for warming and cooking

purposes. The energies of storm and wind are conspicuous among those which are not merely waste, but actively destructive. The force of electricity in the thunderstorm is no doubt fulfilling its function in the universal economy, but from our point of view it is energy destructively directed; so also the raging wind that stirs up the ocean to storm, the explosive forces that burst the earth's crust in volcano and earthquake.

To utilize these forces, to minimize or eliminate their destructive power by directing them intelligently, to increase their value by making them do work which helps to make the world a better place for man to dwell in—these are some of the tasks of civilization, and are tasks which have proceeded a considerable way, as we realize when we compare the modern with the ancient world. But it is not only Nature which is a generating station of energy; and the control and direction of natural forces is but part of the task of a true and worthy civilization. Mankind itself is an energy producer; energy which is physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual. And these human energies are in as much need of right direction and control as are those which belong to what we call "external

nature." Here, as in the case of Nature undirected, there is waste of energy, there is unapplied, and, what is worse, misapplied energy. And when we face the problems of the unapplied and misapplied energies of mankind we come to the very roots of what theology calls the fact of sin. We have but to think of individuals and of nations in whom and in which energies of passion, intense feeling, intellect, have been uncontrolled and misapplied, to realize what harvests of evil and suffering are reaped, not by them alone, but by society at large.

Generally speaking, energy as such, whether natural or human, is neither good nor bad—a fact which has already been referred to in Chapter VI. Energy is the driving power which moves for good or for evil according to the direction which is given to it: everything depends upon direction or misdirection of the energy. Passion, force of intellect, physical power, spiritual sensibility are neither good nor bad till they are directed, until they are in action. Passion and physical power enlisted in the service of a good cause—a cause that aims at the promotion of the real welfare of mankind—are good; but losing themselves in

the wild chaos of selfish gratification and destruction, they are bad. The forces of the spiritual life can equally be wrongly directed—towards superstition, isolation, selfishness. All energy of the human being is good if it is rightly directed and controlled; and so the supreme problem of a religious civilization is to make possible the right use for good ends of human energy.

This principle is being more and more recognized in the sphere of education. Rightly understood—as the Greeks, for instance, understood it—education is not concerned merely with the intellectual energies, but with all the energies of the human being. It used to be assumed that all children possessed a certain quantity of “animal spirits” which must find vent, whether in play or in mischief, and later on, in the case of male youth at least, in the form of “sowing wild oats.” Therefore some provision had to be made, some outlet left, or connived at, for them to “let off steam,” to get rid of “superfluous energy.” Scientifically there is no such thing as “superfluous energy.” It is only energy which we have not learnt to control, direct, utilize, that we call “superfluous.” Baden-Powell did a great

thing for education when he started the Boy Scouts' Movement, which, from the present point of view, may be described as simply a scheme to give a sensible and useful direction to vital energies, physical and mental and spiritual, in such a way as to contribute to character-building and good citizenship.¹

Donald Hankey has written with characteristic insight and power on this problem in relation to the men of our citizen army in the war.² Under the heading "Of Some Who Were Lost, and Afterward Were Found" (Chapter VIII) he writes of men whose energies found no useful place amid the conventions and customs of normal social life. In his own words :

They were lost; but not necessarily damned. They were lost; but they were not poisonous. That was the trouble. They were so lovable. . . . They gave us endless trouble. They would not fit into any respectable niche in our social edifice. They were incurably dis-

¹ Wm. McDougall in his *Social Psychology* (Methuen), Chapter IV, has an interesting and valuable section on "Play," in which he shows that among animals play is a kind of education in the control and direction of energies on whose functioning they will be dependent for their livelihood.

² *A Student in Arms* (Melrose). Quotations from Chapter VIII.

reputable, always in scrapes, always impecunious, always improvident. . . .

We could not fit them in, and somehow we felt that this inability of ours was a slur on society. We felt that there ought to be a place for them in the scheme of things. . . .

Then at last we 'got out.' We were confronted with dearth, danger and death. And then they came to their own. We could no longer compete with them. . . . Never was such a triumph of spirit over matter. . . . With a gay heart they gave their greatest gift, and with a smile to think that after all they had anything to give which was of value.

This one thing is quite clear: there were energies, physical, mental and spiritual, which had long laid dormant or had actually been misdirected into anti-social and destructive ways, which the circumstances and demands of war stimulated and directed into fine and heroic activity. It is a serious reflection on the state of our pre-war civilization and social order that so much power, such splendid human energies were allowed to run to waste, or to work destructively for want of scope and opportunity, or by reason of lack of stimulus and right direction. But it is a still more serious reflection on the state of civilization that little, if anything, has been done since the

war to discover the way in which such potentially heroic energies might become available for the common good. A fundamental problem of that "reconstruction" of which we talked so much, towards which we have done so little, is to give scope and provide stimulus and direction to these energies within the fellowship of a society which seeks life more abundant, rich and varied, rather than the accumulation of material wealth, or the destructive misuse of material power.

It is far easier to be critical and negative than constructive and positive—easier to point out the faults and failings of our social order that have led to the waste of human energy, than to suggest the remedy. It will require the earnest thought, the good-natured, tolerant and sympathetic collaboration of many minds of all sorts of points of view to lay the foundations of a freer, fuller and more creative life. But it is well at least to be aware of the problem—aware of it in two very definite aspects: (1) What, as William James asked years ago, is the moral equivalent for war? In other words, how can we secure the scope and provide the stimulus for the healthy and beneficent activity of human energies in peace, for the

sake of the common good, and to their fullest extent? (2) What is the moral equivalent of industrial and commercial competition as we know, or have known it?

The answer to these fundamental questions obviously cannot be given by any individual thinker: it can only be achieved in the course of experimental living. But there is one line of thought which seems to me essential to pursue if we are to undertake any experiments in living which are likely to help us to gain the answer. That line of thought has to do with the absolutely fundamental nature of the principle of human co-operation. Human interdependence is a fact, of which at times we are forgetful indeed, but of which there are never wanting impressive reminders. "The rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater"¹—so we read and quote, frequently enough, but it is true only in an abstract and quite sketchy fashion. That the sower may have seed and the eater bread involves a stupendous amount of human labour and

¹ Isaiah iv. 10.

co-operation. It would be a good exercise for everyone to start with the loaf of bread as it comes to the breakfast table, and then to trace back, step by step, the processes involved in its reaching that breakfast table: processes of manufacture, transport, testing, reaping, sowing, ploughing, of scientific research in agriculture—merely to mention a few of the more obvious. It may safely be said that a considerable portion of the population of the world is involved in one way or another in giving bread to the eater. We had reason to realize how dependent upon the harmonious co-operation of world workers we were (and are) in this respect during the war. The shortage, which was universal, was not due to the sterility of nature, but to the shattering of the co-operation of man.

Under ordinary conditions there is an immense amount of co-operation in the production of the necessaries of life, and the maintenance of order and stability. Without it, life under modern conditions would be impossible. We may say that the survival of man depends upon a certain minimum of co-operation, and one of the most serious problems before Europe is the question whether that minimum is going to

be maintained. But the lessons of biology, anthropology, psychology and history carry us a good deal farther than this—to the recognition, namely, that if *survival* depends upon the practice of a certain minimum of co-operation, *progress* depends upon an approximation to the maximum. It was the transition from the unicellular to the multicellular organism that marked one of the great turning-points of biological progress—that is, cellular co-operation. It is significant that the most progressive species, among which man takes the first place, are the gregarious ones—those which have engrained in their make-up instinctive tendencies which make for co-operation. And what has been true of the life history of the cell, and the life history of particular groups of living individuals, is true not less, but more, of the whole species of man. If the human species is to make any real progress in the future, it will have to be by means of systematic and universal co-operation.

An objection may be raised to this assertion on the ground that rivalry, competition and even conflict are essential elements in actual progress, and that any real world federation which gave man as a whole the undisputed

mastery of the globe, would inevitably lead to his deterioration. This, however, is but a superficial criticism. Rivalry, competition and conflict are indeed necessary for progress; but the root question is, Who are the rivals, the competitors, the fighters? What is the nature of the conflict? It is always assumed by a certain school of writers and teachers that man is and must be in conflict with man, that man is ever the rival, competitor and fighter of man. I believe the assumption to be fundamentally false, as a necessary condition for the future. The real answer to the question is written unmistakably in Nature, the external world, the total environment. The whole set of conditions in which we live is our rival and competitor, and provides the force opposed to man in his titanic conflict. Nature is no benevolent nursing mother who looks after us and saves us and pampers us in spite of ourselves. There is a beneficent and helpful, as there is a beautiful aspect of Nature, but it is the merest sentimentality to pretend that Nature as a whole and in its entirety is our friend. In many of its most important aspects it is a rival, a competitor, an enemy. Nature, for instance, has to be persuaded with all the arts and

ingenuity of man to bring about the annual harvest; but she needs no help from man to bring death and devastation to thousands of people, and to make in a few minutes a pile of ashes out of what just before was a proud and populous city of habitation.

In face of those conditions which belong to the very constitution of this globe in space which we human beings inhabit, inter-human conflict spells in the earlier stages stagnation, and in the later, racial suicide. If we can find no other means of feeding a growing world population than that of wars of expansion and conquest, and no better or more intelligent means of avoiding the perils of over-population than that of borrowing the destructive methods of Nature and applying them wholesale to the best and most virile section of the race, then we are actively courting disaster; and if that represents the summit of human wisdom and morality, the sooner the final disaster comes to end the tragedy the better. The lesson that experience is not so much telling us, as thundering into our ears, is that co-operation is necessary precisely because the world we live in affords us the arena of a conflict so stupendous that it will take the combined resources of

wisdom, self-control, inventiveness, labour, patience and general good sense of the whole family of the human race to win through.

We used to be told by a distinguished statesman to think imperially. We have arrived to-day at a stage in human history when imperial thinking is little better than parochial thinking. The only sort of thinker who will help us through the crisis that is upon us is the universal thinker. And to recognize this is to be brought to the very heart of religion. Many a time in its history, religion has grasped some great and essential truth, and proclaimed it through weary years of popular indifference; scarcely understanding the truth, maybe, herself, and securing but little understanding of it by the world at large, till some great crisis brought revelation. For how many centuries has religion proclaimed the vision of the kingdom of heaven, the rulership of God, the brotherhood of man—and with how little realization that this was no message of orthodox piety, deriving itself from some alleged supernatural revelation, but that it has behind it the authority of the whole evolution of the species. Man, from the cosmic point of view, represents a critical moment in the sublime experiment of

God. The experiment is one—so far as we can state it—of spiritual creation, under conditions of strain, stress and conflict. Man has come to the hills of vision, whence, in the distance, the promised land can be faintly discerned. He is trembling on the verge of spiritual attainment. But the fundamental law of the spiritual world is Love; and until the race has learnt to obey this law, and consequently to subordinate private, class, national and imperial ambitions to the universal aim of the triumph of mankind as a whole, there can be no entering into the kingdom of God, the empire of Righteousness.

As individuals we want freedom.
As human beings we must have law
& order. How reconcile the two?

XVIII

MAN AND THE COMMUNITY

ONE of the central problems of life, [not merely of this or any other particular epoch, but belonging to the whole course of human evolution], is the problem of the right relationship between man as an individual and the community to which, [in one form or another], he inevitably belongs, and from which he derives, in large measure, his security and well-being. The extreme practical difficulty of the problem is due to the fact that while man is a gregarious species, he is not a perfectly specialized gregarious species. This will become clear if we think of the communities of the ants and bees. They are what may be called perfectly specialized gregarious units. So far as we, [who are not ants or bees], can judge from careful observation, it appears that in these communities the individual can hardly be said to exist, [or at any rate to rank as an individual in any sense of the term which has meaning for us.] There are no such things as individual

rights. Every ant or bee is an integral part of the larger unit of the hive or the ant-hill. In the case of man there is a radical difference. In spite of the theory of the philosophers, [starting, at least so far as the West is concerned, with Plato, that the state or community is an organism, of which the individual men and women are integral parts or organs,] the whole story of man is a most vigorous demonstration of his refusal to merge individuality in the community. For man the community has always been a means to an end, and that end is somehow personal. All the great revolutions of history demonstrate man's rejection of the ant-hill or beehive theory of human society. Behind the overthrow of tyrannies and the slow democratization of government there is the implicit assertion that individual personality has its dignity and its rights; and that, in truth, the essential purpose of human association, [the state, and systems of government,] is the promotion, [not of some super-personal entity, called state, empire, or society, but] of the worth and fullness of personal life itself; "a state," as Aristotle in the *Politics*¹ says,

¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, tr. by B. Jowett (Clarendon Press), III. 9, 6.

"exists for the sake of a good life, and not for the sake of life only." A good life is not lived or enjoyed by the abstraction we call "community," but by the actually alive men and women whose inter-relation we call community. Aristotle is right in saying that the state, or some form of society, is prior to the individual,¹ in so far as what he means is that man actually is a gregarious animal; for, to make use of a paradox, man would not be here at all if he had not been gregarious. But from the practical point of view, and as a matter of simple fact, the whole trend of human history is the affirmation that the individual is prior to the state or society. This was inevitable in a species which developed personal self-consciousness as a dominant characteristic. There can only be a perfect merging of parts in a whole when there is no self-consciousness intruding with its claim to personal integrity and consideration.

