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**RELIGION AND THE  
MIND OF TO-DAY**



# RELIGION AND THE MIND OF TO-DAY

BY

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## PREFACE

The present book is the outcome of many years' reading and reflection on the problems that arise where the spirit of scientific inquiry and the spirit of religious faith meet together. From my early youth I have been interested in religion. After several years of college work, chiefly in the natural sciences, I turned my attention to the study of philosophy and the history of religion. As a teacher of philosophy I have had constant opportunity to touch on those problems that are common to philosophy and theology. I have for a number of years been convinced that, just as Western civilization is in process of rapid change and undergoing reconstruction, so it is with its religion. No civilization has ever existed without a religion, and I do not believe that any future civilization will be devoid of religion. I am convinced, for reasons that I have stated briefly in the following chapters, that the future religion of Western Civilization cannot afford to reject the spiritual values of Jesus and his greatest interpreters. I hold that Jesus Christ and the spiritual motives and standards emanating from Him embody the high-water mark of ethical and religious insight, thus far.

But I should be false to my own conviction as to the urgent necessity of a religious reformation to guide and inspire the new civilization that is now coming into being, if I failed to show how to apply the guiding principles

of our scientific culture to the reconstruction of our inherited religion and social ethics. The new civilization will have a religion. But it must be a religion which unites the exalted spiritual motives and principles of the Mighty Founder of Christianity with the scientific spirit. The Protestant Reformation was a work half-done because the Reformers had not imbibed the spirit of the new science—of the mightiest intellectual revolution in human history. It is often said that there is no conflict between Science and Religion. This statement is true, if one means by Religion that temper of soul inculcated in the ethical sayings and deeds of Jesus; or even simply an attitude of reverent communion with the Universal Spirit. It is thoroughly false and mischievous—it is crying “Peace,” where there can be no peace—if it means that there is no conflict between Science and the antiquated cosmologies, theologies, psychologies, ethics, and doctrines of salvation which have been built up around the sublime human figure of the prophet of Nazareth until his human lineaments have been effaced.

This book is a humble contribution towards the New Reformation, a modest prelude to the dawn of a new cultural synthesis which will mean a new religious synthesis, a new ethical synthesis and a new social synthesis—one in which the light of science will be vivified and energized by the moral and humane values implicit in the works of Jesus and his greatest disciples; but a synthesis which will include the ethical and social implications of our new knowledge of man, nature and their interrelations which are the fruits of science. I reserve the treatment of the specific ethical implications of science for a later work. We are now in the midst of a new Renaissance of

the human spirit. It must be accompanied by a new Reformation.

I have aimed, in what follows, at an outline of a philosophy of religion. I have sought to give, in summary fashion, viewpoints from which to examine the central problems and to suggest to my readers lines of reflection, rather than to write exhaustively. In another and much larger work, *Man and the Cosmos*, I have stated and argued quite fully, in the light of present-day science and philosophy, the philosophical foundations on which the views concisely presented herein are based. The present work is thus the application of a philosophy already developed to the main problems of a religious and Christian outlook on life and the world. On the other hand, I have not tried to write a primer of the subject but to write concisely and to the point and to leave the further applications to the reader's thought.

I have no desire to take part in the acrimonious controversies of the moment, conducted, as they are so often, on the level of prescientific imagery rather than by a thoughtful weighing of the issues at stake. I have written only for those who are in doubt and are seeking their way with open mind and thoughtful candor through the cultural and spiritual confusions of the present time. To those whose minds are firmly anchored either in a traditional dogmatic creed or in dogmatic negations I have nothing to say.

The more immediate circumstances of this book's origin will perhaps explain its scope and its limits. I have, at various times, been asked to give addresses on many of the themes included in the present work. At the invitation of the Editor of the *Churchman*, I contributed, dur-

ing the years 1923 and 1924, two series of articles on the general topic, *Religion and the Mind of To-day* and *The Problems of Religion and Culture*. The articles are now republished here, with a number of alterations and additions, but with no material changes. The chapter on "The Recrudescence of Paganism" is a reprint of an address given before the New York State Conference of Religion in 1909 and published in the proceedings of the Conference.

I wish to express my thanks to the many hearers of my addresses and readers of my articles who have shown so warm an interest in persuading me to put the material into book form. I am also indebted to my publishers for their interest in the same.

To all who love their fellows and love truth with such devotion that they have faith that the knowledge of truth which makes men free is an essential constituent of the Highest Good for men, I dedicate this book. It reflects, in outline, the story of my own quest for light on the supreme questions of human conduct and human destiny.

J. A. L.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE.....	5

## PART I

### RELIGION AND CULTURE TO-DAY

#### CHAPTER

I. WHAT RELIGION IS.....	3
II. WORLD-VIEWS AND RELIGIOUS VALUES.....	15
III. SCIENCE AND TRADITIONALISM.....	24
IV. THE RECRUDESCENCE OF PAGANISM.....	38
V. THE CULTURAL FUNCTION OF RELIGION.....	53

## PART II

### THE RELIGION OF JESUS

VI. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE ETHICS OF WORLDLY CULTURE.....	65
VII. ETHICAL HUMANISM AND THE ETHICS OF JESUS.....	76
VIII. SOCIAL ETHICS AND THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS....	83
IX. NIETZSCHE AND JESUS.....	97
X. THE HEART OF JESUS' RELIGION.....	106
XI. RELIGION AND MORALS.....	118
XII. JESUS AND ECCLESIASTICISM.....	128
XIII. HISTORY, PERSONALITY AND TRUTH.....	133
XIV. APOTHEOSIS AND INCARNATION.....	143
XV. CREEDS AS SPIRITUAL SYMBOLS.....	160

## PART III

## THE VALIDITY OF RELIGION

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVI. A CRITERION FOR THE EVALUATION OF RELIGIONS.	173
XVII. SCIENCE AND RELIGION.....	194
XVIII. NATURAL CAUSATION AND MIRACLES.....	202
XIX. WHAT FAITH IS.....	218
XX. POETRY AND RELIGION.....	226
XXI. A CREATIVE UNIVERSE.....	241
XXII. SPIRIT AND THE COSMOS.....	247
XXIII. MATTER AND SPIRIT.....	255
XXIV. THE IDEA OF GOD.....	267
XXV. GOD, THE HOMELAND OF SPIRITUAL VALUES.....	284
XXVI. MORAL EVIL AND MORAL FREEDOM.....	292
XXVII. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.....	306
XXVIII. PRAYER.....	318
XXIX. IMMORTALITY AND SCIENCE.....	325
XXX. RELIGION AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.....	332
XXXI. RELIGION AND THE STATE.....	347
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	363

**PART I**  
**RELIGION AND CULTURE**



# RELIGION AND THE MIND OF TO-DAY

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT RELIGION IS

Many definitions have been given of the nature or essence of religion. These definitions have been framed from various points of view. Religion has been defined in psychological terms as primarily an attitude of *feeling*, or *volition*, or *thought*. Schleiermacher's famous statement that the essence of religion is a feeling of dependence on the Infinite, *a sense and taste for the Infinite*, illustrates well the definition of religion as feeling. Hegel's notion that religion consists in the apprehension, through representation or pictorial idea, of man's union with the Infinite illustrates the method of defining religion in intellectual terms. Many thinkers have defined religion as consisting in a practical, a volitional attitude towards Higher Powers, which aims at getting something from them or gaining control or power. All these modes of definition have some truth, but all are one-sided.

Religion, whatever else it may involve, means at least a reaction of the entire human person to the problems and values and aims of life. This total reaction or attitude may, and normally does, have its roots in feeling, since

#### 4 RELIGION AND THE MIND OF TO-DAY

feeling is the fundamental matrix or stuff of man's psychical life. And it is quite as true that man is a being who *thinks*—who frames and guides himself by images and general ideas or concepts—as it is that he feels. The objects towards or away from which his feelings point are pictured or imagined, and at a higher level are thought in conceptual terms. The religious attitude is one of feeling directed either towards Higher Powers or a single Higher Power, believed to be able to control the forces of nature and to determine human destiny. And the Higher Power, the Transcendent Being, the "Determiner of Destiny" (J. B. Pratt's phrase) is either pictured or thought conceptually as being and working in some sort of dynamic relationship to both man and nature. The feelings and the notions of the beings towards which the feelings are directed lead man inevitably to act and to refrain from action in accordance with his beliefs. Therefore, we can say, psychologically, that religion always involves a belief in the existence of either several Higher Powers or of one Higher Power which controls the universe and with whom man can enter into personal relations—can fear or reverence, obey or disobey; and who will bestow some good on the faithful. Religion is the explicit belief in a *Supreme Reality* who is the Fountain of All Good. Religion always involves a specific *way of conduct* which brings man into right relation with the Supreme Reality.

Religion then always involves the following elements: (1) Conviction or judgment as to what are the highest, most satisfying and most lasting goods of life. Man would have no religion if he made no distinction between values or goods, if he put all aspects of his life on the

same level. He must have a scale of life values. He must regard some goods and, therefore, the activities and experiences involved in procuring these goods, as superior to others. But (2) if he could, without hindrance or aid, satisfy all his cravings for the most permanent and most desirable goods by the technical manipulation of physical forces and social human forces, he would have no need of a religion. Therefore, religion springs from the recognition of the actual failures, dissatisfactions, disharmonies, of everyday existence as contrasted with its conceivable permanent goods. Religion only springs up in the soul of man when he discovers the discrepancy between what he would be and what he is. The most hopelessly irreligious attitude is that of completely smug satisfaction: "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." The most religious attitude is that of complete submission to the Transcendent Being who is the bearer of the Supreme Values: "Not my will, but thine be done." "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." (3) The belief in the Higher Power who is the Source and Sustainer of the Highest Values involves *acts* on the part of the believer—acts of worship, sacrifice, prayer, obedience.

The supreme paradox and problem of human life lies in the fact that man is ever spurred on by the vision of Higher Values, of a Supreme Good which, if it possessed him freely, would make his life wholly satisfying; whereas, in fact, he is ever falling short of the attainment and enjoyment of the Good. Herein lies the distinction between ethics and religion. Ethics is the doctrine of the good, of the Supreme Values of life. Religion is the faith that these values are eternally realized in the Supreme Reality, that God is the Perfect Fulfillment, the

Eternal Source and Conservator of the true and permanent values of life. If we take personality as the best name for the spiritual reality which encompasses, contains and sustains all the really worthwhile values of life, then we can say that the imperfectly developing personality of man seeks fruition in the Perfect Personality of God. All these terms are hints thrown out at a great mystery. But it is plain, on the one hand, that man everywhere and always, from the Australian savage to the philosopher, has some vision of a best life—the life of superior value for him and his. And it is plain, on the other hand, that man always is compelled to recognize his own failure to realize and hold these values without aid from above and beyond. It seems to me equally valid to say that man must believe that somehow the life of highest value will triumph and endure. And this faith, this affirmation, together with the attitudes of feeling (reverence, humility) that accompany it, and the acts that follow from it (worship, prayer, obedience), constitute the practical side of religion. The contents of the most worthwhile life, the life of highest values, are ethical. Religion is the affirmation that this life is supreme, that it rules and will endure through all the changes and chances of the natural order and the human order.

The differences between religions, the differences between adherents of the same organized or institutional religion, the differences in an individual's religious attitude at different stages in his earthly career: all are determined by differing estimates as to the true values of life. These differences in the relative values assigned to a man's goods are determined by the native individuality of man as modified by his natural and cultural environ-

ments. The influence of social culture on the individual and the group becomes more potent with the advance of civilization in its power of control over nature and the accumulation of cultural activities and interests. Cultural life is *supernatural*, though it develops from the bosom of the natural cosmos. The difference between the religion of an Australian savage and that of the late Josiah Royce (a great religious philosopher) was due in part to the fact that Royce and the savage were born with different mentalities, but even more was it due to the fact that Royce was the heir of world culture, whereas the savage, even though by comparison with his fellows an Australian Royce, was heir to a poor culture.

The distinction between *natural* and *revealed religion* will not hold. All religion is natural, in the sense that it is the natural outcome of man's struggle towards a life which embodies the highest, most comprehensive and consistent values that he can feel, conceive and seek. All religion is revealed, in the sense that it is the result of the interplay of the human spirit, which cannot be sated by the things of this world, with the deep and mysterious pulse of the Universal Life.

All religions that have furthered the ethical and spiritual development of man are revelations of man's higher possibilities as realized in intercourse with the nature of the universe as a whole. The Christian religion (the religion emanating from Jesus Christ and his apostles) is the highest known religion; since through Jesus there was revealed in concrete personal shape, not only the highest and fullest human spirituality, but there were released and strengthened the noblest and strongest motives for the realization of man's moral and spiritual

capacities. If Jesus be supreme among the sons of men in the moral and spiritual order, then He is the most adequate revealer of what man may become under his leadership. He is not the only revealer, but he is the richest and most adequate revealer of the spiritual capacities of man. Surely this is enough. We cannot assert, in the face of comparative spiritual history, that Christianity, in any of its manifold forms hitherto, is the absolute religion, but we can assert that Jesus sets the high-water mark of spiritual self-fulfillment for man. And if man ever rises to nobler heights than the teaching and person of Jesus guides and inspires him towards, it will be through Jesus. I am unable to conceive how man can transcend the exalted moral and spiritual quality of Jesus. But if he should he will do so in the spirit of Jesus. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear to hear them now." "Howbeit, when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will lead you into all the truth." "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Spiritual religion will not cease to be Jesuanic, though it may transcend all existing forms of Christianity. Religion, therefore, changes, but it cannot die. It ebbs and flows with the whole stream of human culture, of which it is the crowning expression and interpretation. As cultures sicken and die, to be reborn in transmuted form, so with religion. So long as man lives so long will he seek to rear fairer mansions for his insatiate and enduring spirit to dwell in. So long will he live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. So long will he embody forth, in images and concepts, ideals of fairer, fuller, more harmonious goods; and, in the face of con-

travelling facts, in the face of failure and disappointment, will he in faith affirm the supremacy of spiritual values over the brute forces of nature; over his own sin, stupidity and error. Until man becomes either a lotos eater or a god he will believe and pray and worship. So long as man remains man, "who partly is and wholly hopes to be," he will be incurably religious.

As man changes in his whole culture, so does he change in his scale of spiritual values, in his estimates of the true goods of life. But always, in religion, he affirms his faith in the reality and supremacy, the cosmic standing, of the highest values of life. When culture decays, religion decays. When culture flourishes, religion flourishes. When the forms of culture decay, religion will afford a refuge and consolation. When other forms of culture become too worldly, too materialistic, religion may rebuke and chasten them. For religion, growing out of a human culture, points man beyond all wordly goods to the Perfect and Transcendent in which alone there is rest and peace for his soul. An institutional or organized religion, which is accepted by any considerable group and which continues for a time to hold sway over that group, is the concentrated expression of a whole social moral culture. Its commands and prohibitions, its ideals of conduct and personality, its ceremonies and organization, its very conceptions of man, nature, God, destiny, salvation, are determined by the social culture in which it lives.

The ethics of medieval Catholic Christendom differ from the ethics of Calvinistic Puritanism, because of the differences in the whole organization of culture. The New Testament idea of God differs from that of St.

## 10 RELIGION AND THE MIND OF TO-DAY

Augustine and his followers for the same reason. The idea of God held to-day by one nurtured in the scientific spirit and imbued with the ideas of social democracy differs from both. Of course we must allow for the influence of great religious geniuses who sum up and bring to a focus, in a relatively new spiritual concentration, all the social and spiritual currents of their ages. Paul was the center of apostolic Christianity. Augustine was the spiritual focus of an age. Subsequent Catholic Christendom was until the thirteenth century in large part the lengthened shadow of Augustine. Thomas Aquinas and Dante are the spiritual burning glasses of their age, Luther and Calvin, of the main currents in the Reformation.

Insensibly and almost unconsciously the spiritual currents of an age of transition and reconstruction run together in its leaders to form new cultural creations. Men to-day bemoan the decay of religion. But if it be decaying, it is being reborn. If the existing Churches cannot be reborn to suit the new age, religion will find new and more adequate forms of expression.

I am not here attempting a comparative philosophy of religion. I desire only to indicate its guiding principles and to apply them to the present. Every worth-while religion has been the unification, concentration and elevation into the Eternal and Transcendent, of the highest, most comprehensive goods of life for some great epoch of human culture. The spirit of Buddhism, with its emphasis on the mergence of the individual self in the universal, is a characteristic expression of ancient Hindu culture. It is a legitimate child of Vedantic pantheism. Classical Christianity was the offspring of the union of

the supreme expression, in universal and unique form, of the ethical monotheism of the Hebrew prophets with Greek philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Medieval Catholicism was the supreme expression of the gradually maturing culture of feudal Europe transfused with the rudiments of ancient Graeco-Catholic culture, Protestantism, especially in its Calvinistic form, was the expression of modern individualism, of a stern and characteristically northern and democratic individualism.

The time is ripe for a new religious synthesis—for a religion which will comprehend, unify and lift up into the Eternal all the spiritual interests and values of the present.

Such a religion will accept from science the principle of the universality of the causal order of nature. It will welcome and use the experimental method of science, which is in harmony with the point of view of Jesus: "He that heareth my words and doeth them." "By their fruits ye shall know them." It will make its own the new social spirit for which a man's value to God and his fellows lies not in the abundance of his goods or the greatness of his power, but in the social function that he performs, the service that he renders. It will cherish the sense of reverent awe and worshipful prayer before the mysteries and tragedies of existence, but it will have done with crass fear and unmanly superstition as religious motives. It will summon its votaries to be clear-eyed, sane and self-respecting, albeit humble and reverent, before the problems and perplexities of individual and social life. It will find the

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus' idea of God is essentially that of the great Hebrew prophets—of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos.

good life, the life of highest value, not in penance and meditation among the tombs, but in the promotion of sanity, harmony, balance, joy and light among men. It will measure and judge all institutions, political, educational, and economic, by their contributions to the development of a community of free men and women, free in knowledge, in clear-eyed sanity, rejoicing in their common fellowship, and striving for the well-rounded and harmonious life. Above all, it will reverence childhood and youth and lend all the power of conviction and faith to the nurture of children and youth in physical health, mental well-being and individual and social harmony. Therefore, the new religion will put the greatest possible emphasis on education. It will demand that we spend much more than we do, in money and well-directed thought, on the nurture and education of childhood and youth. "For of such is the kingdom of God."

The new religion will find a place for meditation, for the spiritual culture of individuality. In our reaction against the soul-crippling, body-destroying individualism which, under the great-scale industrialism of the modern factory system, has wrought havoc, the pendulum threatens to swing to the other extreme. Religion is always a social force. But there is danger that in our praiseworthy emphasis on the social aspects of religion we forget that individual personality and community are two complementary aspects of the same spiritual fact. The trouble with individualism is that it makes, under modern industrialism, for a maimed society, one full of conflicts, disharmonies and human wastes and, therefore, tends towards social destruction. On the other hand, we must remember that it is just as true that a morally

healthy and spiritually vigorous community is an organism or spiritual system consisting of individual persons, as it is true that personality can be developed and enjoyed only where the life of the community is rich in spiritual opportunity. What we must aim at is a community life which nurtures and gives scope for a higher type of spiritual individuality. The new religion will recognize the equal worth of many forms of spiritual aspiration and experience. It will recognize that the development of the sense of beauty, the nurture of souls by the cultivation of artistic appreciation and creation, is just as much a part of spiritual culture as the cultivation of knowledge in science and history. It will be Platonic in the sense that Plato found in the harmonious cultivation and worship of beauty, truth and social justice the supreme good for man, and the adumbration in the human world of the Essential Form of the Good, the revelation of God in the individual soul and in the life of society.

Spiritual religion, in its fullest form, always transcends the existing social order. It can never be the mere conservation of the actual social customs and standards. The deeps of the individual spirit are ever stirred by the thirst for perfection, for communion with the Absolute Good, the Holy—the consummation of all truth, of all moral righteousness and of all beauty. Religion is social in its implications because it aims at an ideal community of persons. But for a truly spiritual religion the existing social order, the life of the state and of economic society, and even the activities and values of the common culture in the arts, sciences and morals must always fall short of the Perfect Object—God. Therefore religion both con-

## 14 RELIGION AND THE MIND OF TO-DAY

demns and aims to elevate the actually existing social life. It lives in the light and works by the guidance of an ideal community which, for faith, is not a mere ideal, a light that never was on land or sea, but the most complete, ever-present and enduring Reality.

## CHAPTER II

### WORLD-VIEWS AND RELIGIOUS VALUES

A world-view is a comprehensive conception of the cosmos with especial reference to man's place in the cosmos. Religion has its roots in judgments and convictions as to the true, satisfying and enduring goods of human life. In other words, religion springs out of an integral life-view which is espoused and served by the faithful. A religion which offered no ideas and promises as to the meaning and destiny of human life, which failed to give to man a satisfying conception of the Highest and Fullest Good, which offered him no means of relief from the ills of life, no way of salvation, would be a contradiction in terms.

But personal life is lived out only in interaction with Reality, in interplay with other persons and with nature. Every integral life-view, then, implies a world-view. It is impossible that one should hold fervidly, in his feeling and conduct, to a way of life and not, either implicitly or explicitly, embrace the world-view involved in that life-view. If life be meaningless and void, if the human spirit and the ideals in which it finds spiritual health are impotent and ephemeral, if they are but momentary and delusive gleams appearing amidst the illimitable darkness of a stony and insensate universe, one can have only a religion of dumb despair and resignation. If life

be meaningful, the world as a whole must have a meaning. Every religion, then, implies a philosophy, a metaphysics, a doctrine of the cosmos, however crude or vague or incoherent this doctrine may seem to one who holds another view. For religion presupposes that the life-values which it makes central and supreme, are grounded in the ultimate nature of Reality.

The earliest and crudest forms of religion that one finds record of have a rudimentary philosophy or metaphysics. There is a belief in *Mana*, a mysterious influence, a vaguely diffused power or energy, which manifests itself in all unusual happenings. Fearsome and beneficent things and events have *Mana*. It causes disease and disaster and death. It is manifested in the wind, in the lightning, in the mysteries of birth, in the prowess of the warrior, in the skill of the hunter or craftsman. *Mana* is controlled in part by spirits. These are not immaterial beings, but beings of finer, more tenuous, more elusive matter.

There are devices by which man can control *Mana*. Magic is a system of such devices. Magic and religious practices are not at first distinguishable. The soul of man is distinguished from his body, which it can depart from and reënter.

Primitive man is not illogical. There is no prelogical stage of human thinking. According to his lights he is logical. He seeks causes and formulates and applies theories of causal relation. What he lacks is an accumulation of carefully tested and rigorously analysed observations, affirmative and negative, by which to keep his causal theories under control. As he accumulated more and better correlated instances of the temporal sequences

in events, man increased his powers of control and adaptation.

And as by more successful control of natural forces and the organization of more stable social structures man attained more security, power and leisure, there emerged the notion of *order, unity and continuity* in nature, along with the notion of principles of *social order*.<sup>1</sup> These complementary notions of natural order and social order grew up together. Then man takes the tremendous step of assuming that One Being, One Creative Will, is the Author and Governor of the twofold and interrelated realms of man and nature. We do not know when this great step was first taken. We do know that ethical monotheism was enunciated by the Hebrew prophets. What distinguishes their monism (or unitary view of the cosmos) is the great emphasis laid on social righteousness as the true service of God and the rapid growth of their religious and cosmical outlook towards universalistic monotheism. Their conception of God is the background of the teaching of Jesus and his apostles.

In the meantime, the Greeks had worked out a metaphysics, or cosmology which culminates in Aristotle.<sup>1</sup> He does not attribute the creation of the world to the fiat of a Creative Will at a definite time. For him, the world is eternal. But he does conceive that the order of the cosmos and the graded series, or hierarchy of species of finite beings, from the lowest to man and higher than man, are due to the striving of all things to be like God. He conceives the universe to be one and have one mover

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<sup>1</sup> It is an error to assume that Aristotle departed radically from the metaphysics of Plato. Their kinship of view goes deeper than their differences in method of statement.

—the Unmoved Mover, God, who draws the world after him by his inherent attractive power, since he is the *Perfect Form of Being*. Aristotle conceives the various species of organisms to be distinct, and their natures immutable. God is the eternally perfect self-contemplating Thought, the paragon and pattern for all Being.

A finite-bounded universe moving upon itself, the earth its center, fixed species, the movements of the planets circular because circular motion is perfect—in short, a small and tidy universe (as Bertrand Russell puts it), aesthetically conceived and dependent upon an Eternal Thinker—such is Aristotle's cosmos. It fitted in very well with the cosmological background of Hebrew prophetism and early Christian faith. The only discrepancy was that the Hebrews and Christians believed the physical cosmos to have been created in time by the fiat of the Divine Will, and matter to have been created by this Will out of nothing. Matter, in Aristotle, is just the potentiality of organized being, so there was no serious difficulty between Aristotle and Christian faith on this point.

The classical world-view of Christianity is the fusion of the Aristotelian and the Biblical views. It is a geocentric conception of the cosmos. It is not only geocentric, but lococentric. The scene of man's creation and God's primary dealings with man are located in the mountains from which spring the two rivers of Mesopotamia. Then the scene of the Divine transactions with man is transferred from Mesopotamia to Palestine and Egypt, and again to Palestine. Gradually, other regions and other peoples are brought into the scheme, as the experiences of the faithful are widened.

The elements of the classical Christian philosophy are these—God created the world in six days. He placed the earth in the center. He created man and the various species of organisms for man's use. He endowed man with freedom, which he used to rebel against God. Sin, suffering and death thus came into the world by man's free act of disobedience. God manifested himself at various times by miraculous deeds. He spoke his will through prophets. Finally he sent his own Son to redeem man from sin by a loving sacrifice. The history of God's direct dealings with man up to the organization of the Christian Church is enshrined in a book, every word of which is inspired. From this book, in Protestantism, all religious authority is derived. In Catholicism, the continuous and living authority resides in the succession of apostolic vicars of Christ from Peter down to the living Pope. High Anglicanism has its seat of authority in a continuous line of bishops from the apostles down to the living bishops of the Church, but rejects the claim to supreme authority of the Bishop of Rome.

This world-view is an admirable setting for the faith that nature is subservient to moral and spiritual values, that the moral order of personal and social life is supreme over the brute forces of the physical universe. The world-view of Plato and Aristotle was similar, and the Hebrew-Christian and Greek cosmologies fused together readily enough. The chief distinction is the greater emphasis on the value and reality of the individual soul or personality in Christianity, together with a higher valuation of the emotional and volitional basis of personality. There is a warmth, a concreteness, an intimate personal quality

in the Christian view that is lacking in the Greek view of life.'

One can admit a spiritual value in the traditional stories while denying their literal truth. For example—The story of the creation enshrines a truth of imperishable spiritual value—the visible and tangible and ponderable world is but a fragmentary and transitory world derived from, and dependent upon, the invisible, intangible and imponderable Creative Thought. The miracles are pictorial embodiments of the same insight of faith that the physical is the instrument of the moral and spiritual. Their literal truth or untruth is unimportant beside the principle of the supremacy of the Spiritual Order. As Goethe puts it, miracle is the dearest child of faith. Therefore, in ages before the mind had been permeated by the sense of the universal causal order in nature it was most natural to attribute to superlative personalities physically miraculous origins, careers and departures.

The cosmological metaphysics of classical Christianity, like that of Aristotle, seems to be undermined by the growth of modern science. (1) By the heliocentric astronomy with its vision of a universe boundless in space and endless in duration, and in which the earth is an insignificant and transitory speck. (2) By the advancing tide of natural law, by the increasing triumph of the causal postulate that every event has its conditions or causes in antecedent natural events. This rules out special divine intervention in the natural order. The triumph of mechanical modes of explanation has led to the confident assumption that nothing really exists but particles of matter, and nothing really moves or changes be-

yond the mechanically conditioned spatial configurations of particles of matter. (3) By the growth of the evolutionary theory which rules out special creation and finality of organic species. The world of life, like the natural cosmos, is fluid and is the expression of the ceaseless interaction of natural causes. (4) By the application of the method of critical history to sacred books. This has shown that those books are not unitary works from the hands of single authors, but composites written at various times, edited and reëdited, full of folklore analogous to the folklore of other peoples. The ark of the covenant, for example, was fatal to the Philistines because it had Mana. The plague of serpents in the wilderness was cured by homeopathic magic. There are two creation stories. The historical books were written up and revised to suit the views of later times. The *prophetic books* are composites dating from different epochs; so are the *Psalms*. The *Gospels* are composites written from varying points of view, somewhat later than the sayings and events they record.

The classical cosmology and anthropology associated with dogmatic Christianity have crumbled to ruin, and the authority of the Scriptures, as a literally and absolutely inspired textbook of astronomy, physics, biology, history and psychology, as well as of ethics and religion, has gone by the boards.

The crucial question is: what becomes of the moral and spiritual values of the Hebrew-Christian tradition when the classical cosmological and anthropological framework has vanished?

*Fundamentalism*, mistakenly so-called, is a movement to preserve the absolute authority of the traditional cos-

mology and historiography, because this authority is believed to be indispensable to the preservation of the authority or supremacy of the Christian scheme of conduct and religion. One must pay to fundamentalism the tribute of being in deadly earnest. Moreover, one must admit that with the dissolution of the authority of traditional cosmology, anthropology and history there must be a revision of the spiritual values and principles of religion.

If the heliocentric astronomy be true, the earth is not the center of the universe and, if there be a God, a Universal Spirit, we have no reasonable right to suppose that his chief engrossing concern is with the earth and man. If the evolution hypothesis be true, then not only were all species not created for man's use, but man did not bring upon himself suffering, labor and death by Adam's sin. Suffering, labor and death are inevitable incidents in the life-history of finite being. Knowledge is not a result of Adam's fall, but the most powerful instrument for human advancement. Then Christ did not come to redeem man from the otherwise unescapable and ever accumulating direful consequences of the free acts of our first parents.

If methods of critical history and the modern scientific spirit be valid, then special acts of Divine intervention in, or suspension of, the order of nature and the casual sequence of historical events are discredited.

The truly fundamental questions are: (1) Must we accept the results of modern cosmology, biology and critical history? (2) If we do this, what revision must be made of the classical Christian scheme of salvation?

I claim to be a fundamentalist, since I am going to deal with the fundamental questions. But I am a mod-

ernist, since I accept in the main the standpoints of modern cosmology and the methods of natural science and critical history. I essay in what follows a statement of the present spiritual value of the Christian tradition in the light of modern thought.

Before embarking upon this voyage of reconstruction, I shall state more fully the grounds for regarding traditional cosmology and anthropology as a ruin, albeit a noble one.

## CHAPTER III

### SCIENCE AND TRADITIONALISM

“Science has been the slowly advancing nemesis which has overtaken a barbarised and paganised Christianity. She has come with a winnowing fan in her hand, and she will not stop until she has thoroughly purged her floor.”  
Dean Inge.

What is Traditionalism? Briefly, it is the assumption that in the traditional dogmas and ecclesiastical forms of so-called Catholic Christianity are to be found whatsoever is necessary to the salvation of the individual and society. In complete and obedient acceptance of all that has been handed down *from of old* alone is salvation. Traditionalism is the attitude which holds that all saving truth was given *once and for all time to the Fathers*. Our business is to preserve it intact and to abide by it. Its favorite formulas are: “The Holy Catholic Church teaches thus and so”; or, “The Fathers of the first six Christian centuries teach thus and so”; or, “The ecumenical councils decreed thus and so”; or, “The Bible teaches thus and so.” Woe betide him who thinks otherwise. No modern doctrines or principles, however well-grounded on facts, or however illuminating as guides to action, can be true or right if they are not in complete harmony with the ancient traditions. If modern science—physics, astronomy, biology or psychology—is not in

harmony with the traditions, so much the worse for modern science. It is Devil's lore.

The first myth of the traditionalist is that there exists or ever has existed a wholly self-consistent content of theological truth, of Catholic truth, "the same yesterday, to-day, forever." There is not, and there never has been, anything of the sort. The traditionalist attitude is by no means confined to ecclesiasticism. The assumption that all our traditionary moral, social, legal, political and economic institutions and customs are absolutely right and all-sufficient is another form of traditionalism, of the bondage of the living to the dead.

It is chiefly with ecclesiastical traditionalism that we are concerned here. It has a protean character. For the central myth of the traditionalist is that the holy tradition is fixed, complete and self-consistent. It is nothing of the sort. Consider a moment! For the unintelligent Anglo-Catholic, everything before the Reformation, everything medieval, however moth-eaten and musty, is part of the sacred tradition. For the more intelligent Anglo-Catholic the first eight centuries of the Church fixed the tradition. The Holy Spirit guided all the so-called ecumenical councils. What the Spirit has been about since A.D. 787, the date of the last ecumenical council, does not appear.<sup>1</sup> For the Protestant traditionalist, who is a bibliolater, as the others are ecclesiolaters, the fixed tradition is confined within the covers of the Protestant Bible. It includes the story of creation, the savage injunctions of Jahweh to the chosen people to smite their enemies

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<sup>1</sup> In doctrinal matters the Seventh Council in A.D. 787 only reaffirmed the pronouncements of the previous councils. Nothing material was added.

hip and thigh and not leave one of them alive, all the details of the Jewish ritual, Joshua's making the sun to stand still, the ascent of Elijah in a fiery chariot to heaven, the dreadful imprecations of the Psalms as well as their beautiful devotions, Jesus' simple gospel of love and liberty, the Jewish Messianism of St. Paul and the preëxistent Logos doctrine of St. John.

For the Romanist, most logical of traditionalists, it includes the latest pronouncements of the newest Pope on matters of doctrine and life. He is the living interpreter and maker of tradition. Thus the Romanist has a live agency for adjusting ancient saws and modern instances. Why should one stop with any particular date? The trouble with the Romanist is that he commits the interpreting of old traditions and the making of new traditions to one man, advised by a conclave of ecclesiastics.

The traditionalist, of whatsoever stripe, limits the true traditions to those accepted by his own sect, church, or party. These he desires to enforce on the consciences and intelligences of all others. I have said that traditionalism is based on a myth. *No universally valid tradition has ever existed.* It would take too long to survey even briefly the traditions that have been either silently dropped from use, or that have died of inanition, or that are now used only in a Pickwickian sense. I will confine my examination to what we may call the core of the traditional Christian doctrine of the world and of man, of God and salvation. I will state it briefly: There was an eternity when nothing existed but God. At a certain time, between five and six thousand years ago, He decided, no one knows why, to create a world. He created: first the Heavens and the earth; then, plants and animals; lastly,

man, whom He made in His own image and to whom he gave a living soul. Man was innocent and happy, enjoying immortal leisure. But, tempted by the Devil, a fallen angel, man disobeyed the moderate prohibition of the Creator, and sin, and with it labor and death, entered into the human world. Four thousand years later, when the state of man had become very pitiful, God finally had compassion on him and sent his eternally begotten Son, the Messiah of the Jews and the preëxistent Logos of the Greeks. He assumed the form of a man, Jesus of Nazareth; taught men, wrought many miracles and, by his suffering on the cross, satisfied the Divine Wrath against the sins of men. This he alone could do, since men themselves, being finite and erring, never could make atonement for their sins against the Infinite Holiness. All who hear of, and accept, Christ as the Saviour, will be saved from eternal damnation. Christ rose from the dead and ascended bodily into the heavens. From thence he shall come at the end of the present world and judge all men. Those whom he accepts, will enter upon the life of eternal bliss; those whom he rejects will enter into eternal punishment. This scheme of man's origin and destiny is set in a neat framework. The earth is fixed in the center of the universe. Above it are the fixed stars and Heaven; underneath the abyss and the awful shades of Hell. The map of the universe is charted out in Dante's *Divine Comedy* and in Milton, the Protestant Dante. It is a physically small and tidy universe; the only serious untidinesses in it are, first, that due to Satan's rebellion, and second, that due to man's sinful disobedience and fall, by which suffering and death come into the world. God is somewhere outside the world. He

miraculously intervenes in its affairs, as He did on various occasions recorded in Holy Writ and Tradition.

If one were to fix any time for the completion of this tradition in its classical outlines it would be the thirteenth century. Then Thomas Aquinas gave the complete statement of traditional cosmology and theology, and Dante incorporated it in his immortal poem.

This system is an imposing edifice; but, either modern science is false through and through, or the traditional system is in irremediable ruin. It is time to stop trying to patch up the old ruin and build a new mansion in which our spirits may dwell and grow in freedom, light and power.

Within three centuries, the framework of medieval cosmology had been knocked to pieces by Galileo and his coworkers. Three centuries later, by the work of many hands, preëminent among them Darwin, Wallace and Huxley, the very foundations of the edifice were undermined.

Modern astronomy has established, beyond reasonable doubt, that the earth, so far from being fixed in the center of things, is but an insignificant speck of matter, spinning in infinite space. There are many stars known to be larger than our sun. Our entire solar system is but one of a large number traveling at immense velocities through infinite space. Some idea of the staggering immensity of the physical universe may be formed from the fact that light now reaching us from a remote star cluster has been traveling 220,000 light years since it left the cluster. Light travels 186,000 miles per second. A light year is the distance light travels in one year. Consider then how far away a star cluster is, the light from which takes

220,000 years to reach this earth. A billion years are but as one moment in the life of the universe. The universe, as known to modern science, is infinite in extent and eternal in duration. There can never have been a time when the world was not. Creation never began, and will never end. The duration of our earth may be a billion years. But the age of the earth is but a moment in the history of the universe. And every instant in its history is the expression of unvarying physical and mechanical law.

Traditionalism adjusted itself, after a fashion, to the new world-view. It maintained, however, that man, his soul's affairs and destiny, is exceptional to the universal order. The animals and plants, like the earth and the stars, might be surrendered to the invading army of scientific law. But man has a spirit, and God has direct dealings with him. The traditionalist let the astronomical theory of the world's origin stand, provided the scientist would let the traditional story of man's origin and destiny stand.

But three centuries after the triumphant resurrection of the heliocentric astronomy, another ancient hypotheses, that of *man's evolutionary origin*, was put on the solid ground of verifiable fact. This theory is no longer a guess. It is a well-established principle, not doubted by any competent astronomer, geologist, biologist or psychologist to-day. The disputes concern only the details of method. Man is no exception in the order of life. He belongs to the Simian species. His ancestor was *Eoanthropus*, a cousin of the anthropoid ape. Adam's innocence was the ignorance of *Eoanthropus*. Man did not fall from a state of innocence and bliss and immortality

either in Eden or from a star, as Plato thought. He descended, but he did not fall, from the trees of his ancestors. He shed his tail, began to walk on his hind legs, and by the use of the wonderful dawning powers of vivid memory, active imagination and creative reason, he began his long march upward. Man has stumbled and gotten lost, but he has picked himself up and found himself again. Still forward he struggles on his way in the dark, lighted by the torch of hope and faith, guided by the map of imagination and reason. Forward down the ringing corridors of time goes man our brother, man ourself. Let him cast off the encumbering baggage of prehistoric fears, of foolish customs and childish superstitions. Let him challenge sternly every hoary survival from his own dim red dawn that now impedes the pathway which is charted by the intelligent facing of facts and their interpretation in the light of reason.

The modern scientific conception of nature and man is incompatible with every single item in the traditionalist scheme, from the six-day creation to the Last Judgment and the commitment of men to eternal damnation and eternal bliss. No sudden creation by a cosmic artificer, no free fall of man from innocence, no extramundane Deity miraculously intervening once in a while, no spatial and literal heaven and hell. No damnation for men at the hands of the offended dignity of an omnipotent Creator, who, being omnipotent, might have made man able to avoid sin, but chose, in his inscrutable caprice, to make man so weak that he must fall and then punishes him through eternity for falling. Such are the negative conclusions from the scientific point of view. Let us stop equivocating and face them, and ask ourselves what is

left in the way of a spiritual world-view when we have faced the music and admitted that traditionalism has gone by the boards.

It is my purpose in the following chapters to consider precisely this question: What spiritual outlook does the modern world-view allow us? Can we accept it and preserve anything of the spiritual value of traditional religion? I think we must accept the new view. I think also that we can preserve the human values of the impulse which originated in Nazareth nineteen centuries ago. When I dig down through the strata of misconceptions and misinterpretations which began with the attempt to prove that the Jewish Messiah had come, and went on to prove that the second person of the Trinity, the Pre-existent Logos, had appeared in the body of a man, I find a wonderfully genial, profound and simple insight into human nature and the true values of life. I find the rudiments of a truly humane and universal vision of good life. But that is another story, to be taken up later. I will close by summing up the case against traditionalism.

There are *three chief* counts against the acceptance of the traditional doctrine of Nature, Man and God. (1) These doctrines are incompatible with the results of the modern scientific interpretation of nature and human history. (2) These doctrines are internally inconsistent—self-contradictory. If the miraculous creation did not begin in 4004 B.C., when did it begin? How much authority have the Hebrew traditions, the survivals of primitive customs and folklore, many of which are of Babylonian origin? Must we accept Joshua's arresting of the sun, the fiery chariot of Elijah, the story of Jonah and the whale, along with the virgin birth of Jesus and

the material ascent into the heavens, as well as the miracles of raising from the dead? Did God's miraculous interventions in history cease with the apostolic age? Or do they continue to the present, at Mons, at Lourdes and St. Anne de Beaupré? When was the correct interpretation of supernaturalism completed? At the council of Chalcedon, or by St. Thomas Aquinas? Or is the interpretation still going forward? How are we to judge what are the credible facts and the reasonable interpretations? Are we to accept the Papal interpretations? Or those of American Episcopalian bishops? Or of the General Convention of clerical and lay delegates? Or of the Presbyterian General Assembly? Has one ever heard of a scientific truth or a new religious insight being established in convention? Have not scientific truths been discovered and the evidence for them collected and sifted by lonely individuals working long and patiently and humbly in laboratories and in fields? Have not all new religious values been the work of individual seers and prophets? Have organizations and committees ever discovered, or created, or formulated any profound truth, anything beautiful or noble? Is it not by the lonely travail of the individual spirit, obeying the irresistible urge of his own imagination and his own reason that truth is found and beauty created and righteousness visioned? If we must use our reason to decide between conflicting interpretations, must we not go farther and use our reason to reject traditions that do not square with the principles of science? Which is the better guide— inferences from observable facts or inferences from what are at best conflicting traditions, from the records of the past, in which the recorders' own spiritual and intellectual

limitations played a great rôle in determining the records?

(3) Traditionalism is a practical failure in the face of the problems of the new industrialism. Traditionalism is a two-world theory. There are two separate worlds in its scheme: here earth, there heaven; here flesh, there spirit; here sin, there miraculous redemption; here death, there immortal life; here renunciation, there bliss untold. An individual, or a group which holds to this two-world theory, cannot have much passion for turning human society into a fitter place to live in now. It becomes part of the divinely ordained scheme of things to endure the evils of this world, if the measure of one's endurance of these present ills is to determine his reward in the future realm of bliss. The saints are free to inherit the next world, provided the vigorous sinners who have the whip hand in this world are left undisturbed in their possessions and powers. The prosperous sinners are very well satisfied, as a rule, with this division of things.

The beatitudes are actually advanced as a reason for not disturbing the existing order. With what holy unction can the profiteer say, "Blessed are the *poor*, for *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven," heaven being very remote, but profits right at hand!

I do not mean for a moment to say that, in past ages organized Christianity has not been a great spiritual force. It has done much to chasten and uplift and harmonize the unruly wills and passions of sinful men. In the later Roman Empire, in the Dark Ages that followed the fall of the Empire, Christianity was the chief custodian of culture, the one great refining and moralizing agency. In the rude and vigorous Middle Ages it softened the barbarism of the new races. It toned down feudalism.

It moralized industry and trade. Time and again it has softened the asperities of civilization, as well as been a moral stay and a spiritual consolation to many a distraught soul. But all this is aside from the present issue. Traditionalism, not content with exaggerating the moral and cultural influence of the ancient and medieval Church, proposes that we shall remedy *all* our present ills by harking back to medievalism, or to the post-apostolic or to the apostolic ages. To these proposals there are two fatal obstacles, even if the traditionalists would agree as to just what we are to revive, which they do not. (1) We cannot be sure just how much the ancient and medieval Church achieved. The records were written mostly by churchmen. The vast majority of those who lived then died without leaving any records. It is quite as easy and foolish to exaggerate the glories of the past as it is to depreciate it in ignorant satisfaction with the present. (2) Even though the Church did all that is claimed for it then, it does not follow that to restore the apostolic or medieval spirit, if it could be done, would bring similar results to-day. The past is dead and gone. It can never be lived again. The revival of an ancient, or nearer past is impossible; if it were possible, it would be useless because irrelevant. We do not live in the first, or the fourth, or the thirteenth, but in the twentieth century. We have our own troubles and problems, our own virtues and vices, failures and successes. The more I read history in the light of the present, the more I see the truth of Hegel's saying—one thing we learn from history, that mankind does not learn anything from history. We must face the future in the light of the present. We have to face a world becoming more and more imbued with the method and spirit of science, of industrialism, of demo-

cratic unrest. To seek to live in the romantic shadows of a medieval twilight is foolish. We cannot live even in the apostolic dawn, glorious though it were.

The problem for us here and now, is this: How can the moral power, the refining, uplifting and harmonizing of the natural impulses of man, which traditional religion achieved when it was not a tradition but a living thing and part and parcel of the social life in which it had its being, be now made effective in a civilization that differs radically from any civilization in which Christianity or any other religion has hitherto functioned? What will do for our new civilization the work which ancient and medieval Christianity did for their civilizations? For this is a *new* civilization in which we live.

The two biggest revolutions that have been, and are still, making this new civilization—revolutions much vaster and deeper and more lasting in effects than the French or the Russian revolution—are the *rise of modern science* and the *industrial revolution*; the third great revolution which is even now just getting into full swing is *popular or democratic education*. By this the results and spirit of modern science will become a living part of the popular mind. The future civilization is being built up in schoolroom, laboratory and study. Traditionalists may inveigh and lament as they please in regard to the irreligious and godless character of the public school and the state university. But they might as well try to beat back the waves of the Atlantic with a broom, as to stop this movement. It will go forward, and by it the new civilization will be made, more than by any other single force. The sacred shrine of American and of all democracy is popular education.

The question for those concerned with religion is this:

Is there any longer a real place, a vital function, for religion at all? What is religion good for now? What religion is good for something to-day? It must be open to the spirit and teachings of science. It must find room for all the normal human impulses and their values. It must be able to gather into a great imaginative and poetic synthesis all the strivings, hopes and faiths of a vast democracy whose ministers and high priests are the teachers and discoverers of truth, who teach and discover, who paint pictures and sing poems and dream dreams, in order that humanity as a whole, no longer a privileged few, may enter into the fullness and joy of the more abundant life.

No thoughtful student of human affairs will question the power of tradition in all that concerns the cultural life of man. The on-going of civilization depends upon it. There must be some continuity in social, political, moral and other cultural structures, if civilization is to endure and progress. There must be an ethical and spiritual continuity in man's religious life, if religion is to minister effectively to the soul of man. The value of tradition is that it conserves the best in the living ideals and patterns of the past, and enables the present generation to be nurtured on these. But it must be a *living past*—it *must* be a tradition that actually functions in the *living present*. Insistence on the authority of tradition is harmful when it hinders the *creative life* of the spirit *now*. Room and free play must be allowed for the revision of tradition in the light of new creative insights. Each fresh creation in the cultural life of humanity becomes an increment added to the riches of the living and effective tradition. All vital and significant history is

contemporaneous. Whatsoever in tradition cannot be interpreted, assimilated and used by the present generation, in such a way as to further its own life, is just dead and meaningless encumbrance. All vital tradition must have its roots and its justification in the inward and spiritual present. The archaic past is, *per se*, worthless.

The hide-bound traditionalist, in contrast with the modernist interpreter of tradition, has two great defects: (1) He vainly tries to arrest, or even to turn back, the tide of intellectual and spiritual life; (2) he does not even understand the traditions which he so valiantly seeks to conserve intact. If he did understand them, he would see that the best service he could render the spiritual life of to-day would be to reinterpret, to modify, and, in certain cases, to abandon the traditions. Here, as everywhere, the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive. If a tradition cannot live with the methods and results of contemporary and growing knowledge, it is useless—nay, more, it is positively harmful. If a symbol has lost its meaning, let it go. If it can be made over to serve the present, then make it over. If a tradition be good for anything, it must be good for something to-day. Unfortunately, especially in America, traditionalists who are violent partisans of what they suppose to be the truth, once delivered, are generally devoid of historical insight. The possession of historical insight does not mean that, for example, one can repeat the words of the Chalcedonian decree or of Thomas Aquinas, but that one understands what these words meant, under the cultural conditions of their own ages, to the men who uttered or accepted them.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RECRUDESCENCE OF PAGANISM

The term "paganism" in the title of this chapter is used in a derogatory sense. In its broadest sense, of course, paganism has included some of the noblest insights and truest conceptions to which humanity has hitherto attained. It includes Plato and the Stoics, Confucius, Lao-tsu and Gotama Buddha. It is not in this inclusive and eulogistic sense that the term is employed in our present discussion. What we have in mind now is the decaying paganism, which primitive Christianity confronted and conquered by the might of a new moral energy.

