RELIGION IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGY

REGINALD W. WILDE

LINDSEY PRESS, 5 ESSEX STREET, W.C.2

By the same Author

MAGIC WINDOWS
AND OTHER TALKS
TO GIRLS AND BOYS

RELIGION IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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LONDON

THE LINDSEY PRESS

5, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.2

TO
F. G., H. K., AND M. D.
IN GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF YEARS OF HAPPY LABOUR
SHARED TOGETHER!

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

THIS little book is not a book about Psychology, as such. It is a book about Religion. It is an attempt to bring together Religion and Psychology, to look at Religion in the light of psychological principles.

Even so, it is but a slender treatment of a theme that is exceedingly vast. It would take many large volumes to do justice to an examination of religion in the light of *all* that psychology has to teach. All I have tried to do here, within the limits permissible, is to look at religion under the time-honoured, but still valid, psychological maxim that all our mental activity has three phases, aspects, or elements—Thought, Feeling, and Will.

The theme of the book may be stated in a nutshell. I have tried to suggest that any religion which is psychologically sound (and therefore spiritually healthy) must have in it elements at once of thought, of feeling, and of will; and that a religion which is deficient in one or more of these is bound to be a lopsided or truncated faith.

I have gratefully to acknowledge the kindness of Dr. L. P. Jacks and Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton in allowing me to reproduce the quotation from "The Challenge of Life" on page 54; of Messrs. Macmillan & Company for the lengthy extract from the late William James's "Principles of Psychology" on page 44; and of Messrs. T. & T. Clark for the quotation from an article by Dr. William Salmond in Volume V of the "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics", on page 37.

The book is an expansion of a short series of addresses, extemporaneously delivered, at the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, in the winter of 1939. These were then felt to be helpful by some. My hope is that they may interest others, and perhaps suggest fruitful lines of reflection, now that they are cast into written mould.

R. W. W.

First Presbyterian Church,
Belfast.
January, 1940.

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RELIGION IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER I

A FAITH THAT GROWS

§ 1

RELIGION is notoriously hard to define! Indeed, it is doubtful if there has ever yet been framed a definition that would satisfy many religious people. Certainly one has never been framed that would satisfy all.

Professor Leuba, an American psychologist, starting out to write a book on the Psychology of Religion,[1] begins by quoting forty-eight separate definitions of religion; and then, finding no one of them satisfactory, proceeds to state a definition of his own. And Leuba's definition would not be accepted by the majority of religious folk!

All this might be construed to mean that religion is so vague and airy and nebulous an affair that it is impossible to bring it down to earth. But the real explanation is otherwise. It is that religion is too manifold, too complex, too large, and too profound to allow of ultimate analysis and definition. All great things are like that. Many of the words we use in common intercourse are but counters with which we cover over our ignorance. Who can define Life, or Growth, or Love, or Beauty? Yet these are real things. Each of us experiences them at first hand. We know them by immediate and personal contact.

So the religious man "knows" religion. And he is not greatly concerned exactly to define this thing that he

[1] J. H. Leuba, "A Psychological Study of Religion".

experiences and knows at first hand. Indeed, any attempt by another to " define " religion is likely to leave him cold, or even slightly hostile. Defining religion seems to him a little like cutting up a living body to find out what life is like.

Moreover, there are many things in life which can be identified and appreciated only by those who actually have known and experienced them. No one can explain to a man who is totally deaf what a sound is like.[1] You may make your explanation as graphic as you will; but the man who is incapable of hearing a sound will not come within a mile of your meaning. Nor can a man born totally blind really understand what it is like to see a colour.

It is for this reason, in part, that so many criticisms of religion fall flat with religious people. To tell a religious man that religion is unreal or a delusion is as if a man totally blind should deride the notion that there is such a thing as colour.

Of course all this may be made an excuse for a lot of cheap and rather shoddy thinking in religion. And frequently religious people (as we aim to show later) are at too little pains to *think out* what their religious experience means. There is real need to make religion, so far as is possible, reasonable and rational. But, finally, it must be said that you do not dispose of religion merely by stressing how difficult it is to define it. Nor, conversely, is a man necessarily religious who can make a nice water-tight definition of religion.

All of this we shall be saying, in other ways, in later pages of this little volume. For our present purpose we may be content to say that when we speak of " religion " here, we mean broadly what religious people in general mean by it; and especially we have in mind the Christian religion taken in its wider aspects.

[1] Cf. Edwyn Bevan, " Symbolism and Belief ", pp. 13–14.

§ 2

Psychology, again, is equally difficult to define—so difficult, in fact, that many experts refuse to make the attempt altogether! The very word itself begs the question. For to speak of psychology as " the science of the mind " leaves you still with the necessity to define " mind ". And, in a word, no one yet knows what mind is. The discovery lies, perhaps, in the future. But at present, although we know a very great deal *about* the mind and especially about the ways in which it works, we do not know what it is in itself.

If this were a book about psychology, we might have to pursue this question at greater length. But for our present purpose this is not at all necessary. For all psychological experts are agreed that there are three broad phases, or aspects, of the mind's activity. Each of us thinks; each of us feels; and each of us wills, our willing leading on to action. These three, in fact, are the fundamental activities of mind. Thinking, Feeling, Willing are the ultimate modes of the mind's working. And each of us knows something of what these mean through his or her own immediate and personal experience.

It is the purpose of this little book to look at religion in the light of these three fundamental phases of mental activity, to examine religion under the aspect of Thought, under the aspect of Feeling, and under the aspect of Will and Conduct.

§ 3

The oldest of our gospels [1] records how Jesus, being asked once, in effect, what was " the whole duty of man ", replied in a memorable pronouncement (quoted in part from the Old Testament) that a man should " love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

[1] The Gospel of Mark, dated about A.D. 60.

mind, and with all thy strength ".[1] It is safe to say that none of us has yet risen to all the height and breadth, the splendour and the completeness, of that great commandment. But, in so far as we come nearer to the mind of Christ, we shall feel increasingly constrained to bring into the service of our religion thought and feeling and will. Which is only another way of saying that our intelligence, our emotional life, and our practical activities, are all to be dedicated to God, and all to find a real and essential place in that thing we call religion.

" Life ", it was once said, " is a big thing; and it needs to be looked at in a big way." Similarly, one might say that religion is a big thing, and that it needs to be looked at in a big way. The tragedy of so much of religious history is that men have taken this big thing and looked at it in a small way; that they have taken what was large, splendid, many-coloured, and have made of it a thing suited only to their own dimensions, at the mercy of the small limitations of their own outlook, propensities, and prejudices.

One of the joys of a really living, personal faith is to find its horizons increasingly growing larger. There is something wrong with us if our thought of God, and our conception of Christian duty, do not grow vaster year by year. When Jesus told men that they must become " as little children " in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, doubtless that great phrase covered many things. But surely, it included *this* prominently among the rest—that they must *retain the capacity for growth.* Life is growth in the biological realm. It surely is so in the spiritual realm also.

Indeed, it would scarcely be too much to say that if we are to keep hold of faith as a living reality at all, it will be by a constant process of growth. The faith which does not grow withers. Many a man loses faith altogether because he has ceased to grow. His spiritual life becomes arrested,

[1] Mark 12. 29, 30.

or (in psychological jargon) " fixated ". Spiritually, he atrophies, because he refuses to *grow up.*[1] Peter Pan may be lovable enough on the stage; he is a tragedy in real life. No man can live spiritually at an adult level if he is content merely with the religion of his childhood.

We are to move on increasingly " unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ".[2] A religion of this sort will never be exhausted. Its horizons are infinite. Ever new and larger meanings import themselves. Vaster and still vaster grow its conceptions of what it means to love God with all the mind, and heart, and soul, and strength, and one's neighbour as oneself.

[1] See on this, A. Herbert Gray, " Finding God ", pp. 139–141.
[2] Eph. 4. 13.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND THOUGHT

§ 1

"A MAN", said Jesus, "is to love the Lord his God with all his mind." That is to say, he is to bring his intelligence to the service of his faith, is not to leave his reasoning faculties behind when he seeks to be religious.

This is not, of course, to say that the whole of religion is thought. Religion must certainly include thought; but thought is not the whole of it. That would be as if a man should say: "I know all the principal rivers and towns of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland: therefore I am a good patriot." Or—to use an illustration of Dr. David Yellowlees:[1] as if one should go to much trouble and pains to argue to a good mother that, on the whole, and taking account of all the relevant evidence, she will be justified in believing that she really does love her children! It was no mere sentimentalist, but one of the acutest thinkers France has produced, who said: "The heart has its reasons that the head knows not of."[2] But of those elements of religion that lie outside the realm of thought proper we shall speak in later pages. In this present chapter we are concerned to stress the need *for* thought in religion.

§ 2

Now, actually, real reflective thinking by no means comes easy to us. Indeed, there is a widespread disinclination to think. Most of us tend to prefer merely to follow fashion,

[1] "Psychology's Defence of the Faith", p. 68.
[2] Pascal, "Pensées", Sec. IV, No. 277.

to conform, and to take up popular parrot-cries, rather than to *think out* for ourselves the problems that life presents to us. The modes, habits, customs, persuasions, of our class, sect, or calling, exert an enormous, though largely unrealised, pressure upon us. For more of us than is perhaps comfortable to think, *these* are the essential religion by which we live; that is to say, these are the determinants that shape our conduct, really control our doings. The pressure of the crowd, or of our particular "set", can so easily take the place of real conviction, be substitute for solid and dependable principles of conduct.

This is true along the whole range of our living. It is true concerning religion specifically. Men tend to take over the religion of their fathers, to rest back upon mere convention, to cling to the outward formulæ and observances of religion, without engaging upon the real reflection and mental exertion which alone can bring a personal and vital faith by which to live. Tradition plays an enormous part in popular religion.

Perhaps, in fairness, it ought to be said that there are probably solid reasons for this disinclination to *think*. There is a fair amount of technical biological evidence that thinking is the latest faculty to be acquired in the process of evolution. For ages creatures were living which could both feel and act, without any ability or mechanism to think. The thought-areas of the brain were the last to be developed. So that, in our unwillingness to think things out for ourselves, and our proneness to take the line of least resistance by falling back upon inherited traditions or contemporary fashions, we are simply acting upon older and cruder biological levels.

But it is precisely the power to think that makes us most truly human, and in forfeiting this, or in failing to use it, we are throwing away our birthright. We are being far less than we might. And this capacity for thought, necessary for all full living, must be brought into the realm of religion,

must be used in the service of our religion, if that religion is to be a really mature and developed thing.

§ 3

Let us now turn to note some of the reasons why intelligence must be brought to bear in the realm of faith, why it is that religion, equally with all other activities and enterprises, calls for the exercise of our intellectual faculties.