In making this statement I am not endeavouring to propound a theory, but so far as possible simply to state a fact. I am not arguing for individualism as against socialism or communism. Indeed, socialism and communism,

¹ *Ibid.*, I. 2, 13.

as often as not, are instances of precisely the trend I have referred to. They are reactions against the tyranny of the community, as that tyranny finds expression in one particular form. The socialist and the communist base their demands upon the rights, not of a super-personal society, but of the persons who constitute society. They are quite as much individualist in the fundamental sense as are those who profess individualism as a philosophy. The common ground of both groups is concern for personal rights. The differences are in regard to the method of securing the end, and, at least to some extent, in regard to personal duties and responsibilities. And it may be noted incidentally, the enemies of true progress are not either the convinced individualists on the one hand, or the convinced socialists or communists on the other, but the convictionless people who just don't care one way or the other so long as they are permitted to enjoy the benefits that are derived from the community, and can escape with an absolute minimum of return in the way of duties fulfilled in relation to the community. In a word, the vessel of progress is slowed up by the barnacles that stick to the keel; the life of the tree is

endangered by the parasitic growths that feed on it without contributing to its life.

The heart of the difficulty resides in the fact that while we actually reject the principle of complete subordination to, or identification with the community, [which, could we have accepted it, would have meant perfect harmony—there are no social abuses or injustices in the beehive]—we are nevertheless absolutely dependent upon society, both for the elementary needs of life and for all the higher personal values which make life worth living. The good life depends upon the maintenance of a stable and harmonious social order. But this very thing, which from one point of view is an exceedingly difficult practical problem, is from another point of view the essential condition of man's greatness and opportunity in the whole scheme of evolution. The bees have doubtless escaped many troubles, anxieties and distresses, but it is a finer thing to evolve a society of free persons than a beehive, even though in the course of that evolution we have to pass through violent upheavals and deadly antagonisms, and have to endure pain and woe :

"Wouldst thou ask why?
It is because all noblest things are born
In agony."¹

It is man inspired by religious insight and vision that sees prophetically the solution of the problem. [And indeed, when once the vision has been grasped, not merely as an external fact with the intellect, but as a living truth with the whole soul, it seems ludicrously simple.] It is not by way of self-destruction, the surrender of all personal existence, and becoming a mere instrument of society, as in the case of the bees and the ants; nor is it by self-assertion and ruthless domination; but it is by way of self-control and fellowship. Man has the capacity to build on earth the city of God—to devise a social life and order which will promote the life and well-being of all its members, if he would only realize it. What prevents, or hinders him, is not Fate or Destiny, but his own yet uncontrolled impulses and tendencies, his inheritance from remote animal ancestry, as well as from more recent human ancestry. There is no reason for social injustice and tyranny, or for ruthless struggle and

¹ Frances Power Cobbe.

conflict; reason does not enter primarily into the situation which brings these things forth at all; it is impulse, untamed and unsublimated instinct, which reason is slowly learning to recognize, understand and grapple with. Still less is there any external necessity in the continuance of social disorder, disharmony, struggle and conflict: the necessity exists within, while instinct, instead of reason, is at the helm. The way has been shown again and again by the seers and the prophets: the way of self-control for mutual service in fellowship. Love God; love man as thyself; do unto others as you would that they should do to you: that is, surrender first to the supreme Ideal, and then, in the light of that Ideal and for its sake, enter into fellowship with man on the basis of an equal respect for the personality of others to that which you accord and expect others to accord to your own. Or, as Kant has put it, in the *Metaphysic of Ethics*: "So act that humanity, both in thy own person and that of others, be used as an end in itself, and never as a mere means."¹

¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysic of Ethics*, tr. by J. W. Semple (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1869), p. 40.

XIX

DESTINY AND THE NATIONS

DURING a recent visit to Holland it was my good fortune to meet and have several intimate conversations with a German professor; and among the matters we discussed was the question of international politics and relationships from the philosophical and religious point of view. He told me that not only he personally, but a considerable body of thoughtful people in Germany, had come to accept the view that the behaviour and fate of nations was altogether beyond the control of the actual persons, whether governed or governing, who constitute the nation. For him the State represented a kind of super-personality, obeying laws of action which are unknown to the individual. He denied that this was an ultimately pessimistic view, because he maintained that every nation would make its contribution, whether through tragedy and suffering, or through success and expansion, to an end which will justify all. This view calls to mind the attitude

of an English historian,¹ who, writing on the problem of England and Germany soon after the outbreak of war, gave emphatic expression to precisely similar views. Thus :

The forces which determine the actions of empires and great nations are deep hidden, and not easily affected by words or even by feelings of hostility or friendship. They lie beyond the wishes or intentions of the individuals composing those nations. They may even be contrary to those wishes and those intentions.

Now this seems to be a perfectly intelligible and natural view to take of the march of events from the outside. It is possible, granted the literary skill and imagination, to write a most interesting history on this basic assumption. Men and women are merely the material used by destiny; they are the tools with which the super-personal, perhaps impersonal, works to achieve its unknown end. On this assumption history becomes splendidly tragic; the unfolding of a superhuman drama. But the whole situation is changed if we do not happen to be primarily historians with a taste for literary effect, but human beings; if our interest is even more in the present and future than it is

¹ J. A. Cramb, *Germany and England*.

in the past. The apparent simplifications brought about by speaking of "nations" and "empires" as if they were self-existent units, with a mind and a will of their own utterly divorced from the mind and will of any and every person, ceases to have any practical value. It is a point of view from which we cannot *face* the present or future in any moral or spiritual sense at all: we can only await the future as fatalistic observers, and endure the present as the inevitable fulfilment of a destiny which we have no part in shaping, and for which we have no sort of responsibility.

By all means let us try to face the actual facts, and do justice to them. If we do this, however much we may dislike the super-personal destiny theory, we shall have to admit that it is a plausible and natural induction from the observed course of events as we look backward. The wars of the nations, which make up so much of what is commonly taught as "history," culminating in the war of 1914, were not carefully planned and thought out and determined upon by the unanimous consent of intelligent communities. They happened as the result of the boiling up and bursting out of impulses and passions which are ordinarily

held in check by the moral individual. No doubt the passions and impulses of the multitude were cleverly played upon by the few who had planned and foreseen; but this is beside the point immediately before us, which is that actually very few people thought about having war, and still fewer wanted war. It came upon them in spite of themselves, and they accepted it as "inevitable." Its causes seem to have lain "beyond the wishes or intentions of the individuals composing those nations," in the words of J. A. Cramb.

But the great question is whether that determination of the destinies of nations, which we admit as a fact of the past, is something beyond the control of human wisdom and foresight, or whether it is the survival in the mass-mind of pre-intelligent mentality. In other words, is not the alleged "super-personal" destiny really a sub-personal destiny, which exists precisely because we have not yet asserted our power to master and control it?—a destiny which, like that in Maeterlinck's play,¹ looms large and forbidding and impressive just so long as we acquiesce in its inevitability, but which dwindles in proportion as we challenge

¹ See above, Chapter III.

its substantiality. The truth is, not that we are the victims of an external and inexorable destiny, but that we are the unwitting manufacturers of a pseudo-destiny, which flourishes on our ignorance of our own human impulses. It is something which we endow, as the fetishist and idolater used to endow his material object, with determining power by reason of our belief and acquiescence.

One of the outstanding requisites of this time—as of most—is a greater power and willingness on the part of the mass of people to *think*. Too many of us are content to echo the thought of others—or what sometimes is merely the prejudice of others. Actually the destiny that we create and fear, which divides us into antagonistic groups, sects, classes, nations and the rest, exists and is effective in proportion to the extent of our failure to think, but to allow ourselves to be borne along on the tide of blind impulse and irrational habit. Most of us only use what thinking capacity we have to justify our impulsive and habitual actions after they have occurred, to persuade others and ourselves that we were really much more reasonable than in fact we were. Now the true use of thinking is not to *explain acts*—

especially by distorting them—so much as to *determine action*, by controlling impulse and modifying habit. Thus the escape from the fatalism of which I have been speaking is by way of education—meaning by that much-abused word the setting free and calling into activity of original and spontaneous mental power. There is no need in the nature of things for the association of human beings to bring about their debasement, their regression to a lower level of mental and moral life than that of the normal individual; but, as we know, that is what only too often actually takes place, as any observer of the crowd is aware. Human association can increase and enhance mental and moral insight, but only on condition that there is mental and moral insight to increase and enhance; and unfortunately there is less of these things than we like to acknowledge. There are large numbers of people who substitute obedience to their unanalyzed feelings and to uncritically accepted mass suggestions for any attempt to understand, judge and act for themselves.

It took no small period of time to evolve the capacity for intelligent control and behaviour in man, and it is no wonder if the sway of

intelligence is not yet universal; that there are frequent lapses to levels of sub-intelligence, especially when groups of men have to act together. It is no cause for pessimism, or the acceptance of a fatalistic philosophy. It is rather a challenge to intelligent effort, painstaking research and practical teaching. Man has endured and survived many bogies and superstitions in his time, and when he has faced and destroyed this bogey of external destiny, he will discover the way of co-operation and fellowship, and pass from the animal phase to that of spiritual life and freedom.

XX

THE SHEEP THEORY

RELIGION necessarily makes abundant use in its language of images and symbols, whether that language be spoken, painted, acted or expressed through the vehicle of music. It would be quite futile to try to do away altogether with symbolic expressions, unless we were prepared to relapse into complete silence in regard to the great and ultimate problems. That has, of course, been advocated from time to time by thinkers—more especially Indian thinkers. Thus ¹:

When Bāhva was questioned by Vaṣkali he expounded the nature of Brahman to him by maintaining silence. 'Teach me,' said Vaṣkali, 'most reverend sir, the nature of Brahman.' Bāhva, however, remained silent. But when the question was put for a second or third time, he answered, 'I teach you indeed, but you do not understand; the Ātman is silence.' The way to indicate this is by *neti*,

¹ Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Camb. Univ. Press, 1922), p. 45.

neti, it is not this, it is not this. We cannot describe it by any positive content, which is always limited by conceptual thought.

But for those of us who are not prepared to go as far as this and who still find it desirable to seek for expression through image and symbol, it is of vital importance to remember that our terms *are* images and symbols, so that we can retain our sense of proportion, and remain in the position of masters of our language, and not become its victims and slaves. One of the roots of all dogmatism and bigotry is to be found just here: in treating symbols as absolute instead of as purely relative. An essential task of religion is the regular overhauling of its imagery and symbolism, with a view to scrapping what has ceased to be valid, and generally recasting it to keep it in touch with reality.

One of the favourite images of Christian thought about man and his relation to God is the Sheep image. It has come to us chiefly from the pages of the Old Testament. The Hebrews were largely a pastoral people, and sheep were an important item in their life. Incidentally the growth of ritual led to the adoption of curious sacrificial practices in

which sheep and lambs figured prominently, and that development has left important traces upon Christian dogma and symbolism. But as purely verbal and artistic image the Sheep idea has endeared itself to large numbers of people. That God is like a shepherd, and His people like a flock of sheep, cared for and protected by Him, is one of the familiar consolatory images which has sustained the faith and hope of many people in times of difficulty and sorrow. One has only to think of the popularity of the Twenty-third Psalm to realize this.

But there are some who want to get more from their images and symbols than they are qualified to provide. The Sheep and Shepherd image is good only as representing a certain mood of a definitely emotional character, in which it is of help to us to remember our entire dependence upon the vast power of God. We wander hither and thither, seeking for richer pastures, intent upon our little needs and interests, and it is immeasurably comforting to think that however far we go, and even when it seems to us that we are lost, we never go beyond the watchful care of the Good Shepherd. It is essentially the language of emotion,

not of reason. (And as long as it is left as a vehicle of emotional expression, and consequently vague and undefined, it is helpful and true.) It is directly theologians or politicians or social theorists drag the term from its emotional setting and seek to press it into the service of particular theories and dogmas that the mischief arises, and the image becomes no longer a help but a stumbling-block.

The story of the development of the Christian Church can be represented, in one aspect, as the evolution of the Sheep theory as applied to mankind. Underlying a great deal of its organization and teaching there is the tacit, if not at times declared, assumption that men and women are like flocks of sheep which have to be herded together in folds. (The aim is to herd together in one fold as many as possible; to mark them with one brand, and strictly to limit them to one area of thoroughly supervised pasture land.) It ceases to be God who is the Shepherd; God is represented on earth by the Institution, and ecclesiastical officers become shepherds of the sheep. Theirs is the duty, not so much to lead the sheep forth to find the best pasture, but to get all the sheep into one pen, and when they leave it, to make sure that

they never wander beyond the limits marked out by some shepherd-in-chief as suitable pasture for them to browse in. In a word, it is the development of the principle of authority, which reaches its natural conclusion in the infallible Pope, who is the shepherd-in-chief. If you are an obedient sheep, believing and doing what you are told, and abiding in the fold, you are good, faithful, "saved"—and the rest. If you wander in search of new pasture lands, and prefer to undertake the risk of finding your own shelter, then you are a "lost sheep," and as such destined to be consumed. It is astonishing how long men and women have acquiesced in the almost literal application of the Sheep idea; but in recent years it is probably the widespread repudiation of the whole Sheep philosophy which has gradually led to the diminution of the power and prestige of the Church. People in large numbers have become hostile to the sheepish attitude; they do not any longer want shepherds to keep them in folds and pens, and drive them out into ecclesiastically approved pastures, fenced around with arbitrary hedges. They want companions in the Great Quest, loyal comrades in the strenuous adventure of life. That is one reason,

at least, why so many really religious people do not associate themselves with Church organizations as readily and naturally as they used to do. It is only fair to remember, however, that this is by no means the only reason for the decreasing support given to churches in modern times. Another reason is the fact that there are a number of people who are simply not prepared to make any sacrifice of their own purely personal interests and self-centred desires for the sake of any attempt at organized service or co-operative fellowship.