When we speak of paganism recrudescent to-day, we have in mind the wanton luxury, the gross sensualism, the cult of unnatural vices, the decay of family life and of the old republican simplicity and integrity, the judicial and political corruption which Seneca bemoans, Juvenal satirizes, and St. Paul lashes. The Roman world turned in this welter of moral confusion and anarchy to the moral energy, spiritual purity, and selfless devotion of the Christian to save society.

As always in the transformations of cultures, the causes of the decadence of antique paganism were complex. The gods of Greece and Rome were dead, their shrines abandoned. They were powerless to withstand the destroying

criticism of Greek philosophy and science; their characters gave no room and inspiration for the nobler ethical and religious ideals voiced by Socrates and Aeschylus, Plato and the Stoics. Intellectually untenable, morally wanting, the old mythological faiths were wholly inadequate to meet the new demands of the political, industrial, and general social revolution wrought by the rise and rapid spread of the Roman Empire. Economic and political forces operated no less than intellectual and ethical principles to render paganism obsolescent. In Greece, the old ancestral piety and morality of custom had already crumbled before intellectual enlightenment and political revolution. In Rome, the ancestral religion perished with the republic, and the inrush of Greek science destroyed its lingering relics of life. The social and moral life of the empire was saved by an obscure movement emanating from Palestine. Do we find anything in the contemporary state of society that is analogous to this decadent paganism? If so, what are the causes and the remedies?

There are, I think, in our social life many symptoms of moral confusion and disintegration that present striking, and even startling analogies to the decadent paganism of the Roman world under the Cæsars. We, too, have our commercial Cæsarism that saps the foundations of the republic. Our Cæsars have ridden roughshod over the moral rights of the weaker, or have, by insidious methods of bribery, poisoned the founts of law and equity in our legislative halls. If they have not made spectacles to appease the public, they have tried to do so by generous subscriptions to church and college. They have taken toll from the worst criminals, and have debauched the

administration of justice. The family life is notoriously endangered among us, and in ever increasing measure, by the rapidly growing frequency of divorce, which, in turn, is but a symptom of deeper-lying ethical laxity and confusion. The unblushing effrontery and sensual suggestiveness of the lascivious stage corrupt our youth. The appalling increase of suicide, even among the young, indicates a weakening sense of personal responsibility, a breaking down of faith in human dignity, with a corresponding heightening of the tension of living. When one reads some of the verdicts of juries on crimes of passion, one wonders whether the belief in the value of law is dying out entirely, and whether men are not becoming blind to the fateful consequences of ignoring the moral foundations of state and society. And, when one considers the frequent and grave outbursts of lawlessness, the rapid growth of hoodlumism and crimes of violence, one is tempted to think that the belief in the majesty of law and the necessity of order in the community life are passing through an eclipse. We seem to be in the midst of a new individualism of the sophistical brand, for which the individual, with his momentary whims, passions, and impulses, is the sole measure of moral values; which means, of course, that objective moral values are no longer recognized.

In many directions, then, our social life shows lack of ethical stability. It is an age of seeming confusion and disintegration, in which many souls are drifting rudderless on a chartless sea.

The question arises: Are not these disturbing and alarming symptoms of the moral life of our society simply illustrations of the eternal warfare of flesh and spirit,

expressions of a persistent antagonism between the two souls that dwell in every human breast, and struggle anew in every generation that is born under the sun? Is this present time really worse than any other time? Might not an alarmist of the eighteenth, or the thirteenth, or any other century, have found the same pagan tendencies at work? Is not man naturally pagan in all the generations that are born? Doubtless there is truth in this view of man's moral lot. Every successive generation must fight its own ethical battles, and win its own spiritual peace. Nevertheless, there seem to be tides and seasons in the moral and spiritual history of mankind, ages of greater coherence, unity, and simplicity, and transitional ages of confusion, perplexity, and apparent disintegration. And our own time seems to be one of spiritual confusion and transition. At any rate, it is the age that is actual for us, and it behooves us to know, and, if possible, to remedy, its weaknesses. If the reconstructive forces are not clearly effective, they must be discovered and set in operation.

I think, that, in their causes, as well as in their symptoms, our social diseases bear striking analogies to the sophisticated age of Athenian life, and to the Roman world of the Cæsars. Just as then the older political organizations of the small city-states, with their industrial and social homogeneity, were merged in the great world empire, with its cosmopolitan administration of law, its tax farming, etc., so we have witnessed the passing away of an old economic order, the merging of the industrial and social life of farm and village in the vast industrial organizations that center in great cities. Just as the Roman moralist laments the decay of country life, and the over-

crowding of the cities, so may we. These industrial changes are transforming our political institutions, our notions of government and law. In all directions social reconstruction is imperative, and in some it is well under way. In the sphere of conduct and spiritual conviction it is a more difficult, and therefore a slower process. Here, other causes of an intellectual and moral sort have been at work. Natural science and historical science have wrought a revolution in thinking men's views of the universe, and of the origins of religions. The doctrine of literal inspiration has faded away before the dissolving power of the higher criticism, and with this doctrine has gone the unquestioning submission to the words of Holy Scripture. The deistical theology, inherited from the eighteenth century, pictured God as a great artificer, dwelling apart from his creation, who once upon a time manufactured and set running a world of which all the parts fitted into the exquisite harmony of an infinitely vast and complicated mechanism. God thus conceived, was a kind of indefinitely enlarged and glorified watch-maker, a cosmical inventive genius in mechanics. And the world which he had manufactured and set going for indefinite time he left alone to run by itself, except that upon very special occasions, when things were getting badly out of gear, he might intervene, either of his own motion, or at the earnest request of men.

Modern evolutionary thought is hostile to this deistical conception of God. It has gradually crumbled away before the triumphant march of biology and cosmical physics. The natural world is now viewed by science as a ceaseless process, in whose unresting and irresistible flow nothing remains identifiably the same, except the order

and direction of change. Suns and star systems indefinite in number, and unimaginable in the vastness of their extent and movement, have evolved and are evolving through the ceaseless transformations of energy. Even the physical elements of the universe are probably in evolution. The alchemists' dream of the transmutation of the elements seems to be coming true. Life arose at first in simple and relatively unorganized form, as colloidal chemical substance, and has evolved into ever more complex forms and functions of movement and consciousness. Nowhere in the universal process of nature is there perfect adjustment and harmony; nowhere and nowhen is there special need for intervention of a supermundane power in the natural process of things. At no point in space and no juncture in the time-process does science find or recognize the static finished world, the flawless mechanism. The great artificer must be ever present and continuously at work, or nowhere and not at all. For the natural world is not a world of static perfection and imperturbable peace. It is a world that ever strives toward perfection, that is, perhaps, moving towards some "far-off divine event," as yet unapprehended.

Teachers of religion are well aware how widely disseminated in the popular mind are these generalizations of scientific thought which conflict with traditional forms of theology. There is plenty of cheap and easy materialism abroad. Even where it is not adopted in the form of a creed it breeds in many minds confusion, and a weakening, or even total loss, of spiritual conviction. And the obverse of the breakdown of the old sources of authority and the loss of faith in traditional theologies is seen in a passionate craving that breeds the credulity

which seeks satisfaction for a spiritual hunger in spiritualism, Oriental cults, and the nebulous nonsense that calmly ignores the facts of experience, and blurs out in its optimistic cloudland the distinction between disease and health, pain and pleasure, good and evil, spirit and matter.

“Our hearts were made for Thee, O God, and they are unquiet until they find Thee.”

There are those, who in this critical pass offer the easy solution that it matters not what a man believes or thinks, provided he does what is right. The proviso begs the question. Man's life is not made up of a series of watertight compartments. His creed or creedlessness must affect his deeds. In the storm and stress of life a thinking man must have a view of life, a conviction as to the meaning of human destiny, to steer his course by.

There are others who put forward the claim that natural science can supply an adequate ethical conception of life. We are told that natural science stands on the solid ground of experience. It has a well-defined mode of procedure, and reaches verifiable conclusions; whereas religion and philosophy have neither empirical basis, sound method, nor assured results. So we have a modern Stoicism, which preaches “life according to nature” as the way to virtue and happiness. “Learn to know and obey the laws of the natural order” is the mandate of this school. Well, no one can really break the laws of nature. A somnambulist who falls from an upper window breaks his own head, not the law of gravitation. The deeds of the murderer and of the heroic life-saver are both in harmony with the laws of nature. The natural order is apparently indifferent to our human categories of good and evil. In the

face of our moral struggles it preserves the calm of a disinterested aloofness.

The imposing march of natural science, its theoretical victories and practical triumphs, must not blind us to the intellectual error and moral emptiness that result from the endeavor to extract from the study of the *physical order alone* ethical principles and religious uplift. Moral paganism is, logically, a legitimate outcome of materialism and naturalistic pantheism. For, as Huxley clearly saw, nature *apart from man* is nonmoral. It seems indifferent to man's moral visions, insensible to his spiritual aspirations, and turns no living face to his desire for personal companionship. We may commune with nature in her aesthetic aspects, and be refreshed and gladdened thereby. There is a great calming and uplifting spiritual power in the contemplation of nature's beauty and majesty—a power which relieves the soul from fret, fever, worry and sickly self-introspection; which frees us from the prison-house of our miserable egohood, and therefore has a religious quality. But in the struggle for personal integrity and social righteousness we require some other resource. Matthew Arnold has most clearly and beautifully expressed the truth that man, as a moral being, transcends the natural order:

When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,  
 Ask how she viewed thy self-control,  
     Thy struggling, tasked morality—  
 Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air  
 Oft made thee in thy gloom despair.

See, on her face a glow is spread,  
 A strong emotion on her cheek.  
 "Ah, child," she cries, "that strife divine,  
 Whence was it? for it is not mine.

"There is no effort on my brow;  
 I do not strive, I do not weep;  
 Yet that severe, that earnest air,  
 I saw, I felt it once—but where?

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,  
 Nor wore the manacles of space;  
 I felt it in some other clime,  
 I saw it in some other place.  
 'T was when the heavenly house I trod,  
 And lay upon the breast of God."

From no worship of nature alone can be drawn the moral power and insight to save society. Man is nature's insurgent son, and he must look elsewhere than to the physical order for guidance and inspiration in his social and moral problems.

Nature, Man, and God are the three factors involved in the ethical and social life. Ethically viewed, nature exists that man may, by conquest and control, turn her forces, both those within his own bosom, and those in the outer world, to the realization of ends which he derives from a source which is beyond nature.

If the deistical conceptions of the relations of nature, man, and God are no longer tenable, and if the natural order, taken by itself, yields no adequate counsels or inspirations for man's ethical-social life, where are we to look? We must look, I take it, to the rational conscience within us, to the needs of the social order in which we are inalienable members, and to the moral order of history, as the threefold revelation of the Divine purpose and destiny of man as an ethical and spiritual being. God, the supreme ethical principle, is known in the individual conscience, in the social order, and in the spiritual movement of the historical process.

History had no progressive moral significance for the ancient pagan. Hence he never reached a vital and forward-looking doctrine of an ideal social order. He had no vision of continued ethical progress, and no burning zeal for reform (I except Plato). History can have no moral significance for the modern pagan. All moral distinctions are swallowed up in the eternal repetitions of the physical process of things. Faith in human progress and in the possibility of the continuous moral betterment of mankind is of Hebrew and Christian origin. It was the Hebrew prophets who first proclaimed at once the necessity of social righteousness as the basis of the true worship of God, and the inviolable moral order of history, by virtue of which the fates of nations and of individuals are determined by their attitudes towards these ethical principles of social life. Jehovah is the Guardian of the moral order and the Judge of all the nations, not of Israel alone: "He shall judge between many peoples, and shall reprove strong nations afar off." The true Shekinah of God is found in the conscience of man which points him towards his brother, and in that unhasting but unresting moral process of historical judgment by which the fates of nations are determined in accordance with their faithfulness to the Divine principles of justice and loving-kindness.

Paganism has gained ground for this other reason, namely, a practical attitude towards man's social life that was at once a legitimate consequence of pietistic individualism and, logically, of deistical theology. If man's sole aim as a spiritual being should be to get his individual soul saved, regardless of what may become of his brother's soul and body, and if the common social life of industry

and school, community and state, science and art, is without spiritual value, then, of course, religion has nothing to do with society and culture. Its sole business is to furnish individual tickets for heaven. And it follows that, when one is awake to a full sense of the interest and significance of this present life, and of the beauty and power of the natural world, a religious system, which takes no account of, and finds no spiritual value in, these things, will tend to lose hold on men's interest. If the representatives of religion have not seen and proclaimed the ethical and spiritual significance of society and state, of work and art, is it surprising that, when these interests become more prominent and engrossing, the lay mind should not discover their essential need of ethical bases? Individualism and deistical otherworldliness bear fruit in an immoral industrial system, an unethical conception of state and society, an unspiritual world-view.

Another form of materialism is rife in American society to-day—the practical materialism which estimates national progress and prosperity in quantitative terms, in bigness of population and wealth, in individual achievement and well-being, in terms of external success and power, of opportunity for sensuous enjoyment. This is, of course, a danger that threatens the inner soul-life of man in all ages. But it is peculiarly an ominous danger in this age, in which our country has grown to material greatness. Industrially we have grown faster than any other modern people. But have we not lost the idealism of the nation's founders? Certainly our national soul has not brought a yield corresponding at all in greatness to our physical achievements.

Why should we boast ourselves and swell with pride

because God has given to us the greatest natural opportunity that has ever fallen to the lot of a nation? We have, indeed, with unexampled headlong energy transformed the natural face of this great continent, and even prodigally wasted our resources. But what abiding contributions have we made to the spiritual heritage of the race? In other words, what have we achieved in those realms of human production that cannot be weighed and appraised by the senses? I do not know any lesson that needs to be driven home more insistently and forcibly to our people than that Athens, the intellectual mother of our culture, was, in the days of her greatest glory, a city less than half the size of Buffalo, and that Palestine, the fountain-head of the redeeming ethical and religious powers in our life, had a smaller area than the state of Vermont. Amidst our great swelling words of "progress," it is well to call to mind such facts, and to ask ourselves what shall insure the spiritual immortality of our nation, when in the political vicissitudes of history it shall have gone the way of all peoples? Politically, the Israel of Isaiah and Jesus, and the Athens of Sophocles and Plato have long since fallen before the scythe of Time, but spiritually they will endure as long as the light of reflective thought, and the spur of moral and religious aspiration move in the soul of man. Their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, their acts endure in the everlasting movements of the spirit. Shall we seek for our nation a like remembrance and persistence, or shall we be content to leave our records in the dust to which all merely material achievement eventually returns?

In view of the moral situation to-day, what is most needed in religion is a reëmphasis of man's uniqueness

in the order of nature, a reinterpretation of the cosmical spiritual meaning of man's moral and social history as the revelation of the Divine spiritual order, and of God as the immanent sustaining and directing power of the whole social-historical movement of ethical humanity. You may find in physical nature an infinite and eternal energy, a God who works in accordance with mathematical formulas, but you must look elsewhere for a God who accounts for the human conscience, and for the social life and thought in which this conscience is born and grows. You will not find in your God of nature any clue to the tangled threads of man's moral history, or any interpretation of man's unceasing struggle in the ongoing of his social life to embody the visions of justice, peace, and love, which have haunted and urged on his spirit through all the toilsome and devious pathways of the centuries, ever since, in the dawning sense of higher values than those of mere brute existence, man first saw afar off the kingdom of the Good.

To give clearer expression and justification to this ethical-religious view of society and history, we need to have taught a philosophy of life and reality, which shall recognize the utter inadequacy of physical concepts and materialistic speculations to interpret and explain the meaning and worth of the life of the spirit in history, society, and the individual. We need a philosophy which shall have won its insight into the mysteries of the spiritual life by a sympathetic, patient hearkening to the voices of faith and endeavor that may be heard by the ear attuned to the notes of tragedy and triumph, pathos and glory, sounded by the chosen spirits of humanity as they

have striven all down the ages for justice, freedom, social peace, knowledge, and beauty.

The moral and spiritual history of mankind is the true revelation of the Divine character and purpose. The prophets of righteousness and love, the seers of truth and spiritual beauty are the clearest voices of God in history. Theirs is a noble company. They live in us and we in them when we labor for the true, the just, the beautiful, in the associated lives of men, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The churches are by inheritance and choice the guardians and champions of the moral order in society. To-day they fight against heavy odds. It behooves them to get rid of unnecessary baggage, to make an end of irrelevant controversies, to bury dead issues concerning the source of their authority, etc., to combine their forces and concentrate their energies on the one aim of conserving and enforcing the Christian moral values of civilization. Otherwise, the recrudescence of *paganism* may become the recrudescence of *barbarism*. In the midst of social and moral chaos a few choice spirits may find consolation and strength in philosophy, but for the many a vivid, passionate, and energetic religious conviction is the condition of moral health and vigor. No great civilization has ever outlasted the demise of its religious faith. If the moral bases of our culture are in imminent danger, the danger can be averted only by a new crusade on behalf of social righteousness and personal integrity, animated by a religious view of life, for which the human spirit transcends nature through kinship with absolute Spirit. I need not

remind you that here the Christian and the Jew stand together on the common ground of a prophetic ethical religion, whose controlling principle of faith and action is the vision of a righteous social order, the Kingdom of God.

Whether in the churches or outside of them, our society will not be saved by those who flee for refuge from the confusion, unrest, and emptiness of the time to an aristocratic Deity beyond the stars, or who hug to their bosoms some private cult which promises deliverance from the turmoil and stress of the day. Our society will be saved by men who are fired by faith in the Kingdom of God, and who see, beyond nature and actual society, a Supreme Spiritual Power ever working in and through man's individual and social experiences, and in the very darkest hours of his unrest and perplexity, for the fuller realization of that commonwealth of moral personalities, which is the only enduringly worthwhile aim of human effort, since it is the meaning and purpose of the entire movement of life.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CULTURAL FUNCTION OF RELIGION

In primitive societies there were no distinctions drawn between the provinces of religion, law, morals, education, science, medicine and technology. The social culture of man was all of a piece; or, perhaps, better, it was a confused mixture of all the above-mentioned elements. Maintaining social order, healing the sick, breeding flocks and herds, cultivating the ground, influencing the weather, training the young, explaining the course of events—all these human interests were based on the one fundamental belief in mysterious animistic powers, susceptible to control by the methods of magic and incantation. The fundamental law of the evolution of human culture is the law of differentiation and specialization of function. One after another, the various cultural interests have been specialized and separated from the primitive matrix. First technology, medicine and science, then philosophy, then law, then morals and education, have passed out from under the aegis of religion to the status of separate and highly specialized cultural enterprises. What most clearly differentiates the modern standpoint from the medieval standpoint is this complete independence of specialized functions. Religion seems to have waged a losing battle all along the line. We no longer seek out the priest for scientific or philosophical explanation, for

aid in our agricultural and industrial activities, not even for aid in education. The priest is no longer a lawgiver. Some churchmen, taking alarm at this loss of religious control, work for church schools and colleges as the remedy. But the claim that a denominational, or "church" college is any more religious than a nonsectarian college will hardly bear the light of unbiased investigation. The writer is familiar with both types. And just as there is no Presbyterian or Episcopalian brand of chemistry or physics, so there is no peculiar sanctity appertaining to church colleges. Our church colleges must make their appeal simply on the ground that they are good centers for an education that is universal, unbiased, nonsectarian.

Nor can the attempt to reclaim the sphere of medicine for churchly influence be made good in the modern world. It is true that sound moral attitudes have a bearing on health, especially in the case of functional neuroses. But it is not true that the healing value of sound moral teaching is confined to any special form of religious belief and practice.

Is there any place left for religion in the life of our culture, with its increasing specialization of method and function? Is religion to be crowded out entirely in the further differentiation of man's cultural activities? Has religion a social function to-day? Or has its all-inclusive domain in earlier societies been parceled out entirely among the various specialized forms of culture?

Religion, freed from entanglement with special interests and methods, has a central rôle to play in our cultural life. The very differentiation of interests requires that there be one agency to reconcile, to harmonize, to synthe-

size and focus on human well-being all the various special interests of man. ' It is the great prerogative of religion to humanize and spiritualize all special activities by bringing to men, in the midst of all their special interests, the vision of a community of spiritual interests, a community of ethical purpose, a community of ideal values which must be recognized to run through and give unity of direction to all the various special cultural interests. Without the vital energizing of a humane and spiritual like-mindedness or community of ideals and values our highly differentiated social structure will fall to pieces. If the industrialist, the enterpriser, the technician, the scientist, the educator, the physician cannot find a community of humane purpose, an ideal human value, which will knit up their specialized work and aims in the service of one overmastering humanistic social enterprise, then we shall have social differentiation without integration and therefore without the necessary fundamental like-mindedness. We shall have to see in place of the realization of the community of God's people, that disorganization which will result from our failures, as groups serving special interests, technical, professional, industrial and otherwise—have to see that communities, nations, mankind at large, cannot live at all in these days of specialization without a recognized and loyally accepted community of human purpose. It is the true function of religion to bear witness to, to define and proclaim and to make effective, this fundamental community of purpose.

All institutions, all special cultural interests, now as in Jesus' own day, are made for man's soul, not man for them. Jesus was the supreme humanist of the ages. The Kingdom of God is the embodiment of his central idea

of an all-embracing human community of ideal aims, of humane values.

The true mission of the Church is to conserve and to reinterpret and show the application for every age, amidst the ever changing social and intellectual conditions of human society, of the great spiritual principles enumerated and exemplified by its founder. Jesus taught and incarnated, in his deeds and his supreme act of sacrifice, what is at once the noblest, the most self-consistent, the simplest and the most heroic type of human spiritual life ever revealed to men. In the fragmentary sayings and the sketchy outlines of his life in the Gospels there is contained a definite, comprehensive and integral life-attitude. There is an extraordinary unity and simplicity in this paragon of spiritual life, and an extraordinary vitality, fecundity and adaptability in the principles it bodies forth. Simple though it be, it can be applied to everchanging and complex conditions of human culture. Jesus enunciated no set of laws or casuistical rules of conduct. He enunciated germinal moral principles of valuation and conduct which all issue forth from a central spiritual spring.

To illustrate by two moral and social problems that are much in the public mind to-day and concerning which there is much confusion of counsel—*property* and *sex*. One will search in vain in the teachings or acts of Jesus for an endorsement or condemnation of any economic or legal system. Economically Jesus is neither for *laissez faire*, moderate socialism, or extreme communism. Indeed, he said, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" But can there be the slightest doubt that Jesus explicitly meant by his attitude towards property that

whatsoever property one has the ownership or use of, one should use as if one were only its custodian for the service of one's fellows? Now, this principle has definite application in law and economics to meet our existing industrial conditions. Jesus enunciates the *principle*. It is for Christians associated together to determine and work for its application to the present situation. With regard to sex it is a sad misreading of the spirit of Jesus to give to his words the force even of ecclesiastical legislation. When he said, "Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," he had in mind more than a physical union. He had in mind a marriage of souls, the wedding of two wills, two spirits, into a deep and lasting community of coöperating life. Physical union is the fleshly substructure of marriage, but it does not by itself make a true marriage. Physical union must be the outward sign of an inward and moral union for a real marriage to exist. To the church falls the glorious and gracious duty of bearing witness and applying, in every age, under every condition of culture, the eternally valid spiritual principles, the standards of value, and the motivations of Jesus.

These spiritual principles are at once the simplest, the tenderest and the most elevated that are known to men. Their validity is not dependent at all upon the validity of the traditional cosmological scheme. It makes no difference to the worth, the pertinency, the spiritual authority of Jesus' scale of spiritual values, how long our earth and heavens were in the making, by what steps, whether minute and many or large and few, the natural world we live in came to be; it makes no difference whether man is physically descended, through an apelike

ancestry, from simple organisms; or was created in a moment by the direct hand of God; it makes no difference whether any physical miracle ever has occurred or not; it makes no difference whether Jesus was born of a virgin or not. To the validity of Jesus' spiritual principles such questions are irrelevant. We must have some sort of cosmology or world-view, since we are thinking beings. It is my purpose in the following chapters to consider: (1) what are the central principles of Jesus' life-view; and (2) what world-view we may adopt in the light of modern thought. I believe that we are entitled to adopt a world-view that is quite consistent with the validity of the life-view taught and incarnated by Jesus. But I register here my opinion that, even though modern thought forced us to adopt a world-view which left no place at all for a spiritual interpretation of the universe, the life-view of Jesus would still be the highest, the most truly human ideal of human conduct; the one most worthy to be followed even in the face of the tragic schism between ethical values and the universal order. Therefore, I repeat, the church's great calling now, as always, is to bear witness, in the midst of the perplexities and conflicts of civilization, to the supreme validity of that unique and wholly consistent type of spiritual life of which the basic principles are found in the New Testament. This type of life is not antiquated, nor is it impossible to be lived to-day. But it must not be misrepresented and endangered by being confused with casuistical or legalistic interpretations. It is not a set of rules, not even a moral code. It is a *spirit* reducible to no casuistical system, expressible in the codes of no police state or police church; a spirit of moral and intellectual freedom, integrity, purity of

motive and aspiration; a spirit of selfless devotion and service to all things good and true and beautiful.

It is the function of religion to interpret and bear witness to the humane and spiritual values of the various activities and interests of culture, to bring these to a focus and to view them, each and all, in the light of a unitary and coherent doctrine of man's ethical vocation and spiritual destiny. Thus the church can lift the various interests of culture out of their onesidedness, and save each one from degenerating into a materialized mechanism.

Without faith in the spiritual dignity, worth, responsibility and destiny of the human soul, all activities of civilization must degenerate into panders to a sensuous selfishness; into a self-seeking on the part of the individual, the special group and vocational class. What becomes of industry, capital, nationality, even education, unless each interest is viewed and guided in the light of its humane and moral function as serving to upbuild the human spirit?

So far, then, is it from being the case that, with highly specialized activities, the place of religion becomes vacant; it becomes more urgent that there should be one unifying inspiring agency which will judge and place and guide each special interest with reference to its due position in the whole of the human spiritual order.

In sum, the spiritual mission of the Church of Christ in this day and in the future is to bear witness to the wholeness, the integrity of the spirit of man; to the supremacy, the dignity and worth of the spirit in man as revealed by Jesus; to test every activity and interest of civilization by this central standard. And to be the rally-

ing point and source of that moral dynamic which can come only from faith in a spiritual greatness of which man is capable. In order that it may the better fulfill this mission the church should give up the attempt to make pronouncements on the origin and course of the natural universe. It should discard outworn cosmologies, and anthropologies, and theologies and Christologies that are inextricably enmeshed with outworn cosmologies. It will best serve its Master and humanity by ceasing to dispute concerning creation, evolution, physical miracles, the fall of man, the metaphysical interpretation of the person of Christ; and by dedicating itself in single-mindedness to the great vocation of making the mind of Christ prevail in the family, the community, in industry, in education, in politics and in the international order.

It is the business of science (using this term in the broadest sense) to analyze and determine the structures and modes of operation of the physical order, the vital order and the human historical and social order. Science is always in quest of precise and minute analysis of processes and of formulas which will most adequately describe the interplay of the elemental processes. Accurate and detailed description and generalization, which will make possible the understanding of the processes, and their practical prevision and control, are the tasks of science. The final evaluation of man's life, the interpretation and organization of life's meanings and values and the furnishing of guiding principles, the quickening of the motives to realize the good life, belong to ethics, religion and philosophy.

Religion needs not to trouble its head over questions of temporal origins or the precise character and rate at which

the temporal order moves either in the field of external nature or human history. The supremely important issue for religion is not how the physical world and man have arrived where they are, but how human life, in its individual and social aspects, may acquire the fullest, most harmonious and enduring values, may be filled with the most permanent meaning, may be endued with spirit and power to see and achieve and hold whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.



**PART II**  
**THE RELIGION OF JESUS**



## CHAPTER VI

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE ETHICS OF WORLDLY CULTURE

The Kingdom of God is the setting for all the sayings of Jesus. It is the framework of the entire Gospel. The disciples are to be members of the Kingdom. Only as a member of the Kingdom can one enjoy the true and eternal life. The conditions of life in the Kingdom are simple but severe; easy for the single-minded, hard for the double-minded. A heroic moral attitude is required. He who would be a member of the Kingdom must be ready absolutely to uproot the impulses of vengeful anger, love for money and love for worldly power. He must strictly rule his sensual nature. Utter integrity and purity of motive, truthfulness and self-forgetfulness are demanded. Forgiveness of injuries, the constant practice of fellowship, and service even unto death, if necessary, are required. The most emphatic stress is laid on the spiritual worth of the individual person. The most exalted ideal of moral perfection is held up: "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Human beings have in them the potency to realize divine sonship. Their exalted vocation is to become in very truth sons of God, to develop and live by the very qualities that are most divine. And this perfection, this divinity in man, is to be realized in the life of human brotherhood. Jesus'

ideal order differs from all merely humanitarian ideals of brotherhood, inasmuch as the life of the community of the sons of God has its *absolute* basis, its source and its goal, in the complete service of God's Creative and Holy Will.

The sharpest opposition is set up between the motives, ends and values that rule in the Kingdom of God and those that obtain in the life of this present world. The members of the Kingdom cannot serve both God and Mammon. They must not seek first the goods of this world; they must not work for earthly rewards and expect wages in proportion to the amount of work done or time spent in God's service. Worldly wealth is despised, it is a hindrance: "How hardly shall a rich man enter the kingdom of God." The one test of greatness is the spirit of unstinted service: "Whosoever will be great among you let him be the servant of all." Jesus refused to have anything to do with legal disputes. "Who made me a judge or divider over you?" He asks. He refused to be entangled in any way with Roman administration. He told his followers not to labor for the meat that perisheth. He warned them against being anxious in regard to food and clothing, or unduly concerned in regard to their futures. He appears to have expected that the Kingdom, which He came to inaugurate, would soon be established in all its fullness by the direct act of God, in a miraculous manner; and that the affairs of the present worldly order would be brought to a sudden end. Therefore He takes no account of worldly culture. He does not concern himself directly with industry or economics or politics, with science or art or letters. After His departure His disciples clearly lived for a time in the daily expecta-

tion of the coming of the Kingdom. All worldly concerns belong to the fashion of this world which passeth away. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." What need have those who live in daily expectation of the establishment of an absolutely new order to concern themselves with property, wealth, statecraft, science, art or philosophy? The first Christian communities lived a simple and austere communal life, indifferent to the passing interests of the world around them.

But as time wore on and years passed into decades, and decades passed into centuries, and the Kingdom did not appear in its miraculous completeness, the disciples of the new life had to effect a compromise with the affairs of worldly culture. They had to come to terms with the life of Greco-Roman civilization, with Greek thought, with the life of the city and the empire. They had to recognize and try to bring under the Christian ideal of life: marriage and the family, worldly vocation and trade, education, political life, art and philosophy. They gave to these worldly interests a lower place than the specifically spiritual qualities. Because of man's sinful nature, the life in the worldly order must be carried out. Marriage, industry, vocation, law and the political order were means for regulating this lower order. They are assigned moral values subservient to the "religious" order of life. The medieval Church worked out a comprehensive scheme of moral values. They accepted and refined and elevated the Greek and Roman virtues of civilized life, crowning them with the higher and specifically Christian virtues of faith, hope and love. If the Gospel was somewhat secularized in this process, the ethics of the worldly order were both elevated and deepened in

content, by being brought under the influence of the Christian vision of an absolute and eternal life, in which the soul of man may share.

The problem that confronted the ancient and medieval Church confronts Christianity to-day in an even more acute form. The moral problems of industry and vocation, of the whole economic order, of the political order in community, nation and the international world, are far more complex and compelling than they were in the days of ancient and medieval Christianity. The life of culture and education, the activities of science, art and letters have increased manifold. The civilized world to-day, with its immense complexity of interests and manifold and insistent activities, has its own standards of moral values; these do not constitute a consistent and unified system. There is an acute conflict between the interests and the moral attitudes of different groups. For example, between the interests of organized labor and of organized capital, between the interests of industrial production and of self-development and between the interests of nations. There is much disagreement as to the right relation between the economic interests and the cultural interests. How far, for example, should material goods be made subservient or instrumental to the promotion of liberal education, science, scholarship, art and literature? If we grant that economic goods should be instrumental to the goods of the spirit, where is our ideal, where are our standards for valuing the latter? The answer is the ideal of the harmonious development and enjoyment of all natural human capacities.

It is undoubtedly true that the prevailing ethical values of our contemporary world are *immanent*. The good life

consists, from a modern point of view, in the development and enjoyment by man, as fully and harmoniously as possible, of all the native capacities of his being here on earth. He does not regard the life of industry and culture in this worldly order as a result of the perversion of the spirit through the sin of Adam. The natural capacities are capacities for good, and civilization is the process of development of these capacities. Therefore, the worldly life is good. The modern man does not look for the good life through renunciation, self-sacrifice, poverty, celibacy or the life of an anchorite. His guiding principle is the unfolding and perfection of his immanent human powers. Industry, wealth, education, science, art, letters, are all means to this end. All are good in their proper relations. The most serious obstacle in the way of the acceptance of the Christian ideal lies in its apparent indifference to the values of worldly culture and at times its hostility. The really crucial problem for Christianity to-day is, as it has always been, since it entered into the life of worldly culture, an *ethical problem*. What place is there in the modern world, with its complex, varied and rich activities and interests, for this simple and austere superhuman ideal of Jesus, the Kingdom of God? Must the modern world leave it behind as the dream of uncultivated Judean peasants, irrelevant to our worldly culture? On the answer to this question depends the fate of Christianity and the fate of worldly culture. Has the modern man lost the yearning for the eternal? Has he lost the pilgrim soul? Is he so comfortably ensconced in this present order that the words, "we have no continuing city here," and, "we are strangers and sojourners here," have lost all meaning for him? Can

he be fully satisfied with the temporal and transitory, and relegate the things that are eternal and invisible to the place of vanished dreams that belong to the childhood of the race? Suppose the world throws away the simple, austere, exalted, yet warm and loving vision of Jesus, the vision of an eternal order of spiritual persons, what becomes of human culture? Then it seems to me the economic life becomes simply a fatuous and spiritually empty struggle between contending groups over the flesh-pots of Egypt. Then worldly wealth becomes a means to selfish gratification of the lust for worldly comfort and power, and the process of its acquisition will breed even more acute social disturbances. Then the amusements of man's leisure and economic surplus will be merely means of satisfaction for the human animal. Art and letters, degenerating into refined and overelaborate ministrations to the sensual beast, the reeling faun, will turn to dust and ashes. There will be no spiritual health in these things. Even science, a great instrument for the furtherance of human values, becomes a heartless and soulless thing if humanity cannot guide itself by the vision of eternal values. I see no choice between a materialism, however refined and elaborated, and the recognition of the validity of a superhuman principle working in the human soul. For the nature of man is a paradox. He is a dual being; he is a physiological mechanism endowed with conscience and an undying thirst for communion with perfection. He is a creature of time and yet he seeks the eternal. Is it not true after all that, as Christianity teaches and as indeed Plato taught, the truly human in man is his urge toward the superhuman, and that the crown and completion of a moral humanism is attain-

able only through the faith and firm resolve which anchors the spirit of man in the superhuman world of the Kingdom of God?

If, indeed, this be true, the challenge of the world to Christianity to-day is to redeem it from spiritual sloth and sensuality, from low material aims, from practical materialism and a refined egotism, by lovingly but sternly bringing the interests, activities and values of worldly culture to judgment before the bar of the Kingdom of God. Worldly cultures come and go—none is sacrosanct or absolutely permanent; modern industrialism and commercialism, modern democracy, science and culture are not exempt from the law of change and decay. They all belong to the fashion of this world which ever passeth away. What endures through all change are God and the community of the sons of God. The Kingdom of God, which is the eternal commonwealth of spiritual persons living in fellowship, in coöperation or active love one with another—such is the message of Jesus to this time, as to all times.

The crux of worldly culture and of Christianity to-day does not lie in the answers to such questions as these: Does Christianity stand or fall with the belief in the verbal inerrancy or scientific accuracy of the Scriptures, or with the belief in the miraculous intervention of an extramundane Deity? It does not even lie in the acceptance or rejection of metaphysical dogmas in regard to the relation of the man Jesus to the eternal God. Those who hammer away at such things to-day, whether they be adherents or foes of the Christian Gospel, are fighting battles that have nothing to do with the main issue. If they are adherents of Christianity then they are wasting

their ammunition on stragglers and camp-followers. The main battle is going on elsewhere.

The critical problem for Christianity and civilization is this: Can the natural capacities and impulses of man and all the manifold interests, values and activities which grow out of them and which make our culture what it is, be transfused with the ethical ideals of the Kingdom? Can the desire for earthly goods, for family life, for social life, for knowledge and refinement and aesthetic enjoyment, for power and influence, be transmuted into the lordlier ideal of Jesus? Can the moral values of nature and culture be made, not a substitute for, but the first initiation into, the life of the Spirit? Can the values of an immanent humane culture be so transformed into the values of spiritual love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, soberness, chastity, that the things which are seen and temporal become the express images of the things which are unseen and eternal? No really intelligent person to-day believes that the natural impulses and the humane culture which is their outgrowth are the results of sin and, therefore, are evil. The problem of Christianity is to take up these humane values, to ennoble and to transfigure them with the glow of the Eternal.

NOTE.—It would take much more space than I can give here, to discuss the problems of New Testament criticism. In regard to the Gospels the most critical question is this—what was Jesus' teaching in regard to the apocalyptic expectation of the sudden, speedy and miraculous installation of the Kingdom? and, in this connection, did he regard himself as the Son of Man who was to establish the Kingdom? I must be content to state my opinion briefly on both these points. In several places Jesus is reported as foretelling the imminence of the Kingdom in all its completeness.

See Matthew x: 23, xvi: 28, xxiv: 3-xxv: 33, especially xxiv: 34, xxvi: 29, 64; Mark ix: 1, xiii: 3-37; Luke ix: 27, xxi: 5-36.

The literal truth of such sayings is not incompatible with the other parables of the Kingdom in which it is represented as already present in its beginnings and to increase rapidly; for example, Matthew xiii: 1-9, 24-33; Mark iv: 26-32; Luke viii: 4-15, xiii: 18-21.

It is incompatible with such sayings as Luke xvii: 20, 21.

But, if Jesus foretold the sudden and complete advent of the Kingdom in the near future, as he is reported to have done, then he was mistaken. The Kingdom has never come in this literal fashion and never will while man and nature manifest the modes of behavior that they have in all the records of geology, paleontology, and history.

There are three alternatives on this critical question:

1. Jesus meant the apocalyptic sayings literally. Then he was mistaken. History has proved him deluded. Traditionalists, who take everything literally as verbally true and authenticated directly from God, try to escape the conclusion that Jesus was mistaken by having recourse to some kind of millennialism. The Kingdom has not yet come suddenly and with miraculous portents, but it will come some time. But if Jesus spoke all the words attributed to him and they are all literally true, messages from God then he must have said to his own immediate disciples "There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power," Mark ix: 1; see also Mark xiii: 30, 31; Matthew x: 23, xvi: 28, xxiv: 34, xxvi: 29; Luke ix: 27 and xxi: 32. I omit reference to the Gospel of John since it is probably much later than the first three and has a different purpose.

Thus the traditionalists' assumption is refuted out of their own mouths. The supreme difficulty in attributing the apocalyptic sayings to Jesus is that they are not in harmony with his other utterances in regard to the spiritual, present, inward, and growing nature of the Kingdom.

2. Jesus used these phrases as an accommodation to the minds of his hearers which were charged with apocalyptic Messianic expectations, but meant them figuratively. This attitude is not in harmony with the straightforward way in which, even in the parables, Jesus is reported as expressing himself. Would he deliberately have lent himself to such complete misunderstanding-

ing? Such an assumption seems to me out of harmony with the utter simplicity and integrity of his nature.

3. Jesus never prophesied the apocalyptic advent. The words put into his mouth are due either to a complete misunderstanding of what he did say; or they have got into the Gospels because the oral tradition was handed down by Hebrew disciples who reverted, after Jesus' death, to their old apocalyptic beliefs. John the Baptist had doubtless strengthened these beliefs. This reversion was motivated by the belief so strongly evident in Matthew's Gospel that Jesus was the Messiah and would return soon. This view of their origin comports best with the general teaching of Jesus in regard to the Kingdom as a life of free fellowship grounded on an inward and spiritual personal attitude and growing gradually.

The other difficult question is this—Did Jesus regard himself as the Messiah? Was the Son of Man a Messianic title? Many volumes have been written on this subject. A strong case for the negative is made out by Nathaniel Schmidt in *The Prophet of Nazareth*.

It seems to me that the best explanation of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus is that he was regarded as a false pretender to the Messiahship, by zealous Jews who were incensed at the completely spiritual and nonpolitical turn that he gave to the Messianic expectation. Jesus probably did not intend, at first, to claim Messiahship. Perhaps he never regarded himself as the Messiah. By the "Son of Man" he may have meant simply himself as a type of the new and universal humanity. He rebuked Peter and he charged his disciples not to say that he was the Messiah. One thing is clear: if he regarded himself as the Messiah, when an open admission was forced on him because of his power with the people, he repudiated its worldly and political features.

The Synoptic Gospels (the first three) are undoubtedly, in what they report of Jesus, more nearly literal verbatim accounts of the sayings and doings of Jesus than the fourth Gospel. On the other hand the fourth Gospel probably contains some true records which escaped the other three. As an interpretation of the essential spirit of Jesus and of the spiritual significance of his gospel and work, the Way, the Truth and the Life, John's Gospel and the Epistles are supreme among the New Testament writings.

Dean Inge says that the fourth Gospel gives an Incarnation theology, whereas the first three give an apotheosis theology. These two concepts are not mutually exclusive. Apotheosis and Incarnation are two aspects of the same spiritual principle. But, clearly, if the significance of Jesus lies in his embodying, as well as teaching what God, or the Cosmic Spirit is like, namely, complete self-imparting Love, then the higher truth is in the Incarnation theology. Unless there was, and continues to be, Spiritual Incarnation, that is, unless the Supreme Spirit really has manifested Himself and continues to manifest Himself in human nature, apotheosis is naught but the projection of human wishes and longings on an inexorable and heartless universe. Those who accept the faith of Jesus, and feel the regenerating and comforting power of the Christ Spirit, find in the Johannine writings the most adequate interpretation of the meaning of Jesus's life, sacrifice and continued life.

## CHAPTER VII

### ETHICAL HUMANISM AND THE ETHICS OF JESUS

The ethical standpoint of modern humanism, with respect to the individual life, involves the modification of that ascetic dualism of body and soul, which is so outstanding a characteristic of much of the thought of the dying culture of the ancient world. It is sufficient here to refer to Gnosticism, Manicheanism and the decadent forms of Neo-Platonism, to remind the reader of that soul-sickness and loss of nerve which so infected the Graeco-Roman culture in its expiring days; and which made great inroads on early Christian ethics. Jesus was no ascetic dualist. Nevertheless, soon even St. Paul was infected by it. The Ebionitic sect went over wholly to it. It left a deep impress on monasticism. St. Augustine was much influenced by it. Through its influence the sharp contrast between the new social order of the "Kingdom" and the "world," that is, the existing social order, as it appears in the teachings of Jesus, was transformed into the irreconcilable opposition between flesh and spirit, body and soul. Christian thought has not yet wholly freed itself from this ethical-metaphysical dualism.

The prevailing modern view of the relation of body and soul is that, although distinct and having differing values in the total life of the self, they are not warring powers. The life of the soul or spirit arises and functions only

on the basis of the bodily structure. The soul, as Aristotle put it in a truly modern fashion, is the *entelechy* or meaning and value; or, one may say, the conscious purport of the body. Body and soul are related as structure and function, organ and directive meaning or purpose, house and householder. The body is the dwelling place and instrument of the spirit. The sensory or receptor organs and the motor or effector organs are the means through which the mind builds itself up, enlarges, enriches and organizes itself, by submission to and action on its physical and social environments. The mind becomes nothing meaningful except in so far as it transcends itself, denies itself, by going beyond its own physical or natural beginnings and living in self-forgetting intercourse with its world. The mind, working through the brain, receives impressions; it discriminates, selects, remembers and organizes these impressions. By its own analytic and synthetic or creative energies the mind utilizes the materials derived from without; and thus makes itself at home in the world, enjoys breadth, depth and harmony of life, by experiencing pain and joy, love and fellowship, beauty and devotion. But this "spiritual" life is possible only in so far as the individual mind "dies" to its natural ego by throwing itself into and forgetting itself in the active wrestle with physical nature and, still more, by living in active service of social and spiritual ends. The soul is saved, not by withdrawal from nature and human society, but by the fullest and most self-forgetting activity and service in this twofold environment. "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it." All genuine mental and spiritual growth illustrates the truth of this principle.

Man is a wondrously complex individual, a spiritual organism, compacted of bodily energies, passional energies and mental or spiritual energies. No sharp line of demarcation can be drawn between the typical energies of his being. The health and sanity of the spirit, and the health of the living body cannot be dis severed. The spirit life is richer, more inclusive, more creative and, therefore, more significant and enduring, than the body life. A vigorous spirit may dwell in a weak body. Nevertheless, the function of the body is to minister to the harmonious life of the spirit. Therefore, the care of the body is essential to both bodily health and spiritual power. If exaggerated emphasis on the sensuous functions is ruinous to the spirit, it is no less harmful to bodily health. If a one-sided development of certain mental functions, such as imagination out of touch with reality and dwelling in a cloudland of fancies and distorted desires, is injurious to the body, it is even more harmful to sanity of spirit.

The life of the spirit, if it is to be well rounded, full and harmonious, must include the activity of all the main functions of our mental being. Accurate observation, thorough thinking and the satisfaction of the powers of aesthetic creation and enjoyment are just as necessary to spiritual well-being as the cultivation of moral feeling and volition and religious devotion. In fact, all the main activities of the spirit naturally tend to blend into one full-orbed whole, which is the spirit's consummation, reached in aesthetic experience, religion and philosophy. Religion is not truly a specialized department of spiritual life. It is the full, total and harmonious union and fulfillment of the human functions at their highest power, recognized as the self-revelation and self-realization of

God, the Cosmic Spirit, through the human person in the human community or fellowship.

The good life, then, always implies completeness, integrity or wholeness, achieved through the continual self-transcendence by the individual of his already attained life. He must be always "forgetting those things which are behind" and "pressing forward towards the mark for the prize of his high calling"; always forgetting who and what he is; always dying to live more fully. The good life does not consist in the suppression of impulses for suppression's sake. Not all impulses are on the same level of values. There must be subordination and sublimation, repression and even suppression, in the interest of harmonious wholeness as a member of the spiritual body of humanity and the universe. The manners and degrees, the times and places, in which the "physical" or biological needs of the organism are to be satisfied, must take account of the higher claims of the intellectual and aesthetic life and be subject to the social or moral conditions under which alone these needs can be most harmoniously satisfied by all members of society. For example, the sex-impulse must not be exaggerated or given a preëminent place. It is to be sublimated or refined and harmonized with the other main interests of human nature. Love should sublimate, through sympathy, loyalty and the spirit of comradeship and service. It thus becomes an avenue of approach to beauty and harmony of spirit.

The good life is nothing apart from the concrete dynamic impulses of human personality. The good life is the progressing integration of human nature in the ways which I have indicated. It is the harmonious articulation of the individual's impulses with one another and

with the physical and social conditions of human existence. The evil life is the life of a divided self—one rent asunder by conflicting and unreconciled passions and interests. The good life for the individual is the life of a self that is forever being unified.

In order to realize the good, human beings must become partners in all that makes for individual integrity and social harmony. Balance, measure, proportion, were the ideals of the great Greek thinkers and they should be ours. We must make ourselves at home with nature as well as with our fellows. We must learn to seek and enjoy beauty everywhere. We must learn to enjoy knowledge and rejoice in its increase.

We must participate in all the cultural interests of human nature. All the arts—music, poetry, painting, sculpture and architecture—are moral interests. All science and its applications to human well-being are means of spiritual development. For the good life is the integral and harmonious self-realization of all human powers. The spirit is the supreme power of integration or articulation of human powers.

I think that, in principle, this was Jesus' conception. He was no ascetic kill-joy. He went to merrymakings. He sat down to meat with publicans and sinners. His enemies called him a gluttonous man and a winebibber. When asked why his disciples did not fast, he replied—"The children of the bridechamber do not fast while the bridegroom is with them." He taught the futility of mere repression for repression's sake. When the soul is empty, although swept and garnished, seven other devils worse than the first enter and dwell there. He emphasized again and again the supreme importance of the mental life, the

realm of thought and imagination. He warned against the danger of submerged but not expunged impulses. He anticipated the principle of psychoanalysis. He warned his hearers again and again in regard to the divided self—"a house divided against itself cannot stand." "No man can serve two masters." "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light."