In the first place, we are to love God with our mind, to bring a dedicated intelligence to the service of our faith, because *only a religion that is based upon thought can truly stand.*

There is a significant passage in Jeremiah where he warns his countrymen that a religion based upon spurious and superstitious gods will break down when the testing-time arrives, that only a religion that is intelligent can really see us through.[1]

That is a lesson that has been learned again and again in human experience. A religion of mere conformity, a faith that is only routine and convention, may seem to serve well enough when life flows easily and makes no particular demands upon us. But only a religion that is based upon genuine conviction can stand the test of real adversity. A religion that we take over from our fathers, or one based simply upon hearsay or custom, has no power to bear us up in those critical times of our experience when we have most need of the strength and stability that a vital personal faith can give.

Sir Walter Scott once related [2] how, as a boy at school, he had for class-mate a youth who was very nervous and self-distrustful. This lad was in agonies when called upon in class to stand up and speak something aloud. By dint of much painful experience he had found a peculiar comfort (not

[1] Jer. 10. 2 and 15. The ordinary version does not bring out the meaning. Dr. Moffatt's translation is much more cogent. Idols " break down when the test arrives ".

[2] Lockhart, " Memoirs of Sir Walter Scott " (Macmillan, 1900 edition), Vol. I, pp. 76–77.

entirely inexplicable to a psychologist) in fingering a certain button upon his waistcoat. Twisting this in his fingers, he was able to master to some extent his quaking nerves and to maintain some hold upon his agitation. One day, in a fit of impishness, Scott secretly detached the talismanic button ! Later, when the boy was called upon to stand up and construe aloud, he felt as usual for the comforting circle. Finding it gone, he collapsed ! The outward prop removed, he had nothing internal to fall back upon. Many a man's religion suffers a similar shock. It has no deep roots within himself, is not built solidly upon serious reflection and assured conviction. And, when the crucial test arrives, such a faith breaks down.

Nothing is more pitiable to the minister of religion than to hear some faithful member of his church, reared from childhood perhaps in the elements of Christian faith, say, in face of some great personal disaster or loss, " Why does God let this happen to *me* ? ", or, " What have I *done* to deserve this ? " Such an attitude, human and understandable enough, is none the less tragic evidence of the want of a sustaining Christian philosophy, the lack of a religion that has been *thought through.*

There is a sound maxim that a man should make his will when he is in good health and when all his mental faculties are intact. So a man should shape his philosophy of life in a time when thought is clear and reflection unimpeded. In the hours when all the scheme of our life has suffered shipwreck, and we are face to face with the worst than fate can bring, we are in no condition to seek for and find a faith that will sustain. If we are wise at all, we shall have built up earlier our conception of Life, fashioned our faith and our philosophy of things, so that these are there, ready to hand when most they are needed. There come to all of us, in the grim school of experience, times when we must walk by a remembered light, if we are to walk bravely and hopefully

at all. Happy the man who, when such a time arrives, has light sufficient for the day!

Here, then, is the first reason why we must bring our intelligence into the field of our religious faith. Only a faith that is intelligent, a philosophy of life that takes reasonable account of all the facts, can really stand by us in those times when we have most need of a faith that sustains. No second-hand religion will see us through the graver issues of our experience. No conventional faith will carry us through when the darker hours arrive. Only a personal faith is big enough to stand the test. And a personal faith must be built upon our own honest inquiry and genuine reflection. We cannot really *live* by a religion of mere hearsay or convention.

§ 4

A second reason for the need of intelligence in religion is that religion can so easily be, and all too often is, a bundle of inconsistencies.

These inconsistencies take two forms. There are inconsistencies between thought and thought; and there are inconsistencies between thought and act. Let us look at each of these in turn.

(*a*) First, there are inconsistencies between thought and thought. By which we mean that frequently a man's religion is not all of a piece, is not homogeneous, not a unity. It tends to exist in separate and isolated compartments, with no connecting doors between. His religion is not a woven fabric, but a patchwork quilt after our grandmothers' style of motley order.

Years ago a woman known to the writer had been reared from childhood in a Christian Church and its institutions. She was a regular attender at public worship. (One stands awed by the thought of the number of sermons to which she must have listened!). She was, among other things, an

expert needlewoman. She was especially valued for her fine work in connection with Church bazaars, where her embroidery would fetch high prices. On one occasion a bazaar was due to be opened on a Monday, and on the day preceding, *i.e.*, a Sunday, she found herself with a large piece of work still unfinished. After evening service she took this up and worked for several hours into the night to complete it. The following day it was sold. A day or two later her little son was taken seriously ill with scarlatina, and narrowly escaped death. The mother, grief-stricken, declared that this was God's punishment upon her for having sewn on the Sunday!

We mention this incident here, not to embark upon a disquisition concerning the keeping of the Sabbath, but rather to point out what a jumble of inconsistencies must have been this good woman's thought of God. Since childhood she had been a member of a Christian Church; her God was, presumably, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". But, equally, her God was a spiteful and vengeful tyrant, jealous for His own dignity and rights, and wreaking His vengeance, for a mother's trivial fault, upon a little unoffending and helpless child! "It is not the will of your Father in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish," said Jesus.[1] "God did this to my child, because I sewed on the Sabbath," cried this distracted mother.

So there lodge within the minds of many of us curious and incompatible speculations, ideas, conceptions, like oddities and inconsequential pieces jostling side by side with finely wrought furniture thrown together into some unvisited lumber-room in a house. There is no order, arrangement, harmony. Things do not "hang together".

There is an old word in religion which one does not, happily, so often hear mentioned now-a-days. It is the word

[1] Matt. 18. 14.

" resignation ". People spoke of being " resigned " to the will of God, and the " will of God " was anything which might happen, especially of an evil and tragic nature. Sometimes that phrase, coming glibly, if sincerely, from human lips, has made Christian ministers " see red ". People would speak of being " resigned " to the will of God as little children died of cholera or typhoid, when the direct cause was the filthy and insanitary slums from which evil landlords made unhallowed profit. They spoke of being " resigned " to the will of God when a drunken motorist recklessly drove down and killed some innocent child. They spoke of being " resigned " to the will of God when leprosy, or plague, or poverty, or war, ravaged humanity's happiness and health. " Resignation "—which meant doing nothing, standing helplessly by, accepting the *status quo* !

But—and here is our immediate point—what sort of God did such people envisage ? Was He really the God they worshipped in church on Sundays, the Loving Father of Whom Jesus spoke, Who counted the very hairs of each human head, so great and so intimate and so personal was His love ?

Many of us erect in the hidden sanctuaries of our mind an altar to the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and then set up alongside it altars to all sorts of other deities—gross, bestial deities; crude, vengeful, malicious demons; partial, prejudiced, tribal gods; gods of all varieties and kinds, having nothing in common with the great loving Father of the race; gods belonging to outworn, out-dated, primitive conceptions, akin to the gods of our savage ancestors; so that the sanctuary within is not a temple, but a pantheon, a heterogeneous collection of incompatible and unrelated deities, no two of which can really be worshipped at one and the same time and in one and the same way.

And the only cure for all of this is thought—sheer, honest thinking-through, clear and dedicated intelligence. If we

do not import brains into the service of our religion, our faith is likely to be a bedlam, and our religious conceptions an unruly chaos.

(*b*) But there is another kind of inconsistency—an inconsistency between thought and act. Here we touch upon a subject that we must examine at more length in a later chapter. But we cannot entirely overpass it here.

There may be chaos between what a man *thinks* in religion, and what he *acts*. How many of us pray weekly, if not daily, " Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us ", and yet remain in some instance hard and unforgiving, nursing up a grudge through the years, allowing our hate or our vengeance to prey upon us within, until it becomes a veritable cancer, eating up our vitals. And we can go on doing that, and never even notice the inconsistency, so great is the mind's power of covering over (" repressing ", to use the technical term) that which it does not wish to see !

Some of the bitterest things Jesus ever said were reserved for precisely this type of thing. How he poured forth his wrath upon a certain kind of Pharisee, who " devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers " ![1] How he lacerated priests who preached of " mercy, justice, and truth ", and passed by a wounded man on the other side ![2] How he seemed almost to despair of those people who would not *think through* the implications of their religion, who maintained a high wall of division between thought and act, separating conviction and consequence !

Moreover, modern psychology has revealed that a man can stand pretty well anything that life can throw up upon him from without, *provided he be a unity within.* No assault from outside can harm us, if there be not civil war within. But when *that* happens, we are undone. Health is wholeness; and mental and spiritual health means integrity and harmony within—a unified self.

[1] Matt. 23. 14. [2] Luke 10. 31.

And again, there is no way to wholeness and harmony, save by honest thought. A religion divorced from intelligence, careless or empty of thought, cannot be a unified thing. It is bound to have inconsistencies, incompatibilities between faith and conduct.

§ 5

There is a third, and equally serious, reason why thought must be an essential element in any worth-while religion. *A religion that has no place for thought can be a positive danger.*

Who were the people who crucified Jesus? Bad people? No. Irreligious people? No. Ignorant people? Again No. They were among the most religious, most cultured, and most influential people of their age. They were social and religious leaders. They were man of standing and great convictions. Yet they crucified Jesus! Why? They crucified him because their thought was too limited. They could not conceive any good thing coming out of Nazareth. They could not conceive a prophet outside the recognised "schools". They could not conceive a Messiah who was not born in a palace. They could not conceive a Divine revelation coming in unanticipated form and in an unexpected guise. Their thought was too limited. Their horizons were too narrow. And they crucified Jesus. High-minded, religious, cultured men, they crucified Jesus!

Paul afterwards, in writing of them, said: "I bear witness that their zeal was not according to knowledge".[1] Exactly! Zeal, but not knowledge. Enthusiasm, but not a willingness to think things through. Seriousness, but not dedicated brains that would follow things up to the end.

Religion, like the sword in the Garden of Eden, is a two-edged thing. It can be the greatest blessing that ever

[1] Rom. 10. 2.

comes to men. Or it can be the greatest curse. No other thing lets loose so much enthusiasm, so much heroism, so much loyalty, so much endurance, so much willingness for self-sacrifice as religion. But, just for this reason, when it is divorced from intelligence it is the most dangerous thing in the world. It is as if a boy should have a machine-gun, or a child be given T.N.T. to play with. Power without responsibility is always terrible in its results. And religion without intelligence is that.

Every damnable crime of which history bears record has been done at some time or other in the name of religion. There is nothing so bestial or so cruel but has somewhere been used as the instrument of religion. "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully," said Pascal, "as when they do it from religious conviction."[1] Let this thing loose without a consecrated intelligence allied with it, and you let loose the most dangerous force on earth.

Moreover, in this age, more than in any other that has gone before, intelligence is needed for the solving of problems that are fundamentally religious. Our problems loom up now on a scale inconceivable to our forefathers. Nothing short of a world-wide sweep is adequate to deal with them. We are sometimes told that more goodwill is needed, more "practical religion". There is a certain truth in such pronouncements. But the inescapable fact is that there is goodwill in plenty, and practical religion in abundance, that are largely dissipated, and which never get down to grapple realistically with the truly gigantic problems of the age.

How, for instance, shall we solve the international problem? By goodwill? Goodwill by itself is not enough. By "practical religion"? That also, of itself, is not enough. What is needed is dedicated intelligence, that will direct goodwill, and give effectiveness to "practical religion".