It is an interesting fact that there is a school of modern psychologists which has adopted the Sheep theory, and set it in the forefront of its social teaching.¹ The old doctrine of psychology that man is rational has had to be revised in the light of the study of instinct and its associated modes of behaviour, and the enthusiasts are fond of telling us that we are all sheep, dominated by the power of mass suggestion. It is curious to reflect how often it is the case that in throwing off one tyranny man submits himself to another. The dogmas

¹ This is the tendency, *e. g.*, in W. Trotter's *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and in War*.

of the Church have been cast off by many folk, who have merely exchanged their bondage to what they call science. If they think that the latest word of science is that man is wholly irrational, they accept this—at least in regard to everybody except themselves. They, of course, are emancipated, and their recognition of everyone else's irrationality is sufficient proof of their enlightened rationality. No responsible person denies the fact that mankind in the mass has sheep-like characteristics. We are all of us liable to be swept off our feet by mass suggestion, and to have our judgment distorted by our own irrational motivations. But this is neither a desirable state of things nor a necessary one. It is not a matter for public rejoicing and self-congratulation: it is a weakness to be grown out of as we advance in rational self-knowledge and control. We naturally and rightly resent the attempt of the Church to make us into sheep; why should we, sheep-like, accept the dogma that anyhow we really *are* sheep when it is a doctor of psychology instead of a doctor of divinity who proclaims it?

The business of men and women is precisely to become something more than mere sheep, and one important function of the religion of

fellowship is to help to develop persons, not sheep. As a philosophy, the Sheep theory is not heroic enough to satisfy a living and active human being. We have a vision of man in his true nature as being for ever discontented to be merely fed in selected pastures and folded in safe pens. He is a participator in the unceasing work of creation, which is no remote prehistoric event, but a continuous process. There is, indeed, a place in religious experience for the submissiveness of a childlike trust, and we are never likely to outgrow the need for it. But there is no room in religion for the cringing, cowardly, unintelligent and sheepish bartering of our birthright as intelligent members of a kingdom of God which we call universe, for the mess of pottage of contentment achieved by spiritual and intellectual auto-hypnosis. The essence of the genuinely religious reaction is finely expressed in the passage in Ezekiel¹ where the prophet records :

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee.

¹ Ezekiel i. 28, ii. 1.

To the human cry, "All we like sheep have gone astray," this is the authentic response of the divine spirit within. (If you have been like a sheep, stop being like one;) "Son of *man*, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee."

XXI

AGNOSTICISM AND RELIGION

AGNOSTICISM is a fact: it is the starting-point of the man who has realized that to study Infinity requires Eternity. . . .

Agnosticism is no excuse for idleness: because we cannot know all, it does not follow that we should remain wholly ignorant. . . .

Knowledge is not a right end in itself: the aim of the philosopher must be not to know, but to be somewhat. The philosopher who is a bad citizen has studied in vain. . . .

In the hour of danger a man is proven: the boaster hides, the egotist trembles, only he whose care is for honour and for others forgets to be afraid. . . .

True religion is betting one's life that there is a God.

In the hour of danger all good men are believers: they choose the spiritual and reject the material.

(From "A Book of Wisdom" in Donald Hankey's *A Student in Arms*, XIII.)

The relation between agnosticism and practical religion could hardly have been better

stated than in these brief sentences. All except the very ignorant—who, as the writer of this "Book of Wisdom" says, are always dogmatic—confess to a large measure of agnosticism. But the great question is: How do they confess to it? Is it for them an end, a terminus, a conclusion, or is it a starting-point? In truth, agnosticism is no doctrine, but is an attitude. He is no agnostic who declares that the universe and its meaning are unknowable, for he professes to have knowledge of the most astonishing character. Agnosticism, as the author of the Wisdom quoted says, is a fact; but it is a fact the acceptance of which involves an attitude. The fact is, not that we *cannot* know, but that as a matter of fact there is an immense amount which we *do not* know; and accordingly the genuine agnostic is characterized by an attitude of humility and teachableness. His agnosticism is the starting-point for the great quest, the impetus to active experimentation, the ever-open window to the freshening breezes from the unknown. Because he is without the cocksureness of dogmatic denial or dogmatic assertion, he is not therefore devoid of strong guiding convictions. But his convictions are learnt from life, and are held

as subject to modification under the discipline of experience.

Thus agnosticism may be regarded as an enemy by theology, at least by all types of theology which claim to be final declarations of truth, but it is never an enemy to religion. For religion has its roots in the very stuff of human nature. Before either knowing, or not-knowing, before gnosticism or agnosticism, religion was, and was the driving force of being and doing. Theology grew up, not to tell us how to be religious, but as an attempt to say what was involved in the fact that we had religious experience. Religion belongs to those deeper sources of motivation which constrain us to do and to be something. We feel God before we know God in the terms of our conceptual or symbolic thought: as Jesus said, the *first* commandment is: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. And it is first not only in the sense that it is the most important, but in the sense that it is prior in experience to any other attitude. The soul responds to the mysterious presence of the Unknown which is all-environmenting long before it puts that response into any formal language, or is capable of inventing any theory about it. To admit agnosticism in

religion is to acknowledge that there are heights and depths in religious experience, that there are inward revelations of aspiration and longing, that are never explained in terms of knowledge, and that therefore while we are agnostic to the creeds, we are in a far more inward and intimate sense gnostic to the immediacies of God within.

Generally speaking it is the gnostics who have endangered religion, the agnostics who have kept its flame burning amid the darkness. It is the people who have professed to know too much about the precise nature of God, and who reduced Him to a formula, who have opened the way to the kind of doubt and scepticism which are really harmful. A great rebuke to this kind of gnosticism, which has hardly yet been attended to by the theologians, was uttered by a Hebrew prophet¹ when he wrote :

Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?

If no one has ever acted in this capacity,

¹ Isaiah xl, 13, 14.

there have not been wanting candidates for the office; and it is the dogmatic assurance of such self-appointed advisers and custodians of the Deity which has led again and again to revolt against what was being offered as religion. The fact is that as soon as we substitute what we assert to be right knowing for right feeling, right willing, and right acting as essential to religion, we throw open the door to irreligion. Knowledge is essentially instrumental.¹ "Knowledge for its own sake" is a phrase without meaning. The most abstract love of knowledge "for its own sake" (so called) is an expression of the curiosity hunger which is one of the active springs of human life and conduct. All attempts at religious knowledge are really instrumental; they are new tools forged by our deepest life, by the whole system of that which we are, in order that life may become yet more and fuller. But the primary thing is always the experience. We are nearer the great secret when we love, and forget ourselves in the wholeheartedness of love, than we are when we formulate the doctrine that God is love.

¹ See below, XXV, "The Place of Experiment in Religion."

" Dear friend, know'st thou not
that the only truth in the world
Is what one heart telleth another
in speechless greetings of love? " ¹

It is the daily, the hourly, crises of experience that prove what manner of men and women we are, and the real meaning of God and the universe to us.

The whole thing is summed up in the suggestive contrast between two incidents recorded in the New Testament: the one of Paul, the other of Jesus. In Acts xvi. the jailor asks Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved. The reply is: " Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." Is it an exaggeration to see in this the fountain head of the whole credal system of Christianity, and the starting-point of its insistence on the profession of right knowledge, or belief? The contrast is afforded by the reply of Jesus to the inquirer about the way to eternal life (Matt. xix. 16-22): " Keep the commandments," Jesus said, and also, Get rid of whatever things encumber you, and come, follow me. There is no theory. Not even the name of God is mentioned, except when the commandments

¹ Vladimir Solovev, quoted by Sir R. Bridges, *Spirit of Man*, 140.

themselves are repeated. The emphasis is all on doing: If you want life, do something; set your face in a certain direction and travel. There surely we may see the fountain head of all the power of Christianity as the religion of doing and being; religion which is not a doctrine or dogma, but an attitude, not a belief, but a spirit.

Does it, then, not matter what we believe? It matters very much. The point is that it matters so much that we cannot afford to wait about on the margin of the great sea till someone can satisfy our curiosity in detail as to what lies on it and beyond it, and what experiences are likely to befall us if we venture forth upon it. The insistent demand of life is that we go, and the further fact is that in going we shall learn. This is the adventure which is appointed for us, and what we need is the spirit, the heroic willingness, that will try to get the best and the most from the discipline. We go forth, in the words quoted, "betting our life that there is a God," because God as a fact, not a theory, something implicitly loved and trusted by the deepest soul in us, and not necessarily formulated into a doctrine at all, impels us to "bet our life" upon Him. We believe in life after we

live, not before, and any beliefs we have about it are worth anything in proportion as they have been derived from our living. We can only believe, intellectually, in God after we have surrendered to the impulse to love and serve God in the practice of good, in the keeping of those commandments which are written on the tablets of the heart.

XXII

ATHEISM AND RELIGION

It is exceedingly difficult to lay down any hard-and-fast definition of Theism, and consequently also of Atheism. The tendency has been for all theological defences of Theism to be couched in terms that are both technical and conventional. In a word, it was supposed that you did not believe in God (*i. e.* were not a theist) unless you believed in a generally approved definition of God in the language of tradition. And on the whole, that seems to be the prevailing attitude of theologians still to-day. It is no wonder, in view of that fact, that religion is profoundly indebted to the great atheistic heretics, who have borne witness to the fact that the reality which the word God ought to stand for is something at once infinitely greater, and at the same time nearer and more intimate, than official Theism recognizes. One of the outstanding instances of the indebtedness of spiritual religion to Atheism in this

sense is provided by Buddhism. At the time of Gotama the old Vedic gods had undergone great changes, largely in the direction of degeneration and multiplication. Gods and spirits abounded in profusion, and these deities were conceived for the most part in the image of man—and man by no means at his best. By special rites and ceremonies and formulas they could be influenced and cajoled, just as a human despot might be. The wise and philosophical, it is true, did not share the crude beliefs of the ignorant. Their attitude was largely pantheistic, and they held that to become one with Brahma it was necessary to forgo the ordinary amenities of life, and undergo the rigours of asceticism and seclusion. To develop states of trance and mystic ecstasies was held to be the height of piety, and a life of abstract speculation was placed in highest honour. Thus on the one hand the idea of God stood in the main for crude superstitions on the part of the ignorant "many-folk," and for a highly abstract entity, to be approached by speculation and withdrawal from the world, on the part of the thoughtful and would-be religious. Now in face of this what Gotama proclaimed was a radical change in the whole

point of view. His system is commonly called atheistic; but strictly speaking it was neither atheistic nor theistic—atheism is really a purely relative term. Gotama did not deny the possible existence of gods and *devas* or spiritual beings; what he denied was that mankind had anything directly to do with them if they existed as depicted in the prevailing theology—unless indeed it were to help them to attain enlightenment; for were they not, as presented by theology, subject to grief, anger, decay, old age and death; subject to the same universal laws as man? The heart of the Buddhist Path or Gospel was the affirmation, not of an external ruler of the universe who made and enforced rules for it, but of an irrefragable moral order inherent in the universe. As Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter says¹:

. . . the mysterious organization of the universe was such that every right effort was sure of its due effect. No chance, no caprice, no evil fate, could frustrate the believer's progress from outside; nor when he had reached a certain stage of moral stability could any failure from within throw him back, or prevent him from reaching the goal.

¹ *Buddhism and Christianity* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), p. 40.

The attitude was somewhat thus : Here we are in a world of suffering, change, decay and death. What is the meaning of it? Has it a meaning? If so, how can it be grasped? And the reply of Gotama is : It has a meaning—everything is the effect of a cause, there is no chance in the moral any more than in the physical realm; evil can be overcome; change, decay, suffering, death can be overcome, by destroying their causes. But man must learn the truth about these causes and do the destruction for himself : there are none of the external gods as depicted by popular theology waiting to help him. But the whole universe will help him if he will learn from it, if he will grasp the truth which it teaches, for the universe is an order : it is absolutely reliable, it cannot play false, but neither can it be cajoled or persuaded by mere forms of words without knowledge. Instead, therefore, of celebrating magic ceremonies to placate deities who, if they exist, are as much in need of the truth as men, or of speculating and undergoing ascetic practices, the way of life and liberation, according to Gotama, is to learn the nature of the Law, the Dhamma—that unfailing system

of the Norm which, understood and obeyed, is the instrument of salvation.

Now Gotama and his early disciples refused to individualize or personalize this Moral Order and call it God, because the whole atmosphere was poisoned by the god-doctrine, which was deceiving men and leading them astray. His moral and spiritual order is nevertheless precisely what many modern men and women mean by God—though official theism may not approve. And, as events showed, a large majority of Buddhists themselves in the course of time came to recognize the moral and spiritual order as God. What these things impressively demonstrate may be briefly summed up in these two propositions: (1) Human nature at its best hungers after something more than any small fragment of truth or insight, split off, so to speak, from the rest of life, and incorporated once and for all in the material form of an idol, or in the verbal form of a dogma. Buddhism rediscovered the heart of religion at a time when the God-idea was bankrupt, by setting it aside, and concentrating on the essential and real problems of human life and good. (2) Yet in the course of its

expansion, and not long after the founder's death, theistic interpretations began to be allowed and were even regarded as orthodox. For some reason the idea of God was found by millions of people not to be irrelevant. The strict atheist would say that this is a falling away from grace. But it is a fact which the genuine rationalist must take into account, that in giving expression to his vaguely felt emotional life man has again and again in the course of history got nearer to the shadowing forth of truth than have the metaphysical speculators.