There is an austere strain in the teaching of Jesus. "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." "If thine hand offend thee, cut it off. . . . For it is better for thee to enter into life maimed." But the end of this severity is to enter into Life. The ideal of conduct is set very high in the Sermon on the Mount—impossibly high, some would say. But there must be a strain of austerity and self-denial in any genuine moral ideal. In order that wholeness and harmony of spiritual life may be progressively attained, it is necessary that some of our natural impulses be subordinated and repressed or even on occasion denied and suppressed. Any moral ideal which overlooks "the war in our members" and the urgent need of self-denial and self-forgetting preaches confusion and disharmony in place of order and harmony. Even Goethe, commonly regarded as a modern pagan, said: "Thou must renounce." The life of man as a spiritual being, which is the only human life, is a struggle, a perpetual self-transcendence. "*Vivere est militare.*" The man who would be good, in the sense of being whole and sane, must curb and renounce many desires and impulses.

But Jesus is no ascetic for asceticism's sake. Repression and renunciation, as taught by him, are steps towards the more abundant life—are for a more inclusive and harmonious good. All self-control and self-denial have,

as their purpose and fruition, individual integrity and social harmony.

In short, for Jesus, as for the best modern thought, spiritual articulation, integrity, wholeness, is the ultimate nature of the good.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the fine article by Professor J. W. Scott. "*Psychology and Idealistic Philosophy*," *Philosophical Review*, XXXII, I, pp. 18-36.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOCIAL ETHICS AND THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

We are living between two social orders—the one passing away, the other in gestation. The greatest and most far and deep reaching, in consequences, of all the social revolutions in the history of mankind has been the industrial revolution. This revolution has coincided with the change from a social order ruled by custom, hereditary privilege and traditional class institutions to an epoch of economic, political and moral individualism. The rapid development, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of large-scale industrialism was made possible by the removal of the fetters of custom and legal restraint from industry. Free competition, freedom of contract and the unlimited right of private association for industrial ends made for the enormous development of the large-scale industry, which was rendered possible by the mechanical inventions which followed thick and fast upon the application of steam to industry and transportation.

But large-scale industrialism has given control over the economic well-being, and therefore over the very lives, of millions of their fellow beings to small, privately associated groups of industrial and financial magnates. This control, by the few, of the means of existence for the many is the most powerful and far-reaching form of economic feudalism that our western civilization has yet wit-

nessed. It is being checked only by the association of labor groups for the purpose of waging economic warfare with their capitalistic masters. It will do no good to mince matters. No other force than the organized power of labor has or can now check the greed of stockholders, financial manipulators and captains of industry.

After the temporary diversion of the World War, which arose as a by-product of this economic struggle, the contending forces are arming anew for the battle. No disinterested and thoughtful student of the present social disorder can believe that the existing methods of trench warfare, alternating with drives into enemy territory, can continue indefinitely. Either our present economic system will disintegrate and be followed by a dictatorship of force or a humaner and juster order must be established. Ahead of us there loom the alternatives—either violent revolution or ethical evolution towards the democratization and humanization of production and distribution. There is now no middle ground. Either political democracy will find a way to industrial democracy or the resistive powers of the economic reactionaries will prove strong enough to dam the current until chaos is let loose. Peace cannot ensue from the continuance of armed conflict between economic groups.

Both the capital-groups and the labor-groups are animated too much by the motive of acquisitiveness. The chief hope for industrial peace lies in the substitution for this motive of the motive of coöperative service in the discharge of their social functions of production and distribution. Capital and labor should function as instruments for the sustenance and improvement of the social fabric.

Peace may come by way of a much larger application

of the principle of voluntary copartnership; or by way of a much increased public ownership and operation; or by way of increased state regulation of privately owned industry; or, what is more likely, by a combination of all these methods. One thing seems certain—economic individualism is in its death throes. Such maxims as “This is my private business and I will run it as I please” will not stand when applied to the great scale industries which produce goods of common need. Economic wealth to-day is the product of the joint labor of so many hands and brains that it is no longer possible to determine precisely what are the fruits of the labor of each individual apart from his fellows. Economically, as well as in other ways, we members of the modern industrial society are all members one of another to a greater extent than has ever been the case in any previous form of civilization.

The fundamental trouble, ethically speaking, with our present economic system is this: whereas it requires the joint efforts and skills of many hands and brains to produce goods, the business is usually conducted and the earnings distributed on the principle of private and individualistic control. The economic values of the materials and products are due chiefly to social coöperation; they are social values, but the distribution of the profits is determined chiefly by those who privately control the capital stock. We have collectivism in production, rampant individualism in distribution. Until we have a much more equitable social control of distribution our social unrest will grow apace.

I am here concerned only with fundamental ethical principles. I recognize that their application involves many puzzling problems that can be solved only by patient

investigation and experimentation. But we must have guiding ethical principles if we expect to go forward intelligently towards a better social order.

It used to be thought that ethics was concerned primarily with the individual. His business was to get wisdom, happiness, goodness or salvation, by and for himself. Conscience was conceived to be the guide by which the individual might steer a safe course in his own boat. No man was his brother's keeper. Even the Christian Gospel was regarded as a vessel which the individual might get aboard and save himself from eternal perdition. We have learned, in these days, from the history of morals, that the ethical concepts expressed in popular judgments and enshrined in laws and political systems reflect the whole economic and social order in which they arose. The individualistic ethics embodied in our legal practice and in the interpretations of our Constitution and laws are echoes of the individualistic type of society, in which our nation had its birth and earlier developments. The so-called "natural rights" of private property and free contract, of unrestricted competition, the right of a freeman to labor where he will (which generally means the right of a nonunion man to work in an "open" shop that is closed to union men)—all these things, and the universal principles of "reason" or "nature" by which lawyers and judges deduce conclusions that bolster up economic individualism, are survivals from the age of *laissez faire*, of unregulated competition and combination.

If a society is to prosper and endure it must be controlled by ethical principles that are adequate to make that type of society a human order; not by traditional ethical maxims that are no longer effective ministrants to

the human life. The manifoldness and complexity of the strands of human interdependence which, under our present industrial and economic life, tie human individuals together into a vast, pulsating superorganism, into a community of action, feeling and destiny so intimate and all-pervasive that St. Paul's great words in regard to the body which is one living whole of many coöperating members are literal truth, require that we have a new social ethics to guide and control the activities of this social superorganism.

¶ What principles of social ethics are implied in the transformation of our collectivistic economic life into a more humane and genuinely democratic social order? (1) Since every working member contributes, in a measure that cannot be accurately determined, to the welfare of the whole of society, every individual thus contributing is entitled, by virtue of his sheer humanity, to the conditions of a decent livelihood. This means a decent living wage for moderate hours of labor. It implies, for a mature man, an income sufficient to enable him to nurture a family under decent living conditions and to give his children a fair opportunity for an education. (2) Since the welfare of society as a whole depends on each member doing his bit, it is the duty of every competent individual to contribute as much as he can to the social wealth. It is the right of organized society to insist upon his fulfillment of this duty. (3) More scope must be given, in the conduct of the common life, for the exercise of human individuality, for the expression of the constructive and other human impulses. This was one of the greatest values of the older American life, which is now fast passing away. No society can prosper and be permanent in

which there is not wide opportunity for the expression of diverse human powers. The true meaning of individual liberty is opportunity for the realization and enjoyment of one's native human capacities. These exist in diverse degrees and combinations, and are the raw materials of our personalities. (4) There should be a much greater approach to economic equality, but not complete equality. Diverse individuals, with diverse powers and occupations, require differing periods of preparation, differing hours and conditions of work, differing ways of spending their leisure time. A scientist, an artist, a teacher and a hand-worker require very different periods and kinds of training, conditions of labor and of recreation. Beyond what is required for the training and exercise of one's special capacities for the fitting discharge of one's functions, there is no ethical justification for inequality of reward. Nothing more grotesquely illustrates the disease of acquisitiveness which so infects our industrial society to-day than the disparities between the rewards of an artist, poet or scientist, on the one hand, and the rewards of an industrial or financial magnate, on the other hand. No wonder that, analogous to the antediluvian age in the earth's history, we produce commercial and mechanical monsters and spiritual pygmies. (5) The surplus of wealth, over and above what is necessary to meet the above conditions, should be devoted to the common good—to enhancing the educational and cultural or spiritual opportunities open to all.

Freedom to starve one's creative impulses, freedom to choose either dire poverty or a maimed and stunted life, is a sham freedom. Freedom to assert oneself only by a fierce egotism and a ruthless cunning in the economic

struggle is freedom to prey upon, to despoil, and to work havoc upon the delicate and complex fabric of the social organism. True social freedom is freedom to contribute one's bit to the social weal, the humane wealth, by work that expresses one's own best impulses. Genuine and lasting happiness can come only from doing something socially worth while, because one is able to make his best contribution to social well-being by doing just that thing. The exploiter of his fellows and the social parasite are not truly happy.

Such I conceive to be the social philosophy of Jesus. His gospel is a social ethics reposing upon a religious faith. It is a social philosophy grounded in the character of the Supreme Reality. The entire framework and substance of His ethics is social. It all centers in, and issues forth from, the concept of the Kingdom of God. Whatever be one's solution of the riddle in regard to the relation between the immanent and the catastrophic or transcendent aspects of the concept of the Kingdom, this much is certain—for Jesus, the Kingdom is identical with a new and more humane social order, in which human personality shall be lived in free, loving and happy fellowship with man and God.

He repudiated all temptations and inducements to entangle the Kingdom with the affairs of Judean priestcraft or Roman statecraft. His religion is a laymen's religion. His ethics is not the ethics of lawyers, politicians and financiers. He rejected all seductions to make terms and strike treaties with the existing orders. This is not, as sometimes asserted, because Jesus was indifferent to man's economic or cultural welfare. It was not that He despised civilization or culture. It was because

His Kingdom had nothing in common with the statecraft or priestcraft of His day. The priestcraft was spiritually and humanely empty of life. The statecraft was rotten. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" is not an endorsement of Cæsar, but a refusal to be entangled with Cæsarism. "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" is not an endorsement of the Hebrew law of inheritance. The heart of the social gospel is pithily expressed in the words, "Among the Gentiles they who exercise lordship over them are accounted great; but it shall not be so among you; whosoever would be great among you let him be servant of all. For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister." The greatest in the Kingdom are they who serve most faithfully—they who visit the sick and the needy, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, comfort them that mourn. Lip service is worthless. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" shall enter in. The Kingdom is ruled by the motives of fellowship, coöperation and ministration. The services rendered are to be determined by the needs found. The individuality of every sincere soul is held in honor. The humble and loving publican and the repentant harlot are welcome. The respectable and socially prominent Scribes and Pharisees automatically exclude themselves by their self-satisfied pride and hardness of heart.

All rites, institutions and laws, even the ceremonial and the moral law, are treated as instruments or means for furthering human welfare and happiness, not as ends in themselves to which humanity must be fitted at any cost. Nothing is sacred but the human person, the spirit

or soul in man. In the Kingdom there is no place for hatred, anger, envy, fear or selfish aggrandizement.

God is the Loving Father of all souls. He rules by affection in the affections of His children. The children of the Kingdom are to grow continually towards perfection, by their life of free fellowship and service. Thus they become perfect in the likeness of their Heavenly Father. For he that hath seen mercy and justice, he that hath experienced comradeship and fellowship, he that hath looked into the face of a fellow man with love and justice, hath seen the Father.

This is the most revolutionary social doctrine that has ever been presented to men. It has been realized time and again among voluntary groups—among those who have been touched and purified by love of their fellows and enkindled by the vision of the Kingdom. Wherever there is genuine comradeship and fellowship, service and fealty, there is the Kingdom. It can take root and grow in the most untoward places.

But it has never yet been made, the ideal of a politically or industrially organized society as a whole. There are not, and there never have been, Christian nations, or Christian systems of industry and commerce. The nearest approach to a Christian system was in the Catholic world of the Middle Ages. Our present Christendom is about as far away from Christ's ideal as was the ancient Roman Empire, amidst the ruins of which the Church grew up. And yet the Kingdom of Christ presents the only hope for our present distraught and confused world. The mechanical and pagan paradises of H. G. Wells and others, who place their hopes on mere intellect and ingenuity of organization, will not make over humankind.

Unless civilization is to become a smoking ruin it must be made over in the image of the Kingdom. All other schemes of human association have failed miserably—monarchies, aristocracies and caste systems. Competitive and capitalistic plutocracy, the system we have been living under, is already in the throes of dissolution. An acquisitive industrialism, geared up to produce simply more cheap and ugly things for profit and sensuous gratification, indifferent to man's creative impulses and the craving for comradeship, beauty and joy in life, is on the rocks.

The only faith worth cleaving to is faith in the values of the Kingdom. Unless men can have a reasonable chance to realize a better social order, one to which they can with joy dedicate their constructive energies, then mankind is without courage and without hope, since without any worthy and inspiring objectives.

All our traditional political and economic devices are on trial to-day. And no new political or economic devices will work better unless they can give good promise of affirmative answers to the following questions: Do they give play to the native human impulses for creative work, for the expression of individuality, for comradeship, for beauty and self-expression?

The incessant drive towards mere quantity production for profit, the continued hypertrophy of the acquisitive impulse and the atrophy of other human impulses will only breed more discontent and disorder. Social peace will come only when the workers can feel in their hearts and see with their mental eyes that their work is worth while in enriching the lives of their fellows as well as their own. We must be able to feel and see that our work is con-

tributing to the deeper and more lasting values of human life—to the life of the soul—to joy and wealth and freedom and harmony of spirit. Turn man into a machine and a server of machines and he is damned and society is damned with him.

The one worthy object of faith and service to which a reasonable human being can dedicate himself to-day is the Kingdom of God, the "Beloved Community" as Royce so happily put it, realizing itself here and now in the common lives of men and women. Duty, the voice of God, "by which the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong," is the love for the ideal of the beloved community, perfecting itself without ceasing, in the fellowship of human persons. "The life is more than meat and the body than raiment." To-day men are asking, sternly and insistently, of a sick civilization, of a mechanized and acquisitive society, What shall a man give in exchange for his soul, for his individuality? The only satisfying answer is, A fuller and richer communal life, in which the human soul can expand and find fulfillment and joy in a harmonious human fellowship of service and achievement. A life in which duty and love, self-sacrifice and self-fulfillment are made one in the sharing of our achievements and joys, in coöperation in the common work for the fuller possession of beauty and truth, of intelligent freedom and spiritual communion with man and nature, and through man and nature with God. Here is Immanuel—God with us. Here, in the communal life realizing in comradeship the humane values of living is the Kingdom of God. Jesus' vision of the Kingdom is at one with the ideal community of the new social ethics.

NOTE.—The social philosophy of Jesus differs radically from

all forms of state socialism, from Plato down to the guild socialists. His premises are different, and therefore the social applications of his teachings are different. The Kingdom is a free or voluntary fellowship of individuals who labor for service, rather than for personal profits. They are motivated by the joy of self-expression in service. They care nothing for economic wealth or power in themselves, since they regard these goods only as instruments for furthering the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of persons. In a broad sense, Jesus may be regarded as teaching a voluntary socialism or communism, since his disciples would labor to support themselves in the simplest manner; to express their own moral individualities and to serve their fellows through free and glad coöperation and ministrations.

The motives and principles of most forms of socialism stand in sharp contrast to the teachings of Jesus. The class struggle, the dictatorship of the organized proletariat, the reduction of all social motives to materialistic ends, the use of force to compel men to serve their fellows—to all such notions, Jesus' ethics is not only foreign but hostile.

It has often been said that Jesus was an individualist. It has also often been said that he was a socialist. In one sense he was neither, and in another sense he was both. He was neither a political, nor economic individualist nor socialist. He had no direct concern with the changing fashions of economic and political practices in "this world." He sedulously avoided laying down *rules* or *laws*, for the conduct of business or statecraft. *He was a liberator of the spirit.* He enunciated basal principles, he opened up wider visions of human possibilities, he aroused into full play higher motives.

Ethically and spiritually Jesus is both an individualist and a socialist. He is an individualist in that he appeals to the spirit—to the heart, the conscience and the will; and only *individuals* feel, think and will. He stresses the supreme value of the individual soul; and only individuals have souls, and are centers of value. Nothing counts for anything at all in comparison with the right inward attitude of harmony, integrity, purity of motive and good will. He is a socialist or communist, inasmuch as, for Him, the right attitude on the part of the individual is impossible unless the individual finds joy in forgiveness, service, coöperation, fellowship. Moreover, Jesus teaches clearly that there can be no spiritually healthy and full life for an individual

unless his feelings and thoughts are suffused, and his will controlled by right social motives. For Jesus individual personality and social fellowship and coöperation are the two poles of the same life. The abundant life is personal because social and social because personal.

Jesus never taught that all who labor should have an equal economic reward. He laid down no rules on this matter. But clearly he saw that the millennium would not come simply by trying to force men, through the police power of the state, to be conscientious and to do their work in the spirit of coöperation and service. He saw that the thing of first importance is the right inward attitude—the right temper of mind. It has been said, truly, that in order that a system of organized economic and political socialism might work well it would be necessary that the members of the state should be animated by Christian motives, and that if they were so animated, no system of compulsory political regimentation would be necessary. This is quite true.

Every attempt at a comprehensively organized and compelling system of state socialism will suffer shipwreck on the rocks of human greed, laziness, stupidity, mental inertia, and moral selfishness and shortsightedness. Even without the compelling influence of greed, which might be mitigated by reducing the chances for any big prizes under a socialistic régime, human stupidity, mental inertia and laziness would in themselves suffice to wreck a socialistic state. On the whole, the state's business is badly conducted because the citizens have not yet sufficient interest and intelligence to see to it that it is better conducted. The successful extension of state activity is predicated upon a much more socially-minded and alert moral intelligence and dynamic than we now have.

Jesus does not ignore the necessity of economic sustenance. But he emphasizes the supreme import of the right attitude of mind. "Ye must be born again." We must get a right conviction as to the values and motives of living in order to do our bit. The social ethics of Jesus stands or falls by the validity of the principle that more social justice, peace and human welfare are attainable only through the voluntary coöperation of intelligently free and responsible human individuals, and that this voluntary coöperation can be insured only by that change of mind (*metanoia*) which is called the new birth, and which means the

reorientation of the soul's values and motives by the principles of the Kingdom.

The only sure means for the accomplishment of this end is by a more socialized *education*—ethical and spiritual. By making mere clever manipulators and technicians we may only be letting more dangerous devils loose in the world. We have divorced intellectual education and moral or social education, not because we have not taught formal religion but because we have not infused our education sufficiently with the social spirit and viewpoint. We have failed to put into vigorous effect, as a reasoned conviction and motivating force, the great principle that there is no real and lasting value except personality, and that personality is realized and lived out only in fellowship.

A Christian social democracy would be one whose members were animated and guided by Christ's principles of fair play, coöperation, service and fellowship. The members of such a democracy would be much more zealous in the discharge of their duties than in exercising their rights. They would aim to do their work as well as possible, whatever it was. For they would know that, however humble the work, it was *their* social service—at once the expression of their own personality and their necessary and valuable contribution to the upkeep of the community of personalities.

## CHAPTER IX

### NIETZSCHE AND JESUS

Friedrich Nietzsche is one of the most significant literary and social phenomena of recent times. During the great war the purport of his work was travestied and misinterpreted by American newspaper and pulpit oracles in a manner that revealed the shallowness and ignorance of our popular "culture." Nietzsche was neither a panegyrist of Prussian *Kultur* nor an apostle of German *Schrecklichkeit*.<sup>1</sup> In fact, he called himself a good European and was one of the severest critics of the social tendencies of pre-war Germany. The gross misunderstanding of his teachings was no doubt due to the hasty and prosaic literalism with which our oracles read the writings (though I doubt if they read much in him) of one who was essentially a great prose poet. Nietzsche was master of a wonderfully vivid, colorful and scintillating style. His leading thoughts were put forth in striking aphorisms. He was not a systematic or logically coherent thinker. He has had very little influence on technically trained philosophers, but a very wide influence on young persons of literary and artistic temperaments. He is one of the very greatest of German writers.

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<sup>1</sup> I know only one good exposition of Nietzsche's philosophy in English. It is by W. M. Salter. The best criticism, from a Christian standpoint, is that by the late Dr. J. N. Figgis: *The Will to Power*.

Nietzsche is significant in two respects: (1) As a mordant and merciless critic of the spiritual and æsthetic defects of modern industrialism and democracy. (2) As the protagonist of an æsthetic individualism, a social aristocracy based on distinctions of mind and character. Incidental to the promulgation of his individualistic gospel is Nietzsche's polemic against Christianity.

Nietzsche directs all the powerful shafts of his irony, raillery and invective against one capital defect of contemporary European social life, as he observed it in Germany and learned of its existence and growth in other industrialized nations. This defect lies in the vulgarizing, mediocritizing and materializing tendencies of our industrialized machine civilization given over to quantity production. He thinks that Germany and England, the most highly industrialized nations of his day, offer the most awful examples of the spiritual degeneration which results from exalting numbers above quality and trying to make, by machinery and the cult of equality, a standardized culture. Education, art, letters, every aspect of culture, is succumbing to the cult of mediocrity. Fineness in taste, distinction in manners and character, individuality and variety are everywhere succumbing to the appetites and standards of the masses. He holds that, if civilization keeps on on its present road, soon every note of striving for beauty, distinction and spiritual power will be drowned out in the clamor of the vulgar multitude for bread and the circus. Only those goods which are valued and consumed by all—material goods—will have any recognition.

Nietzsche hates political democracy, socialism and communism with a deadly hatred. These movements accel-

erate the impetus of our industrial civilization towards spiritual ruin. The greatest injustice, he says, is equality—the claim of all alike to social, economic and mental equality. This claim flies in the face of nature and history. The masses are, as they have always been, a herd of domesticated animals (*Herdenmenschen*). Mass morality is the morality of a herd of slaves who inculcate unlimited self-denial, renunciation, self-sacrifice and pity on the few strong individuals in order to keep them from ruling and imposing on the herd high and strenuous standards of action. This mass morality is the result of a gigantic, if unconscious, conspiracy on the part of the mass which is weak, lazy and inert, to retard the development of a race of heroes. Fear, envy and mental inertia are the motives which have given rise to this mass morality. Thus the strong are sacrificed for the weak, the healthy in mind and body for the diseased, the heroic and strenuous for the lazy and cowardly, the distinguished and noble for the idiotic and vulgar. This morality of the mass enables the mass to multiply in their weakness, inertia and stupidity and, by crowding out the strong, vigorous and valiant, to produce a steady racial degeneration.

In nature the reverse was true, otherwise man would never have come into being. In nature the struggle for existence enables the strong to survive and increase, whereas the weak go to the wall. In human society the natural and beneficent process of evolution has been turned upside down. Originally, "Good" meant noble, powerful, able to rule; "Virtue" meant strength and vigor of individuality. The ruling races, before the advent of Christianity in the West and Buddhism in India, were the

## 100 RELIGION AND THE MIND OF TO-DAY

aristocratic races (the Aryans or nobles, the Aryans of India and Persia, the Greeks, the Norsemen, the Celts). Nietzsche believes in the inherent superiority of the Nordic race. By their energy, daring and power they ruled the small dark-haired races (such as the Semites and the primitive Mediterranean stock). Moved by fear and envy, the latter invented a new morality which exalts self-sacrifice, renunciation and pity to the supreme place. The Jews, who were always being defeated and buffeted about by stronger races, cunningly devised this repressive moral system and thus have won a victory at the cost of racial degeneration. The European world has been perverted and its native vigor undermined by the influence of four Jews—Jesus, Peter the fisherman, Paul the Pharisee and Mary. Christianity is the greatest enemy of human progress, the most baneful instrument of degeneration, that has ever been fashioned. It must be destroyed.

Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Superman*, the leader and ruler and savior of society, may easily be misunderstood. Nietzsche holds that the essence of life is "the will to power." He frequently enjoins his heroes to be strong and be hard. But they are to be hardest on themselves. The Nietzschean superman is as far as possible from being a big, self-indulgent, sensuous brute. It is a race of spiritual heroes that Nietzsche wishes to see mankind produce. These can arise only through the affirmation of life. His bitter opposition to the doctrine of self-denial and self-sacrifice arises from his notion that in Christianity these virtues are enjoined for their own sakes. The good life, for Nietzsche, is a life of affirmation, of "yea-sayings" in place of "nay-sayings." Everything is good which promotes life, and life is identical with power. Renunciation

and asceticism are bad because they maim the life instincts. The instincts which promote life are the instincts of self-assertion, mastery, leadership. The supreme authority is the authority of the genius or hero. (This is very like Carlyle's great man idea.) There is nothing good or true in itself. That is good or true which ministers to life and power.

The superman will be severe with himself. He will practice a strenuous self-discipline and self-control, to the end that he may attain self-mastery. He will be hard on the weaker members of the race—only that he may improve the race. Nietzsche does not deny a place to pity and sympathy. It is only when these attitudes are indiscriminately practiced, so that the result is the perpetuation of the incurably vicious and defective, the imbecile, the diseased and botched travesties of mankind, that Nietzsche pours out upon pity and sympathy the vials of his wrath. The superman will practice *noblesse oblige*. He will rule the masses sternly, but only for their own good. That which is most pitiful in mankind is that it should not be led and ruled by the noblest spirits—that fineness, mental vigor, courage, distinction should be submerged and lost instead of being in the vanguard and setting the pace for humanity. Nietzsche is the prophet of a high, difficult and strenuous ideal of human perfection. He is an optimist and believes that mankind may progress towards a richer and more abundant life, one of greater beauty, power, and distinction of individuality, if it will seek to bring forth and obey a race of spiritual heroes or demi-gods.

Nietzsche's criticisms of our present industrialized civilization are pertinent and valid against American

civilization even more than against pre-war Germany. They should be pondered by all who have at heart the production of a finer civilization. Whether these defects are *really* inherent in an industrial democracy is, I think, a question. I do not personally believe that they are. I think they have arisen because we had no strong tradition of culture to stem the overwhelming tide of commercialism, due to the rapid development of large-scale industrialism in the hands of private enterprise, and have not yet developed social institutions strong enough to control the commercial spirit. The defects of our industrial democracy are removable by a more thorough-going social control of the industrial process. I do not believe that the common people are indifferent to the right leadership, or insensible to the value of distinction in mind and character. When we have more fully socialized industry and turned the proceeds thereof into the development, by education, of a higher average of enlightenment and refinement, we shall get a finer culture. Prewar Germany was not democratic. It was highly industrialized. Industrialism is not democratized even now in the United States. The chief defects of modern industrialism are due to the fact that, without effective social control, private greed has been able to get most of its proceeds. Certainly there can be no great culture without the recognition of a considerable range of distinction in values. A genuine culture must have an aristocratic element. An intelligent social democracy will not fail to see this. When the captains of industry and the lords of high finance are dethroned from the positions of chief rulers, then once more democracy may follow intellectual and spiritual leaders.

In any case Nietzsche offers us no way out of the evils of mechanized industrialism. He fails to tell us specifically how a race of spiritual heroes is to be produced and to get the leadership in our industrial world.

As a critic he is strong and bracing. He attacks us of our complacent optimism with a very real vigor. But he offers us no constructive program. He fails utterly to see that economic socialization is the one way open to a finer and more widespread spiritual individualism.

Nietzsche went woefully astray in his criticism of Jesus and Christianity. I do not find anywhere in the Master's teaching the assertion that all human beings are equal either in intelligence or character. Jesus was no ascetic, no denier of life. He was the true yea-sayer. He came that men might have a more abundant life. He insisted that the spiritual life is a paramount to all else—to all institutions and observances and material goods. He taught renunciation and self-denial only for the sake of the more abundant and harmonious spiritual life. He taught spiritual freedom and self-mastery. His ideal is high, and difficult for those who wish to compromise with the unspiritual powers. He never glorified spiritual mediocrity. He condemned smug self-satisfaction as the worst of sinful attitudes. He came to arouse men to spiritual heroism. In all these points His ideal is superior to that of Nietzsche. When we note the points of conflict between the two the superiority of Jesus' ideal is even more striking. For Jesus the way to fineness, to distinction, to wholeness of life is the way of humility and service—of humility in place of hard aristocratic pride and self-assertion; of service in the sense of dedication of one's life to the highest in man. By this service is true indi-

viduality and power and life realized. The Christian superman does not choose himself and he does not rely on his own strength. He is chosen by God and he relies on a power far surpassing his own. Nietzsche's superman is hard, self-assertive, subjectivistic, without regard for the world and than man's unregenerate thirst for power. In it there is no clear basis for a distinction between the sensuous and the spiritual. The richness of a life of this sort is the richness of the egotist's poverty of soul. No man, said Lincoln in the spirit of Christ, is fit to be another's master. Only that love which engenders sympathy, forgiveness, fellowship can make a man fit to care for or to lead others. The superman of Nietzsche is a creature of passing moods and fancies, relying solely on his own unaided power. The Christian superman is rooted and grounded on a faith in the supremacy of the Spirit of Love in the universe.

In sum, Nietzsche is bracing as a critic but makes no positive contribution to social ideals. His superman is, with all his aspiration after fineness, distinction and nobility, an unlovely figure; vague, elusive and inconsistent, ruled by pride and yet severe with himself.

Christ's ideal is much more exalted. The disciple will never be satisfied with himself. The mainspring of his striving is not pride. It is the ever-present sense of the gap which separates his actual self from the attainment of that Godlike perfection which is realized in the measure in which the disciple serves and loves the best. Whereas in Nietzsche there is no standard of the best, but the strong man's instinctive lust for power and leadership, in Christ there is an absolute standard of the best. This is the life of service and worshipful love, of spiritual

integrity, of truth and fellowship, in bringing to fulfillment the spiritual community of free and noble personalities. This community is not an abstract ideal. It has its source, its sustenance and its fruition in the perfect spirit of the community. Christ is not a vague and difficult but not vague or shadowy, personal, egotistical or subjective, social but not visionary. It includes all that has moral worth in the aristocratic ideal, but this is purged of all pride and hardness of heart. The only legitimate Christian aristocracy is one of service. The only legitimate Christian individualism is one in which the individual develops his powers to the full so that he may the better serve the community.

## CHAPTER X

### THE HEART OF JESUS' RELIGION

The Epistles of St. Paul are the earliest extant documents of Christian literature. At least seven of them—I and II Thessalonians, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians and Romans—are his writings. These are quite sufficient for our purpose, which is to determine what Christ's religion essentially meant to its first great apostle and literary exponent. They must all have been written between about A.D. 47 and 60. Paul has been called the second founder of Christianity; this title is not misleading, unless it be implied that he founded a different religion from that of Jesus Christ Himself.

Paul makes no mention of the virgin birth of Jesus, of His miraculous works nor of the details of His life. Paul did not seek to know Christ after the flesh. For him, the witness of the Spirit is enough. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal., iv: 6). This does not imply that Paul was ignorant of the teachings and deeds of Jesus. Paul wrote to adherents to whom the record of the Master's life was a living tradition, doubtless supplemented by those written records which became the basis of the Gos-

pels, especially the Marcan story and "Q" which contained the *logia* not found in Mark's Gospel.

Paul sets the "mind of the Spirit" in sharp opposition to the "works and will of the flesh," the works and will of the Spirit in sharp opposition to the works and will of the flesh (see Romans viii; I Cor. ii:10-11 and many other passages). This opposition between the spiritual or rational and ethical life and the merely natural or vital life, which also pervades the Johannine gospel, is no new thing. It is found in Plato, is a striking feature of Neo-Platonism and occurs in the most extreme form in various sects and movements, such as Manichaeism, Essenism and Gnosticism. Doubtless, Paul imbibed this philosophy in his native Tarsus from the Stoics. Paul shows markedly the influence of Stoic teaching. And Stoicism, as an ethico-religious movement, borrowed and popularized Neo-Platonic philosophy. But the sobriety of Paul's mind saved him from the ascetic extravagances which the feeling of the warfare of flesh and spirit led to in other hands, within as well as without the Church. Asceticism is not native to the Hebrew mind.

The two great events in the earthly life of Christ, on which Paul concentrates his thought, are: That Christ voluntarily died an ignominious death on the cross to redeem men from sin by a consummate act of love; and the Resurrection, which is the seal of God's approval of the great deed. The risen life of Christ, of which Paul believed himself to have received a luminous demonstration, proclaims Christ as the Son of God, the Divine Logos or preëxistent Heavenly Man, sent by the Father to redeem men from the bondage of sin and death. The fruits of the death and rising again are embraced by men

through grateful and loyal love. Faith and courage to endure are the offspring of love. The two great fruits of Christ's work are: (1) spiritual liberty, which consists in freedom from the bondage of the law (the social and moral law which man by his own unaided power could never overcome); and (2) the power, through love and union in Christ, to put on the mind of Christ and thus to be endowed with a positive motive and dynamic which will control and direct and elevate the natural impulses (the mind of the flesh) as no law could.

But spiritual liberty is a negative and dependent consequence of a rich and affirmative Life—the Life in the Christian community, the fellowship of the faithful—which flows from the grateful and loyal embracement of Christ's love as the supreme motive and ground of faith and conduct. The very heart of Christ's gospel, as Paul understands and lives it, is expressed in the great hymn to Love (I Cor. 13). The essence of Christ, and therefore the essence of God, is Love. The essence of the spiritual mind in man is to embrace and practice this love, in faith and loyalty. The earthly life and death and the risen life of Christ are the three great acts in the consummation of the drama of Divine Love. When, in grateful faith and will, man makes this the animating motive of his life he puts on Christ, he dwells in Christ and Christ in him. Therefore, he dwells in God and God in him.

Paul is an ethical and social mystic. The basic principles of his philosophy and faith (or philosophical faith, since it is a doctrine founded on his own spiritual experience, as indeed all great theologies and philosophies must be) are essentially the same as those of ethical and social

idealism or mysticism. I say advisedly "ethical and social"; for I do not admit that any doctrine can be called "ethical" which is not a doctrine of right relationship. Stoic or hedonistic ethics is not ethical, and, I add, it is self-negating. Mysticism is the negation of true selfhood or personality. Mysticism is ethical and social. This separates it from all sensualistic and individualistic forms of mysticism.

As Paul conceives the matter, the believer and lover is, spiritually, a member of Christ; and Christ is, spiritually, in him. But the believer is not in Christ and Christ is not in him, as an insulated ego. The faithful, as members of the body of Christ, are members one of another. The Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of God, is the sanctifying, life-giving, sustaining and unifying bond of the entire community of the faithful. The individual is truly a spirit or person only as a member of the community. God is the eternal Ground and Life of the community. Christ is the manifestation and, therefore, in this space-time world, the inciting spiritual cause of the spiritual community.

The concrete ethical teaching of Paul, when one considers its brevity and the occasional character of his writings, is the richest and noblest, after his Master's, to be found. It has a spiritual elevation and dynamic not found in Aristotle, a concrete humaneness and tenderness and warmth not found in Epictetus or even in Plato. And nothing evidences more clearly the sanity and sobriety of this mystic than the sound practical admonitions he gives, while living in daily expectation of the *Parusia*.

Closely akin to Paul's thought is the thought of the Johannine writings (I refer only to the gospel and the

first epistle). This gospel clearly has not the reportorial verisimilitude of the other three. Probably some of the incidents recorded in this gospel alone are independent tradition. It is true that Jesus recorded here some of the long discourses attributed to Our Lord, for example the discourse at the Last Supper, can scarcely have been pronounced by Him, as reported. For, in the three synoptists, Jesus speaks "winged words," in aphoristic compact sayings, marvelously concrete and yet home thrusting and universal in application. And, of course, the discrepancies between the order of events in John and the synoptists are glaring.

The supreme significance of the Johannine gospel consists in this: It carries out somewhat further the interpretation of the meaning of Christ's work that Paul began. John (I use the name as familiar, without discussing the troublesome and insoluble question who the writer really was, for we know from the writing who he really was *as a spirit or soul*) is deeply impregnated with the same mystical philosophy as Paul. He is also more of a poet. Like Paul, he makes use of the Logos doctrine. Christ is the Son of God, the perfect embodiment in human form of the Divine Creative Thought, Reason or Word, through which God created and sustains the world, reveals Himself to men step by step and finally consummates His revelation in the redemptive work of the Saviour. In Neo-Platonism, Stoicism and Philo, the Logos doctrine was the foundation of a religious metaphysics. I have not space to sketch all its variant forms here. In sum, the Logos is the Divine Reason; immanent in the creation and conservation of the world and holding in its thought

the various types or patterns of finite being (the *Ideas* of Plato) revealing itself in wise men and good. The I Manifesting Mind of the Logos is the bridge between the world, the finite and the infinite, the mystery of the God.

Paul and St. John do is to give to the Logos a more personal, concrete and ethical character; by identifying the work and person of Christ with the Logos. In terms of the profoundest and most spiritual philosophy of their day they interpreted, for thoughtful believers, the *Supreme Spiritual Value* which the person and work of Jesus had for all who had been deeply moved by that noblest and fairest of all lives among the sons of men. It is true, that, in this process of interpretation, the warm and firm human lineaments of Jesus grow somewhat dim. Not far away looms the danger of dehumanization by Greek scholastics. It is true that we cannot to-day think in their terms. But we should recognize that, for their time, Paul and John did give an interpretation of the ethical and spiritual meaning of that Transcendent Human Life which led thinking men to be touched by the essential spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. The Logos doctrine, in their hands, is not a metaphysics of nature. It is an instrument for spreading the good tidings of *self-sending and redeeming Love as the Supreme Value for man as a person and a member of the community*. If we take it aright, it leads us straight back to the human Jesus of the synoptists.

In the synoptics we find a concrete human individual, a living person, reported by friends who do not understand Him fully and, therefore, doubtless, misquote Him. In view of this and the fallibility of memory and the fragmentariness of the record, what a unique and clear im-

pression does the candid reader get of an absolutely self-consistent, strong and clear personality? He is sent only to the religious realm, where he can be paralleled, but not surpassed, without parallels. His life, His career, form one harmonious whole. The burden of proof rests on those who would reduce this figure to a myth. There is no less reason, nay more, for the historicity of Jesus than there is for the historicity of Socrates. The discrepancies between Xenophon and Plato in regard to Socrates are greater than the discrepancies of the gospels in regard to Jesus. Those who would trace the genesis of the history of Jesus to the cults of the dying and rising god, which were widespread in Asia Minor, put the cart before the horse. Such cults may have colored the interpretation of the person of Jesus, but, without the kernel supplied by a historical personality, it would have required a creative personality of the same order to have invented the history of Jesus. Sects of obscure and ordinary individuals do not invent such definite and heroic figures.

What, then, was the heart of Jesus' life and work? What was the heart of His gospel? For what did He really live and die? Was it something essentially different from Paul's and John's doctrines? I think not. The heart of Jesus' religion is very simple and very revolutionary. Let us remember that religion is whatsoever binds the soul of man, in communion, in worship and devotion, to the Highest Value, and Supremest Good, the Most Satisfying End, in the whole universe.

Jesus teaches that all material and economic goods, and

all social institutions and ordinances, must be made sub-  
 to the inward life, to the life of faith, thought  
 and action. The goal of living is not material and  
 self-life. Men are not to be ruled by  
 the material conditions  
 of life. They are primarily for the meat and drink  
 are to trust God, who is the creator and sustainer of the  
 natural order. In Jesus' thinking, there is no vestige of  
 the dualism between God and Nature which, as a soul-  
 sickness, has infected so much of human thought. Jesus  
 is entirely at home with nature. He finds the Father's  
 activity and care revealed in the common events of the  
 natural order—in the lives of trees and grasses, of flowers  
 and birds. Jesus teaches, by implication, the modern  
 doctrine of the continuous immanent energizing of God  
 in nature and in humanity.

The true soul-life is attained through honesty, simplic-  
 ity, wholeness or purity, humility and courage. Men are  
 to be self-respecting. Therefore, they must be spiritually  
 free. But these spiritual qualities can be developed only  
 by forgetting self and spending oneself in the service of  
 social and impersonal ends. Men become great of soul  
 in proportion as they love and serve needy fellows and  
 worthy causes. *Love, loyalty, self-forgetting courage*—  
 these are the three great words in the moral vocabulary  
 of the Christian. The disciples will spend themselves  
 prodigally and fearlessly. They will not resist evil with  
 evil, but overcome it with positive good. For evil is  
 negative, cowardly and selfish. It kills the soul which  
 breathes it. So with envy, hatred, the spirit of revenge.  
 These are forms of self-assertion that destroy the true

self. The spiritual self grows and flourishes only on that which is constructive, that which is harmonious and creative.

Why do men live thus? Why?

In order that they be

perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." They are to do these things, live this life that they may be the children of their Father, which is in Heaven.

Other religions and other philosophies have conceived the secret of the universe to lie in Inconceivable Power and Ineffable Majesty, or in Inscrutable Mystery, or Awful Holiness, or Pure and Passionless Thought. For Jesus the secret of the universe, the *Supreme Value and Meaning* of existence, is revealed in such simple facts as that the sun shines and the rain descends on the fields of the just and the unjust; as that those who wander in life's mazes lost until the eleventh hour may discover the prize of the meaning of life as truly as those who march forward without grievous error from early morn until dewy eve; as that the careful, prudent, selfish man who buries his talent in a napkin, on the principle, "safety first," loses it, while the one who risks all he has gains more.

The central principle of Jesus' teaching, concerning God and the true values of human life, runs counter to all "worldly" principles of contract, bargain and sale, justice, laws and politics. For all these things are but variations on the one theme: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The principle of all worldly business is the equal exchange of measurable commodities. The standard of value is always a materially determinable

our operative unit. The ruling motive is acquisition, supported by compensation for loss and by preservation of what is gained when compensation is not available. The ego preserves itself by its acquisitions.

Jesus' central conception of value flatly outrages all these principles. God is Creative, Self-imparting, Self-spending Love. The very essence of Divine Perfection consists in eternally creating, sustaining and revealing Himself in the Imperfect. God's Infinitude is not to live an isolated and transcendent life; it is to live in and through the finite. The endless richness of His Being outpours and fills up the poverty of our beings. The only spiritual poverty and weakness is that of the man who, in fear and therefore in distrust and stupid selfishness, shuts himself off from the abundance and greatness of God that pulsates through nature and humanity.

From the standpoint of Christ the problem of moral evil is a social problem. All the rank injustices of this world, all the undeserved suffering of the good, all the unmerited prosperity of the self-seekers, all hindrances to the flourishing of the life of joy and peace and fellowship, in widest commonalty spread, are due to the fear and cupidity that spring from a false notion of selfhood and of the true meaning and value of life. True goodness, the abundant life which is joy giving, is found only in the love which casts out all fear; the love that spends self and wins the peace of God; the love that empties self and is filled with the riches of humanity and all spiritual possessions; the love that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Through the self-spending love that dares and hopes and

endures are men redeemed into Godlikeness. For that  
 seeketh to give his powers and possessions in  
 that spendeth them boldly  
 in the service of life in union with  
 Christ, the one great sin

which is another name for moral cowardice, for lack of  
 spiritual daring. No man is afraid, until he puts himself  
 in the center of his thoughts and pictures himself as he  
 sees himself there sustaining some hurt or loss. All good  
 work is self-forgetting and done without thought of pay.  
 Christ's spiritual order is aptly expressed in Kipling's  
 words:

Then no one shall work for money,  
 And no one shall work for fame;  
 But, each for the joy of the working,  
 And each in his separate star,  
 Shall paint the thing as he sees it,  
 For the God of things as they are.

The root of all evil is to turn one's back on the great  
 adventure of living and to shut oneself up in the dark,  
 musty, fungus-overgrown chamber of one's miserable ego.

It takes a bold and loving spirit to affirm the Christ  
 faith to-day in the face of the advancing tide of theoretical  
 materialism and the vastly more threatening tide of practical  
 materialism and cowardly selfishness which seems  
 to have gained the upper hand in business and politics,  
 especially in our international outlook. As a nation we  
 have turned our backs on all high daring and generous  
 endeavor. Nevertheless, amidst these "gloomy and o'er-  
 darkened days" is not Christ the one "shape of beauty"  
 that "moves away the pall"? Is not His religion the one  
 philosophy that strikes boldly at the root of all evil—the

three-headed dragon of fear, cowardice and the self-seeking  
is spiritual suicide? Does not long roll  
and fearless spirits in all ages tri-  
This sign, bear witness to  
and paradoxical doctrine  
true values of life?

## CHAPTER XI

### RELIGION AND MORALS

A code, or system of morals, consists of the rules, or principles of action that are regarded in a human society, a community, as the essential conditions for the realization of the good life by its members. In short, morality consists of those principles of human conduct, obedience to which establishes and maintains a satisfactory life. If it were possible for a human being to grow up and live wholly solitary, morals would have no meaning for him. This is not possible. A human individual grows to his full intellectual and spiritual stature only as a member of various communities: first, in the family; then in the neighborhood, the school, the civic community and the nation; finally in a consciousness of his membership in the human race and the cosmos. In these various social relationships, the individual's life is both widened in the scope of his thought and interests, and deepened in its meanings. As he enters into wider relationships, these react on his conception of the meanings of the narrower and more intense and familiar relationships. The moral value of the family is altered when it is viewed in the light of the community, the nation, humanity and the cosmos. The moral significance of the national life is changed when it is viewed as an element in the life of humanity, and the life of humanity when this is viewed

in its cosmic relationships. And, in entering into, and in all these relationships, the individual is undergoing a spiritual transformation. He is no longer regarded as an isolated individual, or spiritual individual, but regards himself in isolation.

End-all of his purposive action is a moral monster, or, perhaps one should say, a moral imbecile. One who regards the family as the be-all and end-all has a very meager morality. He is immoral with regard to the larger relationships. And the man for whom the nation is the ultimate limit of moral endeavor has not reached the highest level of moral insight. The problem of morality is to determine the right balance between the claims of the various social circles of which the individual is a member—from the family to humanity and the cosmos. For, be it said, the individual has not attained the highest level of moral insight who stops short of the cosmical relationships of mankind and of all its constituent social groups. It is the human race as a constituent in the life of the universe, or cosmos, that is the final subject of moral thought and action. We cannot acquire ripe wisdom and genuine well-being and happiness if we ignore our relations to nature, and to the ultimate common ground of nature and humanity.

The more primitive moral systems of mankind consist of *customs*, or social habits, binding on the individual, and which are not questioned. Customary moral codes are revised and simplified and made more coherent in the explicitly formulated *laws* and *moral codes* of societies. As man becomes more reflective, gains wider experience, desire and material for thought, he criticizes and revises his traditional systems of social customs. Through the

insights of great moral teachers, *principles* and *ideals* take the place of customs, and become the criteria of moral development. The level of moral development is personal—a condition in which the individual has the opportunity for the thoughtful

individual to arrive at moral convictions for himself, and to determine by thoughtful consideration the applications from day to day in changing situations of these moral principles.

At the level of personal morality there is much more social freedom and moral initiative for the individual than in a custom-bound society. But this does not mean that the individual is relieved of the obligation to be socially moral. Rather are his obligations greatly increased. He no longer satisfies the requirements of the good life by obeying the customs. He must continually consider his moral obligations and responsibilities, as well as his moral rights. The more rights, the more responsibility—the more opportunity for the individual to grow and live by self-directed effort, the more duties he has.

*Ethics* is the *theory of morality*. Ethics arises only when men have reached the stage of personal reflection upon the principles of social conduct. The aim of ethics is to formulate a theory of the moral standards, ends or goods which should guide thoughtful human beings in the conduct of their social relations. It is not part of ethical theory to determine what the individual ought to do under changing circumstances, and in ever varying situations. It is precisely the prerogative and duty of human beings who have the enjoyment of moral freedom and responsibility to determine the details of moral action for them-

selves in the light of ends, or standards, which they de-  
ly embrace.

metimes said that ethics is or the  
or ends, or standards of jud  
areas the determination of the  
of right action belongs to sociology, or social philosophy.  
This is a false antithesis. There is no good or right for  
an individual which has not a social reference, and there  
is no social end which is not an end for the individual.  
For a society or community consists of individuals in  
dynamic relation, acting and reacting, enjoying and suf-  
fering from one another. There is no real distinction  
between ethics and social philosophy. It is all a question  
of emphasis at the starting point. One may begin with  
the individual or with the group, in the consideration of  
moral theory. But whichever one begins with, one must  
end with the other, in order to escape a distorted and  
lopsided theory. There is a distinction between Ethics  
and Sociology. It is often transgressed or ignored. It  
is this: Ethics is the theory of the *ends*, or *values*, or  
*moral standards* of human conduct; whereas Sociology  
is a descriptive science which deals only with the facts  
and factual laws of human society, with the different  
forms of social structure and their evolution, and without  
regard to their moral values. When the sociologist claims  
to set up standards, ends or norms for the organization  
and conduct of society, he has ceased to be a sociologist  
and has become an ethicist. This way lies confusion of  
thought, if the change in attitude from mere factual de-  
scription to ethical valuation is not explicitly recognized.