[1] "Pensées", Sec. XIV, No. 895.

Without intelligence, we do but play upon the surface of things. Nothing but loftiest imagination, conceptual daring, and finely tempered and informed intelligence, are adequate to find solutions to this greatest problem of our age. No amount of wishful thinking will eradicate war; nor will sentimental attitudes about peace and brotherhood. When religion claims the finest intelligences, and these are brought to bear upon the solution of the problem *in the power that religion can bestow*, the problem of war will be liquidated.

There is the economic problem, again, the (by now) commonplace paradox of want and hunger in the midst of plenty. How is that, too, to be resolved? By feeling good about it? By resolutions at Church conferences and the like? By appealing to the latent stores of goodwill in people? No. The problem is too gigantic and massive and intricate for that. In many respects it must be a problem for the expert. Only informed and technically equipped intelligences can take it by the heels. But economic reconstruction will call, doubtless, for large measures of sacrifice, forbearance, and moral courage, on the part of both individuals and classes. New worlds do not come cheaply. Hence the problem is both technical, *and* moral. So that, once again, it is intelligence allied with religion, and with religious enthusiasm and motive, that alone is capable of grappling with the problem.

The same need for dedicated intelligence meets us all in problems that lie in the realm of individual and personal life. There is sex, for instance. Even to-day it is possible to read books and articles suggesting that "instinct is enough". But, clearly, if instinct alone gave all the guidance that is necessary for the harmonious and healthful ordering of sex life, there would be no "sex problem" in our modern Western communities. Yet there is a problem. And those best qualified to judge of it, such as doctors, psychologists, social-welfare workers, educators, and the like, are

convinced of the need for adequate instruction of the young on matters of sex. Instinct may be sufficient guide for the animal; but man has gone too far beyond the animal to find all the guidance he needs for life in his instinctive equipment alone. He is essentially a rational being, and in his case it is essential that intelligence should come in to direct and order instinct.

The basis of home life, again, is instinctive. But it takes something more than instinct pure and simple to create and maintain a lovely home life. To fashion a companionship that lasts and grows richer with the years; to make an atmosphere where children can grow up happily to develop strength and beauty of character; to rise victorious above the minor frets and serious misfortunes of life alike with equanimity and courage—all this calls for more than instinctive equipment alone. It demands thought and thoughtfulness, wise planning, and an intelligent attitude to life.

So one concludes that not the least need of our time, on the individual and on the social scale alike, is to align intelligence alongside of religious conviction, to import a dedicated intelligence into the attempt to deal with moral and practical problems. The man who leaves his intelligence outside the area of his religion is not only resting content with a truncated and one-sided faith, that will let him down in the most crucial experiences of his life; he is preventing religion from being the great dynamic influence it ought, and was meant, to be.

The world has yet to see what could be done by a religion that should enlist in its service all of man's finest intelligence, and should ally spiritual idealism and intensity with a practical concern for the betterment of the world.

Meantime, for each of us the personal issue is clear. We are to love the Lord our God with our mind. We are to make our religion intelligent, and we are to dedicate our

intelligence to the service of our faith. Consecrated brains are a vital need of religion.

> Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason,
> To fust in us unus'd.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind."

CHAPTER III

RELIGION AND FEELING

§ 1

In the previous chapter we dealt with the relation of religion to thought, dwelt upon the need for bringing brains into the service of our religion, upon the necessity for making our faith an intelligent thing. In this present chapter we turn to the relation between religion and feeling.

Here we shall be at once, for many, on more familiar ground. For it has been customary to associate religion with feeling or emotion. The stress on such words as "experience", "assurance", "sanctification", "conversion", and the like, goes back quite to New Testament times. They are, in fact, the characteristic words in which Paul speaks of the Christian life, its origin, and its consequences. And Western Christianity is predominantly Pauline.

For many Christians still (and possibly for many who make no claims to religious experience at all), religion is associated with certain states of feeling. It is to be known by an inner peace of heart; an assurance of standing right with God; a sense of redemption from the world and of an inward cleansing; a spontaneous joyousness of spirit; a feeling of confidence in regard to one's eternal destiny. On more elementary (and perhaps youthful) levels, religion is to be known by a pervading sense of well-being; a "bubbly feeling"; or even a "pleasant sensation at the pit of the stomach". Even with many who have reached a genuinely mature religious development, the reality of faith is still measured by the feelings it produces; prayer

is felt to be effective only when it calls up an inner glow; the sense of God's nearness is associated with the upwelling of soothing and comfortable emotion.

No one who has ventured far across the threshold of religious experience would deny that all of these things are at times connected with spiritual consciousness. But one or two cautions are to be noted.

(*a*) The Master himself seems to have made surprisingly little of such feeling-states. No reader of the New Testament can fail to be struck with the differences between his characteristic utterances, in parable or precept, and the elaborate and formularised statements of Paul in his epistles. Sometimes these differences are so marked that one seems to be moving in different worlds as one passes from the one to the other. There would seem to be no evidence in the Gospels themselves that the Master anywhere laid down, as a condition of discipleship to himself, or as a test of genuine religious experience, that a man should become aware of certain formulated emotional reactions in himself. Indeed his chief emphasis would seem to have been upon practical living. The only test he recognised was one of quality of life. "Inasmuch as ye did it . . ." To this point we shall recur in our next chapter.

(*b*) Paul himself lays much more emphasis upon both intellectual religion, *and* practical conduct, than has always been clearly recognised. The older type of evangelical religion, which laid almost exclusive stress upon feeling-experience, was not (as has sometimes been argued) a complete presentation of the Pauline theology, but only one element of it taken out from the whole.

(*c*) Emotion is not an entirely trustworthy guide to the reality or success of any particular undertaking. A man slightly under the influence of alcohol may consider himself a very smart fellow indeed, and imagine his present performance in conversation, argument, or what-not, to be a very creditable one. But, actually, his feeling-state is an illusory one. His real achievement by no means keeps pace with his imagined brilliance. And the same may be true of a person who is perfectly sober. Fortunately, the obverse is true; we may really have done much better than we imagine and feel ourselves to have done. The success or persuasive influence of a sermon (as any parson can testify!) is not really to be measured by the amount of "glow" which the minister himself has got out of it. In any case, there are times in life for all of us when we have to go on ploddingly doing the thing that falls to our hand to do when we do not *feel* like doing it at all, and when no pleasant thrill or comforting sensation accompanies the doing. And on specifically spiritual levels that truth obtains also. It is not wise to pray only when one "feels like" praying; nor is it safe to assume that God is nearest only when we are most pleasantly aware of His nearness. All the great mystics and masters of the spiritual life are aware how dangerously misleading can be the merely emotional test.

Still, cautions like these had in mind, it is none the less true that, through all its varieties of form and complexion, Christianity has never been alien to certain kinds and qualities of feeling, and that the heart, no less than the head, has taken its place in the consecration of the self to God.

§ 2

Yet there have been systems, and even religious systems, which, in contrast with Christianity, have deprecated emotion and aimed at its suppression.

Stoicism, for instance, was one such religion. It is not easy to do justice to that great faith in a sentence or two. But it would not be wrong to say that the Stoic never felt anything but distrustful of emotion, as such, and aimed at controlling life by pure reason and sweet reasonableness.

A " wise passivity " was the ideal on the emotional side of things. Feeling was held to be a danger, likely to prove destructive of the even flow of unbiased reason. When Marcus Aurelius lay dying in his tent on the battlefield, an officer, inquiring the pass-word for the night, was given " *equanimitas* "—equanimity, the even mind.

Buddhism again aims at the damping-down of all emotional states. Nirvana is the ideal. Just what Nirvana implies is not easy to say; perhaps its precise connotation is beyond the power of the Western mind to grasp.[1] But at least it implies the cessation of all passion, all emotion, all feeling. And Nirvana is not simply a future state; it is one that the believer is to realise as fully as possible here and now. An even passivity, for the Buddhist, as for the Stoic, is the ideal.

Confucius would seem to have come near to the same kind of doctrine in China. Older by several centuries than Stoicism, Confucianism exhibits several parallels with the later Roman faith. Like Stoicism, it was predominantly a system of self-culture, in which intelligence and a wide benevolence were chief ingredients. Passion, emotion, feeling, were to be suspect. They were deceptive influences, likely to lead the mind astray. The developed man would set a small value upon feeling.

Finally, there was the Greek ideal, as Aristotle conceived and expressed it. Here, for example, is his picture of the " great man ".[2] Note how little is the place allowed to feeling or emotion in his make-up. " He does not expose himself needlessly to danger, since there are few things for which he cares sufficiently. . . . He is of a disposition to do men service, though he is ashamed to have a service done to him. To confer a kindness is a mark of superiority;

[1] See, for example, Sidney Cave, " Living Religions of the East ", p. 124.
[2] Nic. Ethics, Bk. IV, Sec. 3.

to receive one is a mark of subordination. . . . He talks and acts frankly because of his contempt for men and things. . . . He is never fired with admiration, because there is nothing great in his eyes. . . . His carriage is sedate, his voice deep, his speech measured. . . . He is not prone to vehemence, because he thinks nothing very important. . . . He is his own best friend."

When our eighteenth-century forefathers expressed their dislike of anything savouring of " enthusiasm " (the older word for unashamed emotion), they were, wittingly or not, in great and classical company. Some of the greatest minds and greatest religious and ethical systems the world has seen have held that the best way to deal with feeling was to reduce it to its lowest ebb.

§ 3

Nor is it difficult to discern the reasons why emotion or feeling should be thus suspect. Let us pause for a moment to consider two such reasons.

(*a*) Emotion can easily become a riot, precluding reason and making rational thought impossible.

In Charles Kingsley's novel " Hypatia " there is drawn a vivid and horrific picture of Christian monks tearing limb from limb a young and beautiful woman, for no other reason than that she was a non-Christian, the last, in fact, of the old pagan (Greek) philosophers. And that picture is historically true ! This beautiful and cultured woman actually suffered martyrdom so at the hands of infuriated Christians.

In recent times a number of books have been written on the psychology of the mob. It is now widely recognised that a mob or crowd will perform acts and go to extravagances that no single individual in that same crowd, left to himself, would for a moment contemplate; acts and extravagances, in fact, from which he would recoil in horror. And the

reason is that, when men are gathered together in crowds, reason and intellectual processes are dwarfed, while emotion comes into the ascendant.[1]

But strong emotion has the same effect upon each of us in individual and solitary experience. It acts as a bar to reflection and rationality. We speak of a man "losing his temper". The truth is, of course, that he finds his temper, and loses his reason. (Which is why some of us are scared of losing our temper.) When passion comes in at the door, reason and reasonableness fly out at the window.

There is little wonder that some philosophers and religious teachers, noting this disturbing and disintegrative effect of emotion, have concluded that the best thing to do with it was to put it in a lethal chamber.

(*b*) Emotion can easily become an end in itself, not leading to anything beyond itself.