We may note in passing that a very similar kind of movement can be traced in ancient Greece. The Greek philosophers rejected the gods of popular theology, and Socrates was executed partly on this very ground. Yet nothing is more certain than that the Greek philosophers helped to prepare the soil in which the best elements of Christian theism were able to take root and flourish.

Turning now to the modern world, and its issues, what is the situation? Bradlaugh, in his *Plea for Atheism*, provided the following rough definition of an atheist :

The atheist does not say, 'There is no God,' but he says, 'I know not what you mean by God; I am without idea of God; the word God is to me a sound conveying no clear or distinct affirmation. I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception, and the conception of which by its affirmer is so imperfect that he is unable to define it to me.'

If we accept this, it is probable that a large number of modern people are atheists—in fact many more than those who recognize and admit the fact. What then is the significance of atheism in relation to the facts of life and its real problems? Is it possible to see in it a salutary revolt against a moribund theism, which needs to be destroyed in order that a greater and truer conception may come? In part that may be the case, but we have to make a distinction, which is not made or appreciated by those who assume that atheism is a gospel of liberation. There are a good many atheists who are atheists for no salutary reason at all, but through sheer indifferentism. They do not call themselves atheists—some of them may call themselves Christians—but they qualify under the definition of Bradlaugh. And they

qualify because they are incapable of facing the intellectual difficulties, and sometimes because they shirk the moral issues, involved in trying to get an idea of God—an idea which is living and not a dead dogma. It is just as great a mistake to imagine that all atheists are heroes of the larger view as to imagine that all theists are cowards hiding behind a pleasing illusion from the grim realities of life. Actually there are slackers in the world, who may call themselves theists or atheists, but who are under either name equally the enemies of human progress. Those atheists whose atheism is a moral and spiritual revolt against an idea of God which is dead, which is not a stimulus to endeavour, but a mere narcotic to the soul, are religious in the same sense as are theists who believe in, worship and serve a God whose law is: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The destruction of the false gods is necessary to the conception of the true God, and I confess that it seems to me that the atheist who rejects current conceptions of God because he sees a nobler, a truer vision, and finds in that vision the stimulus to social service, human comradeship, and universal good-will is in the same boat with the theist who believes in a God

whose law is written, not in bibles or papal decrees, but in the human mind, which includes heart, will and reason, and whose service of God is the service of man and the quest for truth. Names matter relatively so little in comparison with the real issues of life; and men and women of active good-will, who desire to see the enthronement of righteousness, love and reason in all human affairs are actually opposed by a vast army, made up of the indifferentists. The old party labels and sectarian distinctions have no place in the presence of the needs of the world. "Theists" and "atheists" alike are to be found among the indifferentists, whose only aim is to be let alone, to be spared from the task of thinking for themselves and of acting for the common good. Religion is something infinitely more important than a theological controversy, or a dispute as to whether we shall call the Good we believe in and want to serve by the name of God or something else, or prefer to leave it unnamed. Theists and atheists alike need to learn to live in the spirit of George Matheson's prayers :

. . . Let our rival sects and parties be united in Thee. We are postponing our union until

we come into the unity of the faith; that is not Thy method. Thou callest us to the unity of love—love independent of contrary opinions. My brother and I cannot agree about the name we should give to Thy light; may we not shake hands without such agreement? Is not Thy light beautiful called by any name, called by no name? We are agreed about Thy beauty, and about the love of Thy beauty; unite us in that love.¹

Unite us in the love for man as man, in the sympathy for those wants which are universal because they are human. Unite us in pity for the poor, in distress for the desolate, in help for the homeless, in succour for the sinful. Then we can afford to wait for the unity of the faith. Then we can postpone our differences about the name we shall give to Thy light, for Thine unnamed light shall itself be our guide. . . .²

¹ *Day unto Day*: prayers by George Matheson compiled by Hatty Baker (National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches), p. 167.

² *Ibid.*, p. 168.

XXIII

RATIONALISM AND RELIGION

It is a curious fact that in many quarters rationalism is both respected and feared; applauded and yet shunned. The explanation of this leads back into many an old controversy, which happily it is not necessary to recall in any detail. Briefly the fact is that the free exercise of reason has been a right won at tremendous cost from the forces of authority and tradition.¹ But when once it was won, reason was able to proceed to achieve its great triumphs. It reshaped man's conception of the world in which he lives, and gave him a new understanding of the forces with which he has to deal. And because religion was so generally pledged to the principles of authority and tradition, and to the idea of a "revelation" once and for all made, the inevitable result was the "conflict" between science, the achievement of human reason, and that sort of religion which

¹ See Prof. J. B. Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought* (Home Univ. Lib.).

claimed to override reason. Generally speaking the situation to-day is that reason through its striking successes has won a position of almost universal respect—so much so that it has become a mark of respectability nowadays to profess to honour reason, and even to try to practise its principles. Why, then, is it also so much feared, and so frequently shunned? There are a number of contributory causes for this fact, among which it will suffice to mention two. (1) The exercise of reason requires strenuous mental effort, and is frequently opposed by existing sentiments, prejudices and sanctified traditions which it is much easier to follow. In fact the effort to be reasonable is so great that very few people achieve it in more than part of their life; the most reasonable people have reserved areas where unanalyzed feelings and tendencies are accepted as a competent guide. There are men and women of great intellectual power and of distinguished knowledge in some branch of science who nevertheless remain altogether in the grip of irrational prejudice in the realm of religion, which, they say, *must not be questioned*. But (2) there is, in addition to this, the fact that some of the friends of rationalism have exceeded

the bounds of reason, not to suggest sympathy and insight into human nature, in the way they have sought to expound the "gospel" of rationalism. Many so-called rationalists have failed to appreciate the fact that although the claim of an authoritative religion to dictate the realm of knowledge, and to be a sort of super-science, has been generally rejected, yet religion remains as an expression of needs that are fundamental in human nature, a feeling out after truth which will never be stifled by methodological postulates, a demand of the human soul for values that cannot be argued away in any syllogism. The fact is that religion involves a different approach to reality: it is the approach of the human being *qua* human, and not as a being of pure reason consisting of nothing but scientific categories. People are not satisfied to be told that the "external world" is the only real world, that it is governed throughout by a rigid and mechanical determinism, and that all man's mental, emotional and spiritual reactions to the universe as experienced are illusions, "epiphenomena," to be accounted for solely by reference to the activity of the brain cells. When, therefore, people are told, as unfortun-

ately they sometimes are told, that rationalism means this, they begin to fear it and to shun it. "There is no doubt," they say, "that man has made wonderful advances through reason. But if the philosophy of reason is a rationalism of this order, we can do without it. We are not all scientists, and we prefer to trust the ordinary intuitions of our common humanity . . . we *feel* free, and morally responsible; we cannot understand the meaning of life with all its tragedy and darkness as well as its joy and brightness without believing in a God who has something to do with it all, and especially with the destinies of the human race." This reaction against the negative dogmatism of certain types of intellectualism has not remained a mere popular feeling, and hidden itself in the obscurity of a faith to be spoken of only in church—it has found eloquent and powerful expression in philosophic protest; notably in the writings and teachings of William James and Henri Bergson.

Thus man, the ordinary man, who according to the older doctrine of the philosophers is a rational animal, is inclined to shun reason in fact, while paying his tribute of respect to it in theory. So much, indeed, does he pay respect

to it that he will usually try to give very rational motives for his actions when, as a matter of fact, they are obviously determined in given instances by instinctive tendencies, which are far older and more powerful than reason. How many of us, for instance, vote at an election for the candidate who is run by the party to which we are attached by a whole lifetime of loyalties, derived from temperamental, environmental and social causes, rather than from any original reasoning on our own part, and then give various reasons, such as the candidate's support for some matter of policy, about which, in fact, we do not know enough to have a rational opinion !

But it is not a return to irrationalism that we need to preserve and increase the true values of life. Rather it is a movement forward to a much deeper and fuller rationalism ; and a recognition that the barren negations offered by some of the self-styled " rationalists " are not truly rational at all. We must not be frightened from the exercise of reason by the bogey rationalism of the popes of pseudo-science. For the exercise of reason does not mean the killing of emotion, or the damping down of great enthusiasms, or the destruction of faith. And

it does not mean the erection of a new dogmatism—though this seems to be the aim of some pseudo-rationalists. Self-satisfied certitude and finality are not the marks of genuine rationalism, any more than subservience to tradition and the voice of the elders is the mark of true religion. The true spirit and essence of rationalism has been finely expressed by Prof. L. T. Hobhouse¹ in these terms :

There is a tendency to think of any 'rational' system as claiming a certain finality, as forming, as it were, a closed circle from which the world of imagination is quite shut out. Nothing could be further from the true spirit of reason, which insists as a first principle on the relativity of all human conceptions, on the narrowness of the area reclaimed by knowledge as compared with the ocean of reality, and on the unlimited power of human capacity to expand and explore.

To press reason into our service for all it is worth in every department of human life and activity, to remain for ever open to receive and learn the lessons of experience and readjust our life in harmony with fresh discoveries, to surrender partial and misleading explanations when wider vistas have been opened out, to

¹ *Morals in Evolution*, II. 256 (Chapman and Hall).

shut no doors, to erect no final dogmas, to remain humble and teachable—this is the way of rationalism. It has nothing to do with the absurd fiat of the foolish that we must only believe what we can see and handle. The way of reason is always the way of imagination: every scientific theory that has been established, and has broadened and deepened our understanding of the universe, was first a hypothesis, a bridge thrown across the gulf of the unexplored by the imagination. Rationalism in religion does not mean rejecting everything that cannot be proved by mathematics or biology; it means shedding beliefs that are shown to be mistaken, and bridging the gulf between the seen and the unseen by new faiths in harmony with the best formulations of scientific research. And as scientific theories must be proved or disproved in experience, even so must the beliefs of religion, dealing as they do with the realm of values. Some faith which links us with the infinite ocean of being beyond our ken is a vital need with most of us; that it should be a faith that makes us *faithful* to the ideals of truth, goodness and beauty gives us increasing mastery over ourselves, completes and fills in the descriptive universe of science

with the vitalizing breath of the spirit, is the demand of rationalism upon religion. And in the end "if any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching . . ." ¹

¹ John vii. 17.

XXIV

RELIGIONS ARE MANY : REASON IS ONE

SPEAKING of the position of religion in China, Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter¹ says :

The singular position of the three religions in China makes it difficult to determine the actual number of the adherents of each. The entire population is sometimes reckoned as Buddhist, for probably every family celebrates some Buddhist rites. But the State religion (the basis of national education) is Confucian, and the masses at least often join in Taoist practices. The fact is that the three are by no means regarded as mutually exclusive. When strangers meet, observed the Abbé Huc, it is the custom for each to ask his neighbour, 'To what sublime religion do you belong?' The first is perhaps a Confucian, the second a Taoist, the third a disciple of the Buddha. Each then begins a panegyric on the religion not his own; after which they repeat in chorus, 'Religions are many, reason is one, we are all brothers.' This view is not modern, it is many centuries old. 'The teaching of the sects,'

¹ *The Place of Christianity among the Religions of the World* (London, Philip Green, 1911), p. 68.

said Lu Shan Yang, a distinguished Buddhist scholar, 'is not different. The large-hearted man regards them as embodying the same truths. The narrow-minded man only observes their differences.'

It would be a delightful world if only this were universally true. If the spirit of sectarianism, not merely theological, but political, social, international, could be exorcised by reason with its affirmation: We are all brothers, the age-long dream of the kingdom of Love and Righteousness would be fulfilled. It is a strange fact that this ideal of the spiritual unity of the race is the one which has been felt out after by all the great religions in their inspired moments, and yet it has been, and often still is, the adherents of these great religions who cultivate precisely the spirit which keeps the ideal remote. Perhaps the day is passing when the exponents of a particular religion took their stand immovably on the platform that Truth has been once and for all delivered—and to them; that all the rest of the world is in outer darkness; but we do not have to look far afield for the spirit which declares still that Ours is the only real and proper truth in religion; amongst others there may be broken and

imperfect fragments, but they can only be transmuted into real truth by being incorporated into our formulations.

If we look out upon the world at large with eyes that are not blind and understandings that are not darkened, the thing that will most deeply affect us will probably be the recognition of the tragic separation and aloofness of nations and of religions. Only occasionally—and then usually in the presence of some vast natural upheaval or devastating scourge—do we see any real signs of human solidarity as a recognized and determining principle, enabling men and women to face life's grave and difficult problems from the point of view, not of sectional advantage, but of the world's welfare. One of the roots of this separation and of the perpetual misunderstandings which threaten the world's peace is to be found in the fact of ignorance, carrying with it lack of imagination, and breeding prejudice and passion. Lord Haldane, at an early stage in the war, wrote an article¹ in which he called attention to the terrible effects of public indifference to questions of international relations.

¹ "Democracy and Ideas," *The Nation*, August 7, 1915.

. . . the public, he said, did not insist that the unrest of Europe should be the foremost subject of political consideration, nor was it ready to devote the nation's energies to securing its future in peace any more than in war. The democracy in this country was suffering from an indisposition to reflect, and, in consequence, was not disposed to listen to the few who preached.