What, then, is the relation between religion and morals?  
They go together. In every principal phase in the de-

velopment of human culture the religion of that particular culture is set up and affirms the supreme validity of its moral ideals. Whether we are dealing with a primitive animistic community or with a church, the same principle holds. Whatever is regarded by that society as right, or good, is viewed in its religion as having the standing and sanction which comes from the approval of the supreme powers in the universe.

It is sometimes said that religion has been a hindrance to moral development. Those who say this point to the case of Socrates, or Jesus, or other cases (and there are many in the history of man). But the statement betrays confusion of thought. The so-called conflict between religion and morality is always a conflict between some established and customary system of moral conduct and religion and a higher, simpler, more coherent, more spiritual moral and religious insight. Every great forward step in ethical thought is accompanied by the faith that the supreme, cosmical power is on the side of the new insight. It was so with the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, Socrates, Plato and the Stoics, the early Christian Church, the reformers within and without the Catholic Church. It will continue to be so. For religious faith is the lifting up into the Eternal, into the Supreme and Permanent, of these moral values, purposes or ideals that are regarded as best. Religion proclaims the supremacy and permanence of the good life. It affirms that the best triumphs and endures, that the highest values are eternally real and reign in the cosmos, that the true ends of human conduct are securely anchored in the nature of things, that all human ideals are eternally real in and for God.

It is sometimes said that the moral life in man always involves a conflict between the *is* and the *ought to be*, the *real* and the *ideal*, the *factual* and the *ideal*. There-fore religion transcends morality.

Religion transcends morality only by completing what the moral life of man aims at. For faith, the good that we must realize is already real in God. We can overcome the evil since there is One in whom it is already overcome.

The religion of Jesus Christ is *par excellence* the ethical religion. God is the Reality of that which man should aim to become. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And God's Reality in its inmost essence is Love that transcends all commercial and legal distinctions and transactions.

God is the Perfect Individual because he is wholly and completely social. He cares for all. He gives of his life without stint.

The Christian ideal of human life, the Christian standard of the good is the same. First of all, in contrast with all ethics which involve the negation or suppression of individuality, Christ appeals to individuals. The supreme worth and reality of the individual soul, the moral freedom and responsibility of the self, is basic in his teaching. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" "Call no man master." "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

The ethics and religion of Jesus is built on the most tremendous emphasis on the enduring reality, the worth and responsible freedom of the individual. In this respect he is sounder than Plato, who, in the *Republic* with its excessive regimentation and communism, fails to see that

the Good Life cannot be realized unless there be room and free play for the individual to make his own independent advance—his natural needs and impulses—his family life—in winning the common good. It is not individuals too much as mere meeting-places for the Universal Values, mere occasions for training in social service and the contemplative life.

But on the other hand, Jesus teaches that true individuality or spiritual personality (Divine Sonship) is realized only in so far as the individual wills and works to make himself the organ of the common interests (lives in the brotherhood of man). The richest and greatest and noblest personality is he who lives most deeply and fully, forgetting self, in social and universal relationships. The individual who tries to hold what he is born with, and not to use it for others, and for the advancement of human society, is like the man with the one talent. He loses it. He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it.

Now this is true to the moral psychology of man. Growth in comprehensiveness and harmony, expansion and organization, happiness, come only to the individual who makes himself the organ for the promotion of the communal ends. The wider, the deeper and richer one's range of interests becomes, the more one reaches out and works in the service of one's fellows, to promote human well-being and social progress, the fuller and more harmonious is one's selfhood. For a self or individual is just the organic or living whole of its interests, its experiences and acts.

“Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven and the lack of fellowship is hell; fellowship is life, and the lack of

fellowship is death; and the deeds that ye do upon the  
 't is for fellowship's sake that ye do th and the  
 is in it shall live on and on f ach  
 ou part of it, while many a ma. e  
 earth, from the earth shall wane." <sup>1</sup>

This is the Christian ethical principle, or standard of value for the Good Life. It is not to be taken in any narrow sense. Each one is to do his own part in his own way. To one it comes by way of cultivating the ground thoroughly and in the spirit of service, to another through the fine arts or literature, to other through professional service, to still others through the promotion of science or learning, or through the social interpretation and application of religion and ethics for his fellows.

The point is that whatever be one's station and concrete duties and opportunities, the Good Life for the Christian is a life in which he, as this unique and responsible individual, takes his part selflessly and joyfully in the service of the good life in man through whatever way is given to him and thereby realizes his spiritual personality.

The Christian ethics and the Christian religion are one. The Heavenly Father is the pattern held up by Christ. The ever energizing, ever patient, ever caring, self-impacting, self-revealing, divine energy of Love is the supreme incentive for the good life in man and the guarantee that the good life is supreme and enduring in the cosmos.

It is worth while to compare Christ's doctrine of the relations of Ethics and Religion, the Good and God, with Aristotle's. The latter's theory of the Good in some ways

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<sup>1</sup> William Morris, *A Dream of John Ball*.

approaches that of Christ, especially in his treatment of friendship and love, but it lacks the element of sympathy, it is weak, the lowly, the astray; it is not that of Christ. And when we come to Aristotle's conception of God, we find that God, for him, has no share in the practical or moral virtues. Only the practice of the contemplative life, only the passionless and untiring activity of pure reason, is divine. God is the eternal and blessed activity of pure thought contemplating itself. God is not a friend, does not love any man, knows nothing of imperfection, toil or suffering. The ordinary virtues are not lifted up into the atmosphere of the Eternal. And so Aristotle's ideal life with all its nobility of superiority to the baser passions and lower aims remains the higher selfishness of one engaged in the passionless and untroubled activity of pure intellectual contemplation.

Christ's ideal of life follows from his doctrine of God. Man's goodness consists in becoming Godlike. And to become Godlike is to make one's individuality, one's thought, feeling, and one's action, the organ or instrument for the realization of the divine life in human society through service in any of the manifold ways which promote the lasting welfare of mankind.

May not in the future, ethical conviction and action be divorced from religion? I think not. Ethical motives, ethical standards of value or ethical ends, by their very nature, are paramount. They can brook no rivals in human interest. To affirm that a principle of action is good is to affirm by implication that it is absolutely supreme in its demand for human allegiance. Man must continue to believe, unless his ethical aims and motives are to suffer from a paralysis, that the Good which is

supreme over the human interests and motives is nearest  
akin to the Ruling Power of the Universe. We should believe  
that we should be religious. For religion is the  
Highest Values should and must rule in the human order,  
and are supreme in the Cosmic Order.

## CHAPTER XII

### JESUS AND ECCLESIASTICISM

Jesus was no ecclesiolater. He did not come to found a new Church. He did not even attempt to remake the old one. He used it in so far as it served his purpose and when its rulers turned on him, he went to his death gladly to shatter the old and to create a new order of spiritual life. In vain will one search his words for authority for Papacy, Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism or any other -ism. There are, in Jesus' winged words, no prescriptions or hints, liturgical or ecclesiastico-political or metaphysico-theological. He cared nothing for these things. They belong to the fashion of this world which ever passeth away. Like political and industrial and social systems, they come and they go. They are human devices—inevitable and necessary trappings and scaffoldings for the expression of religion in a corporate form or community. But the danger that in them lies, is that these mechanics of organization shall stifle or thwart the spirit which they should minister unto, that the scaffoldings shall hide the building, that the trappings shall eat into the soul of religion and destroy it.

Jesus left no system of theology or metaphysics. He was greater than all such systems. He spoke and worked

in the living and the concrete—in symbols, in parables, in great deeds of love and sacrifice. By these he gathered and inspired a handful of faithful disciples; and touched for a brief time a larger crowd of followers who melted away at his death.

What did Jesus do? With unexampled insight, power and vigor of will, he reaffirmed the principles of universal or spiritual religion. He conveyed, by the magic touch of his personality, a new dynamic influence which was perpetuated by his sacrificial death; and which has gone forward and multiplied itself a millionfold ever since, as does every great spiritual impulse in human life.

What are these principles of Jesus? In sum, they are as follows:

1. That only the inward life, the life of the soul or spirit, is of supreme value. That all real value flows from within outwards into deeds of honesty, of courage, of love, of sacrifice. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" "The life is more than meat and the body than raiment." "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth."

2. That the quality of one's acts depends on one's motives, on the values expressed therein. "Blessed are the pure in heart [those whose motives are clean, honest and disinterested] for they shall see God."

3. That the more abundant life—the life that is rich and harmonious—requires a continual forgetting of self in the service of others and of superpersonal causes. "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake and for the sake of the good news shall save it."

4. That one's life must be whole, integral. This is

what purity of heart means. "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light."

5. That the true life is one of fellowship. It requires the presence of forgiveness, fair play, service.

6. That men should trust the God of nature whatever happens. For he who cares for the things of nature cares much more for the human soul.

Jesus founded a community, a fellowship of free and loving souls. Only in this sense was he the founder of a Church. All politics, sacraments, doctrines, teachings on the part of those who claim to inherit his spirit and to work in his name are to be judged as subservient to the furtherance of the motives and principles of conduct in the Jesuanic community. Whether any so-called Christian Church is Christlike is to be determined in the light of the motives and principles for valuing feeling and conduct which Jesus communicated and which his spirit, the Holy Spirit which he promised to guide and comfort us men, still communicates to all who are of one mind with Jesus. He, as I have said, made no attempt to set up a system of theology or metaphysics; much less a system of church polity. His was a mighty energy of will. His power of appeal is primarily and fundamentally to the feelings and the will. He does not ignore reason or thought, but he sees that it must be an auxiliary counselor, interpreter and guide—that it works by its reflex influence on men's feelings and volitions. Therefore, the motives and standards of conduct, the value judgments on life's aims and ideals which Jesus sets up, are directed primarily to the sublimation, harmonization, ennoblement and energization of human feelings and volitions.

What is the community for Jesus? "Wherever two or

three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistle?" "He that heareth my words and *doeth* them, I will liken unto the man that builded his house on a rock." "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath;" that is, all institutions, even churches, are instruments for fostering and furthering the more abundant life. "My yoke is easy and my burden light."

What are the tests of the kind of conduct which makes one a member of the community of Jesus? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." "Forgive, even unto seventy times seven." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Which of the three, thinkest thou, was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves?" "Among the Gentiles they which exercise lordship over them are accounted great but it shall not be so among you." "Whosoever would be greatest among you let him be the servant of all. For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."

And what of the right motives? "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The right motives are abundantly expressed in the Beatitudes, in the Sermon on the Mount.

The creed of Jesus is the confession in one's heart and by one's deeds of the supremacy of integrity and purity of aim, of the supreme value of the moral personality over every other value in the world, of the supreme worth of the life of good will, honest work and service, fellowship and love. Active participation in these motives and

aims, acceptance of these values as the ruling standards of life, alone make a Christian. All else is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. The Church of Christ is there, and there alone, wherever men live and love and work in fellowship for the furtherance of these humane and spiritual values.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HISTORY, PERSONALITY AND TRUTH

The religious feelings, beliefs and practices of every age are interwoven with the entire culture of that age. Moreover, in each age the religious attitudes and beliefs of persons living on different cultural planes vary with their planes. The individual's religious attitude is profoundly interpenetrated by his entire set of mind. The latter is determined largely by his cultural environment. In turn the religious attitude profoundly influences the other cultural attitudes of a man—his attitudes towards art, science, morality, politics. The peculiar and paradoxical feature common to religion and philosophy is this: whereas they are integral parts of the entire system of culture of a people and a time as of the entire cultural complex of the individual's mind, they bring at once to a burning focus the various currents in the life of culture, and in summing up a whole culture they aim to transcend it by viewing its transitory features in the light of the Eternal or transtemporal Reality.

It is impossible that the religion of a peasant should be the same as the religion of a savant; that the religion of an artist should be identical with that of a gravedigger. Spiritual individuality is the resultant of the interplay of cultural environment and native capacity. This individuality is manifested in religion, no less than in the

other chief phases of culture. It is impossible that the religion of a Hottentot, an Arab, a Hindu, a Chinaman and an Englishman should be the same. But, as humanistic and scientific culture spreads, and becomes common to persons of different races, as the higher cultures of various stocks draw close together, their religions become more alike than the religions of two persons of the same race, but living on different cultural planes.

The possibility of close similarity and sympathy in religious attitudes depends on the sharing of a community of culture which gives rise to profound spiritual sympathy. A completely universal religion of humanity can arrive only with the development of a universally humane culture.

All great religions have had a long historical development. The Mohammedan is the youngest of these (unless one regard Christian Science as one of the great religions). But Mohammedanism did not spring full-armed from the brow of Mohammed. Its roots stretch far back into the soil of the Hebraic and Arabic cultures.

As culture changes, religion changes with it, just as do poetry and the other arts, philosophy and science. Religion is not at all exempt from the universal historical flux—from the ebb and flow of human cultures. It shares in the vicissitudes of civilization. Great creative or synthetic and unifying epochs of human culture are followed by periods of gradual disintegration; the latter in turn by periods of reconstruction, flowering again in new creative epochs. Christianity has not been, more than other religions, exempt from this law of historic change. The Christianity of every great age has been a synthesis, a fusion into spiritual focus, of all the cultural currents

which have made the age distinctive. Every organized religious system is the child of time.

The apostolic age represents the first step in the fusion of Hebrew prophetism and Hellenistic culture. The apostolic age is succeeded by the gradual upbuilding of a Catholic Christendom into which Hellenistic culture and the mystery religions enter powerfully. Catholic Christendom undergoes a schism. Western Catholic Christendom is built up into a unified system, and then disintegrates as a result of the maturing of new powers which it has nurtured—new intellectual, aesthetic, moral and political forces break it apart. Protestantism goes to the extreme of religious pluralism in its division into sects. Once again, at the present moment the cry is raised for a new spiritual synthesis, a new unification of religion.

But it is vain to base this program of a new synthesis on the return to, the reinstatement and revivification of any past epoch. Some would find the key in medieval Catholicism, others in a return to the undivided Christendom before the great schism, still others in the return to apostolic Christianity. All these plans are based on illusions—vain dreams. No past period of Christianity can be restored in its original integrity, any more than we could now restore the Periclean culture of Athens. A religious synthesis, valid for to-day and to-morrow, must arise from the fusion into a spiritual and dynamic unity of all the cultural and spiritual forces operative to-day and in which reside the making of to-morrow's day. Let us have done once and for all with the vain delusion that we can think and live as did the apostles, the Greek Fathers, St. Augustine, or the thirteenth-century Christians.

The great prophets and revealers of moral and religious principles, those who bring new creative insights and a fresh dynamic into religion, do not escape this law of cultural causality and change. Every great religious genius shared in the ideas, beliefs and attitudes of his own time. Gotama Buddha is unintelligible except from the background of Brahmanic ritual, asceticism and brooding pantheistic speculation. Isaiah and the other great prophets of Israel cannot be understood apart from the religious, cultural and political life currents of their people and their time. To understand Isaiah we must understand the background of the life of Judea and the foreground of international politics and wars, of the empires of Assyria and Egypt, and the little peoples whose lands were the theaters of their contentions.

Even Jesus, the greatest creative personality in the history of religion, is not entirely exempt from this law of cultural limitation. He inherited Hebrew prophetism. He had to react to Hebrew legalism and ceremonialism. He shared the cosmology and psychology, the physiology and perhaps even the demonology of his people. He took up and radically transformed, in the alembic of his marvelously creative personality, the long hoped for and eagerly awaited Messianic Kingdom of his own people. He speaks in terms of the culture of his day and his people. He *seems* to have expected that the Kingdom of God, whose herald he was, would come suddenly in its completeness with catastrophic power and that He would return then as the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> His intense devotion to the

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<sup>1</sup> This is the one unsolved riddle in Jesus' teaching *as reported in the Gospels*. If he believed in the imminent apocalyptic *parusia*, then there is an inconsistency between this aspect of his doctrine of

ideal of the Kingdom led him to accept the challenge of death as a critical step in bringing it to pass. For him it was all in all. Nothing else mattered but the Kingdom and the awakening of men to fit themselves for life therein.

Jesus was mistaken in several things. But they were the mistakes of a transcendent religious genius, a great spirit on fire with the vision of hitherto unrevealed divine potencies in the life of man. The Psalmist writes "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," "My meat and drink is to do thy will, O Lord." For Jesus, meat and drink and life itself were instruments to enkindle in men the desire and will to realize a richer life—one of greater individual power, integrity and spiritual harmony, one of deeper and wider human fellowship and communion with God. Consumed with zeal for the Kingdom, all earthly and worldly things were foreshortened for Jesus. He saw and lived for the Kingdom of spiritual personalities alone. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness." All merely mundane values shrivel up in the presence of the Kingdom.

It is vain to attempt to reconcile the literal interpretation of all Jesus' teachings with the conditions of culture, to-day. We cannot live in daily and hourly expectation of the cataclysmic coming of the Kingdom in all its power. We cannot even sell all we have and give to the poor. We have to continue to live in an imperfect order and to make haste slowly in ethical and spiritual matters. We have to compromise with Cæsar and Mammon, to be somewhat anxious for the morrow, to live in a world ruled

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the Kingdom and the doctrine of its ethical inwardness. If he did not so believe, then he was gravely misreported. There is much to be said for either view, on the whole I prefer the latter interpretation.

largely by unspiritual agencies. If we accept the spiritual authority of Jesus we shall, so far as in us lies, live as in this world, but not of it. We shall strive to keep our spirits free and clean from the taints of greeds, lusts, envies, hates, lies, hardness of heart and selfish satisfaction.

Those who assert that the validity of religion stands or falls with physical miracles should, to be logical, go farther and say that the authority of Jesus requires us to change our modes of living and put ourselves in readiness for the imminent cataclysmic arrival of the Kingdom, which cometh as a thief in the night, and therefore one may wake up to-morrow, either in the Kingdom or bound with Satan. The logical outcome of traditionalism is millennialism of the crassest sort.

It is the most unintelligent, unhistorical dogmatism to insist that past events in the history of religion are absolutely and completely authoritative and binding on the intellect and spirit of man to-day. The true historical outlook teaches one that there is no finality, no finished completeness, in any past epoch of man's spiritual or general cultural life. The eternal values of the spiritual life cannot be grounded on the contingent events of history (a paraphrase of Lessing). *Each age*, as Leopold von Ranke said, *is immediate to God*. It must find and validate its now supreme values. The past is alive and effective only in so far as it enters into and is assimilated with the living and growing present. The words and works of the great spiritual leaders of the past are written for our instruction, for our example, for our inspiration. We cannot literally copy them. We cannot extinguish or suppress the ethical motives and spiritual val-

ues which legitimately arise for us from our own culture—from our sciences and arts and letters, from our changed relations to nature and to our fellow men. We are discovering many things in regard to nature and human nature that the forefathers knew not. These new things are the determining conditions of a sane, harmonious and balanced culture. The true function of the race's spiritual leaders in the past is to help us now to live our lives out, aided by their companionship; not to suppress the new values that arise in the present for us, nor to induce us to turn our backs on the promise of the future in the vain effort to restore literally what was temporal and transitory in the past. The true value of any great movement in the past is to enrich the living present.'

What, then, is left of Jesus and historic Christianity? Is anything left? Yes, so much of spiritual power and insight as can be taken up and used in harmony with the intellectual and cultural life of the present. The test of Jesus and all further developments of historic Christianity is this—what do they contribute to the enrichment, ennoblement and harmonization of man's cultural life to-day? How far will the values they expressed enter into working union with the values of the scientific outlook and method and with the new humanism for which man, in his actualities and the promise of his life, is the present summit of the long travail of nature to give birth to higher spiritual individuality?

Great creative personalities are conditioned by the cultures of their races and epochs. But they are great creative personalities because they rise somehow above the average cultural stream of the times and thus contribute to that transtemporal or eternally creative spiritual life

which is above their own times. By their contributions to the race's insights, visions, powers, they become contemporaneous with all time. In recreating, in bringing to a new focus, the spiritual currents of their own day, the creative personalities labor for eternity—for the permanent that endures through all that is transitory.

Socrates and Plato belonged to their own time. But for us they have stimulating, instructing and inspiring values because of what is eternally human and spiritual in their thought. Isaiah belonged to his own time. But, across the ages, we can apply his prophetic burden of social justice and mercy to our very different times and social problems.

Shakespeare belonged to his time. But his time does not account for the perennial timeliness of Shakespeare to every age.

So it is supremely with Jesus. He, the supreme religious genius of all time, is above every time. Therefore he speaks quickening words and stirs the hearts of men in every time. The Kingdom did not and will not come suddenly by a cosmic cataclysm. But the Kingdom remains to challenge us, to prod us out of spiritual sloth and materialism, out of sensuality and selfishness, dishonesty, impurity, mammon worship. It remains to stir us into the ethical and spiritual aspiration, devotion and service without which we retrograde below the animals. Thus He belongs at the head of that small and choice company of the immortals who are eternal; who, because of something timeless and transcendent in their visions and words, deeds and personalities, are relevant to every time.

In all that concerns the higher life of man, truth is not established and made good by extraneous supports.

The witness of the spirit is the supreme witness. Across the centuries, from age to age, the vital insights and convictions of spiritual humankind grow in clearness and fullness. There is change and there is progress. In this progressive change whatsoever is of eternal value in the past deeds of creative personalities is not lost. It is taken up and added to, but it remains a vital influence in the creative travail of the spirit.

A philosophy, a great work of art, or a scientific truth, may have something eternally human and spiritual in it. But all the works of man are subject to the vicissitudes of time. The personality itself has more of the eternal than any of its works and words.

This is supremely the case with Jesus. We cannot accept and obey all his words literally. We cannot think or believe as he did in every respect.

But, through the fragmentary and confusing records of his words, his works, his sacrifice of self, there ever gleams brightly that unapproachably lovely, arresting, challenging, inspiring and lovable Personality,—the “what is” which is behind and greater than the “what knows” or “what does.”

Jesus is greater than all his teachings, greater than the Kingdom. For He is the supreme summit of the Divine in Man.

This is what is timeless in Him, and therefore He speaks to every time. The Spirit of Jesus, speaking and touching to finer issues, to nobler aspirations, to sterner resolves and more selfless devotions, alike the letter-bound traditionalist, the unlettered peasant, the skeptical philosopher and scientist, the recluse and the man of the world, the sage and the ruler—this is the witness to the

only truth we need—that a life lived in communion with his essential spirit is the loveliest and noblest and most satisfying life possible to man—It is man's way of approach to Divine Perfection—"That ye may be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

## CHAPTER XIV

### APOTHEOSIS AND INCARNATION

There runs through the history of mankind the persistent impulse to regard as divine those cultural heroes who, by their manifestation, in exceptional degree, of the creative mind, discover and proclaim new values. For, by such creations the more ordinary level of human beings find their lives enriched, their intellectual, practical, social and moral horizons widened, and new power and meaning brought into human existence. Discoverers of the secrets of nature, devisers of new arts of life, lawgivers, moral prophets, poets, are regarded as inspired of God. They are raised to the rank of divine or semi-divine beings. Complementary to the *apotheosis* of the cultural heroes is the belief in the *incarnation* of the Divine in human personalities. In nearly all important religions there is a belief in incarnation—for example, in Hinduism, Buddhism, the religions of the ancient Egyptians and Greeks.

In proportion as man attains a more refined and elevated consciousness of the true values of life, in proportion as his conception of life's goods becomes more spiritual, in proportion as he gains a clearer feeling of the highest and most enduring meanings of his existence, just in the same measure does his conception of incarnation increase in elevation and range of meaning.

It is no part of my aim here to sketch the whole process of this development. I pass at once to consider the summit of the pre-Christian doctrine of incarnation. This summit was attained by Plato and his followers. For him the *intrinsic values*, or *goods* which give meaning, worth and permanence to the human soul are all purely intellectual, aesthetic and moral. These three forms of value compass the whole spiritual life. Human life becomes worthy to endure, it acquires a divine meaning through the participation of the soul in the life of rationality, beauty, and goodness. In so far as man seriously examines his own life and the world in which he lives in order to find what is permanently true; in so far as he seeks to rise from the enjoyment of physical beauty into the intuition of intellectual and moral beauty in his inward parts; and in so far as he dedicates his powers to the service of integrity, justice and wisdom; man is participating in the Divine. He is becoming Godlike. The Platonic ideas, the archetypal forms, which are the supreme and eternal realities, are the manifold forms of the eternal life of God. These timeless and dynamic types or patterns of being, which are the causal sources of all the forms of transitory existence, the sources of the different types of living organisms, of the orderly relations which we find in the world, of the principles of moral order in society and of moral harmony and proportion in the individual, are incarnations or embodiments of the Divine in this changing and imperfect world of space, time, and matter.

Plato held that all these forms of enduring and creative value have their unity in God—the Essential Form of the Good. God, then, is absolutely good. Plato did not give

a wholly satisfactory account of the process by which the ideas are imparted to the ever-changing things of sense.<sup>1</sup> He spoke of participation and imitation. In his doctrine of the *Demiurge*, or intermediate agent who creates the world, he anticipates the later *Logos* doctrine. Plato's followers and the Stoics, who were much influenced by Plato and who in turn influenced later Platonism, taking up Heraclitus' conception of the *Logos*, conceived the *Logos*, or Creative Word of God as the source of all the order, beauty, meaning and moral value in this ever-perishing world. God transcends all that is mutable and imperfect. But by his Creative Word he forms and orders the world and human life. Thus the *Logos* is the incarnating power of God, the self-manifestation of God throughout the world. The doctrine of the *Logos* or Creative Mind of God (*Nous*), as being the first step in the self-manifestation of the Transcendent and Ineffable and Inconceivable One, who is in Himself above all form, all duality and multiplicity, reaches its culmination in Neo-Platonism. From the One Transcendent Spirit *Nous* or *Logos* emanates or irradiates. From this in turn comes the *World-Soul*, the *Cosmic Psyche*, which becomes incarnate in the world-whole of space and time, and gives rise to the multitude of incarnate souls, who, though far below the One, still share, albeit dimly and unconsciously, in the World-forming Mind or *Logos* of God.

The Christian theologians took up this great conception and identified the fullest expression of the Creative Word

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<sup>1</sup> Nor is Plato wholly consistent and clear in regard to the ultimate relation between the Ideas and God. In the *Republic* and elsewhere he seems to conceive God as the unity and ground of the Ideas. But in the *Timaeus* the Ideas appear as the independently real patterns according to which God creates the world.

with the person of Jesus Christ. Thus, for Christianity the process of incarnation of the Divine is brought to complete expression, in so far as God is capable of expression in a human being, in Jesus the Christ. He is the perfect and unique incarnation of the Divine Word, the eternally preëxistent Son of the transcendent Creator-Father.

It is unnecessary here to review in detail the metaphysical subtleties involved in the long controversy as to how the Incarnate Word could dwell fully in a human person, or to pass in critical review all the difficulties and inconsistencies involved in the statements that Jesus the Christ was at once the second person of the Divine Trinity, eternally begotten of the Father and a truly human being who was born, lived and died subject to all the limitations and sufferings of a human person; or to inquire how a real man could be of the same substance with the Eternal God; and how two different natures and two wills could coexist in one human individual and that individual still be wholly perfect, an integral human person.

What I wish to bring out here is simply the spiritual purport and motivating source of this doctrine. Its motive is clear. The Logos doctrine of the Incarnation is an expression of the spiritual conviction that in the life of Jesus and the death on the Cross was embodied the highest, the holiest, spiritually the loveliest and noblest life possible to man. It expresses the faith that in his essential nature God must be most like Christ. Therefore Christ is most divine. This momentous faith in the identical quality of Christ's will towards men and God's everlasting purpose is what is at stake in the doctrine of one substance. It is only in the spirit that one can call

Jesus Lord. It is *Spirit* that beareth witness with our spirits. This faith and insight arises from a judgment of moral and spiritual values.

In other terms, if the Christ life is the life of highest qualitative value, then, since God is the supreme Reality of all Spiritual Values, this Life is most divine. This life is the life of Love absolute and giving itself without stint for the redemption of man from bondage to his lower nature. The Cross is the symbol of the completeness of this Love. Christ is pure and integral, a whole and completely righteous person and his supreme quality is Love. Love is the quality of selfhood which takes up into itself and transvalues all other values. God is Love, and Jesus is Divine because God is Love. And God must be Love, since Jesus is the one whose touch kindles into flame the smoldering love-potency in the heart of man. He that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. The Incarnate Word is Love.

With Heraclitus the Logos principle is the immanent Divine Ordering Principle or Law which pervades and controls the endless flux of nature. Just as for Spinoza, so for Heraclitus God is the indwelling Order of the world. His Logos is a pantheistic principle. With Plato and Aristotle, God in Himself transcends the order of nature. The Platonic ideas are both transcendent and immanent—transcendent in their own eternal reality, immanent in this realm of space, time and the transitory multitude of imperfect beings; inasmuch as the sensible and changing world participates in the ideal forms which are the eternal realities. With Aristotle the *forms* (the formative powers or *entelechies* which impel and shape matter into individuals or actualities) are wholly imma-

ment in nature. But God, the Supreme Form, is wholly transcendent. The Stoics vacillated between an immanent conception of the Logos and one which makes Him the mediating link or creative principle through which the transcendent God creates and acts on the world. In the main, later Platonism conceived the Logos to be identical in function with Plato's Demiurge. He is the unity of the Ideas, the creative intermediary between the inaccessible and unknown God and the world. He is a second divine Principle or Entity, through which the world is created and ordered. In Philo, Clement and Origen this conception prevails. It is also held by Clement and Origen that the Logos God revealed himself through wise men and prophets before Christ. For Clement and Origen He is the spermatic Logos who has revealed himself partially before Christ but first fully in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

In the orthodox Christian conception (of Athanasius) the Logos is no longer chiefly the intermediate creative principle between God and his world. God creates the world directly. *The Logos is the divine Principle of redemption.* His function is to save men. He is not primarily a cosmological principle but a soteriological principle, the instrument of salvation.

Thus a conception which originated in the pantheistic thought of an immanent Divine order in nature and developed into an instrument for connecting the transcendent God with the world of matter and natural life becomes transformed into a wholly moral or spiritual principle, the Divine instrument of salvation. God the Logos

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<sup>2</sup> Dean Inge's article on "Religion" in the book, *The Legacy of Greece*, edited by R. W. Livingstone, is the most compact statement I have seen on the contribution of Greek thought to the Christian religion.

becomes man in order to enable man, through faith and obedience, to become divine. *Incarnation is the presupposition of apotheosis.* Thus the ancient Catholic doctrine is, *essentially*, an expression of the supremacy in the universe of those spiritual values embodied in the life of Christ and supremely witnessed to on the Cross. To say that Christ is the Incarnate Word is to affirm that his way is the supreme truth and the way to Eternal Life.

It is quite another question to ask what is the valid meaning of the Logos doctrine to-day for one who accepts the methods and principles of biology, psychology and critical historical inquiry.

For many centuries of human thought, dualistic supernaturalism was not an effete tradition. It was the natural view of most men. It is still the view of those whose minds have not been indoctrinated with the scientific standpoint. Dualistic supernaturalism is native to those minds for whom nature is not an ordered and dynamic whole, but only the theater of order in part, order interrupted in many spots by the eruption of mysterious happenings for which no antecedent natural conditions can be found. In so far as men to-day have the scientific point of view, the notion of a nature which runs in parts by itself, and in parts and at times is altered by the intervention of an extramundane power, has gone by the boards. Dualistic supernaturalism and the deistic doctrine of an absentee Cosmic Artificer are both effete traditions.

The Logos Christology was a living and meaningful doctrine for those who formed it. But it did, as it is generally understood, reduce the humanity of Christ almost to a vanishing point. Our intellectual climate is

not the climate of those who framed it. Not even our moral climate is the same. Our scale of human values is different. Our problem is to humanize and spiritualize the complex industrial and scientific and aesthetic interests of the contemporary world.

Many traditionalists talk glibly about the *three persons* in the Trinity, as if this meant three distinct Divine Centers of self-consciousness and will. They assume that our Lord was really a preëxistent Divine Being who took upon himself the semblance of a man (Docetism), while remaining omnipotent and omniscient. They are seemingly ignorant of the fact that the words for "substance" and "person" in the Greek, namely, *ousia* and *hypostasis*, originally meant the same, and were only gradually differentiated in the process of theological debate. They overlook the fact that *prosopon* (*persona*), which Tertullian used as the equivalent of *hypostasis*, meant a mask or character, not a true self, and that in Roman terminology a person was simply a legal subject of rights; whereas a person to-day means an individual center of experience and action.

The truth is that *person* in the Nicene theology does *not* mean an *individual* self. Person means here a distinctive office or function and relationship in the Godhead. *God the Father* means the eternally primal creative, sustaining and governing function of Deity. *God the Son* means the teaching, guiding and redemptive function of the immanent Godhead in human life. *God the Holy Spirit* means the continuance of the Son's work as guide, teacher and sanctifier. The work of the Son and the Holy Spirit cannot really be distinguished. In Paul's theology they are not distinguished. He speaks of the

Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God and the Spirit as having the same office. He uses these three terms interchangeably.

These traditionalists are ready to proclaim the eternal preëxistence of Jesus Christ, though this logically involves a contravention of the principles of heredity as well as Tritheism and Docetism. The sad fact is that most of our traditionalists are ignorant of the development of Greek philosophical terminology from Heraclitus to Origen, the Cappadocians and the Neo-Platonists. No one can follow intelligently the development of classical Christian theology who does not know Greek philosophy. They are also ignorant of the methods and results of modern physics, biology, psychology and philosophy. A further instance may be given—the problem of the growth of personality in man is the *integration*, the fashioning into one harmonious whole, of his native capacities. The integration of a personality is expressed in unity and consistency of thought and volition. How then could Jesus have had two wills? A perfect person cannot have two wills.

The Logos doctrine was a great contribution to the clarification and defense of Christian thought in its own day. That day was centuries long. It saved Christianity from Gnosticism. It affirmed that the creative thought of the One God is the continuously active ground of nature and that He revealed himself in prophets and wise men before Christ, but chiefly and most fully in Christ; as fully as was possible within the limitations of humanity. The Logos doctrine in the hands of Philo was primarily a cosmological doctrine. The Logos was the Divine Mediating Principle of creation, intermediary between the

transcendent, unapproachable and ineffable majesty of God and the natural order of matter and life. The presupposition of the doctrine that the Logos is a distinct *hypostasis* or entity is the dualistic conception of God's relation to nature. From this standpoint, God is, *in Himself*, that is, as Father, wholly transcendent. The Logos is God, but subordinate to the Father (eternally generated, as Origen says). After the identification in the prologue of St. John's Gospel of the person of Christ with the full manifestation of the Logos, the emphasis of the concept shifts from cosmology to soteriology. Finally, the preëxistent Logos is, in the Chalcedonian formula, identified wholly with the Saviour. The cosmological interest recedes wholly into the background. Harnack makes this point clear in his *Dogmengeschichte*.

The origin and development of the Logos doctrine, as religious metaphysics, premises a dualistic cosmology. God created the world, but, as Father, He wholly transcends it. He creates and sustains the world by the instrumentality of a second divine principle or being—the Logos. Now, no metaphysics which is in touch with modern science can accept such an ultimate dualism. From our point of view the whole universe is dynamic. There is no dead matter in it. It is the eternally creative evolutionary process—creative but *orderly*. There are no uncaused events in the universe of reality. There is no chaos in it. There are only different orders—the order of physical becoming, the order of vital creativeness, the order of mental and spiritual creativeness. One order is built upon the order next below it. Life's creativity is built upon the material order, the spirit's creativity is built upon the vital order. God is the eternally ener-

gizing and all-comprehending ordering Principle of the whole. While He is nature's principle of immanent order, He must transcend the highest reaches of finite existence. But His transcendence is not a spatial or temporal transcendence. He is never absent in place or time from any part of His universe. His transcendence is one of value, one of richness and perfection, of spiritual individuality. His innermost nature is, *in principle*, identical with man's spiritual quality. But He is not equally present in all men. He is most fully revealed in the Perfect Man, Jesus of Nazareth. If we take the Logos doctrine to express our faith simply in the continuous and increasing manifestation of God in nature and humanity, then it has both a religious and a philosophical value. If we take it as implying a distinct and separate mediator between the unknowable and unapproachable God and the world, it has no religious or philosophical value for a scientific thinker who will think things out to the end.

There are two working principles or postulates which lie at the root of modern science and research. (1) *The principle of order*, often miscalled the principle of the uniformity of nature. Nature is not uniform. It is complex and multiform. But through all the web of its complexity runs the woof of creative causal order. Nothing happens without an adequate cause. A final cause can be only the synthetic meaning of a series of efficient causes. (2) *The experimental method*. Truth is found and verified by the incessant interplay of theory and observation. Facts yield their meanings to the observing and probing mind. Theories are verified or rejected by the test of fact. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Physical miracles are rejected, not because they are a

*priori* impossible, but because they are not in harmony with the principle of order and are unverifiable by the experimental method. If taken to be true they imply thus far a disorderly universe and a defect in either the Thought or Power of God. These two principles of scientific procedure receive ever-increasing corroboration from day to day.

We cannot to-day accept the Logos doctrine in its ancient form. For we cannot understand how two natures which begin by being wholly different (by hypothesis) can coexist in one person, who thus has two wills, two minds and yet is one person. We cannot admit that Jesus Christ is the solitary exception to the laws of personality. Moreover, the Synoptic Gospels do not support such a doctrine. We must begin with the human person of Jesus. Finding incarnated in Him the supreme moral and spiritual values, finding in Him our elder brother, we can say that the Divine Life, the Ground and Source of all Spiritual Values, is most fully embodied in Him, that He is the first born of many brethren. In this sense He is recognized by faith and love as the Highest Incarnation of the Divine, the Supremest Embodiment of Spiritual Values. The Divine in man, which in other men is less clearly embodied in varying degrees, in some almost entirely effaced, has its consummate expression in Him who is the Way, the Truth, the Life for men. He is "God Incarnate, man Divine," not by being isolated from other human beings, but by being the fullest, the most perfect incarnation in a human personality of those spiritual capacities which are latent and obscured, or at best but imperfectly and disjointedly embodied, in other men.

We speak of spiritual values—of *rationality* and *truth*,

of *justice* and *integrity*, of *beauty* and *love*—as values which guide the spiritually minded man. But we must remember that values presuppose persons or rational selves. Apart from persons, values are abstractions devoid of real existence. Persons realize and enjoy their spiritual capacities in the service of the higher, the more comprehensive harmonies and enduring values. But values obtain and maintain being, only in persons. It is a meaningless substantialization of pure abstractions to talk of the supremacy and permanence of values unless these values exist in and for and through persons. And equally so *spirit*, *mind*, *thought*, *will*, have no existence except as ways of describing the real lives of persons. The phrase “an impersonal spirit” is utter nonsense.

Personality is imperfect in us, and the meaning and purpose of the universe is the continuous development of personal spirits. God is the Infinite and Eternal Ground of Spiritual Life; therefore, of Personality. The supreme greatness of Christ consists in His person. Through the meager and not wholly consistent records there gleams a marvelous genially human individual, and yet one who lives in the atmosphere of the Eternal—no ascetic, no legislator or logic-chopper, but one who reveals the highest moral possibilities of human personality, one who lives fully and sympathetically in the stream of time, sharing the life of man, and yet lifts this life up into the Eternal. The profoundest mystery, the deepest meaning of human life lies here—that man is a sensuous, physically and temporally conditioned being, an animal subject to the hazards and contingencies of animal existence, and yet one who finds no rest nor peace for his soul amidst the shifting sands of time; one who hungers and thirsts for

the Eternal, whose efforts towards righteousness, rationality and beauty are the triune aspects of his striving for communion with the Ultimately Worthful, for possession of the Eternally Perfect. The great duality in man is not between flesh and spirit but between the temporal and the eternal; between the fragmentary and transitory on the one hand, and the complete and integral life on the other hand.

Jesus, in his person, is the supreme revealer of the spiritual possibilities of man, of the way in which the human hunger for righteousness and love may be satisfied. He does not stand alone. But He stands at the head of the race, as the highest human incarnation of the Divine in man. If there were no tendency and urge towards the eternal and perfect in humanity, Jesus would have no real message for men. A wholly isolated Divine Phenomenon can have nothing fruitful for thinking men. The Divine Urge must belong to man as such. Jesus is the first born of countless brethren, as being the fullest realization, the promise and inspiration to other men to live in and for spiritual harmony. His apotheosis is justified, because He is the consummation, thus far, of the ever-continuing immanent Incarnation of the Divine in human life.

Here is indeed a mystery—that man, so weak and passionate and foolish, should yet have in him this Divine Urge, this “sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go.” We do not know why such a creature as man, a being capable of such folly, cruelty, meanness, should yet have this Divine Urge. But so it is. Search the serious literature of all ages, search the traditions and records of the race, search your own heart, and you find it there!

It is no derogation of the spiritual majesty and moral power of Christ to say that the Incarnate Life of God, which came to full flower in him, was finding expression in the race's spiritual leaders and even in their humblest followers before Christ, and that it is continued in all who, wittingly or unwittingly, walk in his footsteps. God, the supreme source and sustainer of the spiritual values of personality, is always incarnating Himself in human life. Jesus makes us, by the enkindling touch of his moral integrity and his spiritual beauty, more fully and clearly aware of this continuing incarnation or personalization of values. "He was in the world and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not. But to as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God." "For he that is born of Love receiveth God and knoweth God." "For they are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the Will of God." The Incarnation as consummated in Christ "is the complete revelation of fact which was hitherto not realized, rather than an absolutely new fact."<sup>3</sup>

If we drop the vain controversies about the preëxistence and eternal generation of a Person who is supposed to unite two different natures and two distinct wills in one individuality, we can retain the Logos doctrine in the sense that in the spiritual life of humanity, of which the Christ life is the norm and touchstone, the *Word* or self-realizing spirit and will of God is being incarnated in Man, under the leadership of *the Man* in whom this incarnation was most fully realized. "The Spirit himself

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<sup>3</sup> Guy Rendall, *The Historical Element in Christianity*. *Hibbert Journal*, vol. XXII, pp. 152-153.

beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Romans viii: 16, 17. "For as many as are led by the Spirit [as many as serve and live by the Supreme Values], these are the Sons of God." Romans viii: 14. "Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God." I. Cor. ii: 11. (See, also, Galatians v: 22-24 on the fruits of the Spirit.)

The recognition of the supreme values through the continuous shattering of our worldly values and the remolding of them into the fashion of the Christ-Life—the transformation of self-seeking into service, of double-mindedness into integrity, of compromise into truth-seeking, of competition into coöperation and fellowship—is the rebirth of the natural individual animal into a spiritual personality. This continuous fulfillment of personality through devotion to the rational and moral order of spiritual values is the life of God in the soul of man. The Reality of God dawns upon us as we serve those supreme values whose service is perfect freedom, since it is the self-fulfillment of Spirit. "Blessed are the pure in heart [that is the disinterested, the wholehearted, the loving] for they shall see God." "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." (I John iv: 20.)

The Godward impulse of the human soul is the impulse toward *unity and harmony of spirit and will*, towards inner peace and social peace through worship of the Perfect and service of the Perfect by its increasing realization in the life of humanity.

No thinking man who surveys the ills and confusions in the individual life and society to-day can doubt that what we need is more *light* and *love*; or, rather, love lighted up by intelligence until it becomes a transforming and regenerating power which will sweep away all the phobias and suppressed complexes, personal, social and international, which hinder the progress of humanity towards the universal fulfillment of the goal of personality. Knowledge is not enough. It must be warmed and impelled by that love of man which can see the lineaments of God even shining through man's ignorances and fears; the love which serves man because it adores the Perfect One in Whose image he is made. But love alone is not enough. It must be guided by intelligence, free and open, facing and relentlessly probing every fact, however sordid or hideous, in order that by the light of love, applied intelligently, the causes of fear and maimed lives, of thwarted personalities and social disease may be removed, that man may become a finer expression of the Creative Thought of God, the Logos.

The Godward impulse will not die out. The leadership of Christ will not cease. As long as man lives he must ever seek to pass beyond what he is and has been, must lose his soul in order to gain it, must die to live. And God in Christ is for man, in whatsoever guise man may depict God, the Embodiment, the Ever Present Being, of that far country of the Spirit. God in Christ is the Perfection, the Home, of all the spiritual values which we human beings must needs worship—in communion with Whose perfection is our peace and our salvation.

## CHAPTER XV

### CREEDS AS SPIRITUAL SYMBOLS

For the purpose of this discussion we shall take account only of the two great historical creeds which are common to orthodox Christendom—the Apostles' and the Nicene. It is, of course well-known that the Apostles' Creed was not framed by the apostles. It quite obviously grew up as a simple statement of the elements of Christianity as a historic faith emanating from Jesus. In its present form it is later than the Nicene Creed. In the West it is traced back to the old Roman Creed of the second century which contains no reference to the descent into hell or the communion of saints. These clauses do not appear in the creeds of this type earlier than in the fifth century. Tertullian (160-240) and Marcion (144) both give the substance of creeds in which the virgin birth is mentioned.

The Nicene Creed was not, in its present form, adopted by the Council of Nicæa. It is the result of a gradual growth due to the doctrinal controversies in regard to the natures and relative positions of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost; and especially designed to guard against Arianism, which would make Christ a lower Divine Being than God. Arianism held that Christ is a perfect moral being who is raised into moral unity with the Father. The creed of the Nicene Council affirmed the uncreated nature of Jesus Christ and the

identity of his divine substance with that of the Father. The Nicene Creed, almost in its present form, was adopted by the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. But the procession of the Holy Ghost "from the Son" as well as from the Father—was added later, probably by copyists.

Neither the creed of the Nicene Council nor the creed of Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, which apparently was the basis of the creed cited at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, made reference to the Virgin Birth or the descent into hell. The creed of Epiphanius is by many scholars regarded as a revision of the Jerusalem creed—the chief addition being "that is, of the substance of the Father," after the words "begotten of his Father before all the worlds." Some scholars argue that Epiphanius wrote down the original creed of the Council of Nicæa and that the additions are interpolations of copyists. The texts cited at the second session of the Council and at the sixth session vary. The true form of the text cited at Constantinople is not known for certain. The procession of the Holy Spirit "from the Son" was a later interpolation of copyists. This addition was the chief doctrinal cause of the split between the Eastern and Western churches, being imposed on the church chiefly by the authority of Charlemagne.

In sum, both creeds were the result of gradual growth and accretion due to many causes. The victory of the Nicene Creed at Nicæa over the semi-Arian creeds was the unexpected victory of a minority with strong convictions. Neither creed can be regarded as having been affirmed once and for all in all its features by an undivided Christendom at a truly ecumenical council as a confession of faith binding on all faithful Christians.

The purpose of the Nicene Creed was to affirm that God was verily incarnated in the historic person, Jesus, the Christ—that being truly man he was nevertheless veritably divine—neither a being of different though similar nature to God nor the mere semblance of a man. Against Gnosticism the Nicene Creed affirms the Oneness of God and the identity of the Creator with the God incarnate in Jesus. Against *Docetism* it affirms the true humanity and distinctive personality of Jesus Christ. It further affirms the identity of the Holy Spirit, as the continuing manifestation of God's teaching and sanctifying power in the world, with the spirit of Christ.

The Nicene Creed guarded the faith against the extreme dualism of Gnostics and Manicheans. It guarded the faith against that docetic doctrine which would have undermined the basic principle of faith; that the ethical and spiritual work of Jesus as a human being is rooted and grounded in the Supreme Being.

The creeds thus rendered a service of inestimable value. It is querulous faultfinding to criticize the Nicene Creed for being too philosophical or metaphysical. It was necessary, when the simple Christian faith was taken up by people of Greek culture, that the faith should be stated in terms of Greek philosophical thought.

The creeds share in the greatness and the limitations of ancient thought. They presuppose the Ptolemaic, or geocentric conception of the universe. "He descended into hell" presupposes that hell is a place of departed spirits situated below the surface of the flat earth. "He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God" presupposes that heaven is a place situated above the earth somewhere in the starry firmament. He "was

born of the Virgin Mary" presupposes that, because of the innate depravity of the human race which is transmitted through sexual generation, a sinless Redeemer must have been incarnated in some other way than by sexual reproduction. The moral miracle of Jesus' sinlessness is taken to presuppose his immaculate conception by the Virgin.

No one of these conceptions can be accepted as necessarily implied in the spiritual uniqueness of Jesus by the mind imbued with the spirit of modern science. They are physical symbols of spiritual truths. Nay, we must go farther and say that while the doctrine that Jesus is of the same substance with the Father, but is a different Divine Person, is a metaphysical symbol of a spiritual truth—namely that for those who are quickened by faith in Jesus Christ the ethical and spiritual values of the Mind of Christ are of supreme authority and therefore must have a Cosmic Source and Support—the symbols are imperfect.