William James tells[2] the story of a noble Russian lady (in the days of the old regime) driving in her sleigh one night, during the arctic winter conditions, to the theatre. Inside the theatre she wept copiously at the fictitious sorrows and sufferings of the actors upon the stage. Meanwhile, through the three hours of the drama, her coachman sat outside. Eventually the lady left the theatre to find him frozen to death upon the box!

The world is full of people like that lady. Their emotions are fulsome and copious enough; but they lead nowhere, never pass on into creative and useful activity. Such people are surcharged with feeling, like a boiler which has exceeded the pressure-point. But, for all their wealth of feeling, they do no more to mitigate the evils of life or to assuage its hardships than do the heartless and the callous. Perhaps they are in even more dangerous plight than the heartless

[1] Wm. McDougall, "The Group Mind", treats interestingly of this. See especially pp. 24–25, 39–45.
[2] "Principles of Psychology", Vol. I, p. 125.

and the callous, for these last may some time be made to feel, and so to act; whereas the sentimentalist never goes beyond feeling.

Sentimentalism is, literally, an obsession. It is an obsession with emotional states and experiences. And, like all obsessions, it chains its possessor within a self-made prison, fetters and shackles him, and renders him unfit for productive and useful living.

If one looked only at the sentimentalists, whereby to judge of the value of emotion, one might well conclude that it was a poor and evil thing, and that a man would be better off without it altogether.

It is not surprising that some of the acutest thinkers of the race have come through to such a conclusion.

§ 4

Yet, as we have seen, Christianity gives, and has always given, a large place to the emotions. It has never, like some other systems, aimed at suppressing, inhibiting, or destroying the feeling-side of life.

The New Testament stands poles apart from the old Stoic writings, for instance. Equally, Jesus does not in the slightest resemble Aristotle's pictured "great man". The Gospel writers have never been at pains to disguise the fact that the Master himself knew, and evidenced, all the emotions common to ordinary men and women.[1] He knows pity; sometimes he is afraid; not infrequently he is angry; he is no stranger to sorrow and heartache; he is lifted up by hope; he knows impatience; he is frankly and unashamedly joyous on occasion; but sometimes he even sheds tears (and he was no sentimentalist). He seems to have plumbed the whole gamut of human emotions. A New Testament writer could say of him: "He was in all points like as we are".[2]

[1] See, for example, T. R. Glover, "The Jesus of History", pp. 50–52.
[2] Heb. 4. 15.

So, too, with his followers. Whatever else may be in doubt about these early Christians who move through the pages of the New Testament, and reveal for us the faith in action after the Master has passed on, at least this much is certain—they were not men and women whose emotional life was suppressed. They had not "so learned Christ" as to imagine that the way of life was "*apathia*" (absence of feeling). Two emotions, in particular, shine out from these pages with unmistakable brilliance—joyousness and love. Almost, one might say that it is exuberance, unquenchable, undiscourageable joyousness of spirit that is the keynote of the New Testament—that, and what William James has called, "in relation to others, a preponderance of loving affections".[1]

Emotion, full, unashamed, spontaneous, characterised both the Master himself and those who first preserved his message to the world.

§ 5

Moreover, modern psychology has vindicated this Christian acceptation of the place and rightfulness of the emotions. It has become quite clear that emotion is the great driving-force to all fine and worthy living. No man gets far in life, or does much with life, unless he is capable of feeling, and feeling deeply. Take away all strong emotion from a human life, and, while it may retain a certain coherence and integrity in itself, it has nevertheless lost the power to do things effectively *in* life, and certainly has forfeited any capacity to influence greatly its fellow-men and -women. Those who have made history, whether for good or for ill, have not been people who have suppressed or inhibited passion in themselves.

Curiously, in spite of what we have seen to be Aristotle's suspicion of the emotions, it was he who, well over two

[1] "Varieties of Religious Experience", p. 486.

thousand years ago, anticipated this finding of the new psychology. "Intellect moves nothing", he wrote.[1] And a modern scholar, commenting on this pronouncement,[2] goes on to put succinctly what are psychology's findings regarding the place of the emotions in life. "Ideas, simply as such, have no more power to touch the will than our percepts have. Truths that have no inherent fitness to create feeling never become springs of action. . . . Doctrines, however great and important, never have the smallest real influence on life, unless they become incandescent, and kindle a fire in the heart. . . . Victory will always be on the side of the principles that can command the strongest and most persistent enthusiasm. Nothing great was ever yet accomplished by a man incapable of intense feeling."

Professor William McDougall, perhaps the most brilliant of all modern English psychologists, has persuasively argued that the instincts of our human make-up are "the prime movers of all activity";[3] and emotion, in McDougall's view, is the one changeless and ineradicable core of instinct. Dr. R. H. Thouless has said that "to abolish emotion would be like abolishing the steam from an engine".[4] There is, indeed, wide acceptance of Aristotle's view, quoted above, that intellect, of itself, "moves nothing". We must be willing to feel deeply, if we would act greatly.

From the viewpoint of modern psychology, Christianity, with its large place given to the emotions, is on wiser and safer ground than are those systems of religious or self culture, ancient or modern, which aim at the elimination of feeling.

[1] Nic. Ethics, Bk. VI, Sec. 2.
[2] Wm. Salmond, in "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics", Vol. V, p. 812.
[3] "Social Psychology", p. 38.
[4] "The Control of the Mind", p. 75.

§ 6

But now comes a dilemma that we must frankly face. On the one hand we have stressed the danger that attaches to all emotion, especially to all strong emotion, have seen how, under the play of undisciplined feeling, a man may become "less of a man and more of a beast"; yet, equally, we have insisted that all finest and most successful living is impossible without the influence of a strongly developed emotional life, that intellect, simply as such, "moves nothing". How are we to reconcile these apparently conflicting counsels, allow emotion to supply us with its dynamic power for fine living, and yet safeguard ourselves from the evils that can so easily attend upon emotion?

The solution can be put in a few words. *Our aim must be to be guided by reason and propelled by emotion.* It is reason, reflection, calm and balanced judgment, that must decide just what causes are most worth serving in life; just what ends are most worth pursuing; just what ambitions shall allure us; just what objects shall receive our attention. Then, to the pursuit, service, and achievement of these we must bring the whole force of our emotional nature, all our stores of passion, feeling, and desire. "To think calmly, and to act emotionally" is, as Dr. Thouless puts it,[1] the ideal.

Another way of stating this same truth is to say that the building of a worthy character must come by way of the formation of worthy *sentiments*. For a sentiment is a system of organised emotions, gathered around an object. Patriotism, for instance, is such a sentiment. It is a man's fine regard for his country, calling forth from him all his stores of emotion and of will; so that he takes joy in his country's rightful success and well-being; feels himself ashamed when it does anything unworthy or ignoble; spends himself in its service, and, if need be, sacrifices for it; is himself anxious

[1] "Control of the Mind", p. 77.

when its safety or well-being is endangered; knows a pride in its long history and rich traditions; throws forward his imagination into the future, to envisage a still finer and better country yet to be. All this, and more, patriotism is. It is no one emotion. Nor is it a matter of mere intermittent gusts of passion, that ebb and flow. It is a steady, consistent, enduring thing. It is, in short, a sentiment.

So, too, one who loves another gathers up into that regard all his stores of feeling and emotion; knows joy in the beloved's presence, sorrow in her misfortune, anger for her wrongs, pain at her absence, devotion for her well-being. Love in this sense of the word is also a sentiment; it is not a passing gust of feeling, a fleeting and fickle emotion, but a strong, lasting, stable thing, that endures throughout the years. It has the permanence which attaches to all genuine sentiments.

Here, then, is the solution to the apparent dilemma to which we referred. It is along the way of the sentiments that we shall combine clear reason with enduring emotion, shall be guided by rationality whilst being enmotived by feeling. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that just as man is most distinctively man when he becomes a creature of reason, as contrasted with the blind impulsiveness of the animal, so, on the emotional side of his life, he has to replace mere feeling and undisciplined emotion by the steady and controlled play of enduring and worthy sentiments. The danger of emotion is its indiscipline and its irrationality. By building up sentiments as the basis of character, we align and ally emotion with clear reason and balanced judgment. Our aim must be "to think calmly and to act emotionally".

§ 7

It is here that we come near to the heart of Christianity at its best. For, while Christianity has never frowned upon

the life of feeling, or sought to damp it down, equally (if we are to judge by the Master himself and those who best have caught his way) it has given no sanction to mere sentimentality or to riotous and uncontrolled emotionalism.

True it is that Christianity has sometimes been held out to be a mere sentimental lush, a flabby emotionalism, an unheroic namby-pambyism. But this has been the distortion of the true faith, and finds no warrant from the Master himself, nor (rightly understood) from Paul and other New Testament writers. The man who imagines that Christian faith is just the experiencing of certain "nice emotions", the presence of "comfortable feelings" within, is miles removed from New Testament doctrine. Whenever the Faith has been truest to its origins and fount, it has never lacked an element of the austere and the disciplined.

Indeed, it would not be a stretching of the point to say that the Christian character, as Paul at any rate conceived it, is very much a matter of the sentiments, thus anticipating the findings of modern psychology. While, at the head of these sentiments that go to make up the Christian personality, stands the supremest—Love. Love—in the sense of a rich and manifold and enduring sentiment—is chief and crown in the hierarchy of Christian sentiments. That conception recurs again and again in the New Testament pages. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law."[1] "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself."[2] "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."[3] The suggestion is, of course, most fully expressed in Paul's great Hymn to Love in I Corinthians 13 :—

I may speak with tongue of men or angels,
But if I have no love,
I am but sounding brass or clanging cymbal.

[1] Rom. 13. 10. [2] Mark 12. 30, 31.
[3] I John, 4. 16.

I may know all mysteries, penetrate all knowledge,
May have faith sufficient to move mountains,
But if I have no love, I am as nought.
Love knows no impatience, and no envy;
It is wondrous kind, knows no self-advertisement;
Is not ungracious in conduct,
Nor does it narrowly reckon up its wrongs.
Love knows no irritations,
Is not gladdened by others' downfalls;
It hides the faults of others,
And is ever ready to believe the best.
Love like this endures when all else fades away.
Faith, hope, and love, all are strong to endure;
But love is greatest and most lasting of all.[1]

Here, then, is the Christian personality. It is one rich in sentiments, with Love as crown and flower of all. As far as east is removed from west, so is this great, glorious, enduring thing removed alike from fitful passion and from lushy sentimentality. Here is the key to Christian living, on its emotional side. We are to bring our brains to the service of our faith; we are to dedicate our intelligence as part of our offering to the Most High. And, guided thus and inspired by reason, we are to live and act with the forcefulness and dynamic power that comes of great feelings finely harnessed, noble emotions fitly directed, enduring sentiments allied to purest ideals.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

[1] Author's paraphrase.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION AND WILL

§ 1

THE third aspect or phase of mental life is that of Will—Will, issuing out into conduct, choice and decision that lead on to practical behaviour. If we are right in the contention which runs implicitly throughout this book, that religion, if it is to be wise, safe, and developed, must include and involve *the whole man*, then will and conduct have their place in religious experience, must be involved in the service of one's faith.