There can be no doubt that the statement was substantially true, not merely of the democracy of this country, but of the masses of people of all the countries whose destinies were so deeply involved. And the world has paid a bitter price for the indifference of its people to questions of international relations; and if the indifference, the contentment with ignorance, continues, it is certain that there will be yet costlier penalties exacted. From one point of view the world is no longer an immeasurably large place: it is one small planet, of which we are all citizens, and in whose total welfare we are all equally concerned. Therefore we must breed world citizens, with world vision and world loyalty, or perish. In the matter of practical international relationships there is the bright promise of the League of Nations, on the success of which probably depends the survival

of existing civilization; but its success depends upon the interest and enthusiasm of those who are citizens of the world. In proportion as men and women believe in it, understand it, take an intelligent interest in it, and support it, will it succeed.

But there is another contribution to be made to the attempt to bring harmony and concord out of chaos and conflict: the fostering and promotion of the ideal of man's spiritual unity. While the world is cleft asunder on the one deep issue which is supposed to stir the highest and best that is in man, what hope can there be for any abiding fellowship, any lasting co-operation? While men and women are indoctrinated from earliest childhood with the notion that the professors of their particular religion are indeed "the sweet selected few," while all the followers of other religions are wandering in error, if not worse, and while sheer ignorance and even prejudiced misrepresentation is encouraged respecting all beliefs and practices in religion except as regards the particular tenets of one tradition, how can we expect to break down the barriers that separate mankind? There can be no one form of religion that will meet the needs of all the varying

temperaments of all the peoples of the earth; but to try to understand, and to benefit by the good and sympathize with the insight of other religious teachings and practices than our own, does not mean that we must love our own less. As the Earl of Balfour has said :¹

Whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not, we are as children living by beliefs unconsciously absorbed from our surroundings, beliefs we rarely question, and, if put to it, could ill defend.

But believing that somehow God has guided us, and given us what vision we have into truth, can we not believe that He has guided others too, and that if we could break through our foolish prides and sectarian self-sufficiencies, He would have more light and truth to reveal to us in the wisdom He has inspired among men of other faiths and traditions? A suggestion has recently been made by Mr. F. J. Gould² in connection with the vexed question of "religious instruction" in the schools, to the effect that sectarian teaching shall be entirely dropped in all Council schools in favour of the

¹ *Theism and Thought* (Hodder and Stoughton), pp. 244-5.

² *The Literary Guide*, December 1923; Article, "England's Education."

teaching of comparative religions : in his own words :

. . . instruction will include such teaching drawn from the religious faiths of the world as may, in the judgment of the teachers, promote the enthusiasm and knowledge necessary to personal and social service and to good citizenship; and no religious catechism or formulary or doctrine which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught.

Truly enough Mr. Gould adds, in commenting on this proposal :

On such a basis England's education might reach a sorely needed unity. On such a basis spiritual (that is ethical) approach between East and West, Asia and Europe, is facilitated, and even political enigmas rendered easier to solve.

This plea for a new policy of breadth and imagination in the giving of religious instruction has a wider range of application than that merely to State education; and it is a plea which deserves the most serious and sympathetic consideration of all men and women whose vision reaches beyond the walls of their own temple of religious tradition. It presents us with a challenge in the sphere of what may be called inter-religious spiritualities which is as

crucial for the future harmony of mankind as the challenge of the ideal of the League of Nations in the sphere of international politics. To promote, through education, a larger understanding of the great common ideals and spiritual aspirations of the world, and deepen spiritual imagination and sympathy, would be a notable contribution towards the establishment of a World Order.

XXV

THE PLACE OF EXPERIMENT IN RELIGION

ROUGHLY speaking experiment is the attempt under the best conditions obtainable to see what happens, and the result of experiment is the drawing of conclusions on the basis of what has happened which can be formulated as principles or theories, for application to future occurrences of a similar character. It is scarcely necessary to illustrate this, for the making of experiments is not confined to laboratories and the workers therein, but is undertaken in some measure by almost everyone. Perhaps the greatest experimentalists are children. They are the people who have an inexhaustible appetite for "seeing what happens," and for taking a real interest in the results of the innumerable experiments they carry out. And probably they learn more from their experiments than do the majority of us. Herein lies the significance of the philosophy of the child heart.¹ It is the turning and

¹ See above, Chapter XI, "The Child Heart."

becoming as little children in such respects as this that is really indispensable for those who would enter the kingdom of heaven. That is to say, we must be eager enough, interested enough, curious enough, and teachable enough to be able to advance in understanding of what happens in this world in which we live—a very different thing from being satisfied with a conventional and authoritatively approved scheme of what it is respectable to think about the world. But there is another feature of the experimental methods of the child that deserves attention. His experiments are carried out not primarily in the interests of an intellectual curiosity, but of a practical need. The child begins to manipulate his legs and to see what happens, not in order to be able to expound the theory of walking, but in order to walk. He is under a persistent urge not so much to know *about* things as to know *how to do* things. A recognition of this primary fact about the psychology of the child has already had a considerable effect upon educational methods, and will probably have yet greater effects in the future. Moreover, the essential nature and function of knowledge is here revealed. It is instrumental, not final; a

means, not an end. ~~And in the first stages it tends to arise and grow not before the doing that it serves, but concurrently with it.~~ As we say, often enough, we learn (*i. e.* get to know) by experience. We do not in the first instance know something and then try to do it. We are impelled by our nature to try to do something, and in the efforts we make at doing we gradually learn about the thing in question, and about ourselves in relation to it.

In this sense the place of experiment in religion is of first-rate importance. The very essence of religion is the impulse, or rather the set of impulses, to do and be something. As Dr. Jacks has said,¹ religion is the urge to be the hero, and not to be the coward, that is in us all. And the rock-bottom truth in this matter is that we cannot first learn how to become the hero, and then put our knowledge into practice. We have to respond to the heroic urge, and make our experiments in heroic living, and see what happens. Then, in our failure or success, or in the mixture of both failure and success, we learn what heroic living means, why it is good, how to do it. Quite one half of religion is experiment of this sort. Religion is

¹ *Religious Perplexities* (Hodder and Stoughton).

not primarily knowledge at all. Owing to the peculiar detachability of the human mind from practice and practical issues, it is possible to know an immense amount about the experiences of others, and the principles which they have formulated to sum up the fruits of these experiences, without gaining the secret of being religious; and hence the secondary importance of all creeds and dogmas. One genuine experiment in the art of being a loyal comrade is worth a multitude of repetitions of creed. Jesus did not say that the first and great commandment is, Be sure you know how to define the Deity in terms that are accounted correct, and the second is like unto it, namely, Know exactly how to classify your fellow-man, biologically, psychologically, racially and so forth. What he said was, in effect: *Love* God, *Love* man, which means, Behave in relation to that great ultimate source of life, spirit and reality which we call God, as one who seeks to serve, to give, to be loyal, faithful, trustworthy. And so in relation to man—Behave to mankind at large, and in particular, as a neighbour. Thus it is the implication of this teaching of Jesus that it is in behaviour which is the expression of love that we learn what God is, and what

man is, religiously. It is the experiment which, showing us what happens, teaches us the knowledge; and it is only such originally learned knowledge that enables us to go on to do and to be still better things. If we will not make these and similar experiments, we may be politely classified as professors of religion, but we shall not be religious.

Thus the essential business of religious discipline and endeavour is not to provide an intellectual illumination, but to release a practical disposition or tendency, and to help direct it aright. It is not supernatural¹ but natural for man to experience the urge from within to live heroically, and to subordinate mere self-interest to the common good. The authority of this urge is within itself, and is not derived from argument. No theory of the good can be anything more than an opinion until it is the theory of the person who is an experimentalist in the doing of good. Our belief in God, or our disbelief in God, which is arrived at before we have loved God, has no religious value whatever. Knowing and doing are here inextricably interwoven, and the result is that

¹ See below, XXVI, "The Natural and the Supernatural."

many a simple person who loves the good, while having no theological and little other knowledge, actually knows more of the reality of God and the meaning of life than do official custodians of correct opinion. An essential commandment of religion, therefore, is : Make few professions but many experiments.

XXVI

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL

It is commonly supposed that the truth of religion depends upon the existence of an order of reality which is beyond or above that order which we call the natural. It is easy to get entangled in a purely verbal controversy on this question, and to miss the real issue. But the function of language is to help us to get beyond terms to meanings, and my present aim is to try to envisage the real problem that lies behind this use of words. But in order to do this it is necessary to say certain things about the words themselves. The matter may thus be summed up : Whether we find it necessary to believe in a supernatural order or not depends entirely upon what we mean by the natural. If by nature we mean a specific, final and limited interpretation of that part of the universe which submits itself to our notional formulations, then not merely religious people, but every genuinely

scientific scientist will find it necessary to believe in the supernatural, for the use of this term now means the conviction that reality is more than is represented in our partial and often fragmentary accounts of it. But if we mean by nature the whole of reality itself, reality which is very partially known to us, but which, as we believe and hope, is becoming always more and more known, then the supernatural ceases to have any meaning. The detection of some phenomenon or event which has not come under any previous formulation does not introduce us to the supernatural, but adds to our knowledge, and probably also modifies and rearranges our knowledge, of nature. But whenever a limited and partial view of the infinite is offered as a final dogma, whether as of old in the interests of a revealed theology, or as in more recent times in the interests of a pseudo-scientific materialism, there will be heresy; and the heresy against that form of naturalism which assumes the identity of the whole of reality with the part which can be notionally represented in knowledge is supernaturalism.

But it seems to me that the whole opposition

between the supposed two orders is a false one, due to inelasticity of thought. There is, on the one hand, no such thing as the "nature" of dogmatic materialism; and there is, on the other hand, no such thing as the "supernature" of dogmatic theology. The former is a purely arbitrary limitation of the field of experience in the interest of certain abstract requirements, and the latter then becomes the term of reference to the unexplained remainder not included in the former. It is the uncritical acceptance of this quite artificial division of our universe that has helped to bring about the unprofitable, and rather absurd, conflict between religion and science. A religion and a science which are in conflict are so only because, and if, they are not dealing with reality at all, but with some abstraction about reality. It is curiously difficult to detach the minds of some people from abstractions, probably because it is so much easier to achieve demonstrative certainty about abstractions than it is about reality. But abstract certainties are only valuable within very definite limits. It is, for example, quite a useful abstract certainty that two plus two equals four. But directly we add

two drops of water to two other drops we make the discovery that sometimes in reality two plus two equals one.¹

We can get rid of this wholly unnecessary splitting asunder of our universe by the simple device of accepting a thoroughgoing, consistent and complete naturalism, which means a frank and full recognition at the outset that nature is far more than any theory of nature. Nature is not the small fragment of experience that is summed up in what we call "natural science," but it is equally the mind that has so ingeniously and painstakingly investigated and interpreted this field of experience. It is not just mountains and streams and woods, but equally the poet's emotion and imagination which ranges around these things. It not only includes mechanical laws (as we call them) of cause and effect, but equally the ineradicable human conviction of freedom and creative

¹ See *Studies in Humanism* by F. C. S. Schiller (Macmillan, 1907), p. 9, in the Essay on "Pragmatism and Humanism." He says: "The abstract statement, *e. g.*, that 'two and two make four,' is always incomplete. We need to know to what 'twos' and 'fours' the dictum is applied. It would not be true of lions and lambs, nor of drops of water, nor of pleasures and pains. The range of application of the abstract truth, therefore, is quite limited."

spontaneity. Moreover, nature is not a fixed system, about which one can say, "Lo! here," or "Lo! there." It is perpetually in process of becoming. Before organic life made its appearance on earth nature was something less than it became after that achievement. Consciousness was, on its first appearance, "supernatural" in the sense of being something more than had been in nature without it. What further becomings and developments nature is capable of undergoing and making cannot be determined beforehand by narrow-minded dogmatists who wish to foist their own perceptions upon the world as final definitions of reality, whether in the interests of what they are pleased to call science, or theology.

And here we reach the really important thing about the whole question. At one point of its development nature has become man, and in man has become not merely conscious, but capable of appreciating values, and of intelligently seeking to preserve and increase them. In him nature has evolved—or is evolving—into spirit. Indeed one of the most impressive facts about nature as we know it is precisely the fact that it is the construction of the spiritual activity of consciousness. If nature

had not in man become conscious, nature would not be what it actually is. Therefore every interpretation of nature which leaves man out, which abstracts from the understanding, willing and feeling mind, is merely dealing with a fraction of that real whole which nature is. A purely objective view of nature, or of anything else, is a purely abstract view, good for certain purposes, but not good for final interpretations. This is just where religion with its faith and life comes in, with the assertion that it has a vital contribution to make to the interpretation of nature. For what is religion? In essence and at heart it is the practical recognition that man as a conscious personality is not an isolated individual at all, a mere phenomenon among phenomena, but a member of a greater body, a citizen of the infinite, a fellow-worker with God. That in which we live and move and have our being, and together with us those partial visions of what we call the external world, is God, the one reality. The urge that is within us to seek for fellowship with a higher Power, to seek for a fuller life, to strive for the fulfilment of duty, the promotion of goodness, truth and beauty, the realization of a brotherhood of man self-ruled by love—all this is the

bursting through into expression of a truth of nature as certain and significant as are any of the scientific formulations of natural law. Religion, in the sense of active religious men and women, is nature on the march, advancing to its consummation—the secret of which no man knows, but which we can only speak of in some such image as that of a kingdom of spiritual values. It is not without significance that scientific men are increasingly trying to remind us in their own way and language of these things. In a recent article, for instance, Dr. J. S. Haldane¹ says :

. . . the material world which has been taken for a world of blind mechanism is in reality the spiritual world seen very partially and imperfectly, and . . . the only real world is the spiritual world. . . .