No competent scholar will say that he knows just what was meant by the *hypostasis*, *prosopon*, *persona*, the separate personalities of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Certainly *person* cannot have meant what we mean by *person*; otherwise we should have the creeds affirming at once one God and three Gods.

The doctrine of the triune God is a hint thrown out at a great mystery. It is a way of affirming the richness of God's being as a spiritual Community of Life and Love, a self-manifesting Spirit, supreme Creator and Lover, continuously immanent in his creation, showing himself forth in ever-ascending degrees of perfection as Power and Thought, and above all as Love, culminating in his

self-revelation in the spirit of Jesus and the continuance and growth of that spirit as the Holy Spirit who leads and guides men with all truth, who comforts and sanctifies them.

The doctrine of the triune God is truer than any doctrine which emphasizes the isolated transcendent unity of the Godhead. The doctrine of the Trinity makes place at once for that reverent agnosticism which leads us to confess that God's ways are not our ways and his thoughts are far above us, that He transcends in richness of nature, in power of creative thought, all that we can think; and for the faith that this world and this human nature are truly though but partially manifestations of his being. He is immanent in ever-increasing degrees in all finite energies, in all forms of life, in man and most fully in Christ and Christlike persons. He is a person, but much more than a person. He is the Spirit of the Cosmic Community in which we have membership, humble though it be.

All our words, even the most refined philosophical terms are but symbols. The richer in content and value any experience, the more inadequate the symbols. The multiplication table is a symbol of certain precise universal and highly abstract and empty forms of thought. Even the multiplication table is not adequate for algebra. All our scientific concepts are symbolic descriptions—atoms, electrons, fields of force, etc. No thoughtful scientist thinks the symbols are the realities or even adequate expressions for them. When we come to love and friendship, to beauty, justice, self-sacrifice, how inadequate our words!

How absurd then it is to say, when we are dealing with

a faith that ventures to reach out at the ultimate mystery of human existence and the cosmos, "fixity of interpretation is of the essence of the creeds!" There can be no rigid fixity of interpretation. There has never been any. The lovers, mystics and poets alone have right. Faith and love will cling to form, but it must not mistake form for substance, spirit for letter.

Those who clamor for fixity of interpretation are without either historical, poetic or genuine spiritual insight.

Likewise those who say the creeds deal with facts, not theories. How absurd. There is no such thing, as any tyro in psychology and theory of knowledge knows, as a fact that is not shot through with theory. Even the discrimination of two adjacent colors in the spectrum or of two sounds of neighboring pitch involves theory. All our perceptions are impregnated with theory. And the more complex in content, the richer in value and meaning our so-called facts, the more they are impregnated with theories.

Truth for us consists in the marriage of fact and theory; or, in spiritual matters, of experience and imaginative projection.

In the creeds fact and theory are inseparable.

A literal interpretation of the elements of Christian faith which would place it on a par with the multiplication table or the mechanics of a particle would be possible only by squeezing out all its spiritual content and value.

These things are hints thrown out at a great mystery.

We do not know precisely what the framers of the Nicene Creed meant. One may well doubt if they themselves knew precisely what they meant. We do know that

every intelligent person must abandon any approximation to a literal subscription to certain articles of the creeds. Even the best scholar cannot be certain of the original meanings of other articles.

Let the creeds stand as symbols of the historic continuity of Christian faith and Christian conduct. They represent, stretching across the centuries, the *continuity of spirit* by which we bow before the unequaled moral perfection, the flawless and transcendent spiritual beauty and power of Christ. We hear the words "Follow me" uttered by the Galilean lake. We learn the Sermon on the Mount. Here we confess is the highest, holiest, loveliest Life that has been revealed to men. Hard it is to follow by reason of our selfishness and stupidity. But the hunger in us for integrity and purity, for love and spiritual beauty and harmony goes out to meet that spirit. All who are touched by the spirit of Jesus can accept the creeds, not as literal and final interpretations in human language of that Surpassing Life, but as symbols of the continuity and community of the Christlike life.

This is no time to make new creeds. We should find greater difficulty in coming to an agreement than did the ancient Christians. This is a day of intellectual and even moral confusion and disorder. We have moved in social life and thought from unity to multiplicity, as Henry Adams puts it.

With the great variety and richness of our cultural and intellectual life, even in any single Christian communion, we have a great diversity of standpoints, of planes of intellectual insight. There are those, and they are the majority, for whom the imaginative forms in which the spiritual substance of religion is enshrined can be appre-

hended only as literal and concrete verisimilitudes of the spiritual values.

There are those, a small but ever growing minority, for whom the pictorial imagery and even the abstract philosophical conceptions of the creeds have become inadequate in their traditional interpretations. But, for all, the essential values of the spiritual conception of life enshrined in Christian feeling, faith, and conduct are the same. The intellectual minority, imbued with the modern scientific spirit and looking at the world and man in terms of the modern world-view being built up by physical science, biology and psychology and the social studies, find their wills and aspirations responsive to the spirit of Jesus, Paul and John.

Let the ancient creeds then stand and be said and sung as historical symbols by which all who are moved and quickened in hearts and consciences by the ethics of the gospel may express and affirm the essential community and continuity of this ethical and religious life with the lives of Christian disciples in all ages and under all conditions of culture.

The spiritual content of faith must have symbolic forms of utterance but the form must vary with the culture of the age and the individual.

The intellectual modernist needs Tennyson's reminder :

O thou that after toil and storm  
 Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,  
 Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,  
 Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
 Her early Heaven, her happy views;  
 Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
 Her hands are quicker unto good;  
 O sacred be the flesh and blood  
 To which she links a truth divine.

—TENNYSON, "In Memoriam," XXXIII.

He who has reached the insight that

Our little systems have their day;  
 They have their day and cease to be!  
 They are but broken lights of thee,  
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

will not stake the validity of the ethical values of religion on the use of any special form. He will recognize that all are relative to, and all are inevitable in, a phase of historical mental culture or of individual cultural development. For such an one can still say with all freedom of interpretation:

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
 Deep seated in our mystic frame,  
 We yield all blessing to the name  
 Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers  
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
 When truth embodied in a tale  
 Shall enter in at lowly doors

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
 With human hands the creed of creeds  
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
 More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave  
 And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
 In roarings round the coral reef.

For learned and unlearned alike, for him who thinks in simple images, as for him who thinks in the highest scientific concepts, this faith remains.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love  
Whom we that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone embrace  
Believing where we cannot prove

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:  
Our wills are ours, we know not how  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

And so all can pray

O living will that shalt endure.  
When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure.



PART III

THE VALIDITY OF RELIGION



## CHAPTER XVI

### A CRITERION FOR THE EVALUATION OF RELIGIONS

The defenders of the absolute integrity and authority of Christian tradition are wont to contend that orthodox Christianity is a religion based on solid and incontrovertible historical facts; that it is a religion whose genesis and completion as the exclusive Divine Revelation of the career, vocation and destiny of man are to be found in certain historical events which must be accepted as the sole direct acts of God; whereas all other religions, ethical systems and philosophies are but man made. Thus the Christian religion, the religion founded on the solid facts of the one process of Divine Revelation and the One Unique Incarnation of God, is contrasted with the religions of Greece, Rome, Egypt, Persia and India, which were the products of man's aberrant fancy, working alone in the darkness without Divine aid; and with all the secular philosophies which are the products of merely human speculation. The rock on which Christian belief and doctrine is built is the solid rock of historical fact. It was given once for all in the veritable and exclusive transactions of God with mankind through certain chosen individuals of a chosen race. Here it is! Take it or leave it at your peril! Take it and be saved; reject it and be damned.

The traditionalist is a very naif person. He accepts

an ancient philosophy of history and a congruous cosmology or philosophy of nature, but he affirms them to be *not theory or doctrine but fact*. Like M. Jourdain, who lived for forty years before he discovered that he had always talked prose, the traditionalist does not know that he offers an imaginative and philosophical epic as fact. He is unaware that his history is shot through with interpretations in terms of certain values which he cherishes and clothes in poetic symbols; in short, that his whole history is a poetic philosophy of history which includes a cosmology or theory of the universe. I shall proceed to show that Christianity is indeed a historical religion, but not in the naïf way in which the traditionalist supposes it to be.

Let us waive the disagreements between Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinists and the numerous Protestant sects, in regard to the true content of tradition. Let us waive the divergencies as to what the sacred tradition of history includes, in order to reduce the problem to its simplest terms. We will begin with the canonical books of the Bible as our starting point (waiving the divergence between Protestants and Roman Catholics in regard to the Apocryphal books) and we will stop with St. Augustine, who gave a classical formulation of the Christian philosophy of history. What have we between these limits? Certainly not a succession of uncolored and indubitable facts, but a noble and imposing *philosophy of history* implying a philosophy of nature.

Just when this philosophy of history began to be framed, we do not know. Its first clear expression is the write-up of Hebrew and world history in the reign of

King Josiah in connection with the centralization of worship at Jerusalem. The Elohist and Jahvist stories of creation and of the history of the chosen people are woven together. Moses is represented as the author of the Deuteronomic Code. Later, under Ezra, there was another revision—the so-called Priestly Code. Thus was established the background for the specifically Christian philosophy of history. As a minimum the latter includes—the special creation by fiat in six days; the fall and expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden; the consequent sins, disorders and wanderings of the human race; the destruction by the flood; the emergence of the Hebrews with a mythical ancestor Abraham; the special acts of God in his dealings with Jacob, Moses, the judges, kings, prophets and priests; finally, the sending of his only Son as the Messiah to redeem his chosen people and other peoples through Israel; the rejection of the Messiah; the atoning death of God's only Son; after he had established a church and ordinances and appointed overseers and provided for the manner of their succession; the continuance of the dispensation of the instruments of grace through the divinely established institution—the Church, outside of which there is no salvation. Logically, there follows the claim of the supremacy of the Church over all other human institutions, since to it alone is entrusted the supreme interest of man—the salvation of his soul.

Augustine, in his *City of God*, brought the Christian philosophy of history to its culminating and most grandiose expression. It implies that when the number of the elect is completed God will bring the present world to a sudden end.

This is the first notable moralistic philosophy of history. It involves the conception of nature as the pliant tool of a transcendent Deity, who created the world primarily as a habitation for man; but who employs natural forces as instruments to punish, chasten and instruct man in obedience to the Divine Will. Nature is merely God's set of instruments which He has made for nurturing and training man. He is above and beyond it. The natural universe is small, geocentric and of short duration. God suspends or alters the modes of operation of natural forces at his good pleasure. Men, especially chosen by Him, can do the same. The heathen have not known God, because He has not chosen to reveal Himself to them. (There are, of course, some exceptions to this view recognized by some of the early Christian writers who had been impregnated with Greek culture.)

The heathen world is sunk in ignorance, error and sin. The virtues of the heathen are but splendid vices; although Paul, Augustine and other Christian writers admit that the heathen are not devoid of knowledge and virtue.

This is not history, but a philosophy of history based on a moralistic interpretation of a period of religious development. In it factual events and interpretations are blended into a whole asserted to be entirely factual. It is not physics but a philosophy of nature. And the philosophy of history and of nature dovetail beautifully together.

Slowly but steadily, modern thought<sup>1</sup> has laid the foun-

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<sup>1</sup> I mean by "modern thought" modern science and philosophy since the sixteenth century. The first great moderns are Francis Bacon, Bruno, and Copernicus.

dations of another philosophy of nature and another philosophy of history. The physical universe is a self-contained whole, of very long duration, marvelously complex in its structure, boundless in extent, and everywhere manifesting regular modes of behavior. The same kinds of forces that operate in it now have always operated and in the same manner. The 'uniformity of nature' really means the continuity throughout all time of the same kinds of causes. The universe is whole and seamless. All its individual constituents, from the electron and man to the remotest star, are elements in one universal order. The universe is not dead matter. It is dynamic, alive, creative. Neither is it disembodied spirit. If God there be, he must be the universal activating or creative Principle of Order, the Ground of all the countless and ceaseless energies, lives, minds in the living cosmos. He cannot be a Cosmic Artificer, dwelling outside the universe, modeling and remodeling it here and there, now and then. Either He works in the universe all the time or He does nothing and is nonexistent.

The cosmology of modern science implies a new philosophy of history. The human race emerges from the womb of nature. It is but one, although a unique manifestation of the cosmic creative energy. Therefore, the whole human race, throughout all its history, has been shaping and reshaping, and largely without clear consciousness either of its own aims or the means for their achievement, its cultures; its moral systems; its religious rites and symbols; its sciences, arts and philosophies; all as ways of better realizing, by new adaptations and inventions, *its fundamental urge for more life and fuller*. No moral system, no religion, no art, no social order devel-

oped by man, is an invention prompted by the Devil. No one is to be despised and none is absolutely final.'

If there be a Universal Spirit, one working in and through the human spirit, then in ancient far-off China something of that Spirit was realized through Confucius; through Lao-Tsü with his doctrine of *Tao* or Universal Order, Quietness and Harmony; and through Mêh-Ti with his positive golden rule. Then the Vedantic doctrine of the identity of the individual soul with the World-Soul is a discovery of one aspect of the total and universal meaning of existence. The pantheism of Akhnaton, the moral idealism of Plato, the mystic fervor of Plotinus, the great compassion of Buddha—are all contributions to the universal spiritual development of the race.

Modern science and our new civilization, which is still in the making, cannot be the tragic errors that some worshippers of the Middle Ages would have us believe. They represent our efforts to realize more life and fuller.

Thus we substitute, for *the particularistic and paternalistic philosophy of history* of the traditionalist, a *universalistic philosophy of history*, which sees in every culture, in every religion, a note in the vast diapason of universal humanity; of man realizing as best he can, under every clime and in every culture, the *good life*.'

We do not exclude from the divine value and meaning of life all but a few thousand years of cultural life played out on the narrow areas of Western Asia Minor, Europe and America. We recognize in principle that, if there be any meaning, any value, any good in human life; every culture, in every epoch, in every clime, is a note in the universal orchestration of the Spirit. Either the Universal Spirit is immanent in the *whole life of humanity*,

which life, in turn, is a special individuation of conscious existence emerging from the bosom of the Cosmos; or there is no meaning at all in human history.'

We reject the dualistic cosmology of traditionalism and we reject its parochial and exclusivistic philosophy of history. No longer, in the presence of what we have learned from science in regard to the constitution, structure, history and behavior of nature, can we admit a geocentric and dualistic cosmology; in which nature is nothing but the football of a Transcendent Spirit, who creates it out of nothing and who kicks it about to satisfy his inscrutable desires.

No longer, in the presence of our widened horizons, our knowledge of the great variety of human cultures and our lengthened historical perspective, going back to the old stone age, can we admit that the Cosmic Spirit, after Adam's fall, confined his intercourse with man to a small semibarbaric people on the fringe of the coastland of hither Asia. We must, in the light of our historical knowledge, reject this unhistorical philosophy of history. It is not a neutral statement of facts. It is a moralistic and pietistic epical representation, containing a modicum of fact but motivated by spiritual values.

No longer can we admit that, *a priori*, every new theory discovered by science, every new area of significant culture revealed by comparative history and ethnology, must either square with the traditional philosophy of history and cosmology, or be rejected as inventions of heretics and evil doers inspired by the Satanic spirit of him who ever denies.'

We have reached the point where the question no longer is this—Can these modern discoveries, these enlarged

horizons of our culture, be reconciled with our own religious tradition, but this—What is there left of our religious tradition, these things being admitted as true?

Well, what *is* left? Jesus, the Divine Dreamer and consummate Artist in the Spiritual Order; Jesus the transcendently beautiful figure, a Life Giver, a Lover of his kind even unto death.<sup>2</sup> Paul, a noble Pharisee on fire with consuming zeal to spread the gospel of spiritual liberty, of universal love, of the supremacy of the spiritual mind over the lusts and hates of the flesh. John, the mystic poet, philosopher of love.

After them, great thinkers like Origen and Augustine, the mystics, St. Francis, and all the noble company of lovers of man, of nature and of God.

No longer shall we measure spiritual greatness by the yardstick made by combining Hebrew cosmology and philosophy of history with an infusion of Greek metaphysics.

We shall welcome whatever can stand the clear light of modern thought, as a precious stone to be set in the great building of the spiritual temple of Humanity. But we shall distinguish between the respective values of the various ethical and spiritual insights as contributions to the upbuilding of a finer humanity. And our criterion is this—*the harmonious integration of the capacities of human nature into a concrete living unity of action and feeling; in short, the harmonious realization and enjoyment of full personality by man.* No fundamental capac-

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<sup>2</sup> There would still be precious spiritual truth in the story of Jesus, even though he were a purely symbolic figure created by the imagination to be the personified center and bearer of spiritual values. Indeed, one must admit that the Christ, in distinction from Jesus of Nazareth, is largely the poetic personification of spiritual values—an ideal figure unconsciously created by the spiritual imagination.

ity of human nature is to be denied self-expression. But no one shall be exclusively affirmed at the expense of others. Each in its due time and measure, the native impulses of human nature must take their places and perform their functions in a *hierarchical harmony*—*lowest*, the sensuous impulses concerned with physical self-preservation; *higher*, as embodying the life of the species and containing the germs of sociality, the procreative impulses; *higher still*, the impulses that flower in creative workmanship, the enjoyment and creation of beauty, the discovery and enjoyment of truth, the growth of social coöperation and communal fellowship; and *finally, crowning all*, the positive sense of the harmony of our being with the Universal Life—Communion with the Divine Meaning of the whole.'

Mankind, in all its varied forms of culture; in its arts, its knowledges, its religions and philosophies; has ever been seeking the fruition of personality, in communion of self with self and of self with the Universal Spirit.

Whatsoever is of any value, as contributing to the fulfillment of spiritual individuality or personality, is to be recognized. When the Brahmanist, in the *Upanishads*, reiterates the identity of the individual soul with the world soul, that is a one-sided expression of the truth that the Highest Human is nearest the Divine. When the ancient Taoist affirmed the good life as one of peace, gentleness, absence of noisy self-assertion and ambition, the cessation of desire; because thereby one became harmonious with the cosmic Tao, Law or Order; which does not haste or strive but silently and eternally originates, embraces and sustains all things; here, too, we have a one-sided expression of the principle that true personality is

won, not through egotistical self-assertion, but by seeking oneness with the universal order.

Indeed, the study of comparative religion and ethics reveals a striking agreement in regard to the moral values stressed in all the religions of highly cultivated peoples. To the ancient Greeks we owe most of our concepts in social ethics. To Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics we are indebted for the original impetus to form good working notions of justice, wisdom, courage, temperance, social rights and duties. To the Romans we owe the foundations of the science of law or jurisprudence. To the Stoics we owe the first conception of a universal social ethics, a universal brotherhood of man and a universal Divine Fatherhood. The Stoic idea of God was really the doctrine of Heraclitus that the world-process is pervaded and controlled by a Universal Order or Reason—the *Logos*. The Stoics gave to this concept a warmer, more spiritual, more personalized quality of being. The Stoics dealt with the problem of the reconciliation of evil with the Divine Goodness, much as do idealistic theologians and philosophers to-day.

Philosophical Brahmanism, as we have seen, teaches the identity of all souls in the Universal Soul—Brahma. It bases on this teaching love for one's neighbor. One's neighbor is in truth one's very self. It insists on chastity, temperance, gentleness, forgiveness. Primitive Buddhism forbids the taking of life, stealing, unchastity, lying, the use of intoxicating liquors. In addition to these commands, binding alike on laymen and monks, it enjoins on its monks celibacy, simplicity, even poverty of life. Its moral teachings are simple and lofty; based on the principle of universal love or compassion for all living crea-

tures. It offers as the reward in the present life the attainment of a calm and serene mind, one freed from all the storms of passion and desire, and therefore from sorrow; and in the future either a more favorable rebirth or eternal blessedness in Nirvana. Like Jesus, Siddartha, that is, Gotama Buddha, insisted on purity of inward motive. But Buddhism did not emphasize the value of positive social service so strongly as did early Christianity.

Summing up, it can be said that the elementary moral content of all the higher religions is much the same. Speaking the truth and the keeping of contracts; chastity; temperance and self-control; courage; justice; loyalty to one's kindred, friends and country; reverence—all these values are recognized in all the higher religions.

So, too, with the more spiritual values—calmness and serenity of mind; fidelity to duty; love and forgiveness; the recognition of a universal community of spirit in humanity—all these values are, in some degree and manner, recognized and stressed alike by Vedantist, Buddhist, Platonist and Stoic, as well as by the Christian.<sup>3</sup>

In truth, the main stream of ancient Christianity, before its division by the great schism, was formed by the confluence of many rivers. The immediate spiritual background of Jesus, is, of course, the marvelous prophetic movement which began in the eighth century B.C. with Amos, Hosea, Micah and the first Isaiah, and which continued through Jeremiah and the second Isaiah. There God is conceived, perhaps for the first time in world history, as one supreme Ethical and Personal Spirit whose

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<sup>3</sup> Compare W. K. Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 73, 74, 78-80, 91-95, 105-107, 112-119, 126-128, 208-212.

true service consists in the practice of self-control, moral integrity, social justice and mercy. Jesus completed the prophetic movement. This movement implicitly contained the principle of ethical and religious universalism. The second great confluent was the Stoic ethics and theology which entered Christianity through Paul. He was reared in Tarsus, at whose University Stoicism was regnant. The Pauline doctrines of body, soul and spirit; the Pauline distinction between the various kinds of bodies (terrestrial and celestial, natural and spiritual); the Pauline contrast between the ruling part, spirit or reason, in the soul and the lusts of the flesh; the Pauline conception of the Spirit of God as immanent in nature and man ("Though he be not far from every one of us, For in him we live and move and have our being," Acts xvii: 27, 28); the very fundamental thought that God as spirit is at once One and Transcendent and Many and Immanent, manifest throughout nature and in higher degree in the hearts or consciences of men—all these notions are Stoic. The last one is also Neo-Platonic. The *Logos* doctrine is at once Stoic and Neo-Platonic. So the third contributing stream in Christianity is the Neo-Platonic. Neo-Platonism, as it developed into a great religious philosophy, laid stress upon the purely spiritual or immaterial nature of God, on the immateriality of the spiritual and ethical part in the human soul, on the mystical union with the Godhead as the supreme Good. The *Logos* or *Word* is Platonic-Stoic in the Gospel of John. The marked affinity between Neo-Platonism and Christianity is evident in the community of thought of Origen, the great Christian Platonist of Alexandria, and his friend Plotinus, the greatest of the heathen Neo-Platonists. Both

developed the Platonic philosophy in the direction of a spiritual and mystical theology. Their fundamental divergence, of course, consists in that Origen identifies the historical Jesus with the full incarnation of God—the Logos. The influence of Neo-Platonism is very marked in the case of Augustine. It continues through Boethius, John Scotus Erigena, the Mystics and Dante.

Another tributary to Christianity was Roman social organization and statescraft, which exercised in time a reflex influence on the conception of God and salvation. The authoritative imperialism of the Roman Empire became the model for Catholic Christendom. It tended to make sacrosanct and to petrify into an unyielding structure all the elements drawn into the making of Christianity.

It is very noteworthy, as I have said, that all the religions of the higher cultures agreed in general terms in their emphasis on certain basic or practical moral virtues. Common to all is the affirmation of faith in the supremacy of those inward qualities of spirit which find expression in temperance, self-control, honesty and integrity, forgiveness, and sympathy; and faith in the harmony between these virtues and the ruling Powers in the cosmos. Where the divergences begin and the distinctions become important are with these finer nuances of spiritual value, which issue forth from the doctrine of *personality* or *moral individuality*, from conceptions of its true nature and its place in the universal whole.

All the nobler Oriental religious insights—those of the *Upanishads*, of primitive Buddhism, of Taoism—are defective at this point. And even the lofty and intellectual mysticism of Neo-Platonism is defective at the same point,

The quest for inner peace, for subjection of passion, for freedom and serenity of soul, by union with the Universal Spirit, is carried to the point where individuality or personality tends to vanish wholly in an Impersonal Absolute. Such a religious doctrine cannot be the source of a vigorous social ethics.

For, since a just, harmonious and vigorous social order is one constituted by the coöperative fellowship and communion of vigorous self-determining individuals, where the negative moment in the development of ethical personality is overstressed at the expense of the affirmative moment, the social order must sicken and wither. Where there is no hope for the individual there can be none for society. A vigorous social order will not be made up of world-weary negativistic persons. It is precisely in Hellenized Christianity alone that one finds the harmonious balance and interplay of the ethical principles of individuality and community. Herein lies the ethical supremacy of Jesus and his followers. For Him the individual has absolute value. God has created and cares for the individual. Everything in nature and social culture is to be tested by its influence in the making of spiritual individuals or persons. On the other hand, personality is developed and enjoyed only in coöperation, communion and fellowship.

Thus Christianity represents the high-water mark of ethical and spiritual insight. It was a happy conjunction, in no way derogating from the supreme value of the Christian spiritual impetus, that the work of Jesus and Paul found a cultivated soil at hand in the preparation already made by the spiritual genius of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. In terms of Ethics, one may say that Plato and

Aristotle laid the foundations of a rational theory of social ethics; one in which the individual is the center and community the area of the circle; or, in a better figure, the individual and community are the two poles of the one spiritual whole. The Stoics universalized the ethical concepts of Plato and Aristotle and the soil was ready for the fertilizing impulse of Christianity.

The permanent value of this great synthesis of Greek thought with the dynamic of Jesus' personality, achieved through Paul and his successors, is in no way lessened when we have recognized that the traditional philosophy of history and nature must be discarded.

For it remains true that there are great creative flowering times in the life of the spirit, as in the life of nature. When our minds are freed from slavish thralldom to the letter of the past we can use more freely and effectively the great insights and the great dynamic impulses which, coming down the stream of time, clarify our notions, quicken our spirits, give us hope and courage and faith to make our own lives and the community life, so far as we may, vessels for the realization of harmonious and integral personality in communion and fellowship.

For we, to-day, are threatened by quite another danger than the extinction of the individuality of the soul by its disappearance into the void of an impersonal absolute. We are not endangered by quietism, world-weariness and negativism in their Oriental forms.

We are threatened by what is perhaps a more ominous danger—the swallowing up of all genuine spiritual individuality; the extinction of human psychological wealth and diversity of experience, expression and joy; by the *mechanization of human society*. We are threatened with

the loss of the sources of inner joy, the extinction of the impulses to vigorous self-expression; to creation; to adventure in the realms of art, literature, play, culture—as well as in everyday work—by the overorganization and standardization of life. Everywhere, quantity production through vast organizations, to turn out cheap and mediocre standardized products rules our lives. “The individual withers and the world is more and more;” and “the world” here means a herd of machine-made men and women serving machines. Mechanization of personality for quantity production—*there is the enemy*.

I think the decline of individuality is manifest in art, letters, general culture, as it is in all industrial activity. It is certainly manifest in my own field of higher education. American higher education is becoming mechanized from bottom to top.

Now, a vast mechanized social organization will not carry on without individuality to rule and run it. But what kind of individuality? Where is the pressure exerted and in what direction? To subordinate everything full, creative, individual in the spiritual realm, to industrial and commercial machinery, to enthrone commercial magnates and industrial managers, advertisers and salesmen as our rulers? Everything must be sold. Can we “sell” personality? Plato and Christ are at one in furnishing us with insights, values and impulses to overcome this engulfing tide which threatens to drown all individuality, distinction, fineness and freedom. Plato says that virtue or the good is supreme in the universe and virtue is the “harmony of the soul”; Jesus says “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” In the modern phrase, what are we “selling”—beauty, joy, freedom,

harmony, creativeness and the fellowship of noble minds?

And now we are ready to state the criterion of religious value, in terms of the function of religion.

1. This function is bipolar. Religion enfranchises and enriches human individuality. By bringing him in touch with the Infinite Life, it frees man from the bondage of mere routine, of habit and mechanization—in thought, feeling, and action. It gives a new dimension to individuality. We are all constantly in danger that the springs of our spiritual life—of feeling, thought and volition—shall dry up. We tend to peter out, to run in grooves, to repeat the same old thoughts, to cherish the same old feelings. We live for the most part as psychical mechanisms. But not wholly so. And we rebel rightly against becoming mere machines. We seek fresh inspirations. This means that we wish to get out of the treadmill of a work-a-day mechanical existence. Religion liberates us. For through it we enter into living and immediate converse with the Universal Fountain of Life which is *supermechanical*, *supernatural*, *superhuman*. The very essence of religion is that in it the individual feels directly his contact with the Creative Source of Life and Power. Religious experience is the agency which recharges the run-down batteries of human individuality. If one take "Nature" as meaning a routine order of behavior of things on a flat plane of mechanism, with no inrush of creative power, then the very essence of religion is *supernatural*.

2. An equally insistent characteristic of religion is that it is communal. It breaks down the barriers between individuals. For what sets up these barriers is just mechanization—is just that habituation of thought and

feeling, by which the individual identifies himself wholly with his own routine ways and interests or with the routine of some group: it may be a labor group, a capitalistic group, a professional group, a political group, or even a nationalistic group. Religion is the only antidote for the bad individualism which is self-minded, group-minded, or class-minded, and thus far unsocial; which cannot see over or through its own backyard fences of self, family or group. This bad individualism and "groupism" spells social disintegration. It becomes the more potent and dangerous, the more highly concentrated and specialized men's interests and activities become.

Religion breaks down these fences. It penetrates the barriers. It reveals the falsity of an individualism in which one is shut up within one's own psychological skin. It shows that the supposed impenetrability of selfhood is nought but the impenetrability of ossified habit mechanisms. Religion is essentially *communal-mindedness*. Everywhere and always, through common worship, it stresses the sense of fellowship, of communion, of values and purposes shared among selves. Individualism spells the depotentialization of individuality. True individuality flourishes only where there is community of purpose, aim and faith. And the wider reaching and deeper going this community, the richer the individualities it develops.

3. The bipolar function of religion—the liberation and repotentializing of individuality and the socialization of purposes, aims and values, can be performed only if there be a supermechanical, supernatural and supersocial Infinite Source of spiritual energies, Infinite Ground of Values—What men commonly call *God*.

The individual who worships himself or his groups, is intellectually, æsthetically, morally—every way. To set up the worship and service even of the most generous and general social values as the object of religion; to put “social values” in place of God seems a way out for those who wish to keep something of the august aura of religion but, by reason of the apparent strength of positivism and agnosticism, have given up all hope of a knowledge of Reality. This way out is a will-o’-the-wisp. Either “Ideal Social Values” is a very abstract and round-about way of translating God, the Absolute Reality, into practical pragmatic terms, or it is a vain and empty notion. Does one mean by the worship and service of social values just the adoration of the sum total of values that human beings actually enjoy or pursue? Then one is worshipping an abstraction. If one cannot well worship one’s own imperfect self and draw spiritual sustenance therefrom, how can one worship the sum total of human selves? One may grant that this attitude is, ethically, a vastly higher and more religious attitude than the worship of oneself in one’s group. But to take this seriously implies that the life of humanity is grounded in an Absolute Source of Life and Value which transcends human society.

The spiritual health of society can only be improved if there really be a doctor who knows its diseases and can supply the remedies. The possibility of social regeneration and individual redemption, through and in the process of social regeneration, rests on the *reality* of a supernatural and supersocial Source of the good life. God must exist as the Supreme Reality, the Inexhaustible Spring of spiritual energy. In reverent communion with

Him the individual and the community gain refreshment and new power.

The best argument for the reality of God is, after all, the fact that man, who has endured and flourished on this planet, is never satisfied with the values yielded by his own work-a-day mechanisms of individual habits and social machinery; but always turns to worship and commune with the mysterious and ineffable, encompassing and sustaining Fountain of Spiritual Life whom men call God.

There is a mystic strain in all of us. It is the deepest source of our creative lives. Without recourse to it we cannot live. We needs must worship and contemplate. The eye of the soul ever seeks farther horizons.

The mystic is he who has developed farther that spark of divine fire that smolders in the common man. The mystic can rightly say of those who would limit knowledge to sense experience and the deductions of abstract reason —“The rest may reason and welcome. 'Tis we musicians know.”

Intuition is a valid form of knowing. It is the immediate basis of our knowing of other persons, of our æsthetic knowledge; and it is the solid core of expert judgment in every field in which the expert or connoisseur works. The function of ratiocination is to interpret intuitions, to classify and relate them. There is no more ground for denying to the intuitions of the mystic any veridical basis in reality than there is for saying that the æsthetic experiences and the immediate feeling of communion with other selves are illusory. On the other hand, all intuitions must justify themselves by fitting harmoniously into the interpretation of reality as a whole.

the mystic's intuition of the Divine, his sense of communion with a Reality above the things of sense and being, the scientist's abstract skeleton or scheme of reality, does not conflict with either sense experience or science. It is more inclusive than sense experience and more palpitating and alive than the scientific conceptual skeleton of reality. No data of sense experience and no legitimate scientific inference therefrom invalidate the livingness, warmth and value of the mystical experience.<sup>4</sup>

The danger that besets the mystic is that of flight into, and repose in, an abstract void; an empty one that is severed from and swallows up in a dark and formless night of vague feeling all the concrete differences, all the plurality and individuality that make up the concrete world of selves. So the mystic is in danger of losing his own individuality and the individuality of all other beings in an Impersonal Absolute. The God of mystical experience, to be of concrete and practical value, must be conceived not as denying, but as including and sustaining all the concreteness and plurality of personal lives. He must be a God who manifests Himself in other experiences and who is the concretely social and living Ground of Nature and finite personality.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Compare the author's *Man and the Cosmos*, pp. 549-555.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the author's *Man and the Cosmos*, Chapters XXX, XXXI, and XXXIX.

## CHAPTER XVII

### SCIENCE AND RELIGION

There are two great types of science: formal and empirical. Formal science, which includes logic and pure mathematics, is the theory of pure intellectual procedure; in other words, of the universal methods of thought by which the truth is attained. Formal science has nothing directly to do with the actual facts of the real world. It is the theory of the universal principles and procedures to which all empirical science must conform.

Empirical science is the systematic study of facts of experience. In every department, empirical science is concerned to determine precisely what the facts are and how they are connected. The basic procedures of empirical science are careful observation and analysis of the data, accurate description and generalization from the facts. Empirical science results in the formulation of laws and explanatory principles. Empirical laws are statements of the regular manner of sequence in which facts appear. A causal law is a statement of the way in which a fact of a specific type follows upon other facts of a specific type. In short, a causal law is a statement of a certain order of events. This is true whether the facts be physical, physiological or psychological, or be a compound of all three types. All empirical science aims to discover orderly sequences and interdependences among

Thus, for example, if there be such discoverable sequences of historical fact, then, thus far and thus far, history is a science. The predictive value of science depends upon the degree in which this order can be formulated as holding for the sequences of events.

Explanatory principles are the great comprehensive generalizations which bind large bodies of facts into more comprehensive systems. Examples of explanatory principles are: the principle of gravitation; the principle of relativity; the electromagnetic theory of light; the electronic theory of matter; the evolutionary theory of the origin and development of solar systems, of the earth and of life. The chief difference between an empirical or causal law and an explanatory theory is that the latter includes within its sweep many special cases of causal order.

The fundamental postulate of all empirical sciences is that, within the special type of fact with which each special science is concerned, there obtain *interdependence* and *regularity*. There are no isolated and therefore inexplicable facts. *An event which was in no way dependent on other events would be a miracle.* Science has no place for miracle in this sense. Further, when a certain type of event has been shown to be dependent upon, or in some way connected with, another type of event, the repetition of the one type will involve the repetition of the other type. The causal laws of science are statements of the repetition of similar events.

The goal which beckons science from afar is that of weaving into one complete and coherent web of thought all the partial causal orders. This goal can, doubtless,

never be reached. But it can be more and more closely approached. Every time that a principle of order, a larger type of behavior, is found to hold in fields that hitherto seemed separate, one step more is taken towards the final goal. This is happening to-day, especially between the fields of physics, chemistry and physiology; also, to a considerable extent, between the fields of physiology and psychology. The goal would be attained if we could show that all the phenomena of life and mind are but special complexes either of physical or of psychical events. This goal, of course, is still far distant. Perhaps it is unattainable. It may be, as the philosophical dualist maintains, that *there are two irreducibly distinct types of events—physical and mental*—which imply two distinct types of existents, *bodies and minds*.

Or it may be, as the spiritualist or "mentalist" holds, that all bodies are really expressions of minds or souls. It is not necessary to prejudge this knotty problem here, if it can be shown that religion has a real place, no matter whether dualism or spiritualism be true. If materialism, the doctrine that everything in the mental or spiritual order is a by-product of physical forces were true, religion would be an illusion. But materialism is an unprovable hypothesis. So is mentalism.

To sum up the aims and postulates or working hypotheses of science, science is concerned to determine the sequential dependences of events that are verifiable; that are real facts of nature or human nature. Science is observation, analysis, precise description, for the purpose of arriving at verifiable laws or orders of behavior. In so far as science is able to do this, man's intellectual and practical control over nature and human nature is assured.

gives man a power of control not otherwise at-

In the past, owing to the confusion of human motives and interests, no clear distinction was drawn between scientific control and other forms of control. The primitive philosophy of *Animism*, which still persists among unscientific people, is the expression of this confusion. Not only did it fail to distinguish between different types of causation; not only did it jumble together physical, biological and mental causation; it further assumed that all causation, or nearly all, is the expression of the will of animated beings, more or less like human beings in their likes and dislikes, their interests and motives, though superior to them in power. As science gradually came into being, more and more the volitions of animated beings were withdrawn as explanations of natural events. The sphere of the gods was narrowed. When, in place of many gods and spirits, the conception of one God arose, the two alternatives which presented themselves were these: Is God to be regarded, *not* as an explanation of any special event, since He must be the animating Spirit of the Whole, the Supreme Ground of the entire activity, life and order of the world, or is He to be placed outside of or above the ordinary order of nature and His function limited to intervention on special occasions, such as the creation of the physical universe, the creation of living species, the critical passes in the history of the race or of specially favored portions of the human race? The latter alternative is a *supernaturalistic Dualism*. It is still held by many intelligent people and is the metaphysics which lies behind traditional orthodoxy. A God who intervenes in a miraculous manner on special occa-

sions is the latent presupposition of all doctrines find the basis of religious authority in sacred institutions and their dogmas.

The former alternative is entirely consistent with the methods and postulates of science; the latter is entirely inconsistent therewith.

From the scientific standpoint God is a superfluous hypothesis which explains nothing, and only constitutes a bar to scientific inquiry. To say that any event is an act of God is to close the door to a natural explanation of the event. The only notion of God that is in harmony with the principles of science is that He is the immanent and ceaselessly energizing Ground of the universe and that the whole complex and varied order of nature, human nature and superhuman nature are manifestations of His Eternally Creative Spirit.

But why should a scientifically minded person be interested even in this monistic conception of the relation of God to the universe? Why not banish the notion altogether? Because science itself is one of the chief forms in which the spirit of man seeks and realized *spiritual values*. Why should man have science at all? Because it is one of the chief ways in which his spirit realizes itself in active communion with the nature of things. The very existence and growth of science is an expression of the self-realization of the human spirit. Man makes himself more at home in the world and, in so doing, is developing his own spiritual powers, through discovering and using the Truth. Man also feels beauty and sublimity, grandeur and terror in nature. He creates, by the ceaseless urge of his spirit, forms of beauty from wood and stone, color and sound. He creates, by the same urge,

and moral ideals through which to satisfy his life and fuller. He seeks to get clearer and better realizations of justice, peace, purity, integrity of spirit, love and fellowship. In sum, the human spirit is so constituted that it must pursue and find and worship *Values*; otherwise it perishes. Science, the æsthetic contemplation of nature, the creation of objects of beauty, the realization of righteousness and Love—such are the chief forms of spiritual value which man pursues.

No scientific account of man is complete which omits to consider this urge of the spirit towards the realization of spiritual values. In fact, science cannot account for Values in causal terms at all. No physical theory will tell me why I love beauty in nature, why I seek to create or enjoy the beauties of painting or poetry. No biological explanation can tell me why I seek peace and justice and love and comradeship in human relations. In these appreciations, in these feelings of value, we find in immediate human experience the revelation of the spiritual meaning of human life and the world.

Indeed, science, while itself a principal form in which man's spiritual nature finds satisfaction, offers no substitute for real living experience. Science is limited to the verification, descriptive analysis and linking of facts. The facts are matters given. *Every science depends on perception.* And perception is a function of the human organism in interaction with its environment. Science yields only skeletal outlines of reality, not reality itself. No science of optics is possible without the mind that sees through the brain and eyes. No science of optics can take the place of the visual apparatus and the mind. No

science of æsthetics is a substitute for beauty, which is impossible without the feeling. The living reality of nature is given in our immediate perceptual experience. No sciences of psychology, sociology or ethics are possible without the living experience of man's individual and social feelings, valuations, reflections and volitions. No sciences of man are substitutes for the living experiences of affection, of fear, hope, anger, love, striving and aspiration.

*Since religion is the total reaction, in feeling, thought and action, of human personality to its whole environment, no science of religion is possible without the immediate experiences of worship, meditation and loyal service which constitute the specifically religious attitude. And no skeletal theory of religion is a substitute for the living experience. Science can describe, analyze and classify the data of religious experience and action and relate them to other fields of experience and action; but, after as well as before, this is done, religion remains, like our perceptual, æsthetic and social experiences, the first-hand reaction of the living soul to the whole of reality, the expression of the reality and supremacy of the Highest Human Values through every aspect of our being.*

Religion is the total attitude of the spirit of man in which he affirms his faith that the values of life and experience are rooted and grounded in the nature of things. Belief in God means belief, faith, in the supremacy of the highest values of life. The scientist affirms this faith when he unselfishly and devotedly seeks the True, just as much as the artist or lover of Beauty and the lover of the Good in human relationships affirm it.

So far, then, from there being any inevitable conflict

science and religion, when we take  
 now, we find that science is itself the  
 and justification of religious faith. For science  
 is based on faith in the True, faith in an order that can  
 be known by the human mind. Devotion to science is  
 devotion to the value of truth. Devotion to beauty is  
 another and coördinate expression of religious faith. A  
 third coördinate expression is devotion to the ethically  
 best in human interpersonal relationships.

Faith in God is the faith that all forms of spiritual  
 value, the True not less than the Beautiful and the Good,  
 by which the soul of man is lifted from the merely sensu-  
 ous and animal life into communion with and possession  
 of some fragment of the total and essential *Meaning of  
 Things*, as a whole have their source and firm foundation,  
 their rock and fortress in the eternal Spirit of the Cosmos.  
 Faith in God is faith that underneath nature and man  
 are the everlasting arms which uphold the spiritual values  
 —whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good re-  
 port. Such a faith does not require the picture of God  
 as a magnificent non-natural man sitting outside of, and  
 occasionally intervening in, the course of events. Such a  
 faith cannot be shaken by any discoveries of science. For  
 every discovery of science, like every creation of beauty  
 and every deed wrought or suffering undergone for the  
 freeing and enriching of the soul of man is a justification  
 of this basic faith in.

One God, one law, one element,  
 And one far-off divine event  
 To which the whole creation moves.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### NATURAL CAUSATION AND MIRACLES

It is about 2,300 years since Socrates, in the Platonic dialogues, showed for all time the supreme importance and correct method of arriving at sound definitions. Nevertheless, almost any of the latest discussions on the subject of miracles will illustrate the failure to form clear conceptions of the terms used. When we are considering the compatibility or incompatibility of natural causation and miracles we must first determine what we mean by these concepts.

The universality of natural causation is the fundamental postulate of "modern science," a postulate that is exemplified and verified by every new step in science. What does this mean? It is sometimes called "the reign of law." Here again we must be careful in our thinking. Law does not "reign" in nature as it does in human governance. A law of nature is not an edict or enactment that natural forces should obey, but sometimes do not obey. *A law of nature is simply a concise statement of an orderly or regular sequence in which natural events actually do take place.* A law of nature is the formulation of an orderly behavior of events; in brief, of linkages of facts. We must first observe the actual sequence of events; taking care to eliminate all irrelevant factors, and to make our observations as complete and our analysis as

Science postulates that there is order throughout the whole of nature. There is no disorder in nature. Chaos or disorder is only an appearance, due to the limitations of our knowledge and insight. This does not imply that all special types of orderly behavior in events can be reduced to the lowest or simplest type, as the mechanist assumes. Mechanism or materialism assumes that all changes in the world are but particular complications of inanimate or lifeless and soulless mass-particles. This assumption has no sufficient warrant in fact. It explains nothing to say, for instance, that a human being is only "rationalized mud"; for mud that is capable of rational activity is not mud in any observable or intelligible meaning of the term mud. If mud can become a rational, moral, affectionate, beauty-seeking and righteousness-serving being, then it is not and never was mere mud. It may be true that there is no lifeless matter in the universe, as many idealists maintain. Or it may be true that, while lifeless matter exists, it is nevertheless potentially instrumental to life. Whatever be the ultimate truth on this point, it is not in harmony with observable facts and, therefore, not scientific to assert that life is not a higher potency of activity than mere matter; or that mind is not a higher potency of activity than mere animal life. What we find in fact is a succession of orders of activity; a succession of events rising one upon another and interdependent—first, the activity of mere force centers (electrons); second, the activity of vital centers (organisms), and, third, the activity of minds. We do not know all the intimate relations of action and passion between these types of monads. But we do know that they all exist and interact. Any regular

mode of behavior among these men is a case of natural causation. Science holds that every event is a case of such behavior, and that every event has natural causes or necessary antecedents.

*A priori*, as Hume put it, anything *might* cause anything else. Spirits in America *might* tunnel mountains in Asia without intervening and observable physical instruments. Bodies might rise without means of propulsion and pass through the earth's atmosphere into interstellar spaces. Primitive man searched for causes; but he assumed that almost anything might produce anything else. The accumulated weight of scientific observations and predictions makes it in the highest degree improbable that spirits can act except through the mediation of physical instruments. It is highly improbable that the orderly sequential dependencies between events ever has been, or ever can be, suspended or interfered with. Every event in nature (including human nature) is, in all probability, the result of antecedent natural events. Science has no use at all for the hypothesis of an extra-mundane cause.

Can science admit the probability or even the possibility of *miracles*? That depends on what one means by miracle. If one means an event which involves the contravention or suspension of the natural order and the intrusion of some supra-mundane power, science must reject the hypothesis as improbable and, still worse, unverifiable. There is no good ground for supposing that causes operate differently in different historical eras or in different places under the same physical and vital conditions. The same kinds of forces must operate now as operated in Palestine 1900 years ago. Therefore, so far from physical or vital miracles in this sense being authentications of a

ine authority and power, the claim that they discredits on the traditional accounts of the and spiritual persons and principles with which they are associated. There is no verifiable instance of a human being who was born of a virgin. There is no verifiable instance of a really dead human organism being raised from the dead in the same body. There is no verifiable instance of an earthly physical organism being able to rise against gravitational attraction and fly off into interstellar space. Every body that is propelled from the earth is propelled by a physical force and ultimately falls to earth again. We have good grounds for asserting that a human organism could not live at all thirty-five miles up in our earth's atmosphere; much less, if hurtling through interstellar space. Either the working hypotheses of science, which are receiving additional verification everyday, are false, or such miraculous events could not have occurred. If it be said that God, living either outside or above the world-mechanism, can suspend its operation when He will, the answer is twofold: (1) Such a hypothesis makes jettison of our abundantly verified conception of the world as a cosmos, an orderly whole. (2) If God so intervened a few times, why should He not have done so on urgent recent occasions?

The question of the historicity of miracles is not a religious question at all. It is a question for science and critical history. Spiritual values are discerned and embraced by the spirit. The ethical values of life do not depend on any particular description of the problems of the history of life and the physical universe. It is irrelevant to the validity of moral ideals and the spiritual value of human life, whether man, the whole realm of animals,

nature and the solar system itself came in suddenly or developed slowly by gradual changes through many millenniums. It makes no difference to the meaning of human conduct and existence what man's ancestry may have been or by what steps in particular man came to be what he is; or how and by what steps man's physical and vital environments came to be what they are. The deep concern of ethics and ethical religion is with the present status and prospects of human life. What makes all the difference in the world is this—how can we interpret the meaning and value of man's ethical and spiritual actualities and capacities in relation to the cosmic whole to-day?

No miracles, however numerous or stupendous, will serve to validate an ethical and spiritual view of human life and the world. The abandonment of miracles, as the products of the naïve imagination of peoples cradled in a world-view incompatible with the scientific conception of a well-ordered universe, does not in any respect invalidate the ethics of Jesus. Indeed, when we have once grasped the great conception that the universe is an orderly and continuous whole, in which there are no causeless effects and no effectless causes, in other words, a living and continuously creative universe; our minds are thereby emancipated from the crude and often cruel deductions which arise from separating God, the ruling spirit of the cosmic order, from the world in which he lives and moves and has his being. Once admit that the world ordinarily is without God and that God enters into commerce with the world and man only on sundry extraordinary occasions, and we have opened the way to all manner of irrational, crude and disordered interpretations of human life. I

in this connection, to the attention of the super-  
 naturalist the terrible effects of the researches  
 begun by the Boston clergy in 1681, on *special providences*, and, especially, the direful influence of Increase  
 and Cotton Mather. These dualistic supernaturalists  
 fomented the witch persecutions.