We have said that a religion, even to be *safe*, must involve will and conduct. And there is abundant testimony in religious history to this significant truth. No religion is safe that stops short at intellectual reflection or emotional satisfaction.

The history of monasticism, for instance, is full of testimony to this effect. It would be idle to deny that monastic life has produced its genuine saints and real heroes. But one is regretfully driven to the conclusion that these represent the exceptions rather than the rule, the few rather than the many. For the inescapable truth is that monasticism is rife with sheer neuroticism, mental and nervous disorders of all sorts and kinds. In those cases where the life of the cloister is so arranged as to include periods of real physical labour, or embraces a wide ministry to the sick and poor outside, these psychological dangers are lessened, though they are never wholly absent. But where the scheme of life is wholly

given up to devotion, meditation, and the like, the mental dangers are a thousand-fold increased.

All this is not really surprising. For we are so built as to need profitable and wholesome activity as a part of normal healthy living. It may be that the angels in heaven can survive upon nothing but unceasing praise and devotional exercise (though many of us in these days find it hard to conceive of such a static heaven!); but for common men and women on this common earth such a mode of existence is fraught with gravest dangers. Mind and body go under to such a state of things; and it is doubtful if, in the end, even the soul profits.

Even where, under monastic conditions, actual neurotic disorders are avoided, a common and well-nigh universal experience is summed up under the old monkish word "accidie". And accidie denotes boredom, listlessness, ennui, a sense of the worthlessness of things in general, an uncomfortable persuasion that life altogether is a stale, flat, and unprofitable affair.

It is not for nothing that a great modern Indian religious director[1] insists that his disciples shall spend several hours daily in genuine physical labours. Such a provision is as wise as it is seemingly prosaic.

For one of the greatest dangers that attend upon the spiritual life, and all efforts towards its cultivation, is that of simple and sheer preoccupation with self—morbid and unhealthy preoccupation with one's own feelings and modes and fancies and conditions. And to be over-occupied with yourself, even on the spiritual level, is both psychologically mistaken and essentially unchristian. There is a very deep and profound sense in which, even in the realm of the spiritual, we must be prepared to "lose our life" in order to "find" it. Self-obsession is no way to spiritual advancement.

[1] Mahatma Ghandi.

§ 2

There is, moreover, to-day, an accumulating body of evidence that all emotion (especially strong emotion) which finds no physical outlet entails a danger to health and wholeness. An engine creates steam within itself only in order to *use* it; and it would seem that the only healthful purpose of the emotions is that they shall be used.

We have already noted that, on the mental level, emotion which is indulged in merely for its own sake, and which has no end or goal beyond itself, is simply sentimentality. And sentimentality is both unlovable and wasteful in a human character. There is no person more uncomfortable to meet than the one who persists continually in wearing his or her heart on the coat-sleeve, and who indulges in uncontrolled emotion with obvious and nauseating enjoyment.

But such people are not merely a burden to their neighbours. There is a price they have to pay in themselves. And that price is always—in greater or lesser degree—a nervous and physical exhaustion. Your real sentimentalist is never physically robust, but is always nervously flabby.

Dr. Aveling, in his book " Directing Mental Energy ", in a chapter significantly entitled " Emotional Wastage ", suggests that there is probably a good deal of nervous expenditure involved in all emotional experience; but that when emotion leads on to no profitable and satisfying activity, this expenditure is vastly increased. There are no more enervating emotions than those in which we do nothing, and try to do nothing.

From another angle, William James warns us that only those emotions have any lasting value or continuing result which are allowed to issue out into practical conduct. There is a famous passage in his great " Principles of Psychology " [1]

[1] Vol. I, pp. 124–125.

which is well worth quotation in full: " Seize the very first possible opportunity to act on every resolution you make, and on every emotional prompting you may experience in the direction of the habits you aspire to gain. It is not in the moment of their forming, but in the moment of their producing *motor effects*, that resolves and aspirations communicate the new ' set ' to the brain. . . . No matter how full a reservoir of *maxims* one may possess, and no matter how good one's *sentiments* may be, if one have not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to *act*, one's character may remain entirely unaffected for the better."

There is sound psychological support for the old adage: " If you feel a thing worth doing, do it now." A religion that stops short of *doing* will have little redemptive and transforming effect upon him who possesses it.

§ 3

When one turns to the Master himself, all such considerations are strikingly reinforced.

How little store Jesus seems to have set by the ostensibly pious, formal, and " devotional " elements of religion! He was, of course, a great pray-er, and spent long hours of communion with the Father in the stillness of the night-time, or amid the silences of early dawn, and in the loneliness of the hills. But there is no suggestion anywhere that he observed formal and set hours of private prayer, and no hint that he at any time imposed upon even his immediate disciples any routine of devotional habits. We know that he attended regularly at the services of public worship in the church of his time (religious abstainers please note!), but he was not what is commonly understood as a pious or devout person; indeed, he shocked and outraged the professionally religious.

There is even less in him of the contemplative or ascetic,

and of the monastic there is no trace at all. He is fresh, natural, spontaneous, sunny, approachable, non-eccentric.

But note, on the other hand, how large is his insistence on will, decision, resolution, and practical conduct. That man's life is built upon sure foundations, he says, who does not come to him with pious and reverential "Lord, Lords", but who *does* the things of which he speaks.[1] Even a grudging and unlovely compliance with practical demands is, he suggests, better than a glib and ostensible loyalty that does not produce genuine obedience.[2] Trees are known by their fruit, he tells men.[3] In one of the most deadly and telling pronouncements he ever made, he seems to suggest that even a man's eternal destiny will turn upon his practical service to the lowly and needy and obscure.[4] "Inasmuch as ye *did* it", is his constant emphasis.

Of the many types who came to him, he seems to have been particularly drawn to the soldier. Not (we are convinced) that he exalted and approved the soldier-calling in itself, although it is well here to remember that our modern problem of war did not exist in his time; but that he saw in the soldier-type qualities and propensities that were of inestimable and essential value in all who would become members of the new Kingdom—habits of discipline, of quick and unflinching decision, of method and orderliness, of unswerving loyalty, of the holding of one's personal comforts and mundane concerns cheap. It was of a pagan centurion that he said, "I have not found such faith, no, not in all Israel".[5] No wonder that he saw in vision the outer, non-Jewish, world pressing into the Kingdom before those who best should have understood and welcomed it.[6]

Dr. T. R. Glover has pointed out[7] how many of the parables turn on energy and quick decision. It is, he says, as if Jesus

[1] Matt. 7. 22–27. [2] Matt. 21. 28–31. [3] Matt. 7. 15–20.
[4] Matt. 25. 31–46. [5] Matt. 8. 10. [6] Matt. 8. 11, 12.
[7] "The Jesus of History", pp. 136–137.

saw one of the chief troubles with men to be their slackness, their inertia, and their indecision. He had no room for those who were simply slack, dilly-dallying, and, though full of pious emotion, *practically* unproductive.

So that when one extols the virtue of practical religion, stresses the element of *will* in religious experience, he has the authority of the Master himself for so doing.

§ 4

How different might have been the history of Christianity through the centuries if men had only maintained the emphasis of the Master himself! How might not Christianity have transformed the world, if it had been as concerned with practical religion as Jesus unashamedly was.

But, instead, all too often men and churches have emphasised the intellectual and the emotional aspects of religion, to the slighting or forgetting of the element of will and conduct.

Think how much labour has gone to the stressing of the intellectual side of the faith. How have the ages produced their voluminous theologies, to the bafflement of the simple and the despair of the theological student. How has correctness of intellectual belief been exalted into the one indispensable condition of Christian discipleship, and a creed made the test of genuine faith. How even to-day does not our own State Church insist upon the acceptance of a certain creed[1] as "necessary to salvation"—concerning which it is correct to say that not one in a hundred even of the clergy themselves understand it in the sense in which its original formulators construed it; which to the ordinary layman is

[1] The Athanasian Creed, which begins: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholick Faith is this, That we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance."

incomprehensible; and which finds no slightest foundation or justification in the words and teaching of Jesus himself, or, indeed, in the pages of the New Testament as a whole ;—a creed, moreover, which has not one word to say about character, or the kind of life a man lives in this world. How, even in this late age, and in face of the vast and growing paganism and materialism of the world at large, is not an *intellectual assent* still insisted upon as the main condition of any *rapprochement* and reunion between the various denominations.

Meantime, through all the centuries of this gigantic intellectual ferment and endeavour, evils have flourished and gross wrongs have abounded; slavery, war, poverty, slums, injustice, have stalked the earth abroad; and the Christian Church, instrument of the Divine Will on earth, has been distracting and diverting much of its energies to intellectual contests frequently waged with intensest bitterness and unchristian feeling, to heresy hunts, pronouncements dogmatic and uncharitable and intolerant, ecclesiastical rivalries and schemings and mutually exclusive ambitions. Almost one might conceive the Master coming himself to stand in the midst of us, and saying : " A plague on all your houses."

Again, there is the emotional and æsthetic side of the Faith. How has that been nourished, cherished, and developed through the ages! Shrines of inconceivable splendour have been reared; elaborate rituals have been formulated; altars have been drenched with incense and emblazoned with candles; gorgeous vestments have been woven and adorned; litanies of enchanting loveliness, and music that ravishes the heart, have been dedicated to the service of the faith; art and poetry have been pressed into the common order; within the walls of the church men have drunk their fill of glory and marvel and brilliance.

Meanwhile, again, the great world outside has gone its way. The mighty have put down the lowly from their seat;

rapacity and greed have ridden rough-shod over the rights and common decencies of men; the rich have taken their fill, while the poor and lowly and unassertive have been sent empty away.

O pathetic paradox of the Christian Church ! So splendid, and so abysmal a failure ! So vast in possibilities, and so incompetent in shaping a world after the mind and heart of Christ !

Almost, again, one might seem to hear the Master praying (in Hazlitt's searching phrase), " Save me from my friends."

So, too, when the Church *has* descended into the arena of the world's common doings, and has lifted up hands of rebuke against men's sins, all too often it has fastened upon the more understandable and less sinister faults of mankind, and has been silent about the really terrible sins that wreck societies and blast the happinesses of multitudes. Tithing mint and anise and cummin, it has neglected the weightier matters of the law. It has declaimed against things like drunkenness, betting and swearing (sometimes even against whist and cinema-going), and said little or nothing about grave economic injustices and the age-long oppressions and inhumanities that cry aloud to heaven for their righting.

Listen to Shaftesbury, speaking of his massive struggle against the evils of child labour in the middle years of the last century : " Prepared as I am, I am oftentimes distressed and puzzled by the strange contrasts I find; support from infidels and non-professors; opposition or coldness from religionists or declaimers." Wilberforce, fighting against the appalling evils of slavery, confessed to the same disillusionment. John Newton, a devout and articulate Christian, describes in contiguous passages the raptures of his intercourse with God and the voyages of his slave-ship with its incredible and unspeakable conditions.