The fundamental conceptions of physical science represent only working hypotheses corresponding, under great limitations, to partial aspects of our experience. . . . When we take into account all that appears in conscious life, in our conscious fellowship with one another, with those who have gone before or will come after, and with Nature, God is revealed as the ultimate and only reality. God and God's

¹ "Science and Religion," *Hibbert Journal*, XXI, No. 3, April 1923.

love and omnipotence are within and around us behind what appears as space, time, the material world, organic life and individual personality. The material world as such is an imperfect appearance, and the only real world is the spiritual world, the only real values spiritual values.

XXVII

RELIGIOUS USES OF REMEMBERING

THE capacity for remembering is one of those things that we are in the habit of taking very much for granted under ordinary circumstances. If, however, we begin to ask questions about it, we learn to appreciate the fact that we are in the presence of something mysterious. Many of the things taken for granted and treated as obvious and ordinary are just the things that are most in need of explanation. One of the remarkable things about remembering is the fact that we remember so little; or, to put it in another way, one of the problems of memory is forgetting. If we remember at all, why do we not remember everything that has played any part at all in our experience? This is not an aspect of the problem which I propose to discuss in this place, and it will suffice for the immediate purpose to say that there is much and ever-increasing evidence to suggest that, although we forget in the sense of ceasing to be able to become aware of much of our past

experience under ordinary circumstances, we do not forget in the sense of completely losing the material in question from our mental life. It seems probable that somehow everything is registered psychically, and memories which can never be recalled to consciousness by normal means may yet somehow function and influence our conduct and our thought for good or for evil. Every perfect habit gives us an instance of this kind of memory; we perform a complicated train of actions without being aware of what we are doing; indeed, to become aware is often to interfere with the efficiency of the habit, and to destroy the proper sequence of actions.

There is a theory about remembering and forgetting which, reduced to its simplest terms, says in effect that we all tend to remember such things as are pleasant, and to forget such things as are painful. Nietzsche put it thus in a nutshell: "I have done that, says my memory. I cannot have done that, says my pride, and remains inexorable. Finally—memory yields." There are things of which we do not like to be reminded, and there are certain memories which we sufficiently dislike, or fear to bring about an unwitting repression of

them. It is as if consciousness has a protective mechanism which excludes certain claimants for admission which are known to be distasteful. This, of course, is only a rough and pictorial way of putting one particular aspect of the memory and forgetting problem; but it is an aspect which is of importance; the clearer recognition of it would often help us to understand both ourselves and others in fuller measure.

A good memory is not good because it provides a miscellaneous collection of images and ideas, which can flow out in a stream of more or less irrelevant reminiscences to the tune of "that reminds me——" It is good when it helps us in the control and direction of life. It is a bad memory which too easily allows to slip away into forgetfulness those painful things which would help us in the effort to do and be better. Thus repression is a normal and helpful part of the psychic equipment, for it would hopelessly overburden consciousness if it were liable to be flooded with irrelevant tides of indiscriminate memory images on all occasions. But, on the other hand, a too rigorous repression, carried out in the interests of some partial sentiment or complex of ideas and tendencies, is the source of a great deal of trouble and inefficiency

in mental life. Broadly speaking what we need to remember are not the things which merely help to make life amusing, but the things which help to make it efficient; and this is a function of memory that can be cultivated—not so much by any direct memory discipline as by the systematic cultivation and organization of harmonious sentiments.¹

In a sense it is not inaccurate to describe the Christian Church as a social attempt to remember the life, teaching and death of Jesus. For various reasons it has been the death of Jesus that has bulked most largely in the main stream of Christian tradition and memory. Concentrating on that aspect of Christian memory, we may fruitfully ask the question: What is it that the Church, as a sort of social mind, tends to remember most clearly and emphatically about the death of Jesus? That is to say, what is most deeply impressed in the substance of Christian dogma—which is not by any means the same thing as what is generally believed or remembered by individual Christians. Now the answer to the question is this: Christian dogma, as a social mind, tends to place in the

¹ See above, Chapter IX, "Sentiment and Sentimentalism in Religion."

forefront of its memory a number of stories which have little to do with the central issue at all—stories about the disappearance of the body after burial, reappearance of the physical body after death, stories in the shape of theories about some alleged supernatural transaction completed by this death for the benefit of believers. Around these, and similar conceptions, the official and authorized ecclesiastical memory of the death of Jesus tends to centre; and the cross has become accordingly, not simply the symbol of Christianity, but it has become the symbol for what are really pleasant memories—memories of things advantageous to believers accruing from the death of Jesus. Now is this the most vital and important fact about the death of Jesus? If not, what are the things we ought to remember about this, and many another heroic death of martyrdom? Surely the outstanding fact above all others, and especially above all mere comfort-giving theories, is that here we are faced with a monstrous, hideous crime; an example of vicious intolerance, a vile betrayal of the first elements of good-fellowship. The cross—the Roman gibbet—is the symbol of the naked cruelty and blind stupidity of man's untamed

passions. It stands for just the things that need to be rooted out from the world; for it is typical of everything by which ignorance, passion and intolerance seek to stifle the voice of reason and charity. The cross is man's self-made scourge; the instrument of torture and death. If only the Christian Church had made it her business to remember that with the same vividness that it has sought to remember the splendour of the self-sacrifice of Jesus, we could well have spared a multitude of memories of things speculative and legendary in that social mind which we call Christian dogma. Is it possible that we tend to repress these terrible memories because of an enduring strain of cruelty, intolerance, obstinate untamed passion, that still makes our attitude to the prophet essentially similar to that of the Jews to Jesus?

Turning now to more recent events, wherever we go to-day in this country we come upon expressions of social memory which relate to the war. Practically every town, village and hamlet has in some prominent position its "war memorial." Not so long ago I read in the daily newspaper the account of an interview with some German visitor to this country, who was giving his impressions of post-war

England. The thing that most impressed me of what I there read was a remark to the effect that in England the war seemed to have taken its place in the national memory as a great heroic episode; what we seemed to commemorate, so it appeared to him, in our "war memorials" was not so much the termination of the world's greatest tragedy, and the appalling sacrifice of human life, but the war itself, as another achievement in the annals of British history, another heroic adventure accomplished. If this is true, it is terrible—the most tragic misuse of memory which could have been devised by the greatest enemy of mankind. What we need to remember about the war—about all war—is not the spectacular side as seen from a distance; not merely the heroisms and self-sacrifices that it called forth. I stayed once with a man whose only son had just been reported killed, after a few months in the trenches. This father told me many things, but he told me everything that needs to be remembered about war when he quietly and sorrowfully said that he was glad the boy had been killed so soon. To remember the mere externals of war, its decorations, pomp and circumstance, and to forget the grim, naked

brutalities and madresses which are its very source, is a misdirection of remembrance for which, if we are guilty of it, we and our children are likely to pay the bitterest penalty.

There is only one way in which the cross—in its various forms—which scourges and crucifies man can be smashed to pieces and cast out of our midst as an accursed thing; and that is by remembering the facts, and not half-covering them with a veil of pleasant illusions. In the end it will be a matter of the people's judgment. When they so vividly remember the reality of war, of international hatred, of class separation, of sectarian bigotry, that they learn to regard these things as criminal and indecent, then war and the sources from which it issues will be destroyed, and not till then.

XXVIII

ETERNAL LIFE AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

As soon as we cease to take it for granted, and at its face value, time becomes one of the great enigmas of human thought. Most people, wisely enough, do not trouble themselves about it as a speculative problem, but are content to live in it and, as far as may be, make the most of it. But there is one point at which it tends to thrust itself upon the attention of even the most practical and least speculative of us: when we ask, namely, about the origin and destiny of human personality, as most of us inevitably do at some time or other whether we are conventionally religious or not. But an even earlier interest than this is probably responsible for the first formulation of a theory that goes beyond the appearance of time. That is the question of the origin and destiny of the universe. Man

has found it difficult to conceive of an absolute beginning in time. Yet if the common-sense view of time which envisages it as a sort of invisible stream, in which events occur and get carried away, is true, then at a certain point in the flow of the stream it would appear natural to suppose that the world suddenly started. But that has not satisfied man. There must be something, he felt, which did not begin in time if there is to be a beginning at all; something which, existing outside of time, was able to make use of time as an instrument of creation. That which was outside of time, and which, so to speak, put the universe into time, was God, and as being beyond time He was called eternal—having no beginning and no end. I do not desire to attempt to enter into the metaphysics of this, but wish simply to point out that here is the germ of all the doctrines which degrade time from the position allotted to it by common-sense, and make of it only a relative reality. For obviously if the ultimate source of reality is not in time at all, time itself is a dependent and conditional thing or appearance. Thus existence in time is only a shadow of real existence which is timeless, *i. e.* eternal.

To be faced with a problem bristling with

the difficulties involved in this conclusion is the price man has to pay for his inveterate curiosity. If he would only accept things as they seem to be, he could eat, drink and be merry and die on the morrow without starting problems which baffle the greatest intellects of every generation. But man is not made to eat, drink, be merry and die in careless comfort. The sort of thing man is made for is reflected in the judgment passed by Jesus, and endorsed by the vast majority of us in our serious moments, on the man who filled his barns, and expected to fulfil his personality on food and amusement. The judgment is, not that he is a sinner, but that he is a fool.

The "one" who came in the gospel narrative ¹ to Jesus asking what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life is a thoroughly typical person; typical both in his reaching out for the bigger thing, and in his misconception of what could give it to him. He was discontented—and which among us is not?—with the prospect of being a mere passing shadow cast upon the background of the world, appearing for a moment, and then disappearing without a trace. But he imagined—and how many of

¹ Matt. xix. 16.

us do the same—that eternal life was the indefinite continuance of temporal life, that it was a sort of “gift” of “length of days” extended to infinity, which he could secure by paying for it in some way, by doing some “good thing.” Jesus has a different conception of eternal life, which he tries to indicate to this seeker. Put briefly and baldly it is this: “You do not enter eternal life by doing one or two ‘good things,’ but by becoming a good man.” It is not the occasional acts that we perform, but the prevailing character that we are that constitutes the quality of our life; and in the teaching of Jesus the eternal thing is not a matter of mere duration but essentially a matter of quality or value. In his teaching there are certain values which are independent of time, which no lapse of time can diminish or destroy. To live for those values, to make them one’s interest and concern is to “lay hold on” eternal life. This teaching is not mere speculation; it is based on and derived from experience. There are things whose worth does not require any external bolstering up; which everyone feels it would have been unconditionally good to have lived for and died for. In the phrase “Seek ye first His kingdom

and His righteousness" ¹ Jesus sums up his view of what the quality of eternal life is. The writer of the Fourth Gospel expresses the same essential thing in terms of his own philosophy, when he records Jesus as saying: "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." ² It is what we live for, not the actual duration measurable in terms of days or years here or hereafter, that constitutes eternity in life.

What, then, can we say about the destiny of the individual soul? It is clearly quite possible to live for things that are eternal in this sense without in any intelligible sense living "for ever." While we live our life may have the quality of being attracted to things unaffected by time and change, without its following that we as individual personalities are immortal. It is in this domain that we meet the full force of the difficulties involved in our attempts to formulate theories of eternal life in terms of mental habit dominated by temporal sequence. My own conviction is that personality itself is the chief good of which we have any direct knowledge, and that in some sense its inde-

¹ Matt. vi. 33.

² John xvii. 3.

structibility is an axiom of religious experience. The difficulty arises when we try to say in so many words what we think that means, because we can only talk of life in time as we know it (or rather to the limited extent that we do know it, even as "in time"), and consequently we get dogmas of resurrection formulated which simply reduplicate our present existence beyond death, and carry it to infinity. Such a concept has always seemed to me intolerable; and we do well to remember that when we go beyond the limits of temporal experience, all we can do is to make symbols of what we believe on the analogy of what is here partly known. Thus as a symbol of the belief in the ultimate indestructibility of personality the theory of reincarnation is perhaps as helpful and suggestive as any.

But the one thing that matters is faith in the conservation of values. In our present order, which is a temporal one, conservation means enduring through time, and defying the ravages of time. We cannot consistently imagine what experience without time would be like, but it would be very rash to suppose that therefore time is eternal, and that immortality must mean an infinite duration in time.

The very attempt at formulating an idea of the eternal and of eternity seems to show a recognition of the inadequacy of all efforts to display immortality as a temporal infinite. Perhaps an analogy may help to make things clearer. Our remote ancestors lived at one time in the waters, unaware of the existence of another world and a different way of life, resembling theirs in some particulars, but most strikingly differing in others. Somehow in the course of evolution these ancestors of ours came out of the water and developed the necessary new apparatus for extracting oxygen from air. A water-dwelling philosopher, if we can imagine one, whose experience had been wholly bounded by water environment, could not have foreseen how the unknown conditions in a world beyond could be met. The solution of that problem was the going forth into the new world, and no doubt the most vigorous marine creatures would best meet the situation. Is it not so with us? In the Confucian *Analects*¹ we read that Ke-Loo once came to the teacher and said :

“ I venture to ask about death.”

¹ *Analects*, Book XI. Chapter XI.