When our minds are permeated with the sense of a  
 continuous causal order manifested everywhere through-  
 out nature and human life, "this doctrine," to quote  
 Spinoza, "not only completely tranquillizes our spirit, but  
 also shows us where our highest happiness or blessedness  
 is, namely, solely in the knowledge of God, whereby we  
 are led to act only as love and piety shall bid us; it shows  
 us that we should await and endure fortune's smiles and  
 frowns with an equal mind; this doctrine raises social  
 life, inasmuch as it teaches us to hate no man, neither to  
 despise, to deride, to envy, or to be angry with any. Fur-  
 ther, as it tells us that each should be content with his own,  
 and helpful to his neighbour, not from any womanish pity,  
 favour or superstition, but solely by the guidance of  
 reason, according as the time and occasion demand."  
 (Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part II, note at end.)

In place of a Godless world, in which God occasionally  
 appears we have then a universe which is eternally the  
 Living Garment of Deity. In place of confusing the  
 authority and validity of ethical and spiritual principles  
 with physical stunts that cause the vulgar to gape, we  
 find the continuous validity and authority of ethical and  
 spiritual values in the spiritual life itself.

"And, behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong  
 wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks  
 before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and

after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord ·  
the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fir.  
Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still  
voice." I Kings xix: 11-12.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which  
is born of the Spirit is spirit." John iii: 6.

It is often argued that, if one admit that God is a  
person, then there is no intellectual difficulty in believing  
in physical miracles, since personality is higher than, and  
guides and controls, the physical order. But what is  
meant by the belief that God is a person? If there be  
one God, he cannot be *a* person. He must be *the Perfect  
Person* and men only imperfect or partial persons. If  
the doctrine of Divine Personality means that God is "a  
magnified and non-natural man," clearly we have no right  
to suppose that He rules over nature so supremely and  
arbitrarily that he can and will suspend or interrupt,  
when he wills, the natural course of events. A human  
person is conditioned by nature. A human person is able  
to control natural processes only by observing and obeying  
the laws of the behavior of natural things. Our power  
over nature is simply the power of observation, rational  
inference and synthesis. If God is like a human person,  
then he is a finite being, and conditioned by the behavior  
of nature.

On the other hand, if we conceive God to be the Uni-  
versal Cosmic Spirit or Supreme Creative Thought and  
Will, who is the Ground of the Natural Order, we cannot  
admit at once that the entire orderly manifestation of  
his creative and sustaining activity in the cosmos is but  
a part of his self-manifestation and that, while he runs  
the world by a certain scheme, which we in part appre-

on special occasions and for special reasons, the operation of that scheme in order to put into effect some better one.

The fact is, that we have no other means of knowing the order of the universe, no other keys to the meaning of reality than those furnished us by patient study of the facts of nature and human nature.

The question at issue is not at all whether there is absolute mechanical uniformity in the order of nature, so that nothing new or different from the old can appear in this order; nor whether one have any right to admit superordinary events. Nature is indefinitely complex. It is supermechanical. The newer and more complex events, such as life issuing from apparently lifeless matter, mind and reason appearing in certain living forms, cannot be explained wholly in terms of the older and more simple events. There is creative novelty all along the line. Even in so simple a process as the union of  $H_2$  and O to produce water there is novelty. The properties of water are not the mechanical sum of the properties of  $H_2$  and O.

No, the real question at issue is this—Have we sufficient grounds for supposing that, because the career and character of one human being are so different in their ethical and spiritual qualities from the careers and characters of all other human beings, therefore, in order to conceive this difference adequately, we must assume that, in his beginnings, his dealings with the forces of nature and his death, he was exempted from the ordinary conditions of human existence? If the spiritual supremacy of Jesus implies this exemption, then those who accept that supremacy are entitled to make it.

But they must recognize that the burden of proof rests

upon them. For science and the comparative human thought unite in rendering extremely distant the likelihood of any human person being exempted from ordinary conditions of human existence. Science, as the description of the normal course of natural events, is estopped by such an instance. The comparative history of human thought yields overwhelming evidence of the natural tendency of the human mind, in its animistic or prescientific stage, to multiply miracles; not merely as *signs*, but as wonders evidencing control of *Mana*, the mysterious wonder-working power. It cannot be doubted that the New Testament writers lived in this prescientific atmosphere.

The attitude of a scientifically minded person towards the revivification of the dead, the transformation of water into wine, the virgin birth and the resurrection of the body laid in the tomb is—these things were possible but highly improbable.

To argue that miracles may have happened, because life is not explainable in terms of mechanical uniformity and because it uses and controls matter and energy, and, hence, may exist apart from them, is to shoot wide of the mark. We admit that life is not explainable wholly in terms of mechanical uniformity. But there are biological uniformity and continuity. There are psychological uniformity and continuity. Moreover, we know nothing of life existing apart from matter and energy. We have no grounds, in fact, for assuming that the Universal Life, the Cosmic Life, exists apart from matter and energy. The continuous order of natural events, which we denominate "material," is an aspect of the continuous orderly activity of the Cosmic Life.

It is quite true that the laws of nature, as we know them, are not absolute and final principles which rule over the procession of material events like a king over his subjects. These laws are but partial and imperfect descriptions of the actual course of events. It is precisely because they are *verifiable* that we accept them so far as they go. Anything which contravenes them has the burden of proof laid upon it. How are we to verify these exceptions, suspensions of ordinary laws, or intrusions of higher laws? They are found in all prescientific forms of thinking. They do not validate any genuine spiritual intuition or insight. It is then a stumbling-block in the way of an intelligent ethical faith to tie up ethical values with the question whether these dubious physical events occurred or not in the remote past.

Jesus refused to work signs and wonders to compel faith. The originals of the physical miracles attributed to him were probably misunderstood and misremembered parabolic sayings of his.

The previous arguments, which are of a general scientific character, and which render improbable and unnecessary the literal belief in the virgin birth of Jesus and in the reanimation of his earthly body are reinforced by an examination of the New Testament records.

The virgin birth is not so much as mentioned by Paul, whose epistles are much the earliest extant Christian doctrines. It may be replied that he knew nothing about it, although it had occurred. If so, then it played no part in the earliest Christian traditions. If he knew of it he would certainly have made use of it since for Paul, Jesus was at once the Heavenly Man, a subordinate Deity, and the true Messiah.

It is not mentioned at all in Mark, which is conceded to be the earliest Gospel; nor in John, which is the most spiritual and mystical of all the Gospels. Indeed in Luke 3: 34, Jesus is referred to as the son of Joseph. In Matthew, which Gospel was written to prove that Jesus was the true Messiah foretold by the prophets, while the story of the virgin birth is fully given, the descent of Jesus from David, which descent was taken to establish his Messianic claim, is traced through Joseph. The fair conclusion is that the story of the virgin birth is a later interpolation due (1) to the mistranslation of the passage in Isaiah vii: 14, wherein the Hebrew *talmah*, properly meaning in this case *a young spouse* (probably the prophet's own wife) was wrongly translated *parthenos*, virgin, in the Greek Septuagint; (2) to the misapplication of this mistranslation as a Messianic prophecy; and (3) to the growth of an ascetic dualism of spirit and flesh which put marriage, as a necessary evil, below the state of virginity. Logically, to argue that the virgin birth was necessary if Jesus were sinless, is at once to detract from Jesus' full humanity, to degrade marriage, and to imply that the immaculate conception runs clear back to Seth, the son of Adam. To say all this is not to deny the delicacy and beauty of the story, or to be insensible to the way in which it has touched the hearts of devout believers in the spiritual supremacy of Jesus. The story is a symbol which enshrines a precious jewel of faith and devotion—the moral uniqueness and perfection of the Son of Man.

Paul is of course the earliest witness to the faith in the risen life of Christ. He places Christ's appearances to him (whether in the body or out of the body, he knows

6) and the appearances to other disciples on the same plane (I. Cor. xv: 4-9). He mentions an appearance to above five hundred, which is not otherwise recorded. He says Christ first appeared to Cephas, that is, to Peter. In Acts ix: 3-8, we are told that Paul, on the road to Damascus, saw a light and heard the voice of Jesus, whereas the men who accompanied him heard the voice, but saw no one. In Acts xxii: 9, Paul is quoted as saying that his companions beheld the light, but heard not the voice.

In Mark xvi, we are told that Christ first appeared to Mary Magdalene, then to the two disciples, then to the eleven at meat.

In Matthew xxviii, we are told that he appeared first to the two Marys, whom he told to tell the brethren to go to Galilee: there he appeared to them and gave them a commission to evangelize the world.

In Luke xxiv, Christ is said to have appeared first to the two disciples, then to Peter, and finally to the eleven near Bethany.

In John xx-xxi, he is represented as appearing first to Mary Magdalene: then to all the disciples except Thomas in a closed room; then, finally, eight days later, to all, including Thomas, to whom he showed his wound; finally to six of them fishing at the Sea of Tiberias.

It is impossible that he should have appeared with a reanimated body, passed through closed doors, have both appeared and not appeared in the neighborhood of Jerusalem and in Galilee, and have appeared in the same way to Paul on the road to Damascus.

The only solid facts in these confusing narratives are: (1) That the disciples somehow became convinced that

their Master was alive and was with them in spirit. I. conviction gave them a renewal of courage, a great infusion of energy, and a firmer dedication to the spread of His gospel. (2) That Paul and John were both mystics. There can be no doubt that the appearances to Paul were in the nature of mystical visions, and that at the roots of John's narrative there is a mystical conception.

It is possible to believe that Jesus appeared with an ethereal body, but this is mere speculation. We cannot fully account for the manner in which the faith in the continued existence and presence of the Master arose, although we can trace its extraordinary effects. If it be said that the only alternative to acceptance of the reanimated body as the manner of the resurrection is the admission that Christianity is founded on illusions, namely, subjective visions, the reply is twofold: (1) Christianity, as the discipleship of Jesus, is founded on something far more solid and universal in appeal than the reanimation of a dead body. It is founded on the witness of the ethical spirit in man which responds to the supreme moral grandeur of the person of Jesus as he lived among men. (2) Who can say what is merely subjective, and what is objective in the things of the spirit? We must perforce, with our bodily investiture, clothe our profoundest thoughts, our noblest aspirations and deepest insights in bodily symbols. The symbols change, but the spirit remains. Who shall venture to say, in view of Paul's achievement and of those of all Christlike souls, that that only is objective which is physical and that the spiritual is subjective illusion? This is materialism in philosophy. I have to say, then, and I say it not in the spirit of abuse,

ut as a statement of principle, that all who would make the validity, the truth, the beauty and spiritual authority of Christ's person and work stand or fall with the literal acceptance of the virgin birth and the reanimation and flight through the atmosphere and interstellar spaces of his crucified body are teaching the crassest sort of philosophical materialism. These early disciples, who were simple souls, perhaps could not otherwise clothe their faith in the triumph of Christ and the continued reality of spirit than in physical symbols. But it is surely time that the defenders of Christianity saw things in a clearer light.

For one to whom Christ's supremacy is witnessed by conscience and heart, that is in the spirit, there is no need of empty tombs with grave clothes lying folded; no need to put physical hands into physical wounds. For him that which is truly objective and eternal is the Universal Spirit of which Jesus of Nazareth *was* the highest Incarnation.

If by miracles be meant events of which we do not understand the natural antecedents, we must admit that there are many such events. Our knowledge is very imperfect, but it grows from more to more. By a "wonderful" event we may mean, either one that we wonder at because we do not know fully its causes, or one which we admire for the intelligence, beauty and nobility of character which it reveals. Into both categories the healing miracles of Jesus fall, since we do not understand the relation of mind and body and these were works of love. But it is a verified fact that human beings, through suggestion, through arousing faith and devotion, can influence other human beings. The influence of suggestion, persuasion,

faith and love are very powerful factors in healing functional disorders. The influence of the mind on the body is a fact just as is the converse. The healing miracles of Jesus do not contravene the principles of science, since other human beings have healed and do heal the psychophysical organisms (the soul-body complexes) which are their fellows. It is no more unreasonable to believe that Jesus was supreme among the sons of men as a moral and spiritual personality, exercising in superlative degree powers that others exercise in lesser degree, than it is to say that Shakespeare is supreme among poetic dramatists. And, finally, the true basis of wonder, reverence, and love for Jesus is for His Person as *He was and is* to men. The works and words are revelations of what the person essentially is, and this goes beyond all works. Shakespeare, the spirit or man, was greater than all his works. We feel shining through his works his greatness.

Browning distinguishes the "what does," the "what knows" and the "what is" as three ascending levels in human personality. The "What is" is the Essential Spirit. Apply this to Jesus. What He does and says give glimpses, broken lights, through which in loving admiration we feel what *He was and is* to man.

Any personality is a miracle; not as contraversing the laws of nature, but as being a spiritually rich and worthy and mysterious embodiment or revelation of the spirit of the universe. To say that the Person of Jesus is the highest, the most Divine among the sons of men is to recognize, in gratitude and love, that this Friend of man is the fullest, the most adequate, expression in human form of the highest spiritual values of existence. In this sense His Person is a miracle, a wonder, the most signal

instance of union and consummation of these qualities of human personality that, wherever we find them, we bow to in reverent love and through communion with which we seek and gain moral strength and spiritual renewal.

NOTE. The remainder of this work is a statement, in less technical and argumentative form, of the ideas developed more elaborately in *Man and the Cosmos*.

## CHAPTER XIX

### WHAT FAITH IS

The emphasis laid on Faith, in the teachings of Jesus and in the New Testament writings generally, is very noteworthy. It occurs in eleven important passages in the Gospel of Matthew alone. Jesus rebukes his disciples for their little faith. He praises a Samaritan woman and a Roman Centurion for their great faith and, because of it, accedes to their demands. He cannot do mighty works in one place because of their lack of faith. Paul makes salvation or justification the outcome of faith. In the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews there is a great hymn of faith, in which are recited what saints and heroes have done by faith. There faith is defined as "the giving substance to things hoped for, the assurance of things unseen" (Heb. xi: 1).

Contrast with the position of faith in the Gospels the lament of Matthew Arnold,

The Sea of Faith,  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore,  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

—DOVER BEACH.

And the doubting, hesitating faith of Tennyson, so accurate a mirror of the soul of the Victorian era,

I stretch lame hands of faith and grope  
 And gather dust and chaff and call  
 To what I feel is Lord of all  
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

—"In Memoriam," LV:4.

What, then, is Faith? It is contrasted with sight and knowledge.

For now we know in part and we prophesy in part. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.

Faith is not blind credulity, nor is it the mind's passive assent to theoretical propositions. *Faith is the dynamic expression of the whole man.* It springs from the need for action and endurance. It is the personal resolve and determination to take risks, to adventure forth on a hazardous quest; because one trusts life, the universe, one's own powers. Faith is essentially a volitional or active attitude. He who has faith is ready to wager thereon, willing to venture his all. *Faith is the dynamic urge of life itself.* Its true opposite is not skepticism but timidity and fear. Faith is that attitude of trust and confident boldness in the response of reality to our deepest needs and highest personal strivings which spurs us to do and to dare. Faith is loyalty to the highest values of life. Faith, as Hoeffding puts it, is akin to faithfulness. It presupposes trustworthiness, dependableness in the object towards which it is directed.

The entire history of the evolution of life on the earth is the story of faith. Living organisms, acting in response

to the pressure of their environments on their native urge or striving for life, fared forth to maintain themselves and to reproduce their kind under changing conditions. The aquatic organisms, venturing on land and becoming modified in order to adopt themselves to the new conditions, obeyed blindly the same urge of life which man feels and which leads himself to plan, to invent, to labor and to venture. The response of the pigmented spot to the light led to the development of the seeing eye. The response of the organism to changed conditions of movement led to the development of legs and wings. The response of the otolith to waves of air led to the ear and to hearing. So on one might go at much length, to illustrate the nature of life as a faith-urge. When man consciously strives, risks, adventures, he is pursuing, at a high level, the same urge. Faith, then, is the urge of life become conscious and, therefore, able to make planful choices and resolves. Faith and will are thus but two aspects of the same dynamic psychical principle. Will is of broader scope than faith, since one may will in the light of full knowledge. But where one wills in the light of imperfect knowledge one wills in faith.

Paul is right. "We know in part and we prophesy in part." Without faith we cannot go forward, cannot take a single urgent and significant step in life. The practical man (and we all have to be practical men) has to act on very partial evidence. In order to carry on, he must have faith in the stability of nature's order, faith in the trustworthiness and capability of other persons, faith in his friends and associates, faith in his country. The scientist could not take a single step in his investigations if he had no faith either in the stability of the

natural order, the trustworthiness of his own mental powers, or of his fellow investigators. Lovers must have faith, friendship requires it. Even among casual acquaintances a modicum of faith is necessary. If one assumes an attitude of suspicion and distrust towards all other persons, one can get nowhere. They are shut off from one's view. One can get no coöperation, one cannot even get knowledge of others. Confidence begets confidence, coöperation and communion.

Faith is contrasted with knowledge. In truth they are interdependent. When we act on faith we act on imperfect knowledge and the result of our action is enlargement of knowledge. This is so even when the event shows our faith misplaced. Thus faith is an anticipation of knowledge. It runs before and leads to knowledge. For all genuine knowledge is the product of active experience, is experimental in origin. To know truly I must actively inquire. Knowledge consists in having a direct acquaintance with the properties or behaviors of things and their interrelations. Its goal is the conception of the world as a unity of interrelated factors. This goal is never achieved. Knowledge remains partial. But the very quest for new knowledge and the confidence that our powers of knowing do not wholly deceive us is an act of faith—faith that our powers of perceiving and conceiving are not false guides, that we are not dupes of an unintelligible and brutal universe. Thus knowledge, in its inception and progress, implies a reasonable faith, by which, as intelligent beings, we are justified; through the very growth from more to more of knowledge and the consequent increase in our powers of intelligent control of nature and adaptation of ourselves to nature. The very

possibility of this growth in knowledge and practical adaptation presupposes the stability, the reliability of the natural order and a basic harmony between that order and the perceptive and intellective powers of man. The quest for knowledge depends on faith in the possibility and value of truth, faith in a stable order in the universe. If this faith were illusory both pure and applied knowledge would be mocking delusions.

A faith in the reliability of any thing or being—in friends, lovers, associates, strangers, the order of nature—is a *working hypothesis*. On the basis of our interests or needs and of their relation to the environing conditions of our lives, we assume that, if we do certain things, certain results will follow and we act upon the assumption. The faith is justified or refuted by the events that follow upon the actions.

Religious faith is simply the most comprehensive and inclusive expression of the dynamic urge of life, of the will-to-live, of the unfolding personality. Religious faith is trust in the ultimate goodness of the Universal Order, faith in God is the trust, the practical venture, that goodness is supreme in the end, that there is an ultimate and supreme meaning in things as a whole and that this meaning takes up into itself whatever is worthiest in human endeavor and valuation. Using the term "person" for the achiever and bearer of the higher values we may say that faith is the trust of persons in the Supreme as Personality.

Religious faith is the consummation and completion of all lesser and partial faiths. For religious faith is the confident trust and boldness, the courage to act on the hypothesis that the whole meaning of life is good and the

nature of the Universe responsive to the Good. Religious faith is an active and trustful attitude of the whole personality. It surges up from the deeps of life. It arises from the fundamental feeling of life, of its budding meanings, its needs, its promises. It is the affirmation of the reality of goodness through every aspect of our being. It is confidence in the supremacy and permanence in the universe of the purest and deepest values of personality, of truth, integrity, friendship and fellowship, justice and love and spiritual beauty.'

If we are to live truly, we must be willing to make a wager on the worth of life, willing to affirm that life will open out and be filled with more meaning as we venture to live in loyalty and devotion to the things of the spirit. We do not know in advance that the life of dedication to moral and spiritual interests will be the most satisfying and enduring life, that it will bring steadfast peace and courage to suffer as well as to do. We come to have direct acquaintance with the spiritual satisfactions of life only by loyal faith and service of spiritual values. We live forwards. We cannot live at all unless we trust the future. To trust the future, in a fully religious sense, is to endure and venture in the spirit of "Not my [egoistic sensuous] will be done, but thy will for truth, justice, love and beauty in the soul be done." Faith in God is confidence in the reality and supremacy of the Cosmic Spirit which is the eternal ground, the Sustainer and Guardian of all spiritual qualities that are experienced in part in human persons. At its fullest, completest pitch, then, faith is the act of trust of a person who hungers and thirsts after goodness, after integrity, purity, love and selfless service, in the Being who is the paragon and champion of all

these qualities of personality. The act of faith is always the voluntary affirmation, the choice and resolve of a moral will, that the spiritual qualities of life must and shall be supreme. All life requires faith. The highest, fullest life requires the highest, fullest faith. Faith is at once the affirmation of our deepest rational and spiritual will and the recognition of our utter dependence, for life and growth in spiritual things, on Him in whom is neither variableness or shadow of turning. It is the affirmative trust that underneath all our struggles after better things are the everlasting arms. Faith in Christ is trust and confidence that the life revealed by Christ is the expression of the deepest and most enduring Meaning, Will and Purpose of God. It is the fruition and completion of all lesser faiths. Since we must trust life and the universe and adventure forth in order to live at all, why not make the venture that the Highest Life is the most trustworthy, the most stable and dependable life? It is surely illogical for us to trust in the order of nature, in the facts of common experience, in the laws of science, in the reliability of our fellows and to distrust the noblest, the deepest, the most satisfying meanings and values which that life reveals. For who can doubt that integrity, purity, justice, love, friendship, fellowship, service, are the most truly satisfying values that we can pursue and possess?

Religious faith is the direct and inevitable expression of the recognition of the worth and dignity of the rational personality. No one can act on the belief in the supremacy of moral and spiritual persons over everything else in the universe without having a religious faith. If the community of spiritual selves is the object of our highest devotion and our unremitting endeavor we have faith in

God, for this faith shines forth in our deeds. Thus, in our active faith, a faith that is real because manifest in deeds, in the worth and dignity of whatsoever appertains to the maintenance and enhancement of the spiritual community of persons, we experience as though it were present what, as matter of fullest acquaintance is future—the presence of the Perfect overshadowing us and guiding us.

## CHAPTER XX

### POETRY AND RELIGION

Art is the work of the *creative imagination*. This spiritual power, in contradistinction to the *reproductive imagination*, creates from the images supplied by inner and outer experience and reflection, new forms, fresh symbols, which better convey and which better enhance the *meanings* and *values* that the spirit seeks than does the routine order of experience and memory. What differentiates art from the other works of creative thought in science and prosy historical record is the quickening power it possesses to arouse, through its vivid and dynamic symbols, ennobling, harmonizing, satisfying emotions. The acid test of art is always this, does it arouse in the soul a significant meaning or value bathed in emotion? The abstract and precise and colorless symbols of science do not usually arouse emotion; although a great synoptic hypothesis, such as the conservation of energy, the evolutionary theory, the electronic theory of matter, do arouse emotions in those minds fitted to be quickened into imaginative feeling by the contemplation of the sweep and depth and harmony of the principles. But art makes a more general appeal. Its symbols are more concrete—wood, stone, bronze, pigment, sound—and through the harmonious and well proportioned relations of their parts arouse pleasurable emotions.

The close kinship of art and religion is revealed in the well-nigh universal use made of the arts to express, in concrete symbols, religious imagery and to arouse spiritual feelings. Every religion uses some of the arts. Every great epoch in the history of a religious culture has been rich in religious art. Witness ancient Greece, Buddhist India, China and Japan, ancient Eastern Christianity, and Western Catholic Christianity in the twelfth, thirteenth and following centuries. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry are all employed in the service of religion.

Poetry is the highest and completest of the arts. The part that poetry has played in religion is well known. The *Odes of Pindar*, the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, Virgil's *Aeneid*, the Hebrew Psalms and Prophets, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the poetry of Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning—all these, not to mention hymnology—are great religious poems. There are very definite ethical and religious philosophies in the poetry of Burns, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning. Shelley's poetry is pervaded by an ethical and humane religious idealism.

Even Shakespeare, whose poetry seems secular, has a religious spirit, a broad and balanced ethical humanism, whose controlling principles are akin to the spirit of Jesus' religion.

The grounds for this intimate union of poetry and religion are not far to seek. Poetry, said Aristotle, is truer than history. Poetry, we may say, is a truer expression, because a more intimate, more concrete and richer expression of the inmost values, the aspirations and strivings of the human spirit, than any narrative of outer facts, or

than the abstractions of science.' Science supplies us with the surest instruments for improving the physical lot of man. But the instruments supplied by the intellect must be directed and controlled by spiritual and emotional values—by love and loyalty, devotion and self-sacrifice, sympathy and vision, hope and faith—if they are to further the improvement of man's social and mental life. The emotions must be aroused in chastened and sublimated form, the impulses must be harmonized and directed to ideal ends. It is not necessary to set up an absolute opposition between reason and feeling, in order to say with Tennyson that

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice "believe no more"  
And heard an ever breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answered "I have felt."

"In Memoriam," CXXIV.

But it is true that pure reason alone, gives us no knowledge of concrete reality. The function of reason is to relate and interpret, to formulate and connect into a systematic whole, the meanings and values that spring from the heart of immediate experience. In all affairs that deeply concern our lives; in friendship and comradeship, in the experiences of love and beauty, in the dynamic impulses that move us to action, in the spiritual enrichment of experience, it is immediate experiences—perception and feeling—that count most. Reason is ancillary and instrumental with respect to our attitudes towards the whole

of reality, the sum of things, as with respect to our relations to our fellow men and external nature. Immediate experiences—perceptions, impulses and emotions—are the sources of action and the materials from which values and meanings are distilled—are both the beginnings and the endterms of experience and action.

There are two meanings, a more comprehensive and a narrower one, in which the term *Poetry* may be taken. In its narrow meaning poetry is the expression, in metrical and rhythmical words and in an imaginative and impassioned manner, of human deeds, thoughts and valuations, and of the influence of nature on the mind and will of man; of the interplay of man and man, man and nature, man and God.

In its more comprehensive meaning, poetry includes all impassioned and imaginative utterances, all winged thoughts. The line between poetry and imaginative and impassioned prose is indistinct and tends to vanish. For the prose writer whose soul is on fire with a thought, a vision, a great deed or a great conception, expresses himself in concrete symbols and his utterances take on rhythmical and even metrical movement. It is this wider sense of the term poetry that Wordsworth has in mind when he says:

The Man of Science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude; the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of science. . . .

Its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but

carried into the heart of passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. . . .

The Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men.

Shelley says:

A poem is the very image of life expressed in its external truth. There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connection than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is, itself, the image of all other minds.<sup>1</sup>

Again, with respect to the moral influence of poetry, Shelley writes:

The great secret of morals is love; or a going-out of our nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimi-

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<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.

<sup>2</sup> *A Defense of Poetry*.

lating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void forever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb. Poetry, and the principle of self, of which money is the visible incarnation, are the God and mammon of the world.

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the center and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odor and the color of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendor of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship—what were the scenery of the beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations on this side of the grave—and what were our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar?

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression: so that even in the desire and the regret they leave, there cannot but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is, as it were, the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea, which the coming calm erases, and whose traces

remain only as on the wrinkled sand which paves it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship is essentially linked with such emotions; and whilst they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organization, but they can color all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this ethereal world; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change; it subdues to union under its light yoke all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes; its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms.

If we accept the nature and high office of poetry as thus described, it becomes understandable why a consider-

able part of the noblest poetry of the race is religious, and why spiritual religion is the soul of which this poetry is the concrete imaginative and impassioned utterance. For the poet is the supremest human incarnation of the Creative Cosmic Mind. Brooding in rapt contemplation over the nature of man, his vicissitudes, his moral failures and successes, his sufferings and joys, his visions and aspirations, his undying quest for union with the Perfect and Eternal, the poet, by the creative power of an imagination enkindled by humane passion, interprets man to man, nature to man, and God to man.

The poet is the *maker*, the *creator* of a higher, richer, more harmonious realm of spiritual being than any which the workaday humdrum world of ordinary life supplies. The poet escapes from the treadmill of daily and hourly existence. He shuns statistics, and flees the commonplace. He soars beyond the mechanical casual order. And what he sees and feels in this flight into the Empyrean reached by spiritual imagination, he clothes in vivid, concrete and pulsating *symbols*, so that we lesser mortals may warm ourselves by that divine fire that the Poet has filched from heaven, may breathe that rarer and serener air in which he has moved.

All great religious geniuses are poets, though not all poets are great religious geniuses. The writers of the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Job, were great poets. Jesus is supremely a poet. With homely and familiar symbols, drawn from the flowers, the birds, the animals, the growing and harvesting of the grain, the familiar incidents of natural life and human life, Jesus throws a warm and vivid, illuminating and transfiguring light upon the divine potencies in the soul of man; in its spiritual

relations to fellow man, nature and God. How cold and strained, how lifeless and abstract, seem all the metaphysical discussions of creeds and dogmas beside these simple, vital and profound parables of his! He liberates and quickens the will-to-live deeply and harmoniously.

Form and substance are inseparable in all genuine poetry, as in all genuine religious feeling and imagination. Religious poetry ministers to spiritual feeling and incites to selfless devotion, to communion and prayer, by clothing its intuitions in concrete symbols alive with color, movement and passion.

The superiority of poetry, as a medium of expression for religious feeling and aspiration, consists in the fact that it speaks in concrete, moving, impassioned symbols compacted of the imagination. Science abstracts from the warm and varied stream of experience. Science, of necessity, "murders to dissect." Every science is one-sided. It tears some aspect of living experience out of its total setting. It arranges its data in statistical tables. It formulates equations and laws. It furnishes good skeleton maps for the pedestrian traveler but little solid and nourishing food for the imaginative and emotional life. Moreover, conceptual knowledge is ragged at the edges. Conceptual knowledge is always incomplete as well as skeletonlike. It promises more than it can perform. The fact is related to another fact, and so on, until the formula or law is substituted for the individuality, the variedness, the concreteness, the livingness of the experiential facts. In all scientific work, as in all merely practical activity, such as the making and administering of laws or even the endeavor to live according to right principles, there is always a surd—something left over, something further

to relate and interpret. Philosophy corrects the abstractions of science, in that it recalls us to a total, a synoptic or comprehensive and harmonious survey and evaluation of experience *in its wholeness*. Philosophy is thus the most concrete of intellectual procedures. A philosophy which leaves out of account any main aspect or phase of experience and life is not a genuine philosophy. The true standpoint of philosophy is the quest for the total and harmonious, the global or integral point of view. But philosophy is still an intellectual attitude, a conceptual point of view, a contemplative theory. When philosophy becomes impassioned and is expressed in concrete symbols, as in Plato, then the lines of distinction between it and religion and poetry vanish. The perennial charm and stimulation of Plato resides just in this—that he is at once philosopher, poet and spiritual mystic.

Poetry is the richest of the arts because, using articulate language, it can compass the widest range of expression—fine nuances of individual feeling in the lyric, deepest reflection in the elegiac and the problems of cosmic destiny and fate in the tragedy. Poetry can be made the most supple and socially appealing means of expression for human feeling and thought in all their length, breadth and depth of meaning. What makes all true art is range and power of concrete expression; poetry exceeds all other arts as an instrument of expression. In it thought and feeling are married in indissoluble union.

Poetry, like all aesthetic forms of expression, mediates the union, the communion, of the individual soul with the object. The self is taken out of itself, is enlarged and merged in the object—the soul of man becomes one with the beautiful, the sublime, the tragic, the humorous.

Thus poetry, even when it expresses but an individual emotion, delivers the self from itself; fuses the ego in feeling and rapt contemplation with a complete and satisfying spiritual object. In its more significant forms poetry is the vehicle of a self-transcendence which is attainable through the merging of the self with the Perfect and self-complete.

Now, religion is for men the most universal way of self-transcendence, of escape from the petty and trivial and discordant selfhood of the moment, through communion with, union with, vision of, the Perfect, the absolutely Worthful. In religion we have an integral attitude of soul, by which it is united with the totality or integral unity of supreme values regarded as a concrete and living Reality. Thus, in religion, one throws the center of one's being beyond one's actual selfhood. One is merged in, united with and transformed by the Perfect. All genuine religious experience is a vision, a symbolic experience ablaze with the feeling for the Whole and Perfect. The soul is enlarged, transformed, purified by this union or communion. Religion and serious poetry are one in aim and meaning.

Poetry, I have said, is truer than science. Poetry is indeed the breath and finer spirit of Knowledge. All high and serious poetry is the expression, in symbols that enkindle our nobler emotions and quicken our hearts, of the ethical and spiritual meanings and values of human life. Poetry is truer than science since it stirs into feeling and expression the motives, the ideals and aspirations that are the very essence of the human spirit.

Poetry and religion cannot be separated. Some one has said that religion is the poetry of the heart. It were

truer to say that poetry is the impassioned, harmonious and proportioned utterance of the spiritual life. Therefore poetry is the most adequate means of expression for religion. A prosaic religion is but a maimed and one-sided religion—a religion that fails to enlist in its service the power of the creative imagination to give concreteness and vividness and warmth to spiritual values and aspirations. Indeed, since religion is fundamentally the *feeling* of union with the Higher, the Perfect and Integral and this feeling cannot flourish without imaginative projection, poetry is the natural language of religion.

Moreover, the feelings of beauty, harmony, sublimity, which are enkindled and nourished supremely by poetry and in some degrees by all the arts, are essential elements of a full religion. Religion, in order to be full and complete, must include and satisfy the human longing for beauty, order and harmony in Spiritual Experience. The good and the beautiful must be ultimately one. The purest and therefore most satisfying joys come through the experiences of Beauty when the object has moral proportion and harmony. Religion must minister to this craving of the spirit for joy in Beauty, in Harmony, Proportion and Grandeur.

It may be objected, to our assertion of the intimate union of poetry and religion and especially to the description of religion as poetry, that poetry is fiction; the product of mere imagination and, therefore, not true. But this is a philistine and purely external attitude. All noble poetic utterance is the expression of the deepest feelings and most meaningful ideas in regard to human life. It voices the sorrows, joys, aspirations and devotions of the individual human heart. It depicts the inter-

play of human passions, the passional reactions of Man to Man, of Man to Nature and of Man to the Divine. Poetry, of course, as the rhythmic and impassioned utterance of human feelings and thoughts and the vivid depiction of human actions and human sufferings, has a wider sweep than religion. The religious experience is one of the subjects of poetry. Religion is not coextensive with poetic utterance. Religious feeling and thought may express themselves in manifold ways and by various symbols. Gothic architecture is one of the supreme expressions of the northern spirit in religion, the passion for the Infinite; just as the Parthenon is the expression of that worship of the harmonious and symmetrical Finite which was the characteristic of Greek religion. Music, in chant and psalm, is another expression of religious feeling which in this expression weds words and music into one. Painting expresses the objectives of reverence, devotion and love; as in the "Sistine Madonna."

In the broad sense, all these artistic expressions are forms of poetry. What makes religious poetry is the expression, in symbols drawn from sensory experience and recreated by the creative imagination, of devotion, love, communion with the Perfect, in some individualized or concreted shape. Thus, too, sacraments are poems—outward and visible signs or symbols of inward and spiritual graces; that is, of feelings of adoration, devotion, communion. Religion, as an immediate experience of the soul is a *temper of mind*, an *attitude of spirit*. This temper we describe as one blended of aspiration, devotion or adoration, love and communion. Forms of worship, places and accessories of worship, acts of will, are the varied expressions of the religious temper of mind. Paul's

great hymn to Christian love in I Corinthians, Chapter 13, is a great religious poem.

“The things which are seen are temporal; the things which are unseen are eternal.” The manifold expressions of the religious feeling or temper of mind, in poem, hymn, chant, sacrament, altar, church, are bodyings forth of the unseen spiritual essence which is the heart of religion.

Poetry is one with religion in so far as it embodies in symbols the life of aspiration, devotion, communion and love in all its length, breadth and depth; and by its symbolic utterance arouses the religious temper of mind. The fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long suffering, meekness, goodness, self-control.

These fruits are yielded through expression. Their powers are enhanced through poetry. Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the poet. For the poet who selects and expresses the abiding values of life, who seizes on and depicts the deeper meanings of existence, is a creator. He is the best mouthpiece of the Cosmic Poet, the World Artist. In Wordsworth's words, “Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity: the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence, and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an ‘imperfect shadowing forth’ of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between

Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry; between religion—making up the deficiencies of reason by faith; and poetry—passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumspection, and reconciled to substitutions; and poetry—ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Essay, Supplementary to the Preface, 1815 Edition of “*Lyrical Ballads*.”

## CHAPTER XXI

### A CREATIVE UNIVERSE

The ancient barriers of thought between nature and God have been broken down by modern science and philosophy. Dualistic supernaturalism is, for the modern mind, as dead as a doornail. For modern thought the cosmos is an infinite and eternal Whole. There are no water-tight compartments in it. All its elements are inter-related. All the diverse qualities which it displays are expressions of its ceaselessly creative and mobile energies. It is a dynamic universe. From the single electron, up to the whole cosmos of star-systems, everything real is active and in movement. The universe is eternally creative mobility. Creation is not confined to any moment or period in the history of the universe. Creation is an eternal process. The history of the universe is an eternal history—one which has no absolute beginning or ending. This earth, this solar system, these living organisms, have had histories. They originated by the creative synthesis of the primordial elements of the physical, vital and mental orders. They will pass into other forms of finite existence. But the new forms, with their new powers and their promises of further advance—all the multiform novelties and enrichments of the universe—are born from the synthesis of preëxisting energies. From the electron to the star dust, and from the star dust to the poet, the

seer and the scientist, who can read the æsthetic, intellectual and spiritual meanings of the universe, what vast forward steps in creation! Creation everywhere and always, but no absolute beginnings!

The physical universe, with its infinitely vast and complicated movements, its unimaginably variegated dance of energies, is the stage and scenic background for the display of the more richly creative powers of *Life*. *Life is a higher, a more significant, organization of energies*, than the intra-atomic and interatomic movements of non-living things. Life is a richer potency of creation, built upon the substructure of physical energies. In the order of creative ascent, which is the living garment of the Eternal ever being freshly woven into new patterns, there are: (1) the wonderful complex of interatomic and intra-atomic energies; (2) the higher complex of vital energies, and (3) the still higher complex of mental or spiritual energies.

Living beings are self-moving, self-feeding, self-repairing, self-reproducing. Finally, they are creative of, and live by communion with, all forms of beauty, truth, justice, love and sacrifice of their lower selfhood. For example, sex love is a higher manifestation of creative cosmic energy than chemical or electrical attraction. For from sex love spring forth tender emotion, the vision and worship of beauty, the power of self-sacrifice for sweetheart and child.

Living beings can rise to the height of the vision and the service of *spiritual values*—to creative imagination and worship, through art and science, philosophy and religion, in the sanctuary of the personal spirit from which man goes out to commune with nature and his fellows,

and to find God in this communion. Thus, in conscious life, physical energies acquire a soul and spirit, manifested in perception, memory, æsthetic feeling, imagination, creative intelligence and the higher loves of comradeship, fellowship and worship.

No finer sketch of life's qualities and deeds has ever been drawn than the following: "The variety of life—thousands and thousands of distinct individualities or species; the abundance of life—like a river, always tending to overflow its banks; the diffusion of life—exploring and exploiting every corner of land and sea; the insurgence of life—self-assertive, persistent, defiant, continually achieving the apparently impossible; the cyclical development of life—ever passing from birth, through love to death; the intricacy of life—every drop of blood a microcosm; the subtlety of life—every drop of blood an index of idiosyncrasies; the interrelatedness of life—with myriad threads interwoven into a patterned web; the drama of life—plot within plot, age after age, with every conceivable illustration of the twin motives of hunger and love; the flux of life, even under our short-lived eyes; the progress of life—slowly creeping upwards through unthinkable time, expressing itself in ever nobler forms; the beauty of life—every finished organism an artistic harmony; the morality of life—spending itself to the death for other than individual ends; the mentality of life—sometimes quietly dreaming, sometimes sleep-walking, sometimes wide awake; and the victory of life—subduing material things and, in its highest reaches, controlling outside things towards an increasing purport" (J. Arthur Thomson, in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*).

Man is a new stage in the cosmic creative process. In him the Infinite Creative Energy has reached a richer phase of self-expression than in the animal world—one richer in individuality by the possession of the creative powers of passion, thought and imagination. In man we begin to see somewhat clearly the beauty, the glory and the further promise of creative evolution. Consider what man has created out of his own immanent energies in interaction with the energies of earth and sea and sky—languages, tools, societies, morals, political and economic systems, forms of beauty and of truth in increasing sweep and depth of purport—all the manifold forms and instruments of human culture, all the humane values and ideals, culminating in religion, the vision and the feeling of communion with the Perfect, of union in spirit with the Spirit of the Whole! But man cannot be the last word in creative evolution. Nay, is he not rather the first stammering but clearly meaningful expression of the Universal Purport? Above man there must be a whole hierarchy of higher forms of finite individuality, more harmonious and richer selves. And, far ahead of man, as he now is, there gleams, along the far vistas of time, the beckoning vision of a more nearly perfect humanity, the realization of the Divine Sonship, foreglimpsed by ancient and modern seers. From man shall come the superman—not by brute force, but by a wider sweep of imagination, an intenser stirring of love and loyalty, a more penetrating concentration of creative intelligence and creative vision. Creative love and creative mind, fused into one by the white heat of thinker, artist, poet, seer and lover, shall give birth to the spiritual superman.

The stream of evolution cannot rise higher than its

source. If there be endless creative evolution, there must be an infinite fountain of creative life, thought and feeling. If you ask, where is God in the creative process? the first answer is, *everywhere*. He is manifest in the energy of the electron, in the architecture of the atom, of the human brain and of the solar systems. God is the infinite and ceaseless formative energy manifested in all things. When we look narrowly at this or that particular thing, we may not think of God, since our attention is riveted on the particularity of the thing. But when we consider the relation of this particular being to other beings, and thus our thoughts are led to the contemplation of the Whole, we are led straight up to the notion of the creative ground of the whole dynamic order or system.

Is then God equally present and manifest in all things? By no manner of means. The more richly organized, the more individual and comprehensive in meaning, any finite being is, the more of the Creative Spirit of the Whole does it reveal. God is truly in the electron and in the atom. But He is much more adequately revealed in "Lord Christ's heart and Plato's brain." "His dwelling is the light of setting suns," "And the round ocean and the living air." He is in "the blue sky and in the mind of man." But there is more of the Divine Spirit's meaning and power in a great human soul than even in a sunset. He cannot be less and, indeed, He must be much more, than His highest finite manifestations. He must be more than the wisest and noblest human person. He must be inconceivably richer in qualities than the highest soul that we know. He must include and transcend the spiritual qualities of human personality even at its best. God, if He must be more and greater than

man, must be conscious. He must think and feel. For anything which is conscious and feels is higher than which is unconscious and unfeeling. The highest human beings are those which have the widest and intensest and most harmonious consciousness. Therefore, God is not merely the creative Energy and Ground of evolution. He is the creative ordering Thought and the all-transfusing, all-harmonizing Feeling of the entire cosmos. He is personality, but more than personality. If He were but a person like ourselves He would be finite and over against us—a magnified non-natural man. Beyond our most comprehensive and intensest consciousness of Him must lie infinite riches of his Being, Life, Thought and Feeling blended into one perfect Whole. He can paint and model as no human artist can. He can think and image and body forth as no human thinker can. God, then, is the superpersonal and infinitely creative Spirit of the cosmos—at once transcendent of, as He is immanent in, all that is finite. Since the highest in us is the capacity to think, to love, to worship and to serve the Supreme Values of Truth, Beauty and Love incarnate in human experience, we may say that we approach nearest to God's innermost being in our fellowship with those human souls who best embody and most fully serve the realization of spiritual values in human life. And our highest destiny is, by the service of spiritual or humane values, to bear our parts, however humble and obscure, in God's creative process, by which the cosmos becomes ever richer in centers of harmonious feeling, rational insight and power and beauty.

## CHAPTER XXII

### SPIRIT AND THE COSMOS

All the words for "spirit" in European languages point back to the quasi-material thinking which regarded spirit as a tenuous and elusive but not immaterial entity; which identified spirit with the breath or air in a human being: for example, *spiritus*, *anima*, *psyche*, *pneuma*, *thumos*, *ruah*, *nephesh*.

It took mankind thousands of years to arrive at the notion of a supermaterial principle. The supermaterial nature of spirit is first explicitly taught by Socrates and Plato (we cannot at this distance separate their teachings). Their word for spirit is most often *nous*; that is, thought and reason. Reason or spirit is the governing principle in man and the cosmos.

One finds a similar line of development in Hebrew thought until Hebrew and Greek thought came together. The spirit or heart of man is the essential principle. In Hebrew thought more emphasis is laid on feeling and less on reason and æsthetic balance and harmony than by the Greeks.

The Platonists and Neo-Platonists carried on the work of Plato; and the Stoics made use of their thought. Philo was a Neo-Platonist, and probably through Philo the sharp distinction between the material and animal and the spiritual orders passed into the Gospel of John. Who-

ever the author was he was deeply imbued with Neo-Platonic spiritualism or idealism. The distinction between the *physical body*, the *vital principle* of vegetable and animal life, and the *spirit* as the principle of thought, conscience, the higher sentiments and rational will, is found in St. Paul and St. John. This distinction was taken over from Neo-Platonic philosophy. It derives from Plato's distinction of the three levels in man—*sensuous desire*, *impulsive vigor* and *governing thought*.

After this brief historical résumé let us consider now the essential meaning of spirit, its relation to personality and its place in the cosmos.

Spirit includes sentiment, thought and volitional attitude; but it is more than these. When we speak of a man's essential spirit, say he has a fine or brave spirit, we mean a unitary, permanent, active power or principle that is deeper than his consciousness and is the wellspring of his sentiments and active attitudes. Spirit is the supernatural power by virtue of which man becomes a personality and by which the animal organism is transformed into rational, moral and social individuality. Thus spirit is the vital principle of personality.

It is the principle of self-activity, the source of the higher sentiments, of intellectual and moral judgment and volition and of those imaginative visions and intuitions which are the most concrete and rich forms of experience.

But while spirit is the spring and principle of personality, it is more than personal. There cannot be impersonal spirit but there is superpersonal spirit. Personal spirit is but an individualized resultant of superpersonal spirit.

We all recognize that intangible but real and effective

power which makes of a social group an actual social and moral being. There is the spirit of a family, a team, a school, a college, a community, a church, a people or a nation. This communal spirit is not the arithmetical sum of the individual spirits which make it up. They depend on it for the qualities they show even more than it depends on them. The communal spirit is shown in the various achievements of its members. It is evoked through leadership and response. The communal spirit seems engendered by the interplay of separate individuals, but it is far more persistent in the larger groups than in individuals. The spirit of a church or nation changes but endures. Even the spirit of a college or university may be very enduring. Witness Oxford! Many of our American universities are not real universities since they have no common spirit, no soul. They are mechanical aggregates of departments. The cultural traditions carried on by social institutions are the vehicles of the enduring, changing, growing spirit of civilization as a whole, and of its several constituents.

In sum, then, spirit is the source of personality, since it is the superpersonal principle by which personality develops. There is not personality without community. It is true that there is no real community without members who are persons; but in terms of comparative value and enduring reality the community must have precedence of individual personality.

Apply this to the cosmos. If there be a cosmos or universe it must be pervaded by one spirit. To separate nature from spirit or spirit in man from the cosmic spirit is to rend the universe asunder, to deny that there is a cosmos. The more we learn in regard to nature and man

the clearer it becomes that they are members of one whole, and this whole is eternally creative. It manifests inexhaustible energy and vitality. Thus the cosmic spirit might be called the Infinite Creative Urge—the inexhaustible creative vital energy in the life of which every finite center of energy, however humble and transitory, is a fragmentary event. The whole universe is the body of the cosmic spirit; every individual in the universe is a cell or part of a cell in the cosmic body. Since all the multitudinous and various finite individuals or monadic forms of existence are interdependent; since the endless creative life of the universe is the story, ever being freshly written, of the ceaseless interplay of the finite monads, and this story is a continuous and intelligible order including in its indefinite diversity many lesser others, the cosmic spirit, working ever at the roaring loom of time (time is but the form of his ceaseless working), weaves a patterned fabric whose design bit by bit we puzzle out. The whole design we do not know. Therefore, the cosmic spirit or life urge is creative cosmic intelligence or thought. This creative thought is the life-urge—the world soul. It is manifested in all things, but in different degrees of individual fullness. The cosmic spirit is manifest in the macrocosmic and microcosmic physical energies, in the electrons and the solar systems; it is more fully manifest in the living organisms; even more fully in the whole panorama of vital evolution; even yet more fully in man, who is the most many-sided and macrocosmic concentration and unification of the cosmic energies. The manifestation of the Cosmic Spirit increases in comprehensiveness and depth and organization of individuality from the electron and the physical cosmos

to the highest type of man and of the human community. There is no reason to deny, and good reason to suppose, that beyond the human community the mounting ladder of finite individuations of the cosmic spirit rises into richer and nobler forms of being.