No one can measure the havoc that has been wrought, the discredit which has been brought upon religion altogether,

and the vast opportunities which the Christian Church has missed, through its preoccupation with the intellectual and emotional sides of religion, to the neglect of the practical and volitional. Small wonder that Bishop Gore could write that the first need of the Church to-day is an act of penitence for having failed so long and so vastly to be the champion of the oppressed and the weak; for having tolerated what it should have unhesitatingly condemned; and "for having been so often on the wrong side".[1]

To neglect the will and conduct side of religion is not only to have a truncated and subversive faith; it is to work incalculable havoc in the world at large.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength." Religion without the iron of resolution in it is but a sickly and effeminate affair.

§ 5

We have been speaking of the Church, in the section above, *en masse*. But the same truth holds when one comes to deal with faith on the personal and individual side of things. How easy it is to make of religion merely a pleasant hour occasionally spent in worship whose atmosphere is soporifically tinged! How easy to "feel good" under the sway of poetic liturgy or finely rendered sacred music! How easy to experience a pleasant thrill that may be construed as goodness!

And how difficult, in comparison, to take the stern and uncompromising ethic of the Gospels, and weave that into the common doings of everyday life, maintain *that* amid the thousand and one relationships and commitments and duties of the ordinary days! How difficult, sometimes, even to keep one's conduct on the level of a mere decent humaneness, to say nothing of the superlative orbit of Christian standards!

There is Dean Hole's story about a man in church joining

[1] See, *e.g.*, his "The Holy Spirit and the Church", pp. 154–161, and 345–351; "The New Theology and the Old Religion", pp. 282 ff.; and his Halley Stewart Lectures, "Christ and Society".

in the hymn before the collection, and singing lustily "Were the whole realm of Nature mine, That were an offering far too small," and at the same time carefully fingering the coins in his pocket to make sure that it is a threepenny, and not a sixpenny, piece that he shall put in the collection plate! Just as there is many a slip between the cup and the lip, so there is often a "great divide" between creed and conduct, a "great gulf" fixed between what a man feels and endorses in church and what he does practically in the life of the everyday.

It is of course, precisely at such points that the critics really get us. The most insidious dangers that threaten the Christian religion are not the attacks of pagan philosophers or scientific rationalists. Religion is too broad-based upon certain ineradicable capacities and needs of the human heart ever really to go down before merely intellectualist attacks from the outside. In that arena religion can look after itself well enough. But the most searching and destructive of the criticisms levelled against religious people is that religion, which they profess to be so big, does so little with them, seems to make so little difference in their lives. The lines are worn too thin oftentimes, between the Christian and the decent pagan, for the ordinary man to be attracted towards religion.

It is said that criticism of Christianity in the East has passed through three successive phases. At first those to whom it was preached said, "Christianity is not *true*." Next they said, "It is not *new*." Now they say, "It is not *you*." And that last is the only criticism that need make us afraid.

Fortunately, signs are not wanting that a new realisation of all this is coming home, with vital force, to the religious people of this generation. The social conscience is awakened; if the numbers of church-goers have shrunk, their influence is probably growing; and on many sides there is an increasing desire for reality, for the interpreting of spiritual aspiration into terms of the everyday life of men and of societies.[1]

[1] Mr. V. A. Demant has laid down the first outlines of a Christian Sociology for this age in his "God, Man, and Society".

Moreover, there now exist certain incisive challenges to Christian faith on its practical side. The new political ideologies—Communism, Fascism, and the like—are demanding, and receiving, from their devotees, a wealth of ardour, enthusiasm, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and unflinching heroism, which (however these new "faiths" themselves may be estimated) are sufficient to call forth the admiration of all who see them, and to stir them to emulation. If a political or a racial creed can enlist such loyalty and devotion, there would not seem to be much room in the modern world for any religion that cannot do likewise.

A new realisation by Christian people of the *practical* aspect of religious faith may well prove the real test of survival value for Christianity in this age. The house of our faith may go under to the storms if it is not founded (in part) upon this rock.

§ 6

But now let us turn to another aspect of this question of the volitional, or will, aspect of religion, and contemplate a great principle once enunciated by the Master himself—that *doing* may itself be a road to Truth. "He that doeth the will", said Jesus, "shall know the doctrine."[1] A saying which Frederick Robertson once paraphrased, "Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge."

How does a son come to know a father? Doubtless, in a variety of ways: in the intimacies of home life; in noting his father's turns of thought and phrase; in the imbibing, for the most part unconsciously, of the father's attitudes and spirit. But not less in practically following the father's way, aligning himself increasingly with the father's interests, purposes, and concerns, entering sympathetically into his plans and ambitions and practical activities. And in this identification of himself with those things that lie nearest

[1] John 7. 17 (paraphrase).

to his father's heart, the son gains new insight into the character and personality of his father.

In the same way, Jesus would have us believe that that God, "whom no man hath seen at any time" is in part to be known and discovered by the man who will identify himself with what he knows of God's will and purposes, set about the doing of his Father's business in this world, help to lift some part of "the burden which is God's", aid in the transformation of this world into that Kingdom where God's will shall be entirely done and His reign be effected.

There is no greater mistake a man can make than to imagine that the only road to the discovery of God is that of the intellect. Youth, in particular, is prone to that mistake. Admittedly, there are things we can learn about God by the disciplined use of our intelligence; it is no mean thing to seek for the signs of God in the world about, "the starry heavens above and the wonders of earth beneath", to "think God's thoughts after Him". But frequently a man, doing the best he can along such a road, will halt short at what he feels to be a very imperfect understanding of, and fellowship with, God. In such cases there is one golden counsel which never can be wrong: "Take what you do know of God, however small and imperfect and fragmentary you may feel it to be, and *act upon it*. Take that small piece of conviction, and *live out its implications* in your daily life. And you will come to find that doing is another high road along which we can approach to the understanding of the Most High."

Conversely, one may say that no man has discovered as much of God as it is possible for him to discover, until he has aligned himself alongside God's purpose, made God's intention for this world his own, and is spending himself in day-by-day, practical activity—both in individual life and in social co-operative effort—for the Christianising of the world. The Master's first demand on his disciples was that they should "seek the Kingdom".

"Jesus", writes Dr. L. P. Jacks, "was by no means indifferent to the value of right thinking, but He saw, what few of His followers have seen so clearly, that the first step in right thinking about eternal life is a right action done decisively and with the least possible delay." [1]

We are to bring the element of will into our religion, not only because without it our religion will be a truncated thing, devoid of one whole side of religious revelation; but also because even other sides of our religious experience will suffer for want of it. Doing is a road to truth; knowledge itself waits in part upon practice. "He that doeth the will shall know the doctrine."

§ 7

Yet, when all is said, there is a final caution which must be uttered in connection with this insistence on practical religion. It is this: that our practical activity needs to be sustained by a satisfying philosophy and innerved by a sense of conscious fellowship with God.

There are two dangers that attach to the ardent social worker and reformer, unless his practical service is done in the course of his religion, and is sustained and nourished by religious faith. Let us say a brief word about each.

(*a*) There is the danger that he shall grow more than a little hard, bitter, and possibly even cynical, as the years go on. The people who most need helping are not always the most lovable. To serve a cause consistently, year in and year out, is not uniformly heartening and enjoyable. There will come times when one's powers seem to be exhausted; when service seems profitless and of doubtful value; when to work in harness with someone is harder than to work alone; when one comes to be dried up, parched, and spiritually listless.

A surprisingly large proportion of social workers and

[1] "The Challenge of Life", p. 90.

enthusiastic social reformers come to such a pass. Disillusionment breeds heart-ache, if not contempt and cynicism. If there are not secret avenues of power, resources open for inner reinforcement and renewal, the strain may well prove too much.

This is the danger that attaches to all merely secular reform, whose workers are not inspired and sustained by religious realities. To have no personal religion, whereby to nourish the deep roots of the soul, is sooner or later to realise that one's practical service to the world is less than it might have been.

(*b*) The second danger is that "practical service" may become an "escape mechanism", a smoke-screen which we throw up whereby to hide ourself from ourself. A committee, a scheme, a series of resolutions, frantic and even sacrificial labours—all these may be a means whereby we hide away from ourselves and become stranger to our own soul, so that we cease to be aware of our own faults and to desire their amendment, cease to know inner poise and relaxation and peace of mind, cease to be aware of God and even of our need of Him. When these things happen, "practical religion" has become only an evasion. It is a form of unreality.

These things lie, for the most part, outside the scope and purpose of this little book. But we could hardly avoid brief mention of them in any consideration of practical religion, the *will* and *conduct* aspect of faith.

Practical religion there must be, if religion itself is to be healthy and safe. But works without faith is like to end up dead.

It is the whole of religion that is needed—the honest seeking for God, and the reaching-out after an intelligent apprehension of His nature and His purposes; a fellowship with Him that brings inner reinforcement and renewal, power, stability, poise, and peace; and then, the translation

of these into terms of daily life and conduct, a " walk after the manner of Christ ", an heroic and earnest desire so to live (both in one's personal and intimate relationships, and in the vaster spheres where citizenship operates) as to make for the increasing Christianisation of the world and the transformation of this earth more nearly into the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER V

A WELL-BALANCED FAITH

§ 1

THE last paragraph of our previous chapter has anticipated in brief what we want to say more fully in this final chapter. Our religion must be *a religion of the whole man*. It should take up, and consecrate, and bring to a focal point, all our powers of reflection, of emotion, and of resolution. It should embrace at once elements of thought, of feeling, and of will. It is with heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, that we are to love and serve the Lord our God, and this will of necessity include the service of our fellow-men. Our offering is to be a complete and whole offering. No partial or limited worship will really do. " The idea is ", says a fine modern commentator,[1] " that God can and should be loved with a love which possesses and expresses man's whole conscious and moral being." And he goes on to suggest that just as for the Jew, in the time of Christ, God was conceived of as one, in contrast to the " Lords many " and " Gods many " of heathenism, so it was to be a whole-hearted and unified devotion that man offered up to the one true God—will, emotions, and thought, " united "to " fear His name ".

To offer to God less than the whole of ourselves is to give to Him an imperfect offering. And such a truncated worship and dedication will not only spoil the unity of our own life, but will adversely affect our view and conception of God Himself.

It is a commonplace to say that worship affects a man's practical life. But the obverse is equally true. Life affects

[1] J. Vernon Bartlet in " Mark ", Century Bible, p. 338.

worship. If there are departments or phases or elements of our life which are divorced from our religious consciousness, then inevitably our idea of God will be affected thereby. Not only do we tend to grow like the God we worship; the way in which we practically live tends to shape and determine our notion of what God is like.