The reply of the master was :

“ While you do not know life, how can you know about death ? ”

The fact is that there can be no logical proof of the immortality of the soul, because directly we begin to think about the soul and to try to treat it in the same sort of way that we treat a proposition in Euclid, we have lost it. The soul is itself a dweller in the infinite, and it declines to appear before the bar of formal logic. It is not the nature of the soul to know or be known, but to become. Eternity is not a thing or a place, but an attribute of spirit, and immortality is not a doctrine about coming to life again in some mysterious fashion after having died, but it is a dimension, so to speak, of spiritual life. The soul is not immortal by some resurrection hereafter: its immortality is a present and indelible attribute. This life in which we are is eternal life: there is only one life, and death, maybe many deaths, is an incident in the progress of life.

The conclusion of the matter seems to me, so far as it can be expressed, to be this. Personal immortality is not primarily an idea to be

accepted or believed, but it is a spiritual disposition. We see it in its fruits, and not in the creeds that men have made about it. The men and women whom we all acknowledge as the true spiritual representatives of the race have lived as those whose destiny is not that of the candle flame, extinguished by a puff of wind, but as already here and now members of that invisible City which hath the foundations. They have beheld life and duty not as passing conventions of convenience, but as abiding and ultimate realities. There is some quality or virtue in man, flickering and feeble in many it is true, which constrains them to act as citizens of a kingdom that is eternal. Even the feeblest and most materialistic rise to this kind of action when the supreme crisis comes; they may not knowingly "believe," but they act as if their deed had eternal significance, and in that sense the words quoted in Chapter XXI from "A Book of Wisdom" recorded by Donald Hankey are true: "In the hour of danger all good men are believers: they choose the spiritual, and reject the material." In proportion as that vital impulse is obeyed, as men take life seriously, and see it under the aspect

of the eternal, so do they advance into the heart of the eternal, and, to quote Emerson :¹ "all unawares the advancing soul has built and forged for itself a new condition, and the question and the answer are one."

¹ R. W. Emerson, *Essays*, on "The Over-Soul."

XXIX

THE EVOLUTION OF LOVE

IN a recent publication¹ Sigmund Freud has, in his own words, made "an attempt at using the concept of *libido* for the purpose of throwing light upon Group Psychology." With Freud, to quote again: "Libido is an expression taken from the theory of the emotions. We call by that name the energy . . . of those instincts which have to do with all that may be comprised under the word 'love.'"

Further, he has included those instincts under the general term sexuality, thereby leading to a great deal of misunderstanding and confusion. In ordinary language the term has a fairly clear and definite range of application, and it came as a shock to ordinary habits of thought to extend the term to include various instinctive activities of infants. Freud made this extension because he believed that

¹ Sigm. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1922), p. 37.

he had adequate evidence from the practical experience of psycho-analysis to show that psychically the impulses manifest in various infantile activities were actually the impulses which, in mature development, express themselves in definitely sexual behaviour. He himself admits that he stated his case provocatively, though he professes himself unrepentant. It is none the less a misfortune, since it has led to hostility largely based on misunderstanding. As a matter of fact common-sense, quite apart from psychology and psychopathology, has long recognized the extreme importance of sex and the manifold emotions that cluster around it, not as a realm apart, but as bearing upon and colouring the greater part of life. The manifold applications of the one word "love" indicate this; that there should be one word for many manifestations is not due to poverty of speech, but to insight into the fact that these various manifestations have a common element. The uses of the word in religious language is especially illuminating. It stands for the ideal relation between the worshipper and God, and no less for that among the worshippers themselves. There has always existed the closest relationship between the language of sex love and that

of religious and social relationship; and this is particularly marked, of course, in mysticism. It does not require technical psychology to enlighten us concerning the fact that religion has ever been one of the greatest sublimators of the love impulses; it has redirected, purified and enriched the raw material of the instinct and built it into the greatest and most ennobling of all human sentiments.

Whatever our view may be concerning the detailed validity of the Freudian formulations, we should all admit probably that love is a basic principle in the union of any society. Now love has undergone a long evolution, and there are certain valuable lessons to be derived from a recognition of this fact. From the biological point of view sex love does not start as human love at its highest and most spiritual level. It starts as a kind of hunger; an appetite which produces unrest until satisfied. It is not necessary to attempt here to trace the process of its growth and expansion; my purpose will be fulfilled by referring to certain important stages of that development in the human species. The most characteristic phase of love between the sexes that has been arrived at by the general mass of mankind, at least

until relatively recent times, appears to be what may be called the "possessive-submissive" type, in which the man conceives himself to have captured, won, or otherwise got possession of the woman, and in which she conceives herself as a cherished piece of property, for whom it is appropriate to luxuriate in all the pleasures of yielding to strength, and experiencing the delights of dependence. That phase of the relationship of love as uniting the sexes is characteristic of a good deal of religious teaching; particularly, for instance, as expounded by Paul. But—and this is probably much more representative of what is accepted by the ordinary man and woman—if we read the popular fiction, not merely of the past generation, but very largely of the present as well, we find this idea in the centre of the picture. It was not only Sir Walter Scott who loved to portray the active, strong, adventurous and dominating male, and in contrast the beautiful, bashful and unutterably submissive female, but still to-day our really popular novelists delight to depict for our edification the strong, silent, masterful man with clear-cut chin, ever squaring his shoulders, and the girl who perhaps begins by thinking that she is an independent

young thing, but discovers the secret of life and happiness when against her will she is brought into subjection by a seemingly ruthless mastery, with even a tinge of cruelty. And this is probably quite good psychology, so far as it goes. It is a perfectly true delineation of a certain type of the love relationship—and maybe the most widespread type still to-day. It represents the energy of the sex instincts at one level of sublimation, and on this level there have been many happy and successful marriages. But the process of evolution has continued; and sublimation has been carried beyond this level. It has led to the idea, and increasingly to the experience, of love as a genuine partnership between the sexes. The idea on the one hand of dominance and possession, and on the other of dependence and submission, is no longer an essential element in the picture, but in place of this there is union on the basis of an equal loyalty to the larger whole of the partnership unit. It is no longer the person of one of the contracting parties that is possessed by the other, but a common life of richer content that is possessed equally by both; no longer the submission of one personality to the other, but a common duty and responsibility which is

submitted to equally by both. The achievement of this level of yet more sublimated love is necessarily a slow process and involves a good deal of incidental stress and unrest, but it is an essential feature in the whole story of what may be broadly called the feminist movement. We may safely say that when this stage is attained, not by the few, but by the many, it will mark as great a change in the relations of men and women as was marked by the change from polygamy to monogamy.

Now in social life the love principle, whether it is so called by analogy with, or because of definite affinity with, the love between man and woman, has also undergone its evolution, and similar stages may be detected. The prevailing love attitude in social life up to the present seems to be quite clearly the possessive-submissive attitude—essentially similar to that between the sexes. We may say that the group tends to display both male and female characteristics. In the measure in which the members of a group think of themselves as parts of the whole, with the emphasis on the power and strength of the whole, they tend to look upon all the rest of the world from the point of view, and with the prejudices, of the

possessive male. The group tends, as a unit, to be assertive; it wants, if it is virile, to spread its opinions, its culture, and its organization to other groups. It wants to possess, to assimilate. And whatever it succeeds in possessing and assimilating, it loves, receives into fellowship—always on condition that the new-comers, or the newly conquered, become genuinely submissive to the possessive power and authority of the victorious group. In religion this is the "missionary" spirit in its acutest manifestation. In international affairs it is the imperialism of world conquest, from which no one nation is the only sufferer. In smaller groups it is the spirit of superiority and sectarianism. The essential formula of this attitude is: We love what we can possess, and possessing can stamp with our own image and superscription; until that time everything that is not possessed is potentially in the position of the chase—things to be hunted and harried with a view to their capture. That is the possessive, masculine, principle in the love of social life. When the individual approaches the group with the idea of his own dependence upon the group, and the emphasis is on his dependence and weakness in relation to the

group, the feminine attitude comes into prominence. The group is strong, big, all-powerful, and the individual's happiness and security is to submit and to obey. There is a peculiar joy, as everyone must know from personal experience, in discovering that one is in perfect accord with the will and opinion of the group. The way always to be in accord is the way of submission, of uncritical, unquestioning acceptance of all that the group approves and has embodied in its conventions, customs, institutions and traditions. And here we come upon the very lair of suggestibility and suggestion.¹ To prefer the dictates of reason to the imperatives of mass suggestion is to withhold the submission which, at this stage of its development, the love of the individual for the group demands. Now here, no less than in the sphere of the relations between the sexes, there are at least occasional evidences in the world of a process of higher sublimation at work. There is the dawning recognition that love can perhaps attain to the height of respecting that which it does not possess, and indeed that it may be the chief function of love not to possess, but to enrich, to achieve fellow-

¹ See Chapter VII, "Faith and Suggestion."

ship not merely within a group of those who are submissive to the same yoke of authority, but with those beyond its jurisdiction; that, moreover, it may be the function of love to cast out fear, upon which, in the long run, submission is based, and to substitute the principle of comradeship. It seems clear that the future of man on this planet depends upon his ability to achieve this sublimation, and on his ability to achieve it *in time*. Just as we have only too abundant evidence that the institution of marriage on the possessive-submissive basis has been undermined, so we have equally abundant evidence that the larger institution of civilization on the same basis is tottering to its fall. And an intensely practical and interesting question is, therefore, whether the sublimation can be made in time to revitalize civilization, or whether the present crest of the wave of human advance and achievement is destined to give place to the trough—an event which has occurred more than once in the history of civilization.

XXX

THE PROBLEM OF THE SELF

THE prevailing opinion concerning the nature of the soul or self which has occupied the field for many centuries seems to be the naïve view that the self is some sort of double of the body; a kind of shadowy occupant of the physical frame. Probably the earliest historical record of this point of view comes from ancient Egypt. This record is found on sepulchral inscriptions and incorporated in the *Book of the Dead*, some of the papyri of which are more than four thousand years old. The doctrine of human nature implied is not a simple one, but it will be sufficient for the present purpose to note the general scheme. There is, in the first place, the physical body. The practice of mummification, with which the world is now familiar, was a relatively late development,¹ and it came into vogue not in order to interest or instruct

¹ See A. H. Sayce, *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, Gifford Lectures, Lect. II.

modern inquirers, but in connection with and as the expression of a particular psychology. The mummified body was considered as in a sense alive. The soul, or "Ba," was represented with the figure of a bird and the head of a man, and this was apparently regarded as an animating principle, somewhat similar to the "animal spirits" of a much later theory. The preserved body, or mummy, apparently enabled the "Ba" to return to some sort of union with its physical instrument, and hence the elaborate care taken over the embalming and preservation of the corpse—that is, in the case of persons of sufficient importance. But in addition to the doctrine of "Ba" there was the doctrine of the double, or "Ka," and it was this which really was the counterpart of what many modern people tend to think of as the basis of personality. It was the conscious principle, conceived as the "image" of the object (in this case the body—and more particularly of the "heart" as the seat of the feelings and mind), and it was also the vitalizing entity, without which the body dies. But the death of the body does not involve the death of "Ka." Putting this as nearly as possible into modern terms, it amounts to very much the same as

the common-sense psychology of the ordinary man, the psychology behind the belief in ghosts. Every man, according to this, is two: a physical body and a spirit, soul, or double, an ethereal counterpart of the body. The body is the normal habitation and instrument of the spirit, and is necessary under ordinary conditions for its manifestation and activity in the material world. This general idea has been worked out in great detail by theosophy, but in essentials is no less present in most popular religion.¹ There is little change in this respect, as in many others, from the conceptions of four or five thousand years ago. It is not, therefore, to be dismissed as false. The mere age of an idea gives no proof either of its truth or falsity, as is so often fallaciously assumed. All that can safely be said is that the agelong survival of an idea proves that the idea has been of value, and that hitherto no other idea has been universally regarded as of sufficient value to take its place.

The story of the self in Indian thought is too long to tell in this chapter, for it passed through

¹ See the set of seven Theosophical Manuals, Theosophical Publishing Society, especially I, *The Seven Principles of Man*, and VII, *Man and his Bodies*.

many stages. The interesting fact to note here is that the tendency of the advance in speculative and mystical wisdom, represented in the Upanishads, is towards the conception that individuality is an illusion, a mischief that is the result of bad thinking and bad living. The self is not an enclosed and isolated entity; it is essentially a ray, so to speak, from the supreme and only Self; Ātman is Brahma, Brahma is Ātman. The more truly and fully one knows the self, the further one gets from the self as individual, for it is the window which opens out into the infinite Self. Thus in the Chhandogya Upanishad it is taught :

“ All this universe is Brahma,—
All that live and move and die,—
Born in Him, in Him subsisting,
Ending in that Being High. . . .
. . . From Him every deed and action,
Every wish and impulse spring,
Calm and conscious, never speaking,
He embraceth everything !
He—the self within my bosom,
Impulse of the heart and brain,
Smaller than the smallest substance,
Kernel of the smallest grain.
He—the self within my bosom,
Greater than the earth and sky,
Vaster than the lands and oceans,
Higher than the heavens on high !

From Him every deed and action,
 Every wish and impulse spring,
 Calm and conscious, never speaking,
 He embraceth everything.
 He the self within my bosom,
 He the universal goal,—
 When I leave this world of mortals,
 Unto Him will wing my soul !”¹

Again, the following prose passages express the same conception :

On that effulgent Power, which is the Supreme One, the Light of the universe, do we meditate, governed by the mysterious light which resides in us for the purposes of thought; we ourselves are manifestations of the Supreme Being. He is the One Deity, He is the Great Soul, He is the Soul of all beings.