Personality-in-community is the most comprehensive, most concrete and most worthwhile expression of the cosmic spirit that we know. Can we say that the cosmic spirit is a person? Not as I am a person. For I am a very imperfect and dependent spirit. I am dependent on my physical and social environments. I am only in very small degree a creative center. I am very incompletely socialized and rationalized. Nevertheless, when I consider that which is of most worth in my personality, I find the best analogy because the widest and fullest, for interpreting the nature of cosmic spirit. For organic filaments from within me reach out and touch the organic filaments of life and spirit that stream through the cosmos. I can be one in spirit with the stars in their courses, one with the misty mountain winds and the eternal snows, one with the unplumbed salt estranging seas, one with the meanest flower that blows; one with Orion and the Pleiades, with Betelgeuse and the electron. The more a personality I am the more I feel and live in oneness with my fellows; one in sympathy and insight, one in suffering and joy, in heroic endeavor and quiet contemplation. The human self, as it becomes more of a person, reaches this destiny by reverent communion with that which is below it—physical and animal nature; with that which is around it—human nature; with that which is above it—cosmic spirit manifest in the creative sweep, the manifold and concrete wealth of individualities all compacted

into order and beauty, the grandeur and the sublimity of the Cosmos.

Certainly God is not a person as I am a person. The Cosmic Spirit is not an individual over against other individuals, not a magnified non-natural man sitting outside nature and humanity and entering into commerce with them. In Him we and all things live and move and have our being. In us and all things He lives and moves and manifests His being. But, since personality in community (and there is, I repeat, no personality without community) is at once and by virtue of the same nature, the most intensely concentrated and unified, the richest and the most universal and wide-embracing expression of the universal life, we are justified in saying that, while God, the Cosmic Spirit, must transcend all that we can know or imagine Him to be, nevertheless, in the communal spirit of a society of persons we find the most adequate expression of His nature. He is not a self shut out by other selves. He is the cosmic spirit of which interpersonal community is, for us, the most worthy adumbration. At best we have only pictures, symbols; but it were foolish to take anything less than the richest symbol to interpret the meaning of the cosmos.

Is this Pantheism? Yes and no. It is Pantheism in the sense that no chasm can be admitted between God and the world; neither between God and nature or God and man. Nature and humanity are members of a whole; interdependent factors in the cosmos. Nature and man taken together are the only revelations we have of the cosmic life. God is immanent in the whole process or He is nothing. What, then, of His transcendence? Certainly there is a truth in the doctrine of transcendence.

It is this: We must, in reverent agnosticism, acknowledge that there are higher reaches of being, fuller worths and deeper meanings in the total cosmos than we know or can realize in our experiences.

The best name for our view is *Panentheism*, which means that all finite beings are in or dependent on God and not that God simply exists distributively in all finite beings. Pantheism has two great defects: (1) It tends towards a slurring of differences of meaning and value in the finite; especially it tends towards the slurring of moral and spiritual distinctions. (2) It tends towards conceiving God as a mere collective name for the sum of finite beings.

We are dependent members of the whole. The whole must transcend us. What of evil, then? It is imperfection, defect of insight and defect of will or spiritual energy, an inevitable incident of development or growth in a creative and living universe of finite beings. We must recognize that, so far as it is remediable by our efforts, we grow in mental and spiritual stature just by remedying it. So far as it is irremediable, we grow in spiritual stature and strength by accepting the inevitable order of things.

The only real alternative to this attitude is to cut the cosmos in pieces and set up a finite God over against an irrational or demonic evil principle. Not only does the latter solution violate the human impulse toward dependence on a stable and total order. It has neither practical nor religious value. For, if the universe be not a universe but a duoverse or multiverse, then we have nothing stable to lean on. We shift the entire weight of the universe to human shoulders. That is too much of a

burden. We all need moral holidays a-plenty. Furthermore, dualism is not consistent with the fact that, by every step we make in science, we learn more of the interdependence of the elements of reality, we see a bit more of the design of the cosmic weaver.

A Creative Cosmic Spirit in whom is neither variable-ness nor shadow of turning, but who ever works in and through all finite forms of energy and life—such is the belief that, in harmony with science and with the æsthetic and the religious sense, affords a veritable metaphysical basis for human energy, courage and repose; “underneath are the everlasting arms.”

## CHAPTER XXIII

### MATTER AND SPIRIT

The most crucial problem for theology and metaphysics is the matter-spirit or mind-body problem. I prefer to state it as the problem of the ultimate relation of matter and spirit for two reasons: (1) The living body is a special case of material organization. (2) For theology and religion the special interest of this problem lies in the nature of spirit rather than of mind. Mind is a more inclusive, broader and vaguer reality than spirit. There is the "mind of the flesh," as Paul put it, or the vegetative and sensuous mind, as Aristotle put it; and there is the "mind of the spirit," or the mind which is the seat or power of thought, the higher imagination and feelings, moral volition, and, in short, of all the activities, experiences and deeds which make up the life of spiritual values. True religion has no concern for the place and fate of the merely vegetative and sensuous mind. If the spiritual mind be the mere transitory by-product and plaything of matter, then religion is an illusion. Therefore, the most critical problem for religion is this: does modern thought compel us, if we are desirous of being rational in our view of the universe, to admit that all things spiritual are nothing more than chemically analyzable secretions of the physical body? If we are constrained to give

an affirmative answer to this question, then all religion is an exploded superstition.

There are three chief attempts at an answer to this problem: (1) *Materialism* or mechanistic metaphysics. (2) *Spiritualism*, often misleadingly called Idealism. (3) The theory that Matter and Spirit are both real and organically interdependent factors in the universe. It is difficult to give this last theory a short name. It has been called *Dualism*, but, to me, Dualism has so many misleading implications that I prefer not to use the term.

There are some very strong arguments for materialism. Man's spiritual powers do seem to depend for their normal functioning on the normal functioning of the central nervous system. This system, in turn, depends for its normal functioning on the proper action of the digestive, circulatory and glandular systems. I need not do more here than refer to the mass of evidence that has been accumulated on this score. Furthermore, when one considers how utterly indifferent the forces of material nature, operating on the large scale in our universe, seem to be towards the well-being and survival of spiritual values, it is difficult to believe that the cosmos exhibits any real concern for the fate of spirit. Omnipotent matter seems to crash along, blind and insensible to all that gives meaning and value, worth and dignity, to human life. The physical forces undergo their ceaseless processes of transformation, combine, dissolve and recombine endlessly; in their blind and inevitable march they occasionally throw up those transitory phosphorescences—beauty, friendship, love, heroism, truth, purity and self-sacrifice—which we call *spiritual values*. But in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, these values are engulfed,

with the beings who cherish them, in the abysmal whirlpools of insensate material movement. Philosophical humanists have often drawn terrific indictments of nature's cruelty and indifference to spiritual values. If the sum of things be purely material it cannot be cruel, since only a being who can think and feel can be cruel. The materialist who charges nature with cruelty is guilty of the pathetic fallacy of attributing his own feelings to that which cannot feel.

Against the above considerations one may set others that seriously weaken the case for materialism. How can a merely brutal and insensible and unintelligent universe have given birth to such strange progeny as loving, intelligent, heroic, creative spirits? How can "omnipotent matter" have produced so much that is not only superior to itself, but so different in character from itself? The entire works of human culture—all the arts, moral and social systems, sciences, religions and philosophies—are *prima facie* evidences of the creative power of spirit, a power which operates on a plane and in a manner quite different from merely material forces. The whole history of human culture is an insoluble enigma to the materialist. Moreover, in the human individual, it is no less true that spirit influences the body immediately connected with it, in this way influencing other spirits, than it is true that body influences spirit. Our beliefs, our hopes, our fears, our longings, our resolves, our choices—all influence first our own bodies and then our surroundings. It is more plausible to argue that the bodily ills which derange the spirit and which may seem to extinguish it are due to defects in the instrument for the spirit's expression than it is to assert roundly that all things spiritual

are mere by-products of the material body. There is evidence a-plenty in the lives of human individuals and in the whole of social culture for the doctrine that mental and spiritual powers really exist and are effective factors.

Spiritualism is the extreme opposite, the logical contradictory, of Materialism. The spiritualist argues that we can have no knowledge of any material forces, since all our knowledge is derived from ideas or percepts. This argument is a clever quibble. I can no more perceive directly a unitary and self-active spirit than I can perceive directly an electron in movement around a nucleus. In both cases I infer the reality that is not perceived as being the best hypothesis to account for the perceived facts. The spiritualist is invited to explain why the phenomena, or empirical behaviors of minds and nonmental bodies, should appear to be so different in character, if rocks, electricity, wind, rain, etc., are but ways in which other minds impinge upon our minds. It is impossible to understand, or even to imagine, why my body should be different from my mind as I know the latter, or why your body should be felt differently by you and by me if both bodies are nothing but "ideas." The arguments of Berkeley and his kin are acute but unconvincing and raise more problems than they lay.

We must admit, then, as the best hypothesis, that material forces and spiritual forces are both real, and that the problem of their ultimate relationship is one to which we can offer no satisfactory solution. We must, at present, be content to formulate the relation as a fact of the real nature of which we are almost entirely ignorant. In short, I do not know how matter and spirit interact, but I believe that it is most reasonable, in the face of the

facts, to say that they are both real and that they influence one another. Our inability to formulate a complete and wholly perspicuous theory of the interdependence of matter and spirit does not in the least render foolish a doctrine which is a generalization from facts; or, rather, a general statement of fact. Materialism is not science; it is a very crude and lopsided metaphysics. Spiritualism is not quite so crude a metaphysics, but it is equally lopsided. Our point of view is a genuine empiricism, since we hold to the facts.

The hypothesis which is fairest to all the facts is the following: The universe of reality, taken as a whole, is neither lifeless matter in motion, nor is it dematerialized nonspatial spirit. The whole of reality is a living system which includes many degrees or grades of individual beings, from the ultramicroscopic cosmos of the atoms up to rational persons and, presumably, to higher selves than any persons we know. We may speak of unorganized or lifeless matter, in the sense that the elemental constituents of empirical matter are devoid of the properties of living organisms—do not feel or will, do not repair themselves nor reproduce themselves as do living organisms. But we must remember that the ultimate constituents of the material world are dynamic and have some degree of individuality. Moreover, nonliving matter forms the positive substructure of living organisms. Life emerges and manifests its specific modes of behavior on the foundation of a specific organization of dynamic material particles. It is questionable whether one should think of lifeless matter as being more than an abstraction from reality. Mind, in animals and men, emerges and functions in specific ways on the basis of a specific organiza-

tion of nerve cells and fibers. Spirit in the sense of rational, moral and æsthetically endowed personality, is the actualization of the highest potencies of mind. Therefore, mind and spirit are so intimately associated with a spatial and material substructure that we should not speak of matter as unspiritual nor of spirit as existing apart from matter. The bodily substructure of spirit is subtler and more complex the finer the spirit is. In the broad sense of the terms, there are no disembodied ghosts and no lifeless material. The whole universe is shot through with the qualities of spirit. Nature as a whole is the complete interpenetration of matter and spirit.

Even God, the Universal Spirit, must have a body—the spatial and dynamic material Cosmos. There is an ascending hierarchy of individuals. These are all members one of another, in the sense that there is no individuation of the Universal Energy that is not related to all the others. The whole is living and spiritual. There are very significant differences, in power, meaning and value, in the individual members of the cosmic whole. We have not explained away a mind, in terms of matter, when we have found out the chemical and subatomic structure of the body in which it lives and moves and has its being. We have not reduced a living organism to an assemblage of dead matter, when we have stated its physical structure. The universe as a whole is indefinitely rich in the complication and organization of its qualities into individual members of the whole.

We must abandon the dualism which sets over against one another as incommunicable and unrelated opposites—mind and body, matter and spirit, God and Nature. The

whole of nature is the living garment of spirit or mind. The structures and relations which we are able slowly to spell out by science are parts of the patterned web of this living garment. With the microscope, the micrometer scale, the diffraction grating, the telescope; in short, with all the instrumentalities of science, we are tracing out bit by bit the lineaments of spirit in nature. There is no antagonism, but rather complementation and interplay, between the traces of God's life and energizing power in nature and in the heart, the conscience and the will of man. Spirit is manifested throughout the natural order. It is more concretely, intimately and immediately known in human feeling—in love, devotion, sympathy, sacrifice and service. But there is no antagonism between these twin revelations. For the supernature which is thought, will and love is a part of nature, when we mean by nature the world-whole, the unceasing utterance of the Creative Spirit of God.

Thus, in the name of science and philosophy, we must reject a dualism which would sunder matter and spirit, Nature and God, and make it forever impossible to understand how spirit can enter into matter, how God can enter into a world which is external to and over against him; and still more impossible to understand, how spirit can exist without physical habiliments, or how God can live and energize without a cosmos to express that universal living and creative Energy which He is.

In this deepest of all philosophical issues the facts seem to be as follows (I am making a very summary statement of an immense range of facts): Certain forms of matter constitute the positive potentiality of vital organization. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and phosphorus are

themselves doubtless the results of certain specific arrangements of electrons. Given a suitable arrangement of these elements in a fitting environment and life arises. No one knows *how* life arises. When the living organism has reached a specific degree of organization it becomes sentient. No one knows with certainty whether nerve cells organized into a system are necessary for the manifestation of consciousness. It is highly probable that such is the case. Certain highly organized and sensitized organisms become the organs of thought, imagination and moral volition. These are spiritualized material organisms. We know nothing, empirically, of disembodied spirits. On the other hand, the evolutionary materialist who claims that he is scientific in asserting that the spiritual qualities of men are nothing but the summations of the movements of purely physical particles is talking arrant dogmatism. He is not talking science at all. He is putting up a metaphysical bluff. It is not science to say that spirit is a by-product of matter. It is not science to say that life is only a special case of material arrangement. There are several big jumps, as well as many little steps, in the evolutionary ascent or descent. It is just as bad logic to say that the big jumps are made up of a lot of minute steps, of steps so minute as not to be steps at all but crawls, as it would be to say that an athlete breaks the record for the high jump by adding together more little jumps so small as to be unnoticeable than his competitors. The evolutionary materialist makes his case plausible by taking all the time there is and then adding more to cover up the jumps by making them smaller and smaller until the differences between organisms seem to disappear. When he has, by skillful use of millennium upon millen-

nium, obliterated from view the differences between organisms, the next step is easy—to obliterate the distinction between living and nonliving bodies. But all this is not science. It is very bad metaphysics. Probably, as a generalized statement of the history of life, the evolutionary hypothesis is the best we have. It is in harmony with a multitude of facts. But it conceals many unsolved problems—notably the problem of discontinuity or novelty, that is of the jumps in the structure of the empirical world. The biggest of these jumps are the jump from nonliving to living matter and the jump from sensuous mind to reasoning spirit. Man is not a disembodied spirit; but that he is a spirit and not a mere animal organism must be evident to any one who will compare the achievements, sufferings, troubles, aims and ideals of man in civilization with the work of the anthropoid ape. It is scientific since it is in accord with the facts to believe that man is a responsible and rational spirit, a being of large discourse, capable of looking before and after. It is unscientific to shut one's eyes to the cultural and moral phenomena of human life which bear witness to the reality of spirit, and to deny its existence simply in the interests of a dogmatic metaphysics masquerading in the name of science.

The theory of evolution is simply the best description and interpretation of a great body of facts. It is not by any means a final and complete explanation of these facts. In particular, the theory of evolution gives no explanation of the following facts: (1) That the original organization of the material universe, the distribution of its elements, was such as to enable life to appear and develop in manifold forms. (2) The origin of life itself is not

explained. Even if it be admitted that life is just the result of a special configuration of certain chemical elements it is not thereby explained away. This specific complex is the physical basis of life. It cannot be regarded as lifeless matter. (3) The theory of evolution has, as yet, given no satisfactory explanation of the causes of the indefinite variability of living matter which has resulted in all the novelties we find in the kingdom of organisms. Nor has it yet offered a satisfactory explanation of how variations are transmitted and thus enhanced. (4) It has not offered and it cannot offer, any causal explanation of the origin of consciousness, of feeling, rational thought, creative imagination, spiritual vision and moral conscience. Therefore, it fails to explain the causes of the whole work of human culture.

Nothing is gained and much truth is obscured by obliterating differences. Man is akin to the lower organisms. But he is also very different from all other organisms. His whole career and works on earth prove this cardinal fact—the uniqueness of man. Man is what he is and he will become what he has power to become, entirely regardless of whether he was created in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, on the first Saturday 4004 B.C., or first appeared as a low-browed apelike savage 500,000 years ago trailing a long ancestry with him.

The theory of evolution sheds light on the question why man is so easily beset by fears, superstitions, lusts and greeds; why he is so little of an angel. It enables us to discard the notion that man's weakness and brutishness are the consequence of Adam's sin. But it does not in the least detract from the beauty and value of man's spiritual nature. It does not mar the sublimity of his thought,

his higher affections, his visions, his aspirations and his heroisms.

Man remains, from the evolutionary standpoint a paradoxical being mingled of clay and spirit, his feet in the mire, his mind and heart ascending to the stars.

If spirit be a unique kind of creative and intelligent power, even though it be here and now associated with certain forms of matter, it may well be capable of association with other forms of matter, with forms more plastic to the aims of spirit. If spirit be a unique power or force, even the darkest and most shocking cases of the apparent obscuration or extinction of the spirit by the operation of material forces do not shut us out from the right to believe in the endurance and ultimate victory of spirit. We are apt to be imposed upon unduly in these matters by very striking or large-scale happenings. The Japanese disaster appalls us, but it raises no new problem. The insanity or extinction of a brilliant spirit appalls one, but it, too, raises no new problem. The differences between such cases and more ordinary experiences are differences of degree. It is very difficult to believe that spiritual things are supreme or ever will become supreme in the universe. But the most inexpugnable ground for this faith, appearance to the contrary notwithstanding, is the undying urge in man which prevents him from falling back on what has been or even being satisfied with what, whichever pricks him on to create and recreate works of culture to slake the undying thirst of his spirit for more life and fuller.

And it is scarcely credible that this most unique, most creative and most insistent force in the world—the spirit as manifested in man—should not be akin to that which

is highest, most creative and most enduring in the universe. As in man, so in the universe. The body is the instrument and expression of the spirit. The order and beauty, the sublimity and unhasting but unresting creative life of the universe are the vesture or expression of the Universal Spirit. The physical Cosmos is the body of God. It would be carrying coals to Newcastle for me to repeat here the magnificent imagery of the prophets and the psalmists in which there is expressed for all time on this earth the doctrine for which I have been arguing.

NOTE. It will be obvious to the thoughtful reader that the present writer's standpoint in philosophy is *dynamic idealism*. The universe is a dynamic and living system or an eternally creative order, of which the most adequate expression or realization is found in the community of personal spirits. This is the proper meaning of idealism, inasmuch as, ever since Plato, it has meant the doctrine that the *ideal principles* concentered in the human world in the various forms of rational insight, volitional harmony and aesthetic and affectional communion are the controlling principles of reality.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE IDEA OF GOD

There are two ways of approach to the Idea of God—the profoundest, most difficult and most important concept that man forms. One may approach the God idea from the consideration of the natural cosmos, or from the consideration of human personality. Of course these two ways must ultimately come together. For, on the one hand, the concept of the natural cosmos is a concept formed by man from reflection upon the data of human experience in its totality. And, on the other hand, human personality is developed and lives only in interaction with nature. Man is a dependent member of the natural cosmos. All the movements and forces of the universe meet in him, and yet he judges and appraises the cosmos. He wills in harmony with its movement. At times he struggles against it. Although he seems but a broken reed shaken by every wind of nature, he is, as Pascal put it, *a thinking reed* and thus far he is greater than nature. In primitive thought there is no clear distinction drawn between the natural world and the realm of man. Nature is held to be governed, in all her movements, by manlike spirits. In animistic and polytheistic thinking there is no more order recognized in nature than in human nature. The increasing recognition of *order* in nature marches step by step with the growth of order in human social

relations, and in the highest reaches of human thought these two orders keep pace together. The order of the starry heavens is complementary to the order of the moral law.

As man becomes more self-conscious, more clearly aware of his own nature and of the interests and goods which belong to human self-realization, he tends to conceive the natural cosmos as subservient to the highest Values. Thus, in ancient Greece the philosophers looked upon nature as a rational and æsthetic order which is the expression of the same principles that are for them supreme in human life. Nature is what she is, she becomes what she becomes, through the power of these *Forms* or *Rational Principles* and *Æsthetic* and *Moral Values*, participation in which, for Plato and Aristotle, was the highest destiny of the human soul.

The Hebrew seers, who thought in more imaginative and concrete terms, conceived God as a Righteous Personal Will who creates and rules nature as well as man. "The Heavens declare his power." "The firmament showeth his handiwork." "Heaven is His throne, the earth his footstool." "He forms the light and creates darkness." "He rides upon the wings of the wind."

In the magnificent imagery of prophet and psalmist God is pictured as the absolute and holy creative and governing Will. Nature is the subordinate expression and the subservient instrument of that will. But the highest, the most characteristic expression of the Divine Will is to be found in the moral-social life of man. "What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah vi: 8. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your

doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Isaiah i: 16, 17. "And he will judge between the nations and will decide concerning many peoples." Isaiah ii: 4. "Seek good and not evil, that ye may live. . . . Hate the evil and love the good, and establish justice in the gate." Amos v: 14, 15. "But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Amos v: 24.

The Hebrew prophets depict the order of nature as the manifestation of God's glory and power but as entirely subsidiary to his holy and merciful Will, which is revealed in his dealings with mankind. They have no thought of any invariant order of causation in the course of nature. God may at any moment, for a moral purpose, arrest and change that course.

The modern scientific conception of nature excludes the notion that God intervenes on special occasions and in preëminent degrees in the orderly process of natural events. The whole order of nature is the continuous expression of the divine purposive Energy or Will. God does not suspend that order. The only God for modern science is the World-Soul, the immanent spirit or order of nature (the World-Soul of the Stoics, the *Deus sive Natura* of Spinoza). In this respect the scientific conception of nature is incompatible with the Hebrew and Christian notion that the energies and events of nature are more or less arbitrary expressions of a divine will that is beyond them and that can abolish them, as it has set them up and keeps them going, for its own good pleasure.

The only notion of God that is compatible with the

principles and postulates of a scientific conception of nature is that of an immanent principle of Life, Order, Intelligence, continuously manifesting itself in the course of nature. This does not mean that God is limited by what we actually know of nature. He is not in the natural process, as though His life were cribbed, cabined and confined by the laws of the behavior of material energy, or vital energy. Nature is in Him. Nature is the continuous expression of an Orderly Power. The laws or rules of nature's behavior are the coherent and persistent language of the universal *Logos*, the *World-Reason*.

But this immanental conception does not imply that God is equally manifested in all forms of finite existence. The lower forms of life are fuller manifestations of his Creative Energy than nonliving things. The higher forms of conscious life are more adequate expressions of his nature than the lower. There is more of God in Man than in a manlike ape, more of God in a saint or great creative artist or thinker than in an ordinary man. God's self-manifestation in nature, including human nature, is an *ascent*, a hierarchy, a graded series of steps of self-revelation.

But nature seems cruel, harsh, insensible to human suffering, indifferent to human good and evil. So men have been led from of old time to conceive God as a finite being, struggling to promote the good against external hindrances; against personal devils or impersonal brute matter. The line of thinkers who have taken such a view, from Zoroaster to William James and H. G. Wells, is a long and highly reputable one.

Nevertheless, the doctrine of a finite or limited God defeats the end for which men conceive and believe in

God. The ideal aim of science is a complete description of all the elemental features of nature in their interdependencies as parts of one all-inclusive order. It would conceive the entire sequence of events as involving the complete and continuous determination of each phase by the preceding phase, and of each future phase as necessarily issuing from the present phase. A universe consisting, at any instant in its history, of a system of reciprocally determining elements; and consisting, at each successive instant, of a temporal phase of that system as inevitably issuing from its previous phase—such is the world-view implied in the postulates of science. The history of the universe is an endless history—without beginning or ending—of causally interdependent events. Science has no use for the conception of a First Cause, existing antecedently to the creation of the natural cosmos and continuing to exist outside the cosmos which he has created. The only conception of God's relation to nature that is in harmony with the principles of science is that He is the eternally energizing power or spirit who, by the inherent necessity of his nature as self-expressive and self-revelatory, eternally creates and sustains the world of nature. And the eternal conservation of the world is the act of *continuous creation*. God cannot *will*, by an inscrutable fiat, to make a *world*, and then later will with equal inscrutability to intervene, to remake or improve it, and then perhaps still later decide to abolish it altogether. There can be nothing capricious in his will. Moreover, a living energizing God eternally implies a world of nature. His eternity is not timelessness, but a continuous creative energizing through all time. He is not "above" or "beyond" the temporal world order. He

endures through it, or, rather, it endures through Him.

Now, as we saw in the previous chapters, the universe is *creative movement*. While science implies unity, continuity, a coherent and systematic whole in the universe, it does not imply that all parts of the universe are on the same level of value and reality. God's self-expression in nature is an ascent in *meaning*, in *individuality*, in *value*. Nonliving matter and energy do not account for living organisms. The principles of merely organic life do not account for mind, for reason, for moral conscience, for the sense of beauty. God's self-expression is cumulative and it reaches its highest pitch (so far as we know) in spiritual personality. God's creative power and his character are most fully revealed in spiritual individuals—in persons who not only feel and think and act; but who feel, think and act *rationally, consistently, harmoniously* in the service of the spiritual values possible of achievement by man.

Thus the continuity and order in nature is not at all on a dead level. It is *creative continuity*. It is energy and life ever ascending step by step towards greater comprehensiveness, depth, and harmony of conscious rational and moral life. Those who say that man's spiritual life is an excrescence, a homeless waif in the cosmos, are invited to explain how the cosmos has engendered such an inexplicable and self-contradictory phenomenon.

God is then the creative and sustaining Ground of a living universe, which issues in spirit and personality. The evolution of life must have its Ground in a Being who transcends every stage we know in the march of life—who transcends even the highest reach of human personality.

God transcends Nature and Man, not by being outside of, or beyond, or behind nature and man. He reveals Himself by expressing his creative meaning step by step in ever richer degree moving towards perfection—in the starry heavens, the majestic march of solar systems, the equally majestic march of the electrons, the whole spectacle of infrahuman life, the whole history of man, and in the individual soul.

But, beyond the fragment of the cosmos whose characteristics and laws we know by perception, inference and imagination, beyond all the solar systems, and beyond His highest and loveliest revelation in the beauty and nobility of human personalities, beyond all human culture, there live still further undreamt of riches in the infinite plenitude of His Being. God transcends nature in man's moral and rational and æsthetic life. He must transcend, in the qualitative richness and harmonious comprehensiveness of His Being, all we know and even all we dimly feel.

He is the ever-immanent creative source of the finite personality and its environment, just because He is the transcendent ground of all Being. He must be the Transcendent Ground, since he is ever pouring forth the riches of his creative meaning, in life upon life, world-age upon world-age.

Thus, in place of the older, separate arguments for God as the Creative Ground of Nature and Humanity we have one argument. The *ontological argument* was that the idea of a Perfect Being necessarily implies the existence of such a being, since to add existence to all other attributes of an idea is to increase its perfection; and therefore the idea of God minus existence is not the idea

of a Perfect Being. This argument does not prove the existence of a loving, a good, or even an intelligent Supreme Being. The truth in it is that when one thinks out what is implied in the existence of the finite one is inevitably lead to the conception of the whole and self-complete. The existence and continuance of the imperfect, with its ascent towards a greater measure of perfection, does imply a Perfect Reality of some sort which realizes itself by self-expression in the successive gradations of the Imperfect. The idea of gradations in the Imperfect implies the recognition, however vague, of the Perfect.

The *cosmological* argument is that the existence of an orderly universe implies the reality of a Cause or ground of the whole order. It does; but not in the sense of an extramundane cause or divine mechanic; not even necessarily a theistically conceived transcendent Personal Ground.

The *teleological* argument is that the adaptation of the various parts of the world implies a purposive designing Intelligence. Against this argument, which has usually proceeded on a narrow humanistic bias, have been cited the imperfections, wastes, failures, maladaptations, in nature and in human life. In the form which implies that everything was created and arranged to satisfy the appetites and wants of the human animal, this argument is well-nigh worthless. But there is creativeness, there is an increasing evidence of creative order and meaning in the stages of the evolutionary ascent. If the meaning of the universe includes, and even transcends, the origination and growth of spiritual individuality or personality, as it seems to, then the argument is valid. But this

means, not that the world is an oyster for the human animal to open and regale himself with; it means that, through all the imperfection, struggle, suffering and failure of the world-process runs the meaning and goal of more nearly perfect spiritual individuality and community as its true end. Man does not exist, then, to hold what he is and has. He does not exist to mark time and maintain his foothold as an animal. If this is the end and value of human life, if an egoistic or even a collectivistic hedonism (the good as pleasure, satisfaction or agreeable feeling) is the key to the value of humankind, the universe indeed mocks and thwarts it at nearly every turn. But, if the true value of human life consists in man's ever passing beyond what he has attained, in striving, serving and loving, in living in and for the spiritual goods of integrity, truth, beauty, justice, fellowship, the course of nature pricks him on to this destiny by which he becomes a son of the Most High. The teleological argument means this:

All tended to mankind  
And, man produced, all has its end thus far!  
But in completed man begins anew  
A tendency to God!<sup>1</sup>

The creating and perfecting of personal spirits is the meaning of the universal order. Every human being, as a potential Son of God, is begotten not made, is of one nature with the Father. The Divine and the Human are not two separate natures that do not mingle. The divine is the spiritual potency of the human. Disinterested thought, love of beauty and truth, devotion to justice

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, *Paracelsus*.

and rationality and fellowship; in short, dedication of the self to the furtherance in mankind of the commonwealth of rational and free ethical persons, is the divine in man.

“The eternal contrast between the actual and the ideal seems to me to furnish the natural key to the problem of immanence and transcendence. Transcendence does not mean remoteness or aloofness. The distinction it points to is that between the perfect and the imperfect; and by perfection we do not understand the possession of innumerable unknown attributes, but the perfect realization of those very values which we recognize as the glory and crown of our human nature. This idea of perfection disclosing its features gradually, as men become able to apprehend the vision, is the immanent God, the inspiring Spirit to whom all progress is due. But the immanent God is thus always the infinitely transcendent. The two aspects imply one another. A purely immanental theory means the denial of the divine altogether as in any way distinguishable from the human, and involves, therefore, the unqualified acceptance of everything *just* as it is. A theory of pure transcendence, on the other hand, tends to leave us with a ‘mighty darkness filling the seat of power,’ for only so far as God is present in our experience can we know anything about Him at all. It is the immanence of the transcendent, the presence of the infinite in our finite lives, that alone explains the essential nature of man—the ‘divine discontent’ which is the root of all progress, the strange sense of doubleness in our being, the incessant conflict of the lower and higher self, so graphically described by St. Paul as a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. And the more clearly

we identify the call of the higher with our true self, the more unfeignedly do we recognize the illumination of the divine spirit. *Deus illuminatio mea*—‘In Thy light shall we see light.’”<sup>2</sup>

This, it seems to me, is the true standpoint from which to estimate the significance of the Christian idea of God. The Christian doctrine of God essentially means that his innermost character, his essential nature, is revealed in the Christ-Life, and realized in some measure by all who participate in this Life. And it does shed a light on the tangled facts of human experience that we get nowhere else so fully, although there are foregleams of it in Plato, and Gotama Buddha and doubtless in others. Its most definite pre-Christian anticipation is in Isaiah liii.

What the Christian doctrine does is boldly to take all the conflicts, and perplexities and burdens, all the hazards of our finite existence, and through the assertion that God is self-imparting, self-sacrificing Love, transform these puzzling facts into instruments for the realization of that potential divine sonship which it proclaims to be implicit in the nature of man.

The crux of the problem of God is this—How can we reconcile the divineness of these stirrings and strivings in the human spirit towards a life of personal integrity, clean and straight in thought and action, motivated by love and fellowship, with the unlovely, stupid and cruel things in man and with the apparent indifference of the forces of material nature to the higher values? Yes, even the apparent unmorality of the impulses which are neces-

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<sup>2</sup> A. Seth Pringle Pattison in *The Spirit*, edited by B. H. Streeter, pp. 21, 22.

sary conditions of human existence—sex, self-assertion, gregariousness or the herd instinct?

The heart of the problem is the right relation between human personality and nature. Nature achieves her most worthwhile, most meaningful results in personality. Can we be certain, then, that nature is hostile or even merely indifferent to the true Goods of human personality? No doubt the supreme mystery of human life lies in the fact that human beings are each private centers of poignant feeling and yet are but dependent elements in the natural order. When a human individual is tortured with pain, goes down to mental and moral defeat, we are tempted to say that nature is devilish. But do we not misconceive the true and permanent meaning and destiny of personality? If the world is, in the great words of Keats, a vale of soulmaking, have we not the right to believe that all the vain struggles, the anguish and despair of our human lives, even our most terrible losses and deepest griefs, are steps in the transmutation of the natural human animal into a spiritual personality? May not struggle and suffering, even utter defeat, be the means by which we are taught to seek first the Kingdom of the Spirit, to be reborn into the likeness of God, to become sons of God and to know and commune with our Father? If the natural order be but the prelude to the spiritual order, then through suffering and disaster our spirits shall be regenerated into a communion with the transcendent spiritual world.

Then, while God is immanent in the natural cosmos and in increasing measure in every step upward towards increasing individuality, intelligence, self-initiative and sociability, he is most fully immanent in the lives of

those who have been purified of the sin of self-centeredness, who have learned selfless devotion to the things of the spirit, who have gained purity and integrity of heart of mind and will through suffering and service.

This is the meaning of the Cross! The disciple of Christ has no need for the desperate resort to a finite God. The dilemma—either God is not good or He is a being limited by some brute power of evil—does not exist for the Christian. Dark and mysterious are the ways of life. “Sorrow is hard to bear and doubt is slow to clear.” It is hard that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, that by His stripes we must be healed. But if the goal of life, the meaning of personality, is to preserve one’s individuality, as a separate and private center of feeling and will, by having this animal center of feeling and impulse made over into a spiritual person who finds self-fulfillment by holding nothing back, by seeking not his own but by dedicating all his powers, in whole-mindedness and simplicity and purity of heart, to the service of truth, justice, beauty, fellowship and love, in human kind, Christianity offers the only solution of the riddle of the Sphinx.

All the suffering, all the evil, all the apparent brutality and cruelty of nature, cannot hinder the achievement of this end. Having divested ourselves of self, having found self-fulfillment in selfless dedication, we become “as having nothing and yet possessing all things, as poor yet making many rich,” as empty and yet full.

God is immanent in nature but He transcends nature, for his innermost character is revealed in the spiritual life of persons, who save themselves by losing themselves in devotion to the spiritual commonwealth of persons.

The evils and defects inherent in the natural process are stepping stones on which individuals rise from their dead selves to spiritual personality. They put on immortal life when Christ dwelleth in them.

Neither principalities nor powers nor life nor death are able to separate them from the love which is in Christ Jesus. For the deepest mystery, the mystery of evil, is revealed. God suffers through Christ, and all who are, in however humble degree, Christlike, in order that spiritual personality may be fulfilled in all. There is no other way, no other solution. When we have learned to endure all things, so that our hearts are wholly cleansed of animal self-seeking, of duplicity and impurity, when we have put on the armor of single-mindedness and the breast plate of selfless devotion to the things of the spirit, we have conquered evil and death. We are become spiritual persons, Sons of the Most High.

The interrelations of action and suffering in all the elements of the universe, the causal interplay of all the factors in our world—material and vital, sentient and insentient—warrant the inference that there is a Universal Ground of the orderly interdependences in the elements of reality. As Lotze put it, using the symbol *M* for the ultimate ground of interaction, if we, for the sake of simplicity, take any two elements of reality *A* and *B* and consider the fact that the successive states or phases of these elements  $A^1, A^2, A^3$  and  $B^1, B^2, B^3$ , are interdependent there must be a Ground *M* for their interrelations. It is impossible and out of accord with our ever increasing knowledge of the mutual influences exerted by finite beings on one another, to suppose that *A, B, C*, etc., each develop throughout its history in independence

of all the others. Therefore, there must be a Ground M of the whole universe of interacting beings. Moreover, since the universe includes in its history the actions and passions of a graded series of sentient and conscious beings up and presumably beyond rational and socialized or moralized personality, the Ground M must be the Creative and Sustaining Principle of order.

But when all this has been said, there remains the further question—what is the relation of this Supreme or Cosmical Ground to the highest qualities or values of personal spirit? The most powerful argument for the belief in a Supreme Reality which includes, conserves, and transcends the highest spiritual qualities of human personality is to be found precisely in that undying urge of the human spirit, that unquenchable aspiration after a more perfect life, which impels men notwithstanding their own grievous errors, lamentable failures, and sins, to pursue spiritual self-fulfillment. The constant struggle of man for a harmonious spiritual content of life, for the possession and enjoyment of beauty, truth, reality, goodness, and the transformation of their beings by these things, is the best witness to God. The divine in man implies a more divine in the universe. It is in man's vocation as a being capable of a continuous quest for a more harmonious, deeper and more comprehensive spiritual life that we find the surest evidence of the reality of God. For it cannot be that those qualities, without the partial achievement of which man is never satisfied and the partial achievement of which only spurs him to more of the same kind, are illusory by-products of a meaningless and worthless universe.

It is in the very existence of the possibility of spiritual

personality and its constant though imperfect impulse to further development that one finds the best key to the meaning of reality as a whole.

If we take the word "moral" as equivalent to "spiritual" and "personal," then we may say that in the moral values lie at once the keys to the meaning of human life and of the universe. These include: the creation and enjoyment of beauty which is always conditioned by harmony of insight and experience; intellectual integrity and rational insight into the nature of things; justice, which is the effective recognition of the inherent value of personality in others; fellowship or interpersonal communion and love, which are various nuances of that community of feeling, thought and striving without which personality is a maimed and dwarfed life. These are the spiritual values. Without the growth in these qualities personality does not become, does not develop. They are facets or aspects of the life of spiritual selfhood. The Supreme Reality must take up and conserve and transcend these qualities of spiritual being. In us they are broken and imperfect lights, but they are our best lights on the road to true happiness and to God. The Supreme Spirit doubtless must possess these qualities (and others) in much higher degree than even the noblest men. But the qualities of His spirit must be continuous in kind with these qualities of the human spirit.

Thus we can see, however dimly, that God—the Supreme Source and Ground of the spiritual qualities of persons, of rational and moral individuals—must be the Eternal Perfection of that type of being which, in our human order, we call Spiritual Individuality or Personality. If you define a person simply as a private and

unique center of feeling, thinking, and acting, in part dependent upon his social relationships to others on the same level, and in part dependent on the physical order, then God is more than Person. He is superpersonal. But he must include in perfection all that is implied in Personality. For the spiritual values, quest for and possession of which are the marks of personality in the finite, have no being apart from selves or persons. And on the other hand, finite persons have no being and growth except as members of a community. Therefore God, the Source and Ground of the communion of personal spirits, must be a superpersonal Spiritual Life which is at once the fulfillment of the ideal of a spiritual community and of spiritual individuality. He must be the Supreme Instance of selfhood and community.

At this point we reach the limits of human insight. It is hard for us to see how the Perfect Spirit can be Perfect Self and Perfect Community in one. But we can see that the higher and finer, the deeper and richer and more integrated a human self, just so much the more sympathetic, inclusive and universally human that self is. It is the fullest personality in which there is the least sense of apartness, the least self-consciousness, pride and self-assertion. The greatest spirits are the humblest, the ethically greatest individuals are the most socially minded. Therefore, can we not say, carrying out the thought from which we started, that the Perfect Self is the Perfect Community?

## CHAPTER XXV

### GOD, THE HOMELAND OF SPIRITUAL VALUES

The present emphasis on the social and practical applications of religion is very valuable. For it means the recognition that religion touches human lives here and now in every vital spot. But there is a danger to religion from overemphasis of the social and practical, in the usual sense of these terms. This danger lies in assuming that the entire sum and substance of religion consists in social ethics and its applications. From this point of view the sole function of religion is to render concrete and practical social services. The Church's whole work and the minister's sole vocation are taken to be the service of the community through various institutional agencies—to promote sociability, coöperation, recreation, charitable work, education, etc., through organization.

It is a great gain to have it recognized that Jesus taught a social gospel. But we must not forget that He said, in answer to the complaint of Martha that Mary was sitting at His feet and listening to His words while she was overbusy serving: "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." We must not overlook the distinct, unique and private individuality of every soul. We must not, in effect, deny that a redeemed society is constituted of individual persons. The health of the human soul requires that it shall be able to

slake its undying thirst for communion with the Highest, for worship and love of those supreme Spiritual Values, in devotion to, and communion with which, the soul is lifted out of its actual weakness and poverty of inner life and transformed in the service of Perfection. The human soul can never be satisfied with itself, even with its fellow-souls, as they actually seem to be. The soul must reach out and touch a richer and more worthwhile and enduring Life, one in communion with which it finds both peace and inspiration to action. "Our hearts were made for Thee, O God, and are unquiet until they find Thee" (St. Augustine); "In Thy will is our peace" (Dante); "Thou wouldst not search for me, unless Thou already possessed me" (Pascal).

If it be said that these are words of Christian mystics and mysticism is outworn, I cite the case of Auguste Comte, who regarded himself as the founder of sociology. Comte proposed to substitute, for the metaphysical spiritualism and mysticism of Christianity, a scientific program of social order and organization based on the empirical study of social facts. In this way society was to be made over without faith in any supernatural or mystical background or support. But Comte found it necessary, in order that men might be stimulated and their affections moved to work for human perfection, to set up a *system of worship* based on the faith in the supreme reality of a mystically conceived *Supreme Being*, the *Eternal Spirit of Humanity*, regarded as including in its life all the generations past, present and to come. What is this but God the Holy Spirit couched in other terms?

Faith in, love and worship of, an All-sustaining, All-embracing and Eternal Spirit, in whom all the higher

values of life—the values which we seek and but intermittently and brokenly realize—are rooted and conserved; such are the indispensable conditions for the attainment of a better social order, as well as for the peace and progress of the individual soul. Without the mystic's vision and faith in God as the Homeland of all spiritual values there can be no health in us individually or socially.

And, if God be the Homeland of all spiritual values, there is no exclusive road to communion with God which is the monopoly of any one institution or sect or school. All roads of the spirit lead to Him.

He is known through communion with nature through the

sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns.'

He is known in all the beauties and grandeurs of nature, in all the majestic forms of mountains, stars and seas, in all the marvelous forms, colors and activities of the living world, in the stately march of life through the ages.

He is known in all the lineaments of law and order which the scientist traces out in reverent and loving study of nature.

He is known through all the forms of beauty, sublimity and tragedy which the creative spirit of man weaves with materials of stone and color and sound.

He is known, as most closely akin to the human spirit itself, in the march of the human spirit through history. He is revealed, most richly and concretely, because most humanly, in the deeds and teachings of all the great lovers of their kind who, throughout the long day of

human history, have given to man visions of a community of souls finding joy and peace and goodwill in a fellowship dedicated to the spread of justice, truth, beauty, friendship and love among humankind. Chief among these, the first-born of many brethren, is Jesus our Lord. His revelation does not exclude those other seers. It includes them. It includes that of Plato, of Gotama Buddha, as well as that of the great Hebrew prophets, his own racial forerunners.

God is revealed and experienced in all sweet and noble human relationships. Rays of his light illuminate the life of man in every unselfish devotion, in every dedication of the spirit of man to the well-being of his fellows, to the discovery and spread of truth and justice and to the creation and enjoyment of beauty.

All these partial communions with God are taken up and included in the higher form of mysticism. There is a mystical element in all human experiences of value—a direct sense or feeling of oneness with the object which has value. No one can fully analyze or explain away, in purely theoretical terms, the beauty of a landscape, a seascape, a painting or a poem. No one can fully account for a noble friendship, a great love or even a case of simple comradeship. So it is with our sense of the reality and presence of God. All our scientific knowledge, all our partial visions of beauty, all our imperfect forms of interpersonal communion, all our contacts with the race's spiritual heroes are contributory to it. But, finally, our sense of God as the Homeland of human values is an immediate and living feeling or intuition of God's reality and presence in and through all forms of spiritual experience. We know that He must ineffably transcend all we

experience of Him. We know that the most carefully and comprehensively worked out theory of His Being and His relation to ourselves and nature is a mere skeleton—a network of abstract thoughts. To admit this is not to undervalue speculation in theology or philosophy. Theory may interpret and harmonize experiences, but theory is no substitute for first-hand experiences. Without the living sense of God's being and presence as the Universal Spirit and Homeland of values, theory is empty and pallid.

What I am saying is what Browning says in these words: "The rest may reason and welcome, 'tis we musicians know." Without the mystic's sense of the presence of God in his own inner experience, in nature, in the communal life, mere logically articulated systems of thought are spiritually vain.

Our little systems have their day,  
They have their day and pass away,  
They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

Nevertheless, "He is not far from any one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being." He is "closer to us than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

When some one objects that the finite cannot know the Infinite and, therefore, mystical knowledge is sheer illusion, the answer is that the finite and the Infinite have no meaning when they are sundered apart. *They imply one another.* The Infinite is that in which the meaning and value of the finite is completely realized. We are finite-infinite. Although finite there is in us the idea

and impulse towards the Infinite. This impulse is the potential presence of the Infinite in us. There is not one of our higher experiences, our aspirations or yearnings, not even the most severely logical thinking, which is not stirred by the yeast of the Infinite. Nowhere in the life of spirit, neither in pure logic, nor empirical science, nor in art or poetry, nor in personal endeavor, nor in social life, is there anything which moves that does not so move as drawn towards and by the ideal of Perfection. Everywhere our thoughts, our feelings, our sentiments and aspirations presuppose and reach out towards the Perfect.

So, too, when we are told that personality is finite, since it is realized and enjoyed only in relation to and dependence on other selves, the answer is that personality, even in us, is not merely finite. The continual outgoing and upgoing of our selfhood, the continual process of self-transcendence, of finding our lives by losing them for social and impersonal ends or causes—this process is the very life of, the only method by which we put on or grow into, personality. Personality is finite-infinite and the most adequate, because richest and most comprehensive, revelation of the Universal Spirit. God is personal in the sense that personality is the fullest expression of His character. Since all the values and meanings of human life are unified and perfectly grounded in Him, since He is the universally immanent Spirit of the Whole, He is completely personal since completely social.

We can admit that the forms and symbols, the imaginative figures of speech and vision, in which the mystical experiences of God are clothed when one attempts to express to his fellows the nature of the experiences, are

inadequate; that no words can express God's being, no figures give form to it. This is not a lack peculiar to such experiences. The richer and more comprehensive and meaningful any experience the more inadequate to its expression are all physical symbols. We may admit, too, that the mystic's expressions are determined by his surroundings, by his social and physical environment, but this does not mean that he is the victim of delusions, any more than it means this in the case of his insights into natural truth or beauty or human moral and affectional relationships. No discoveries in historical criticism or in natural science can destroy the value of these mystical experiences of the Divine Meaning of Life. Whether one draw his sense of the presence of God chiefly from the contemplation of nature and of beauty or from the contemplation of human life, or from communion with Christ, or, what is best, from all these sources, no discoveries in regard to the past or the present can destroy their value. For this sense of the presence of God in nature, in history, in the human heart, is a present fact of experience.

Man has never stood in greater need of the immediate sense of the Divine in experience, of the presence of God in his life, than he stands to-day. "The world is too much with us . . . getting and spending we lay waste our powers." "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." We have invented a multitude of wondrous machines to give us more leisure to possess our own souls. And we have less leisure! We have no time to get acquainted with the deeps of our own nature and with God. We run to and fro on the earth. We are cumbered with much serving. There is not time or quiet, amidst the ceaseless whirl of the machinery and the relentless march of the

hours, for thoughtfulness, for contemplation. We need greatly to "loaf and invite our souls"; to feed our spirits with the enduring values "in a wise passiveness." Western civilization, especially in America, is in imminent danger of losing its soul entirely in the clatter of the machineries and organizations, the busy and vociferous nothings, in which it is engrossed. We are offered, as explanations of individual and social ills, all manner of crude and exaggerated psychologies and sociologies. If the half of these were true mankind would long since have gone down into the pit and been forgotten as an insane aberration of nature. In place of thoughtfulness, meditation and worshipful communion with the Perfect we are offered for remedy all sorts of patent nostrums, from psychoanalysis to the latest brand of socialism. We must begin from within and first cleanse the inside of the cup with the pure and healing waters of thoughtful and reverent meditation. What shall an individual or a civilization give in exchange for its soul? The only real cure for the ills of our civilization is the renaissance of that sense of communion with the Perfect by which alone the soul is lifted out of the whirl of machinery into the presence of the Eternal Values.