Only in this full-orbed consecration of the personality, then, can our thought of God rise fitly to the truly Christian conception of Him. Only as we dedicate the whole of ourselves to God, shall we really be able to conceive of Him after the manner of Jesus Christ. To exaggerate or isolate the intellectual aspect of religion alone is to have a God who is little more than a "Great First Cause", an "Absolute", a "Creator and Sustainer of the ends of the earth". Admittedly all this is a great conception of God; and without it our thought of Him must necessarily be dwarfed and inadequate. But of and in itself it is seriously deficient as a whole picture of what God is like. Similarly, to isolate the emotional aspect of religion is liable to result in a "grandmotherly" notion of God's nature and character; our God will be one whose main function and office is to protect and coddle us. And this last, as we have seen earlier,[1] is likely to prove a poor and very unsustaining faith when we come face to face with the harsher and more painful aspects of human experience. However we may finally sum up life, there is a Calvary running through the heart of it; and no religion is big enough to see us through, if it rests upon the thought of God as being merely, or even mainly, a "great protector". God's purposes are something bigger and mightier far than the warding off from *us* of all pain and hardship and annoyance. While, finally, to isolate the will aspect of religion is to erect God into little more than "a Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness"; and such a conception, vital and precious as it is, in its due place and

[1] Pp. 18–20.

proportion, does not afford a religion really big enough wherewith to live and die. The human heart, in all the varieties and vicissitudes of its experience, craves something more than an "Eternal Righteousness" at the centre of Life's mystery.

§ 2

It is probable that most of us do, unconsciously, but none the less really, accentuate one aspect or element of religion, to the neglect or exclusion of the other two.

There are people for whom the intellectual side of religion serves for well-nigh the whole of it. This is frequently the case with adolescents, though it is by no means confined to them. A young man, moving out from childhood into the larger and more reflective world of the adult, is likely to ask from any religion that he is willing to embrace that it shall be able to explain "everything in the world or out of it". To tell him that there are vast questions to which religion can supply no settled and verifiable answer is to court his scepticism, possibly his contempt. But many adults remain at this level of religion throughout their lives. This means sometimes that, because of it, they remain *outside* religion and the churches all their days. There is, for instance, the astronomer Laplace's childish assertion that he had "swept the heavens with his telescope, and could find no trace of a God there". The cure for all this sort of thing is, of course, in one sense "thought, and more thought". The remedy for a poor philosophy is a better philosophy. But—and this is more pertinent to our present inquiry—there is need to recognise that intellect is not the whole of religion. "The heart has its reasons that the head knows not of." If it were possible for a man to fashion so masterly a philosophy that he could supply intellectual answers to the whole problem of life and the universe, he still would not thereby be a religious

man—at least, any religion he might have would not be the religion proclaimed by Jesus. The intellect has its rightful place, but it is not the whole of us. Nor is an intellectual answer all the answer we require from the universe at large.

With some adolescents the religion evolved is an emotional one. This has been especially linked on with the experience which was formerly stressed as "conversion". From out a time of stress and strain and turbulence, the youth emerges into a sense of quietness, joy, and security. Now once again there are precious and valid elements in such an experience. But harm is likely to result if this is not made simply the initial stage, but is taken as fixed and final. An emotional religion is generally deficient in philosophy, and is likely to go down in face of some shattering experience. Yet such a religion is frequently the only one held by some people throughout life. It was not an immature youth, but a middle-aged ordained minister of religion who, preaching once in the writer's hearing, told the story of a son in the Great War. He prayed, he said, almost without ceasing for this son, petitioned earnestly and agonisingly for his safety. On one occasion, he told us, this lad was in a trench attack, when the man on each side of him was shot down, while he himself escaped. The boy finally returned home unscathed after the whole war had finished. And the moral we were bidden to draw was twofold: (1) that God looked after His own; and (2) that real prayer was efficacious and of avail. Two questions occur in connection with such a pronouncement: one, what would have happened to this father's faith if his boy, instead of returning home safely, had perished in battle? and two, how did this father conceive of the two other lads who fell?—did their fathers not pray for them, and, if not, what sort of God was it that cut men's lives short through a failure in prayer on the part of their fathers? Clearly, a religion of emotion—resting back upon feelings of trust, joy,

peace, and the like—needs to be qualified and sustained by an adequate religion of the intelligence.

Then, again, there is that type of religion which is almost exclusively a "doing" religion. Many is the man who will say, "My religion is to do good." This, too, has its appeal to the adolescent, for devotion and sacrificial service come native to the young. But it is also the religion of many adults, and the only type of religion which they recognise. We have already seen that there is much sanction on the part of the Master for such an approach to faith. But we have also seen that it, too, has its dangers. It needs the help which an adequate philosophy of life can bring; and, if it is to rise to its own best, it needs sustaining by the restfulness and quietude and renewal of heart that are among a larger religion's gifts on the emotional side of things.

Perhaps, things being what they are and human nature what it is, it is inevitable that each of us will always place a larger emphasis upon some one element of religion, to the comparative subordination of the others. Some will always incline towards the idea of religion as offering a philosophy of things, an attempt to read, by honest inquiry and reflection, the signs and handiwork, in sky above and earth beneath, of that great God "Who made the world, and all things therein", a "thinking of God's thoughts after Him"; others will lay their chief emphasis upon the emotions of trust, and peace, of joy, and inner quietude of mind and heart, that are among the fine fruits of religious faith; while others again will be chiefly attracted by that aspect of religion that sends them out into the world's highways and byways, actively to do good, and to heroic labours for the betterment and uplifting of the world. All this is natural and indeed rightful; for we are not all built alike. Nor is it desirable that we should try all to squeeze into one self-same mould. Variety and difference are of the very essence of human personalities.

But our plea is that none of us should rest content with

a too rigorously lopsided or partial faith, but should recognise that a really sound and enduring faith must contain something of all three mental elements—thought, feeling, and will. Religion is meant to be a big thing; we must not make it small. It is meant to include the whole of a man; we must not dwindle it to cover only part of him. "Heart, mind, soul, and strength"—intelligence, feeling, resolution, practice—all should find some real place in the religion of each one of us.

§ 3

Again, there is not wanting evidence that whole churches and denominations are liable to fall victim to the same habit of truncating religion as are individuals.

Professor Heiler, who has a monumental knowledge of western religious movements, has noted[1] this tendency of a church to fasten chiefly upon one psychological element in religion, to the minimising of the rest.

It is not infrequently asserted against Unitarians, for instance, that their religion is an "aridly intellectual" one, appealing exclusively to the head, and not at all to the heart. Professor Heiler, however, finds precisely these defects to be characteristic of the Lutheran Church, what has (in our day, in spite of its origins) become coldly intellectualistic, appealing mainly, if not quite exclusively, to the rational faculty. For some time, he writes,[2] the Lutheran Church has displayed an almost complete absence of any emotional element in its life and worship. In our own islands, it is those churches which remain nearest to the Calvinist tradition and theology which are—spite of pronouncements to the contrary—most afflicted with the rationalistic spirit, and weak in emotional content.

The danger of Unitarianism, on the other hand, is otherwise. It is that it tends to exalt the ethical side of religion,

[1] In his "The Spirit of Worship: Its Forms and Manifestations in the Christian Churches".

[2] Pp. 92–93.

and to stress too exclusively the practical implications of religious faith. A favourite approach towards faith by the Unitarian is, "This *do*, and thou shalt live." It is in keeping with this that Unitarians have been prominent for generations in such spheres as philanthropy and social service, where they have exerted an influence out of all proportion to their numerical strength.[1] The less admirable results of this large emphasis on the practical side of religion are to be seen in a comparative neglect of the more devotional aspects of religion, a suspicion of "fervour", and frequently a holding light of the duty and privilege of public worship.

It is with the Methodists that there was found, and probably still is found, the strongest emphasis upon the feeling side of religion. In their beginnings, they were held suspect as being too full of "enthusiasm"; and certainly their early history contains not a little of the extravagances of religious emotion. Not all of this is bad, of course; it has its positive side. The hearty singing of the Methodist churches, their kindling sense of fellowship, the genuine warmth of their devotion, are factors that spring naturally from this emphasis on the affective, or feeling, element in religion. But the danger, as we have seen, is that an emotional faith tends to hold light the things of the intellect; and it is, we think, a fact, that until quite recent times scholarship has been but lightly esteemed, if not even suspect, by Methodism. Even to-day, in many quarters, Methodists view with a rather unquiet tolerance, if not with positive alarm, such things as a college training for ministers.

A rather different kind of emphasis on the emotional element in religion is to be seen in the Roman Catholic Church, and in the Anglo-Catholic branch of the Established Church. Here it is a specific type of emotion that is encouraged and placed in the forefront of matters of faith—namely, the

[1] See, for example, R. V. Holt's "The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England".

æsthetic emotion. Incense, lights, vestments, processions, and rituals, all make a strong appeal to the æsthetic sense, and play definitely upon the sensuous propensities. Dr. R. H. Thouless has said that there is much in this type of service that induces in the worshipper a condition that comes close to the hypnotic.[1] This being the case, it is not surprising to find that preaching is not highly esteemed in these branches of the Christian Church, and that the quality of their preaching is (with certain notable exceptions) of a comparatively low order. Indeed, some of the most cherished of their services are those where no provision at all is made for the promulgation of " the Word ".

The Established Church as a whole embraces such wide variety, and enshrines at once so many divergent elements, that it is not easy to appraise it psychologically. But certainly the traditional element looms large: truth tends to be tested by the criteria of age, custom and continuous authority. So the curious paradox exists, that while Church membership is, ostensibly, based upon an intellectual conformity (demanding acceptance of the dogmatic creeds), this conformity is, actually, anti-intellectual, since it allows no room for fresh discovery or even the restatement of doctrine. In truth, what looks like an intellectual basis is in reality an emotional one, being, psychologically, akin to ancestor-worship and the unquestioning veneration of the dead. For the High Churchman, at all events, inspiration finishes, as Dr. George Jackson once put it,[2] with the Fathers of the first four centuries. Whatever its superficial appearance, such an attitude cannot really be equated with a rational or intellectual approach.

What we have written in this section has been set down in charity, and with no desire unduly to exalt the particular

[1] Lectures delivered at University of Manchester. See also his " An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion ", Chaps. V, VIII, and IX.

[2] Article, " God is not Dumb ", in *Manchester Guardian*, December 13, 1938.

faith which the writer personally holds. All we have aimed to do is to show that the tendency towards the limitation of religion to some *one* mental element, to the suppression or minimising of the others, is exemplified in the great historic churches and denominations.

Actually, of course, the lines do, in practice, overlap considerably, and a growing appreciation of the many-sidedness of religion is seen on all hands. There is, as we have suggested, both gain and loss, when one psychological element is disproportionately stressed and exalted; but the loss outweighs the gain. Each Church might well learn something from all the rest. None has yet caught the whole glory and majesty of the Faith as a full-orbed and many-sided splendour, making its rightful appeal to all the elements in man's psychological make-up. Our little limitations and prejudices and narrownesses break up into constituent and imperfect portions the pure " white radiance " of religion in its wholeness and its grandeur, so that we do but dwarf that which we would exalt and glorify.

The world has yet to see a church which does full justice to *all* the constituent elements in man's composite make-up—a church at once intellectual, emotional, and practical.