Why bring stones from the hills to build fine temples for the Supreme One to dwell in? He constantly dwells within you.²

The self, none the less, is a fact that has to be dealt with, for while illusion lasts, so does the individual self, and the aim of the religious is to effect the disappearance of the individual self by union with the supreme, a goal which can only be achieved after much and prolonged discipline.

¹ Romesh Dutt, *Indian Poetry: Selections Rendered into English Verse* (Temple Classics, J. M. Dent & Co.), pp. 41-2.

² *World-Religion Sacred Scriptures*, pp. 14, 15.

Buddhist psychology is extraordinarily interesting, and in many respects astonishingly modern.¹ Its fundamental psychological doctrine is that of "No Soul" or "Self." In rough outline the teaching is that a living being is a temporary association of five Skandhas, or Aggregates, just as a chariot is the temporary conjunction of

axle, wheels, chariot-body, pole, and other constituent members, placed in a certain relation to each other, but when we come to examine the members one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no chariot. . . . In exactly the same way the words 'living entity' and 'Ego' are but a mode of expression for the presence of the five attachment groups, but when we come to examine the elements of being one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no living entity there to form a basis for such figments as 'I am,' or 'I'; in other words, that in the absolute sense there is only name and form.²

The *Skandhas*, or "attachment groups" are :

- (1) The material Properties or Attributes.
- (2) The Sensations, which include not only

¹ See Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Psychology* (G. Bell and Sons, 1914).

² H. C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations* (Cambridge-Mass., 1922), p. 183.

what is received through the five senses, but also what is contributed by memory.

(3) Abstract Ideas.

(4) Tendencies or Potentialities.

(5) Thought or Reason.

This set of aggregates comes into association as a result of Karma, and during the lifetime of the individual they are constantly undergoing change; for the fundamental category of Buddhist thought is not "substance," but becoming. The Buddha is reported as teaching that it were better for the "ignorant, unconverted man" to hold that the body is an "Ego" than that the conscious principle is an enduring self; for:

. . . this body which is composed of the four elements lasts one year, lasts two years . . . lasts twenty years . . . lasts fifty years . . . lasts a hundred years, and even more. But that, O priests, which is called mind, intellect, consciousness, keeps up an incessant round by day and by night of perishing as one thing and springing up as another.¹

Passing now to ancient Greece we may take a brief glance at the teaching of two of the greatest of all Greek thinkers, Plato and

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

Aristotle. They exemplify the somewhat different attitudes of mind which may be called the philosophic and the scientific. Plato tends to be more mystical, to deal in spiritual values often in a highly symbolical form, while Aristotle is the observer of facts. It is, of course, impossible to reduce the teaching of either of them to a few sentences. But it seems fairly clear that Plato regarded the soul as being a real individual entity, and the ground of personality. It survived death, and ultimately its function was the contemplation of all truth and reality in the realm of the Ideas. Its incarnation was in some sense a *kenosis*, or emptying, or regression, for it had left the realm of the Ideas to become enmeshed in the world of shadows, and only retained its heavenly birthright in the form of a more or less vague reminiscence. But it is reminiscence which enables reason to triumph over the illusions of sense, and to recognize amid the many confusing particulars of sense experience the general or universal ideas which alone are reality, and of which all things as we sense them are poor and imperfect copies. With Aristotle the soul is really life, the animating principle, for he distinguishes biology as the science of "en-

souled things " from the science of the inorganic, which is non-souled. At its broadest, therefore, soul is the power of spontaneous movement and growth. But there are stages or planes of soul. There are:¹ (1) the vegetative processes; (2) appetites, desire, or conation; (3) sensation; (4) spontaneous movement; (5) reason. It is the human soul alone that has the whole of these powers; the animals have the first four; while plants possess only the first. But the soul is not asserted to be in any way distinct from the body. Rather the typical statement of Aristotle is that the soul is the form of the body. As the figure impressed on the wax is inseparable from the wax, and is the form or meaning of the wax so impressed, so is the relation of soul to body. This is an assertion of psycho-physical unity, but Aristotle does not hold to it with any dogmatic assurance. He is not sure whether there may or may not be functions and affections peculiar to the soul, in which case it might be possible for the soul to exist without the body. But equally if there are no such peculiar affections or functions it cannot exist

¹ I have largely followed McDougall's exposition of Aristotle, in *Body and Mind* (Methuen & Co.), p. 20 ff.

independently. Aristotle evidently had not made up his mind: he wanted more evidence than was available before he could assert the existence of the soul in any other sense than as the animating principle of the body.

If now we travel past the long period of time during which the main occupation of Western thought was the interpretation of past wisdom, and come to the beginning of the modern period of philosophy, we meet with very much the same types of answer to the old question. Descartes set up a complete dualism between body and mind. Body is matter, which is extended substance, while mind is inextended thinking substance, and can only come into relation with the body through the brain and nervous system, and it is solely concerned with conscious activities and thought. The vegetative and other functions of the organism which are non-conscious are carried out on purely mechanical principles. But so great was the distinction between the mind and the body that the successors of Descartes were faced by the problem of how such essentially diverse things could in any way interact. Leibniz, Spinoza, and Hobbes all came to the conclusion that they could not interact at all. Leibniz

developed his theory of psycho-physical parallelism known as "Pre-established Harmony." Spinoza developed a theory of the ultimate identity of mind and matter as two modes of the absolute substance, while Hobbes developed a thoroughgoing materialism. Hume, as we have seen,¹ developed a non-soul or non-self theory very similar to that of Buddhism.

Where, then, are we to-day? Are there any new factors which make it possible to get any nearer to a solution of this world-old enigma? It is a question whether there really has been much advance. We listen to-day to very much the same old arguments for the same old theories as did the ancient Egyptians, Hindus, Buddhists, Greeks and all the rest. We have, it is true, rediscovered hypnotism, and made some interesting contributions to the empirical study of personality on this basis; but it was a re-discovery. The ancient world seems to have known as much about the facts of hypnotism as we do, and based a good deal of their religious theory and practice upon these facts. The phenomena of mediumship, so much to the fore in spiritualistic circles, were also well known and utilized. Dissociations of personality also

¹ In Chapter X, "Fancy, Imagination and Belief."

were observed and treated, and variously interpreted. What is characteristic of this age is that science has established the practical value and enormously wide applicability of the category of mechanical causation as a general working hypothesis, and it has systematically ruled out the alleged operation and interference of so-called spiritual agencies. The old concept of a "vital force" distinguishing living from non-living matter has largely been given up in favour of the view that "life" is the result of a particular arrangement of material particles, not the introduction into them *ab extra* of a totally new principle. That there is now no spontaneous generation of life is held to be due to the fact that the conditions are not favourable, as they must once have been, for the particular arrangement of atoms and molecules which was biogenetic. Biology and physiology both get along without the need for calling in the assistance of any incalculable "force," though biologists and physiologists acknowledge that they cannot yet explain all their phenomena in terms of mechanical causation. The one field that has for a long time withstood the mechanistic invasion is that of psychology. But now this

last sanctuary of the soul has been invaded, and there has for some time been a "psychology without a soul"—and indeed it is commonly regarded as unfashionable to defend any sort of soul theory from the psychological standpoint. For the view is that psychology aims at being a science, and consequently cannot admit into its purview any such lawless concept as that of souls. The self is merely a feeling, or a "unifying principle" contributed by the physical continuity of the body. The Behaviourists scorn to talk the jargon of such old-world superstition at all. A man is a thing that acts or behaves, and sensations, images, ideas and the rest have nothing whatever to do with the real facts of the case. Psychology, indeed, only differs from physiology in being the study of the total behaviour of the organism as a whole.

But there is another side to the general attitude. Many who do not bother much about scientific postulates and methods, but are interested in life, and its ultimate problems, have reaffirmed their belief in personality as something more than an illusion in a variety of ways. Numerous ancient theories, dressed up sometimes in the garb of modern mysticism,

are adopted and offered as a kind of revelation. When it comes to action few people really accept the self-denying ordinances of science. So the old doctrines, offered to us as "New Thought," or Theosophy, or Anthroposophy, or Christian Science, or Spiritualism, attract us; and if we heed science at all, we endeavour to make the best of two worlds.

In the welter of contradictions and uncertainties there are two significant movements which are genuinely trying to explore the field of human personality. They are *Psychical Research* and *Medical Psychology*. The seekers here decline on the one hand to be warned off the field on the ground that "science forbids," or by any sort of disapproving dogma, while on the other hand they approach the whole problem from the experimental as well as the purely observational point of view. While the whole problem of the relation between mind and matter has not approached much nearer solution as a result of these researches, certain facts do seem to have been fairly well established, which render the attempt to give a purely mechanical account of personality or the self wholly inadequate. I will mention a few of these facts.

(1) Mental process actually influences bodily states and activities. This is seen perhaps most clearly in the phenomena of suggestion, especially under hypnosis. As McDougall points out,¹ however far it may be possible by the use of speculation to carry the account of the nervous changes involved in hypnosis, no account renders intelligible the ultimate fact that verbal suggestion leads on to the production of physical effects of a most striking character.

(2) Personality is not to be identified with consciousness.² Abundant evidence of an indisputable kind has been accumulated and severely tested which shows that there is mental power and activity which is beyond the ordinary awareness of the subject. Dissociations of personality provide part of the evidence, but there is a great deal more.

(3) Communication of thought is possible in certain cases and under certain conditions without recourse to the usual means of speech or sense communication. One of the surest achievements of the work of the Society for Psychical Research is the establishment of the reality of Telepathy, not indeed as a universal

¹ Wm. McDougall, *Body and Mind* (Methuen), pp. 351-2. ² See Chapter XII, "Personality and God."

characteristic, but as a mental or spiritual power actually possessed by certain individuals.

What formulation, then, is it possible to make concerning the nature of the self? F. W. H. Myers came to the conclusion that man is

. . . at once profoundly unitary and almost infinitely composite, as inheriting from earthly ancestors a multiplex and "colonial" organism—polyzoic and perhaps polypsychic in an extreme degree; but also as ruling and unifying that organism by a soul or spirit absolutely beyond our present analysis—a soul which has originated in a spiritual or metethereal environment; which even while embodied subsists in that environment; and which will still subsist therein after the body's decay.¹

McDougall comes to a very similar conclusion after a very careful analysis of the history of thought on this subject. He does not follow Myers in regard to the "proofs" of survival, but he considers that what he calls the "animistic hypothesis" is fully justified, and even goes so far as to say that there seem to him "overwhelmingly strong reasons for accepting, as the best working hypothesis of the psycho-

¹ F. W. H. Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, abridged ed. (Longmans, Green & Co.), p. 20.

physical relation, the animistic horn of the dilemma." ¹

Sir Oliver Lodge, as is well known both from his books and articles, has come to the conclusion that personality is something different from and independent of matter.² The self or personality is like a pianist playing on the piano.

My own conclusion—or conviction—is that there is ample evidence that the self or personality is real and immaterial—that is, non-material in the uncritical and popular sense of the word "material." But it appears also to be increasingly evident that the "matter" of common speech is a figment, and not a fact; and accordingly a scientific materialism which faces all the facts and weighs all the evidence may be as accurate a formulation as any spiritual or idealist formulation, for it will have to give a definition of matter and its capacities which includes all the facts and functions of personality. The manipulations of the letters of the alphabet which we call "Hamlet" have, in Shakespeare's control, produced a thing which cannot be explained away on the ground

¹ Wm. McDougall, *Body and Mind*, p. 357.

² *Man and the Universe*, Raymond, article "The Larger Self" in the *Hibbert Journal*, XXII, No. 1, October 1928.

that the alphabet is only a collection of letters. So the organization of the body with its wealth of capacities remains as the supreme fact whether we call the organizing principle a quality of matter or a spiritual entity. In the largest sense, therefore, psychology cannot go far without paying heed to personality. But there is a marked tendency to divide the activities of psychological research. Some, with a narrow and limited end in view, wish to study the empirical facts of behaviour on the assumption that they can all be adequately accounted for on mechanistic principles. Others want to find out just as much as may be possible about mind as well as its manifestations, and they refuse to be frightened off the field by the ridicule of "orthodox" materialists. Both inquiries are necessary, but whichever we adopt we need to avoid dogmatism. Our business is to investigate, and then to interpret facts; not to dictate to the universe what can and what cannot happen. If we assume at the start that mechanism holds the field in psychology, we tend inevitably to close our eyes and ears to all facts that do not conform to this assumption. No less, if we assume at the start that whatever else does or does not exist, the soul *must* exist,

the same blindness will afflict us with regard to all the facts which do not lend support to this preconception. The interests of science, in the broadest sense of that term, require that every reasonable hypothesis should be worked to the utmost, but that every hypothesis should be loosely held, and should be surrendered, amplified or modified, when and if it reaches bankruptcy. One fact stands out prominently in all this sort of discussion, namely, that whatever theories are nominally held concerning the illusoriness of personality in the abstract, no one outside a lunatic asylum attempts to act on them. All action is the implicit affirmation of the reality of personality, and all heroic action is the implicit affirmation of the eternal reality of personality.¹ If the epiphenomenal theory be accepted, it has to be kept in one of those isolated compartments of the mind which are characteristic of irrational dogmatism, and the question becomes a very live one: What is the use, value, or truth of a theory which no one can use, and no one believes except with a dissociated fragment of his mind?

¹ See Chapter XXVIII, "Eternal Life and the Immortality of the Soul."