§ 4

Within, and at the same time overlapping, denominational barriers, individual churches tend to come down mainly within one psychological field. So also do individual ministers.

More than is commonly realised, so-called " great " or " leading " preachers are frequently men who build up a reputation on one type of sermon or appeal. There are some preachers from whom one will never hear anything but some treatment of the " social gospel ". With others, nothing but the personal element in religion is expressed—the immediate relationship of the soul with God, and the need for a certain " experiential " process, whose main

features are emotional. One leading preacher was described to the writer, by one who was a member of and a regular attender at the other's church, as a "flapper" preacher—his sermons were frankly devoted and addressed to very youthful worshippers of the modern city type. There are individual churches that "go all out" for the social gospel; others "specialise" on such things as "conviction", conversion, and the like.

Here again, life being what it is, and human beings what they are, all this is perhaps to some extent natural and inevitable. Yet the ideal must be otherwise. We are all of us creatures compounded of intelligence, emotion, and will, and it were well that most sermons, at all events, should make some measure of appeal to each. In most congregations, too, various human "types" will be found, and it is not good that the whole preaching appeal should be limited to the idiosyncracies of the minister. In preaching, as in so much else in the religious life, there is need to have constantly in mind the "other brother". The ideal for the minister is to aim at a "balanced" type of preaching, which gives due place to all three psychological elements—intellectual reflection, emotional satisfaction, and practical ethical implications. The best preaching must surely be that which enlarges the thought, kindles the affections, and fires the will.[1]

Perhaps with even greater force this principle should hold in the matter of prayer in public worship. In those churches where a liturgy is the rule, the individual minister has no element of choice or self-direction. Actually, a liturgy is likely to be less one-sided than are "free" prayers, though in some of the great historic liturgies the practical ethical element is much neglected. But with "free" prayer the individual idiosyncrasies of the minister have loose rein, and are likely adversely to affect his praying and to make it less representative of the congregation as a whole. Thought in

[1] In this paragraph I have drawn upon suggestions in an essay on Preaching by my friend, Arthur W. Fox, M.A.

the sense of *argument* should not, one need hardly say, intrude into prayer, although one has heard public prayers which come very near even to this—we have in mind that type of prayer which consists in telling God at some length what He is and what He does. Conversely, a prayer should not be anti-rational—a principle which raises the question as to whether, in this modern age, one can intelligently pray, for example, for rain. So far as the emotional element is concerned, it is sufficient to say that no prayer which is not emotionally tinctured will affect or really lift up a congregation. The ideal is to hit the medium between a coldly rationalistic utterance and one which is given over to a forced and extravagant emotionalism. Lastly, no prayer can be complete which does not seek to envisage and express something of the practical implications, for daily living, of that communion with God which is worship. "No prayer", said the rabbis, "is a true prayer which does not mention the Kingdom."

Praying, like preaching, should incorporate all three mental elements—intelligence, feeling, and will which issues out into conduct. And if this holds true for prayer in public worship, it can scarcely be less true for the individual in private devotion. It is bad—both psychologically and spiritually—if our private praying begins and ends with ourself.

§ 5

We may well conclude with another glance at the Master himself, and note with what fullness there are combined in him, in his faith and in his message, all three psychological elements as we have enumerated them in these pages.

See how magnificently the reflective faculty shines in him, and how impressively he brings a dedicated intelligence to bear upon matters of life and faith. There is a sense in which he was the child of his race; he was nurtured in its

sacred scriptures, making their spirit his own, and glorying in their story of men's age-long search for God. As he begins his public ministry it is from them that he quotes. When he hangs dying on his cross, one of his last words is a prayer breathed forth to the Father, and couched in the language of the Psalms. His great enunciation of "man's whole duty to God" was, as we have noted earlier, mainly a quotation from the ancient scriptures of his people. Though he must have seen and heard there many things that shocked his deep religious sensitiveness, yet to the end he never failed to attend regularly at the services of worship in the synagogue.

Yet, spite of this fine reverence for the things and witness of the past, note again how he does not hesitate to challenge and revise what the past has taught. His is no religion of tradition, precious as tradition is for him. He has resolutely thought his way through things, dared to bring an active intelligence to bear on matters of faith, and to enunciate new principles in the light of new knowledge and new experience. "Ye have heard", he said more than once, "that it hath been said. . . . But I say unto you. . . ."[1] He would not lightly profane the Sabbath; but he did not hesitate to set it aside when rational reflection upon a present necessity seemed to justify it.[2] He would not have it (as was commonly assumed in his day) that suffering was always and everywhere the result of sin;—he had won through to a larger philosophy of life.[3] He challenged the assumptions concerning God of even authoritative teachers and scholars. "Why judge ye not for yourselves?" was his plea:[4] he seemed both troubled and perplexed that men should not use the God-given intelligence with which they had been endowed. He brought to men a new conception of God. And that conception was the result of his own deep thinking and pondering and earnest reflection. When one urges the need and the place of dedi-

[1] Matt. 5. 21–48. [2] Mark 2. 27.
[3] Luke 13. 1–5; John 9. 1–4. [4] Luke 12. 57.

cated intelligence in the service of religion, he has the Master himself for authority and guide and example.

Of the deeply emotional content of his faith and his message we need say little; partly, because here we enter upon a field almost too sacred to be lightly analysed and discussed, partly because this much is clear to even the most casual observer of his life and work. How deep and profound are his capacities for feeling and emotion! The tenderest name that was ever devised for God is his—"Father". How magnificently his emotional life is integrated! What deep realms of feeling he had plumbed! Two emotions, in particular, he sensed as the gift of a vital religious faith—joy and peace. They were his last bequest to his disciples—a joy and peace that nothing on earth had power to shatter or destroy. On his last night on earth, with tragedy closing in all around and the shadow of a cross already falling upon him, it was of these that he spoke to his little intimate band. "My peace I give unto you",[1] he said; and, "Your joy no man taketh from you."[2]

Yet he was poles removed from the sentimentalist and the emotionalist. He was alive to the danger attaching to mere transitory enthusiasm and ungoverned emotionalism. He warned men against that soil which at once received the seed "with joy", but had no enduring root.[3] He knew how easily men could put their hands to the plough, and then "look back".[4] When the sentimentalist came to him, with glib and ready promises, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest", his reply was an uncompromising wresting back of the speaker to grim and unclouded realism.[5] When an emotional woman cries to him, "Blessed be the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck", quick as a flash his answer comes back: "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."[6]

[1] John 14. 27. [2] John 16. 22.
[3] Matt. 13. 20, 21. [4] Luke 9. 62.
[5] Luke 9. 57, 58. [6] Luke 11. 27.

He purposed to do something more than breed pleasant emotions in those who came to him.

That type of emotion which is termed æsthetic was richly developed in him, found expression in his words and message. Judged from purely literary standpoints, his parables are among the most beautiful and finished things the world has seen. His sayings have ravished the hearts of men through the centuries with their loveliness. (Indeed, sometimes we have been so alive to their poetry as to be blind to their uncompromising ethical implications.) The Parable of the Prodigal Son;[1] the Beatitudes;[2] the Parable of the Last Judgment[3]—these, even for their artistic qualities, are unsurpassed. The model Prayer[4] which he gave to his disciples is a marvel of conciseness, suggestiveness, and beauty.

Yet, with all this rich vein of poetry in him, all this capacity for deep and disciplined feeling, he never succumbed to the temptation to make religion stop short at feeling. As we have said earlier, he was no contemplative or ascetic. His days were filled with labour, and he insisted always on translating faith and feeling into terms of hard, practical realities. He had no use for a religion that did not enter into the commonplaces of life and redeem and sanctify them. Most of his parables turn upon a man's practical responsibilities to his fellow-men—the need to be generous, patient, thoughtful, kind, forgiving. The "virtues" he stressed were all practical ones. In his mind, the thought of God was inseparably linked on to the thought of the Kingdom; they were the two sides of a single medal, as it were. It seemed to him self-evident that if a man thought or felt a certain way about God he should *do something about it*. He would, we think, have endorsed Shakespeare's assertion, "If our virtues Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike As if we

[1] Luke 15. 11–32. [2] Matt. 5. 1–16.
[3] Matt. 25. 31–46. [4] Matt. 6. 9–13.

had them not." Like Milton, he distrusted "a fugitive and cloistered virtue". If one must come down somewhere, and suggest where his strongest emphasis lay, one would have to say that it was upon doing, more than upon thinking or feeling. He regarded character more than creed, practical right living more than fine feeling or lofty sentiment. His final test was practical conduct: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these . . ."

Actually, of course, we wrong him if we subtract any one element and isolate it. For his thinking, his feeling, and his ethical principles, were inseparably bound together. It is sometimes suggested, by quite earnest and sincere people,[1] that what the modern world should do is to accept and practise the practical ethic of Jesus, whilst discarding his religious faith and devotional habit. Quite apart from the fact that this would decidedly not work, it is based upon a prior fallacy. In truth, you cannot separate these things. For Jesus' thought of God grew out of, and in turn qualified, his practical experience *of* God, and his ethic was the result of both. To attempt to apply his ethic without accepting his religious faith is like trying to get the end result of a chemical experiment without fulfilling the prior conditions.

In this realm there are no short cuts. You cannot have the faith without the ethic. And the ethic without the faith is an absurdity. Men will not act after the principles of Jesus until they are persuaded that Reality is what Jesus said it was, which is only another way of saying that God is like what Jesus conceived Him to be. The redemption of the modern world lies in the rediscovery of God, and in the practice of the moral and practical implications that will flow from that.

§ 6

We have wandered far in our attempt to look at religion under the aspects of thought, feeling, and will respectively.

[1] Mr. George Bernard Shaw, for instance.

We come back, in closing, to two thoughts that we have expressed earlier.

(1) Religion always suffers, and the man who professes it suffers too, if it is truncated and one-sided—that is to say, if it exaggerates one psychological element to the minimising or neglect of the other two. Thought, feeling, will, must all find a place within our religion. What is needed is a faith that embraces and activates the whole man. We should strive to love the Lord our God with "heart and mind and soul and strength".

(2) A religion of this kind, though it will naturally begin on elementary levels, will never be exhausted. Its horizons will continually expand. There are no barriers or limitations to its growth. Because it does not stultify any part of the nature of him who possesses it, it will grow with his growth, develop with his development, and move on into infinitudes and splendours inconceivable. Such a faith can never be "outgrown", for its dimensions are large as Life itself, and it has all experience for its ground and subject-matter.

So the last word is this—that religion is a bigger thing than the best of us have dreamed. It is a "many-splendoured" radiance, touching and transforming human life at every point, lifting up every power and every faculty that man possesses into new vitality and breadth. There is no better thing that we can do for it than just to give it room, to allow it to do what it can, with us and in us and for us, to afford it a scope natural to its dimension. Like Life itself, it is a big thing, and it needs to be looked at in a big way.

> Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
> As the swift seasons roll!
> Leave thy low-vaulted past!
> Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
> Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
> Till thou at length art free.

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BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.