The central function of religion is now, as always, to bring man out of his weakness, his strife with himself and his fellows, into the strength, the peace and harmony, *the integration of his life-impulses*, which he can get only in communion with the Eternal Presence. This, and not to serve tables and run organizations, is the supreme work of the Church and its ministers. We need a new birth of meditation, of worship and contemplation, a revival of the spirit of the great mystics.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### MORAL EVIL AND MORAL FREEDOM

In this chapter I shall not discuss the problem of natural evil—of suffering, physical catastrophes and death as incidents natural and inevitable to the life of man. The doctrine that man was naturally, by his creation, free from suffering and the fate of death and that these ills came into human life as a result of sin may be dismissed as not worthy of serious discussion. No one at all familiar with the facts of biology and able to think in terms of science will entertain such a notion. The apparently unjust distribution of natural evil in the human world is a very grave problem for a religious world-view—the gravest of all the speculative problems of religion. I shall discuss this problem separately.

In so far as physical suffering, disease and death result from man's moral delinquencies, of course these evils fall under our present category.

A distinction is often made by religionists between *moral wrong or vice* and *sin*. It is said that sin is an offense against the holy personal will of God, whereas moral wrong is only an offense against one's fellows. This distinction will not hold. If God mean the ultimate Ground or Principle of Spiritual Values, the Supreme or Cosmic Good, the good in human social order must be a partial expression of this Cosmic Good. Therefore, moral

evil and sin are only different ways of looking at the same fact. To say that an act or a motive is morally wrong is to say that it is opposed to the Good for the individual and for the social order. To say that the same act or motive is sinful is to say that it is out of harmony with the Cosmic Ground of the Social Order.

Moral Evil arises from the deliberate volition and personal choice of individuals. Harmful consequences to himself and others may result from acts done in involuntary ignorance, but the individual so acting is not evil in intent or character. No one deliberately chooses evil for himself or for those whom he cares for. He may choose evil for others in the furtherance of good for himself or his family. He may seek revenge or will the commercial ruin of another to gratify his own passion. He may ruin a woman's life to gratify his own lusts. But it is the apparent satisfaction of his own desires as good and not the deliberate willing of evil that leads him to these evil acts. He does not choose evil as evil. The evil he does is a consequence which comes in the train of what is to the agent in the moment of choice a good.

There can be no moral evil until there is deliberate volition and choice. The occasion of moral evil is the natural man, the animal organism. As a natural or biological organism man is a set of impulses, cravings, appetites. In themselves these are neither good nor evil. They are neither immoral nor moral. They are simply the nonmoral potencies of both good and evil. The impulses of self-preservation, self-development, self-expression, sex, love of offspring, are not evil and not good. They give rise to good and evil deeds; according to the manner, degree, and circumstances in which their gratifi-

cations are sought consciously or deliberately. Hence the flesh is not inherently evil. Indeed, it is good rather than evil in its main tendencies; since only in this fleshly organism does the rational and moral spirit come to conscious life and fulfillment. Of course some individuals are born with abnormally weak and abnormally strong impulses. Some seem predestined to evil from birth and by heredity. It is possible, nay more, it is probable that this predestination to moral disaster is the result of a bad social environment in the ancestry of the individual so born. For moral good and evil are social through and through. And, in individuals not born with abnormal tendencies, a bad social environment may turn the normal impulses in immoral directions or give to certain of them an exaggerated emphasis that is evil. No man sinneth unto himself alone and no man doeth good unto himself alone. A vicious social environment, the product of human greed, callousness and stupidity, is responsible for much, perhaps most, of the evil twists given to normal and natural human impulses.

Sin is a social fact. The forms of sin recognized in earlier religious thought (for instance, in the Babylonian Penitential Psalms) are violations either of Tabus inspired by the Gods—and these Tabus have to do with acts whose commission or omission are harmful to the group over whom the God is sovereign; or sins are violations of the social customs of those groups that are not matters of explicit divine ordinance (such as murder, cheating and adultery). The two classes of sin overlap. Early society is ruled by custom and tabu. Later, in the organization of social order, customs are codified and

simplified, as in the Mosaic law, the code of Hammurabi, the code of Manu.

Customs or moral codes are amplified into laws having both divine and human sanctions in the administration of government. At the highest stage of social development the rational conscience of the morally mature individual is recognized to be the arbiter of good and evil motives and aims and the power of wise practical judgment (the Greek *phronesis* or *prudence*) to be the judge of the right means to achieve good ends. This does not mean that at the level of reflective personal morality (the level at which the teachings of Socrates and his successors and of Jesus function) good and evil have passed beyond social reference. Moral evil or sin for which the individual is accountable is still social in its bearings.

It is always as a member of a commonwealth or community of moral persons that the individual is a responsible moral agent. Wrongdoing, wrong feeling and wrong thinking are sins against the spirit of the ideal community. A man may seem to sin primarily against his own higher nature; as when, without having any overt social responsibility—not being a father, husband, a brother, or a son—he makes a glutton, a drug-addict or a drunkard of himself. But his sin is against himself as a member of the commonwealth of persons. It has social reference. The self-indulgent gifted individual who, free from the pressure of hunger or cold, fails to develop and exercise his gifts and power to the full is both sinning against his own higher nature and against the common weal.

The fact is that, at the highest level of free personal

and reflective moral life, the social obligations of the individual are more subtle, far-reaching and exigent than in a type of society in which the good consists simply in conformity to established custom and law. To say that there is a suprasocial spiritual or moral life which the individual should live in and for is only another way of saying that, beyond the overt demands of the obvious and actual social order, as expressed in custom, law and usage, there functions the ideal of a social community of selves progressing towards perfection through the free or self-determined perfecting of its individual members.

It is true then that sin is antisocial, that the root of sin is selfishness, if we understand what we mean. Sin is that short-sighted and one-sided self-indulgence which in the same moment injures or denies the claims of the higher, more inclusive and more harmonious selfhood and thus subtracts from the increase of social good. The more comprehensive and harmonious and social the motives and aims of the self, the more selfless his volitional life, the more he realizes his true self as a free and responsible contributing member in the community of selves.

But we have yet to face the deepest problem of the moral life. *This life begins in the moment when the individual, having become conscious of his own impulses and their individual and social bearings, consciously identifies himself with these impulses as motives.* There is no moral or immoral desire and consequently no voluntary deliberation and choice until the individual becomes conscious of himself as one who weighs, judges, and thus affirms or denies his impulses and appetites. But it is not until he feels the urgency of impulse and appetite that he begins to think. It may happen that, through

ignorance, he is led into acts which are objectively bad without understanding their import and consequences. To feel sex desire is not to sin, but one may be led to indulge this desire in act or even only in thought, without being aware of the harm that may accrue thereby to another as well as to oneself. To be angry is not necessarily to sin, but an angry impulse may have bad consequences. The beginnings of vicious courses of conduct are often laid in ignorance. No one willingly seeks evil for himself; but, in seeking what seems a natural good—the satisfaction of a strong impulse or urgent desire—he may do evil to himself as well as to others.

Since, before we are become conscious of the natures, the imports and consequences of our impulses and appetites, we are not truly volitional or moral agents and therefore neither guilty nor praiseworthy; whereas, when we have entertained or indulged even in thought in the satisfaction of these impulses we are already embarked on the way to evil, it appears that we are doomed from the start to sin. This is the meaning of the doctrine of man's natural depravity. But man is not normally a naturally depraved being. He is a being who grows into the stature of a moral personality only through struggle and choice. No man is sinless in the sense of being free from the temptation to sin. But the possibility and the incipient actuality of sin is the condition of growth into moral personality.

In order that man may fashion himself into a moral personality, by the regulation and organization of his natural impulses and desires, he must be able to *reflect*, to *judge* and to *choose*. If there is never any real possibility of choice by the reflective self between possible

interests or values, morality is a delusion. Then man is no more guilty or responsible, no more praiseworthy or blameworthy, than a physical machine. To assert that man is but a complex machine is to sound the death knell of personal morality. A good man from this standpoint is of the same order as a good gas engine, a bad man of the same order as an engine in which the spark plug, the carburetor or some other part of the mechanism is out of gear.

The moral life, with all its implications of praise and blame, repentance and the satisfaction of a good conscience, responsibility, guilt and goodness, stands or falls with the truth or falsity of Kant's famous argument "Thou canst, for thou oughtest."

Freedom of choice, then, is a postulate of the moral life. We may dismiss the doctrine of an arbitrary, a capricious free will, one that is supposed to function independently of concrete interests, habits, and character, as nonsense. Such arbitrary freedom would negative the possibility of the development of moral character. Freedom of choice does not mean that the individual can free himself from either the inherited tendencies to act, which were the raw materials of his character, or from the habits of feeling, thought and action which are his present character. The individual is, at any stage in his career, a determinate and limited complex of capacities to think and feel and act. Whatever power of choice he has is determined by his original nature, as this has been organized under the influence of his environment. But a normal moral self is a being in whom there has developed the paramount capacity of *self-conscious reflection and choice*, one who is able to weigh values, to balance interests and

to choose in the light of ends or goods which are present before his mind in reflection. A free individual is one whose motives are constituted by the conscious identification of interests, values and ends with the self.

Freedom of choice, then, is limited, since the individual is always a limited being, limited in his capacities and in his opportunities. It is essential to the moral life that the individual self is not a fixed mechanical sum of non-psychical forces. If morality is to mean anything the self must be capable of moral change and of moral growth through self-determining effort. From the moral standpoint, there must be in the whole self a unitary capacity of reflection and choice. This is an ultimate datum. From the moral standpoint, then, the potency or capacity for the development of responsible self-determining choice is an ultimate and indefeasible reality.

The whole crux of the problem of moral responsibility and of freedom, in the sense in which it is at once in harmony with scientific method and with the demands of man's moral vocation, lies in the nature of the self. If personality be nothing but an exceedingly complicated bundle or complex of mechanically constituted contrivances—of springs, levers, cogs and combustion and transmission devices, like an automobile engine and driving gear, only more complex, then it is arrant nonsense to talk about responsibility and freedom or even educability. Those who make such an assumption brazenly deny patent facts. It is not science to ignore differences where differences are highly significant. All unprejudiced observation and all the activities of social administration and education, no less than the moral common sense of mankind, unite in supporting this thesis—The self is an

imperfect but developing and plastic unity, capable of choice, able to grow into fuller harmony or integration of aims and activities; able, in short, to increase in rational and moral self-determination. The converse is true—the self is able to degenerate, to decline in the power of rational self-control.

On the other hand the assumption that freedom of choice implies that the individual at the instant of choice could have chosen otherwise than he did appears to me erroneous. *It is quite true that, until the choice is made, there are, for the deliberating individual in a normal state of mind, open alternatives.* But in the actual choice, the opening is closed. The choice is made in the way it is because of the motives and considerations that then are uppermost or strongest for that individual. He expresses his individuality then and there in that particular choice. At that moment and in that posture of affairs he, being what he is, cannot choose otherwise. But he may in the future in a similar situation choose differently because of the consequences of that very choice. His nature is modified and other motives are reinforced by the outcome of his previous choice. The individual is not a mechanical resultant of external and internal forces. He is a living and plastic unity—a unity complex and self-modifiable—modifiable by his own power of reflection. To him belongs the freedom of rational deliberation.

To say that the view that the individual could not have done otherwise destroys the basis of responsibility and praise and blame, and makes repentance and satisfaction and the sense of obligation meaningless, is to miss the important point. I may recognize that, being what I was, I could not then have chosen otherwise. But I can

reproach myself for being what I was at that moment in that situation. I can repent and cultivate a stronger sense of responsibility. And these processes will enable me to choose differently now and in the future. When I acquit myself my satisfaction or self-respect again strengthens my power of choice in the right direction. If I reproach myself because my sense of duty was too weak or my moral insight defective, this reproach will strengthen my sense of duty and stimulate the more assiduous cultivation of moral insight. Moreover, from this point of view we shall be slow to judge others and shall keep in mind the injunction of Jesus, "judge not that ye be not judged." From this point of view vindictive punishment is a stupid cruelty. Retributive justice is justified only as a corroborative measurement.

On the other hand, social freedom and responsibility are correlative, since it is just in a free society that men develop their full moral statures by being held responsible for their own acts. Only thus can they develop responsible moral freedom. In any society where human beings are not treated as machines they must be held responsible, praised and blamed, corrected and encouraged in order that they may develop that rational self-determination which is identical with genuine moral freedom.

Freedom means that power of self-determining choice by which the individual is able to weigh and value, to judge and choose between alternative motives and ends. A free, moral act is one which is not determined until the whole self consciously chooses the first step. Having committed himself thus far the agent is not free. He who wills an end wills all that end entails.

Might then the individual have chosen otherwise? Be-

fore the moment of choice, Yes! At the moment of choice, No! Up to the instant of actual decision, if the act was a voluntary one, he must have been free to choose the other alternative. What he was in part was decided by the very act. He was different before and after the choice. It may have been a choice in which he affirmed further his moral freedom or one in which he forged a fresh link in the fetters of a vicious habit.

The real possibility of moral evil and moral good, the development of the individual into a moral personality, are meaningless delusions unless there is in the individual, over and above his natural impulses in their original form and over and above even the character already in part formed by indulgence of these impulses, a rational principle in the self which can set up and follow the good. The only freedom possible and needful is the freedom of rational reflection and choice.

So long as the power to choose remains, the spiritual self is alive. When, as is possible by a continued evil career, this power is lost, the wages of sin have been reaped fully. The wages of continued sin are death. This is the sin against the Holy Spirit in the human self. Whether man can thus fully murder his own spirit I do not know.

In the opposite direction, continued choice of the good must result in such a harmony between the spiritual principle and the natural impulses that it is no longer practically possible for the person to choose an evil course. Freedom of choice issues in that complete moral self-determination which is perfect freedom; but no freedom to choose the evil way.

The darkest mystery of all in this connection is the

fact that so many human beings seem born without the power ever to become actually free—moral imbeciles or moral monsters. Why should some be born to be vessels of dishonor? Why the defects of nature and taints of blood which make the natural criminal or moral imbecile? In part, no doubt, perhaps entirely, these tragic deformities of the human spirit are the effects of the sins of ancestors and of the evil nature of society.

Many wrecked lives are due to the evil character of society. Untoward social environments are responsible for many of the mental disorders that are the causes of the sins and crimes of individuals. We are only just beginning to get a glimpse of the truth that most criminals and defectives are mentally disordered, and that, in the last analysis, these disorders spring from the hardness, the selfishness, the stupid cruelty and the greed of those who should be the responsible leaders in the conduct of a better social order. Jesus said, "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me, to stumble, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were plunged in the depth of the sea."

We must take this saying in all its length and breadth and depth of meaning. Jesus knew the extraordinary delicacy and plasticity of the human soul in its budding years. He saw that dwarfed and maimed and twisted spirits—sick souls—were due to the cruelties, the hardnesses, the stupidities and greed of those who, having power of leadership and rule and wealth, betrayed their trust and offended those who were by nature destined for the Kingdom of Heaven.

The prime source of the most widespread and apparently immitigable moral evils are human greed, human

selfishness, stupidity and lack of imaginative sympathy. The greatest evils spring from the crimes against childhood and youth—the lack of healthy physical and social environment, the lack of opportunity for full physical, mental and moral education; the lack of opportunity to earn a livelihood under moral and humane conditions.

The prime sources of moral evils are selfish greed, and stupidity which lead to cruelty. These, together with self-righteousness are the major sins—greater sins than the sins of the flesh, though the latter are subtle and soul destroying when they are the results of the deliberate pursuit of self-gratification.

Religion, with its vision of a perfected social order, the *ideal commonwealth of moral personalities*, must forever wage unceasing warfare on behalf of every movement to give light and air and intellectual and moral nurture to the spirits of the young. Those who have the power of leadership, of rule, of wealth, of influence, of teaching and writing and use these powers to injure or corrupt the spirits of the little ones and of youth are the greatest sinners, the chief devils, in our complex society.

Why should the spirit that breeds moral evil in society in the manifold ways of supporting and pandering to vice, of hindering and hampering economic and educational and moral opportunity for moral personality to develop, be allowed to run rampant? Why should so much evil be permitted to flourish in our social order? We do not know fully. We can only partially answer such questions. The only way in which finite natural individuals can grow into the stature of full moral personalities is in this mixed world, full of dangers and beset with temptations. Through toil and struggle,

through error and failure, through stupid selfishness and wanton cruelty, the soul of man wins its way, groping oftentimes blindly, stumbling in the mire to rise again. It seems as if some diabolical power contrives again and again to turn or lure man's soul aside from the paths of reason, justice, love and happiness. And we cry, "Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom, lead thou me on. The way is dark and I am far from home."

We should have to give up in despair if we might not hope and believe that somehow there is a Cosmic Soul of Goodness that is and will ever be triumphant; and those who here have had no fair chance to achieve the eternal life which is the more abundant life of harmony, comprehensiveness and joy may yet enter into it.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

It often seems as if the Inscrutable Power which manifests its boundless wealth of creative energy in the lavish production of a vast variety of living forms and which has brought forth in man the most highly individual and richly endowed living being, either has done so only to make mock of its finest handiwork, or else is hindered and thwarted by some brute fate or malevolent destructive power; so that the fairest and richest form of finite individuality must, in proportion to its keenness, depth and range of feeling, thought and striving, suffer and be made the sport of either actively malign or brutally indifferent forces. Else why do lives fair in promise, goodly in body and mind, go to seeming wrack and ruin? Why all the physical suffering, mental anguish and disorder which human beings bear for no deliberate sin of their own or their immediate ancestors? Or, if all these defects, sorrows and defeats are traceable to the original sin of mankind's first progenitors, why then, among the host of Adam's descendants, should the selfish, the hard and callous, the low-browed, the servants of Mammon, so often go scot-free and prosper, while the loveliest and most finely organized natures suffer and even disintegrate in mind without obvious cause or justifiable result?

The problem of evil is the greatest stumbling block in

the way of faith in a single and absolutely perfect Spiritual Power conceived as the common ground of nature and human life. Nature seems wholly "careless of the single life," and even of the type, as Tennyson put it; utterly unregardful of the fate of the richest individualities which she brings into existence and nurtures for a moment and then wantonly casts aside on her rubbish heap. No solution of the problem of evil that has ever been offered is satisfactory. Are we told that "evil is naught, 'tis silence implying sound," as writers from Plotinus and Augustine to Browning have said? We reply that evil for which we can see no justificatory or remedial value, evil to which no one can point as specifically contributing to the good of any one as much as it subtracts from the good of those who suffer from it, is a positive and heart-rending fact. It is no illusion, unless everything in human life be illusion and then all basis for thought and action is dissolved.

To say that evil is a necessary element in the make-up of a world which *on the whole* is good is one way of making the best of the stern facts. Evil is evidently inevitable, in the sense that it is an inescapable factor in our human world. To say that the world is, on the whole, good is to say what we do not certainly know. It is to make a venture of redoubtable faith in the face of an equivocal situation. There are but three ways of dealing with the problem of evil. The two first are forms of *cosmical dualism*, *personalistic* and *impersonalistic* respectively; the third is a monistic theory of the world.

1. Evil is due to the free will of personal beings, angelic and human. God permits it, but he is not its cause, nor is he to be held responsible for it. He created

angels and human beings with the power of free and arbitrary choice and some of them chose evil. The universe was originally good through and through; it contained neither disease, suffering nor death. One of the angelic beings, the proud Lucifer or Satan, in his insatiable thirst for power led a host of his fellow-angels in rebellion against God. They cannot prevail against the Almighty, but they must work out and suffer the consequences of their contumacy. Satan is permitted to tempt man. Man, being free, is tempted and falls. Thus sin, the result of the exercise of an inscrutable freedom, enters into the human world. It brings in its train, disease, suffering and death. Thus God is absolved from responsibility for evil, which is the result of the misuse of the high prerogative of free will, first by superhuman agents and next by human agents.

The Kingdom of Evil, once established, can only be undermined and destroyed by atonement for sin through suffering. Man, being finite, is unable to atone for his infinite sin against the Perfect Holiness of God. God sends his only Son to suffer and thus to make atonement and to redeem men from sin, suffering and death.

This is a touching doctrine, but it is no solution of the problem of evil.

In the first place, it takes no account of the part borne by suffering, disease and death in the whole economy of animate nature. Biologically, suffering, disease and death are incidents in the evolution of animal life, as well as in the development of the individual. Beings devoid of sensation would not suffer. Beings devoid of sensation would not develop far in power of adaptation to, and control of, their environments. Without nervous

systems living individuals would be plantlike. The higher and more individualized and efficient the organism, the more finely organized the nervous system and the greater the capacity for suffering. Disease is a state attendant upon the unstable equilibrium of the organism, which in turn is the condition of its power of adaptation to the environment. Death is a necessary incident in the on-going of life. A deathless organism is an unconceivability. The individuated life force may pass from one organic habitation to another and so develop into greater perfection, but one cannot understand a living body that does not die. All finite lives must pass through the gate of death, perhaps into higher forms of individuality.

The doctrine does not free the Creator from ultimate responsibility for evil. For He created beings endowed with freedom and the impulse to rebel against Him, knowing that they would do so. He was responsible for their existence with the natures they have. Therefore, ultimately He is responsible for their free acts and the consequences thereof. Moreover, he permits them to continue in their courses. Either then God could not do otherwise; He is a finite being and not the Creator of the evil tendencies in angels and men. Or He is responsible for the possibility of evil and the world in which evil is possible is a better and richer world, one with more movement and individuality, than a mechanically perfect Paradise.

For it is not apparent on this theory, why those who have not willed evil, who have not sinned, should suffer from it. The doctrine that an all-powerful, all-wise God permits the infliction of grievous evils on innocent persons, in order to vindicate his holiness, which was offended

by the free act of sin of some remote ancestor, seems to me to imply the worship of a Moloch, not a just God, much less a loving one. This doctrine is an offense to humane reason. It supposes God to be either a vindictive tyrant and man since Adam a mere puppet, or God to be helpless in the face of the facts.

The doctrine of the innate depravity of the human race does not lighten the problem in any way. For the Cosmic Order must be responsible for man's state of innate depravity. Moreover, the impulses that make for goodness, for balanced intelligence, for harmony and happiness in human life are just as innate as the impulses that make for evil.

If God be not responsible for Satan and his works, then there is an eternal conflict between two Cosmic Powers or hosts. Why then stop at two? Why not go back to polytheism and polydemonism? Why not admit that there are many beings superior to man and that these beings are not in harmony with one another, do not constitute an economy or cosmic order?

2. The second type of cosmic dualism makes evil result from the conflict between spirit and brute matter. There is a power or stream of tendency in the universe making for goodness, for justice, for integrity, for friendship, for love, for happiness—in a word, for the ethical and other values of the human spirit. But this power is hindered in running the race that is set before it, by obstacles resident in the nature of matter as blind, inert and formless.

The physicochemical conditions of human existence, in nervous organization and the other living tissues, are imperfect instruments for the realization of the life of soul

or spirit. It is possible that matter will become more subservient to the development and fruition of spiritual life. It is possible that matter will continue to be a hindrance of equal magnitude. At any rate, the spiritual forces are limited or finite. Matter is not omnipotent, but it is not the ready and subservient tool of spirit. The imperfections and sufferings in the living world are due to this obstructive character of brute and insensate matter.

The attempt to escape the problem of evil by cutting the universe in two with a hatchet and supposing that a second cosmic power, impersonal brute matter, wars against a finite cosmic power of Good (the limited God of dualists) will not do. The cure is worse than the disease.

There is no scientific ground for supposing matter to be evil or to be obstructive to the operation of intelligence. Intelligence and will are called into play in the effort to understand and control the material universe for human and spiritual ends. The steady progress of modern science makes this sort of dualism obsolescent. One can understand why ancient thinkers, pondering over this perplexing mystery, should suppose, as do Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, that formless or unorganized matter is the polar opposite of mind—of the forms of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. They lived when the work of science had hardly begun. But no one in touch with modern science and its achievements and promises can entertain such a notion. So far is matter from being an unintelligible formless brute obstruction to spirit, that it is just in discovering the forms and relationships of material energies that spirit achieves some of its greatest triumphs. Matter is not formless and disordered. It

is the underpinning of mind. It is the substructure of human life. Through our sciences, our arts and crafts, we live better the more we understand nature. The diseases of human beings are not due to lifeless matter. They are caused by the struggle of microscopic and ultra-microscopic organisms. The physical obstacles to human life, even the great natural catastrophes, are surmountable and avoidable in great part.

In our æsthetic relation to physical nature there is a spiritual, a truly religious quality. We cannot say that nature apart from man gives evidence of being haunted by our "struggling tasked morality," that she feels qualms of conscience or strives for an ideal or either loves or pities human beings. Nevertheless, in contemplating her majesty, sublimity or homely picturesqueness, our spirits are calmed and elevated. The material universe is not evil. It is grand, terrible, sublime, beautiful, friendly by turns.

Nature does make jettison of our egoistic aims and oft turns a stony face to our puny wailings. But nature is our home; the framework, substructure and support of our lives. I question whether the attitude of faultfinding towards nature is ever justifiable; certainly it is worse than profitless. If she is not always as kind as we would have her, she is not cruel to us as other persons are. In her majesty she shows neither envy, nor malice. Communion with her is a calming, healing and uplifting experience. By it man is raised out of sordidness, pettiness and egoistic whining. Jesus was right in his attitude towards nature.

Cosmical dualism is without adequate scientific support. Ethically and religiously it is wanting, too. For,

if there be a Cosmic Power of Evil over against the Cosmic Good, we lose the sense of the unity and harmony of the universe which is a calming, uplifting and heartening experience. On the other hand, if there be no cosmos or universe but a *duoverse* of either God and the Devil or Spirit and Matter, we are helpless. We have then no right to the faith that the Good is triumphant or will ever be triumphant. Moreover, if we admit a *duoverse*, why should we not go on back to a multiverse—to cosmic pluralism; in short, to polytheism?

The only faith that will really nerve and comfort a thoughtful human being is not that the Good may possibly triumph somewhere and some day, but that it is even now supreme.

3. The least unsatisfactory attitude towards this ultimate riddle of the sphinx is to admit the reality of evil and its inevitableness as a factor contributory, on the whole, to the beauty, the grandeur, the meaning and goodness of the universe.

Evil, then, is a necessary and contributing factor in the goodness of the whole. We may not be able to understand the incidence of the particular distribution of evils. But we can see that, if spiritual selfhood develops only through the effort which begins in the lower organisms in the growth of individuality, and which flowers in man in consciousness, in rational volition and creative thinking, then the "hazards and hardships"<sup>1</sup> of finite selfhood are the inevitable conditions for the development of the soul, for the appearance of spiritual individuality. This world then is, as Keats puts it, the "vale of soul making."

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<sup>1</sup> This phrase I take from Bernard Bosanquet.

And the finest, richest, deepest, most harmonious selfhood is developed just by those who face and bear with courage and self-abnegation the burden of evil for their fellows.

The entire evolutionary process seems, in so far as we can read its meaning from the data at our disposal, to have labored to bring forth rational and moral individualities or personalities. The tendency of the cosmic process is to personify itself, as W. K. Clifford observed. On the other hand, the Cosmic Order sometimes seems to have no concern for the fate of persons. If we define the good as the full and harmonious functioning of personal life, then we must admit that this good is very imperfectly realized on earth. Many selves seem to be "cast as rubbish to the void." Many lives are wrecked. Many selves, that set out with fair promise of realizing harmonious and happy lives, are ruined through no obvious faults of their own or their parents. Nature or the Cosmic Order does not seem to care for the individual as we human beings do.

Jesus and other teachers of religion have employed the homely and beautiful symbol of Fatherhood, to express the attitude of the cosmic order towards persons. But when one looks the facts squarely in the face the symbol seems to lose its meaning. A human father who, if he could prevent it, would yet permit his children to suffer such dire fates, ignorantly to endure such thwarted, maimed and twisted lives, as fall to the lot of many human beings, would be adjudged an inhumane and wantonly cruel parent. In view of the vast amount of physical suffering and mental anguish and disorder in the

human world, by what right does one affirm that the Supreme Ordering Power of the universe is in any respects like a loving Father?

Herein lies the supreme paradox of human existence—individual persons are the bearers of all values; persons alone love and are loved, seek and enjoy truth, beauty and all other forms of spiritual value; but persons, although the richest offspring of the cosmic order, in that order seem cruelly treated and wantonly destroyed.

In short, we face a trilemma—either (1) Evil originates in a source independent of the Good, and then it may never be overcome, may indeed triumph; or (2) the good of the universe is something more than the fruition of personality, our human values have not the place in the universe that we are fain to believe they should have, and we do not know what place these values have in the ultimate scheme of things; or (3), notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, selves will endure and progress and all the failures here will be made good, some where and some time.

The first alternative is not in harmony with a scientific conception of the unity of the universe and leaves in everlasting doubt the issue of the struggle between Good and evil. The second alternative leaves us much in the dark as to the positive place of human goodness in the nature of things, but it affirms the faith that there is a supreme Good, though we do not know what it is like, and that the values of our lives are merged in the supreme value. The third alternative is the hardest to take, in the fact of the ubiquity of evil and death, but it holds out the fairest promise for the fruition and permanence

of human values. It is a hope which can, through faith, be transmuted into a source of strength and comfort for the buffeted spirit.

Faith in personal immortality is not so much a solution of the terrible problem of evil, as it is the courageous venture of an escape through the recognition that man is a pilgrim of eternity whose life here on earth is but a moment in the march of his spirit.

To take this standpoint is to make a virtue of necessity. It does not solve the problem of the apparently unjust distribution of evil. It does not make clear to us why promising lives should be blasted in the bud and why useless and even wicked men should encumber this earth to a hale old age, why the wicked should flourish like a green bay tree, while the seed of the righteous should beg their bread, why catastrophe and pestilence, war and famine should strike down the best and let the worst escape unscathed—all this remains a “burthen and a mystery.” We can take refuge only in faith—faith that there is a redemptive power in the sufferings of the righteous, faith that evil is overcome by the atonement made by the sorrows borne and the evils undergone by the wisest and most loving for the evil deeds and evil motives of their fellows.

The Christian religion strikes at the heart of this problem just in this way. If the attitude of Jesus be indeed the best key to the spiritual meaning of existence, if he be Divine in the spiritual quality of his character and deeds, this means that the supreme secret of the universe is revealed as the self-imparting, self-sacrificing love that fears not any evil or sorrow; but, meeting and bearing all that man can bear, triumphs over evil. “The Son

of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," "He gave his life a ransom for many," "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." Romans viii: 38, 39.

The way of escape from suffering and natural evil for Gotama Buddha is by the uprooting of all desire and the utter extinction of will by that state of desiring nothing and willing nothing which means the cessation of personality. The way of escape from the power of evil for a disciple of Jesus is the dedication of one's personality to the struggle against evil, the positive devotion of the self in service of love; which means indeed selflessness, but not the cessation of personality. It means rather the development of spiritual selfhood through dedication and service to ever widening and deepening aims.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### PRAYER

Prayer and Faith are interdependent. One absolutely devoid of faith could not pray. If life were so complete and self-sufficient that faith were superfluous, prayer would be superfluous. Prayer springs out of the same feeling of need and dependence that gives rise to faith. One may pray for greater faith. When in distress and perplexity of mind one may call desperately "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" Hence there may be earnest prayer but weak faith. But not the converse. A strong faith does not mean a lack of prayerfulness. For prayer, at its highest level is the attitude in which the soul seeks communion with the Perfect and Eternal.

Prayer at its best is not petition for temporal blessings, but aspiration after the peace which passeth all understanding. To pray spiritually is to repose one's spirit on God; to commit one's present and future interests into the care of the Universal Spirit; to say, even while longing and hoping that one's distresses may be relieved, one's sorrows healed, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." At a lower stage of spiritual life men pray when they urgently long for temporal goods or for the removal of temporal ills. At a higher stage they pray for their loved ones. Prayer for the health or well-being of one's loved ones is a higher prayer than prayer for temporal

goods, since in it self is almost forgotten. Self is merged in other selves. So, too, is prayer for the well-being of those who are strangers to us. But prayer is not truly spiritual until one is willing to put all one's own private desires and interests entirely behind one's self, and trust all in submission to the order of things.

It is not unspiritual to pray for temporal sustenance, "Give us this day our daily bread" and "deliver us from evil," provided that in our attitude we first say, "Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come."

It is argued that prayer is purely subjective, that it is absurd to suppose that any petition of a being so insignificant as man can affect the course of events. Prayer is subjective. It is the worshipful and trustful communion of the human person with the Universal Spirit. But it is not "purely" or "merely" subjective, if *human persons are real and worthy members of the Universe*. Only if personality were an utter illusion would prayer be objectively meaningless. Since persons are real members of the universe, the attitude of a person toward the whole in which he is a member must make some difference to the spirit of the whole. It is no disturbance of the universal order, nay rather it is a fulfillment of that order, that man's spiritual communion with the Permanent and Perfect in prayer should affect the Permanent Being. It would indeed be senseless to suppose that, while human persons are truly members of the Universal Spiritual Order, their personal attitudes can make no real difference in that order.

The answer to prayer may be very different from what the petitioner looks for and desires, but to say that there is never any response to prayer is to close the whole prob-

lem at the start, by assuming the materialistic position that the universe is a blind machine and man but a minute part of the cosmical mechanism. Whether one take the position of personalistic theism that the universe of selves consists of many finite selves and God in mutual relations, or the position of idealistic pantheism that human selves are elements in the Universal Spirit, literally parts of God's being; in either case prayer, whether as communion with the Great Other Being or, as communion with the whole of which the individual is a true part, is fully justified. Indeed, in the higher communion with God in prayer the line which separates the personalistic theist from the idealist pantheist seems to become thin and wavering. In communion with the Enduring Spirit how can one say, "here I end and God begins to be?" Whether one in his individual interpretation affirms the reality of a community of spirits not elements in one all-embracing spirit (personalistic theism) or affirms that all finite spirits are included in the Universal Spirit, and that, quite literally, "in Him we live and move and have our being"; in either case the prayerful attitude of submission, trust, and communion, the attitude in which one takes all one's burdens and perplexities, one's doubts and heartaches and lays them down before the Heart of the Universe is the same.

The spiritually minded devotee may even pray for temporal goods if he does so in the spirit of submission and reverent communion; that is, if he thereby confesses his weakness, need, and dependence on God. For the essence of irreligion, of unfaith, is simply that proud self-satisfaction with one's actual being and condition that issues in a complete independence and self-reliance. When

we have this spirit we are headed for trouble. Our spirits will be broken on the wheel of the universe.

Prayer, for one who rejects a dualistic conception which separates the Supreme Reality from Nature, and who thereby recognizes that the universe is an orderly whole, is the act of placing one's whole self in reverent communion with the Universal Order. To pray is to bring one's spirit into harmony with the Universal Spirit. It is willing submission and acceptance of the course of Reality. The first petition should be that one's own will shall be in union with the Universal will. But it is natural and inevitable at critical times that one should send up specific petitions, that one should beseech the safety, the recovery from illness or from moral weakness of one's loved ones or one's friends. Intercessory prayer is an expression of one's concern for one's fellows. Is such prayer futile and without meaning? Not if it be made with an express recognition of the dependence of all concerned on the order of the whole. It is even possible that prayer of this sort is a factor in bringing to pass what is sought for. For if reality is a living whole, the expression of a Universal Life or Spirit, there is no reason why the acts of finite selves should not be factors that evoke some response within the whole.

Since man is essentially a being who develops his highest capacities in the community of acting, thinking, feeling with other persons, common prayer is an expression of the deepest humanity, an utterance of the common spirit of dependence, devotion, and obedience which brings men into better communion with the whole of Reality.

Can prayer for specific material changes be regarded

as a factor in such changes—prayer for rain, for fair weather, for good crops? Such prayers are expressions of human need and dependence. As explicit recognitions of our dependence they are naturally human. But the belief that the weather will be changed in any particular locality in response to the petitions of some group suffering from drought is surely illusory. The course of material events is the expression of the universal order. It is true, as some defenders of the efficacy of prayer for physical changes argue, that we are not to suppose that the material order goes on independent of or apart from the vital and spiritual orders. These orders are interwoven. But it is going farther than a sound science and philosophy can take one to suppose that, for example, since we do not know all the causal conditions of climatic changes, therefore human prayers can produce climatic changes. Of course if human prayers stir men to act on the forces of nature, by draining or clearing land, climatic changes may follow. But such prayers are not direct causes of the changes. The laws of nature are only statements of the actual causal sequences in nature. We know these only in small part. But we know enough to know that the procession of nature, while on the whole it makes human life and spirit possible, goes on regardless of the particular physical vicissitudes of individuals and groups. Any doctrine of the efficacy of prayer which implies that prayer is a direct causative agency in altering the infinite unending and unending course of natural events is based on the denial that the whole order of nature is the expression of the activity of the Supreme Reality, the Universal Ground of the life of man and nature. To argue that because our human knowledge of the causal

sequences of the natural order is very insufficient, therefore prayer may be a natural cause of the same order as electricity, the expansion of gases or the solidification of liquids, is to make an appeal to ignorance, and to crown ignorance with confusion. We must make our choice between explicit admission that the *whole* endless and boundless order of nature is the expression of the ever-energizing and supreme Creative and Rational will and the view that there is no universal order, but only little stretches of orderly behavior, here and there, intermitted by unaccountable spasms and jumps. We cannot have it both hot and cold. We cannot admit that nature is the living garment of Deity and then turn around and say that, since we do not know the whole design and pattern, nature is but a thing of shreds and patches that may be sewn together hither and yon in response to prayer.

In short, while men in dire need will continue to pray for changes to be made by superhuman agency in the actual causal procession of material events, it is unreasonable to ask and expect such changes. The forces which operate in nature (the system of the living and nonliving, if there be nonliving material things) are many, complex, and still but ill-understood. But the progress of knowledge, and the basic principles of science counsel us to pray to get understanding, patience and humility; so that we may learn to control where possible, and, where impossible, to submit to the operation of natural causes. The argument that if God is the Infinite, then he may interrupt the course of nature and interject nonnatural forces into the causal procession, since human persons do interrupt or direct natural forces, begs the whole question by covertly making the following fallacious assumptions:

1. That man controls or directs natural forces in any other way than by understanding their behaviors and interpretations and thus controlling or modifying their operations by releasing other forces. Man's control over nature is the result of intelligent apprehension of, and submission to, its order. The first premise in this control is that there is an order that can be understood and followed, but not contravened.

2. The second fallacy lies in supposing that God stands in the same relation to nature that a human person does, only in a more eminent degree. The forces of nature are *not* the expression of human will. They are *given hard data* which human intelligence can understand in part and by understanding adapt itself to. On any other philosophy than a complete metaphysical dualism the forces of nature are not data external to the Divine Creative and Sustaining Will. They are the continuous expression of that will.

3. Let us not assume that God is a person just like a human person subject to change in his purposes and feelings and thus likely to suspend or alter the course of that material order, which is the utterance of his creative will, in answer to our petitions.

Prayer, then, for a reasonable person, is the act of communion with, of submission and obedience to, the Universal Spirit. Petitions made should be made in the spirit of Jesus. "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### IMMORTALITY AND SCIENCE

The belief in the immortality of the soul is very old. In its earliest form it was a corollary of Animism and Dualism—the belief that the soul of man is a finer, more elusive and tenuous double or replica of the bodily self. Primitive people seem quite generally to have held the view that, in this present life, the soul is separable from the body, that it can and does leave the body, especially during sleep, and reënter the body. From this point of view there was no difficulty in the assumption that a soul might pass from one body into another; hence the belief in demoniacal possession. If such things were of daily occurrence in the present life, it was most natural to believe that the souls of the dead returned to their former habitats and appeared to both friends and enemies. It is to be noted further that the soul, in primitive thinking, is not really an immaterial entity. It is a more subtle and elastic material substance than the ordinary body.

Our present scientific knowledge of the relations of body and mind are, on the whole, hostile to the assumption that these are absolutely separable entities. Neurology, psychology and comparative anatomy unite in pointing to the close interdependence of the mind and the brain. Therefore, it is much more difficult for one in touch with scientific thought to believe that the soul or mental self

survives the disintegration of the brain than it was even a hundred years ago. And yet the hunger for assurance of immortality has not ceased in the face of this apparent negative finding of science. Indeed, the tremendous psychological strain of the World War, with the loss of millions of loved ones, and with "all the burthen of the mystery," "the heavy and the weary weight of this unintelligible world," has sharpened this hunger. The old question, "If a man die shall he live again?" comes up with heightened poignancy to-day.

No wonder that many are turning to Spiritism for assurance of the immortality of their loved ones and for the comforting promise that they shall again see them face to face.

I shall state briefly why I regard Spiritism as a broken reed on which to lean for support of faith in immortality before advancing other considerations.

1. Spiritism is really based on animistic Dualism and a quasi-material conception of the soul or spirit. Its metaphysics is a survival of primitive thought. Myers admitted as much, but very few of his followers do. For the spirits who communicate to the living through mediums do so through *materializations*. It may be admitted that all communications to us must employ physical symbols of sound and writing, though if telepathy be true (which I do not admit) it is difficult to understand why even the ordinary symbols of speech should be necessary. But breezes, ectoplasms and cantilever rods are certainly materialistic enough manifestations of soul to satisfy a Hottentot.

2. If Spiritism be, as its adherents claim, empirically verifiable, why are its phenomena so sporadic, so com-

monly confined to suspiciously queer conditions and abnormal or illiterate persons? The test of fact in science is that, under conditions that are constant and perfectly definable, any one of normal intelligence who will take the trouble to verify the alleged facts can do so without recourse to half-lights, darkness or cataleptic trances.

3. Why should communications be vouchsafed to so few people? There are millions of us who would like some message that is significant or valuable from beyond the grave and cannot get anything worth while.

4. Why should the communications be concerned with such trivial, crude and silly matters as they are? Why should they be so suspiciously reminiscent of the material concerns of our present existence? Why should the enlightened spirits not give us some light on the problems of conduct, of education, of philosophy? I should like to know the truth as to the relations of the mind and the brain, what thought is occupied with over there, etc.

5. Most of the reputed phenomena of Spiritism that are not deliberate frauds are capable of nearer explanations. The physical phenomena are illusory interpretations of physical facts that do not require the invocation of spirits. The psychical phenomena, such as the communication of things unknown either to the medium or the sitter, are probably the results of forgotten impressions, coming up when attention is in abeyance through associations in the *subconscious mind*. Any scientific theory of the relation of the mind and the brain must still be stated largely in terms of our ignorance. But one thing we do know—no stimulus, however faint, no feeling or thought or incipient act, however unnoticed and unplaced and undated by consciousness, fails to leave its

trace on that most marvelously sensitized and complex of all recorders, the brain. The latter records billionfold impressions and makes billionfold connections between them. Most of these do not rise clearly into consciousness in our normal waking life, because our attention leads the memory process to run on the single track which is headed towards the achievement of our purposes. But, in dreaming and daydreaming, in delirium and intoxication, attention being in abeyance, all manner of subconscious associations come into play. Furthermore, there is a fallacy to which we are all prone in some degree. And the degree of our proneness marks the degree of our credulity. It is what logicians call the *neglect of negative instances*. We jump greedily at whatever seems to support our belief, desire, prejudice or whim. We overlook and turn our backs on whatever contravenes these personal attitudes. One warning dream, one lucky hit of a soothsayer, will lead the strongly predisposed to turn his back on ten thousand failures of dreams or predictions or writings with ouija boards.

6. Finally, I doubt whether preoccupation with Spiritism is good for the intellectual or moral health of the soul. It takes an unusually critical and well-poised mind to mix much in such things without being thrown off his balance. These matters should be investigated by competent psychologists and physiologists. As to the moral value of trafficking in Spiritism I will quote only one authority: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."

Rightly interpreted the consideration of the whole spectacle of life justifies a *reasonable faith* in immortality

in the sense that what is most creative and valuable in the human personality will endure and go forward after death. For this is a living and creative universe. In it death is but a critical phase in the march of creative life. The whole panorama of our world, from the primeval star dust which became fitted to be the theater of life, up through the unicellular organisms in the steamy primeval waters, through invertebrate and saurian and bird and mammal to man, is the ascent of life towards higher and more creative individuality. The nervous system did not exist at all in the lowest organisms. Then came simple feeling in connection with simple nervous ganglia and fibers. Then appeared a central brain mass and more complex reactions indicative of dawning perception and memory. Then appeared the marvelously complex brain of man, fitted to be the instrument for recording, compounding and reacting to the stimuli of the environment and to be the instrument of creative imagination, thought and moral feeling.

If some one tells me that this evolution proves that the spirit or mind of man (I do not distinguish them here) is the by-product of the nervous system and, since this is material, the mind of man is the by-product of matter, I answer that mere matter accounts for nothing creative. *Creation implies energy, and the richer and more complex the creation the richer and more complex the creator. Life is creative. Mind is the highest potency of creative life.* Life grows and reproduces itself with variations. But the merely physical or natural life dies in creating its children. Mind does not die, but rather recreates itself in creating thought, truth, beauty, goodness, love. "He that loseth his life

shall find it" is a literal truth, true in science, in art, as well as in morals and social life. Mind creates all the forms of culture—morals and social order, arts and sciences, philosophies and religions. And in creating these forms it is not dying but living more fully, realizing its potencies more completely.

From the physical or natural individuality of man comes, through participation in the creative work of human culture, the spiritual personality. The human animal is transformed into the thinker who can scorn delights and live laborious days in devotion to truth; into the artist who foregoes animal goods and worldly profits that, in obedience to his creative impulse, the Divine in him, he may body forth for the delight of other human souls without number, forms of beauty and grandeur; into the saint and lover of his kind, who, in spending his life and powers to enrich human life in those things which are lovely and of good report, enriches his own soul-life.

In this creative universe nothing that is of value in the creative process can perish. In this creative universe that which is most fully creative must be most enduring. And that is most obviously mind when incited and guided in its work by the impulse to create and to impart freely to other minds that which it has created.

Here on earth mind and brain are interdependent. Here the creative power works through its given instrument. If the instrument be defective the work is ineffective. But the instrument is not identical with the user of it. When the instrument is worn out the creative user thereof can surely get a better one. Clearly the mind influences the body and the body the mind. If we ask, Whence come the incitements and plans of action, the

purposes, visions, dreams and daring adventures on which man sets out forever and forever? the answer is obvious. These things which stir the body to action are mind engendered, mind created. Without the mind the body does next to nothing. The entire history and the present problems and outlook of human civilization are creations of mind or spirit. How absurd it is to suppose that the individualized power which is the highest reach of creativeness in this living universe can pass into nothingness! This power is the rational ethical spirit—personality.

Why, then, do we know so little in regard to the future conditions and forms of spiritual existence? Because our present duty and opportunity is *Here and Now*; to make this present day and hour as full of value as is possible; to make life instinct with beauty, harmony and joy in the inward parts and in all social relations into which we enter; to spend ourselves in the creation and spread of beauty, truth, justice and fellowship. Thus doing our parts in this creative universe in the faith that whatsoever is worthy to endure will endure.

## CHAPTER XXX

### RELIGION AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

The belief in the progressive perfectibility of man, and his actual development towards perfection, through the increase of scientific knowledge and its applications, through improvement in education and social organization, is a modern notion. Francis Bacon was the prophet of human progress through science in his *New Atlantis*. Various Frenchmen, from Jean Bodin in 1656 and the Abbé de Saint Pierre to Condorcet in 1793, formulated doctrines of man's continuous progress through the improvement of social culture. Auguste Comte, with his famous doctrine of intellectual development as being the condition of social progress, announced himself the inaugurator of the new era—an era in which, by the positive study of the facts of social organization and the discovery of the correlations of social phenomena and their development, and under the guiding star of love for humanity, a perfected state of human society would finally arrive.

G. W. F. Hegel described the dialectical march of the Divine Idea through history culminating in the God state, in which men should enjoy that personal freedom which consists in the harmony of the individual will with the social will embodied in the observances and institutions of the state. He glorified the state as the supreme

moral power and subordinated the Church and other moral institutions to it. He seems to have thought that the divine state had already attained realization in the Germanic state, especially in Prussia.

In England and America the doctrine was hitched on to the theory of biological evolution. Herbert Spencer, its most voluble and influential exponent, taught that, by the inexorable and beneficent necessity of a great cosmical law, society was marching towards an industrial age in which social authority would be more and more decentralized and in which, by the operation of the natural laws of evolution, man's egoistic and altruistic impulses would finally come into a perfect equilibrium.

The vulgar form of the belief in progress in England and America, especially in America, has been that progress consists in inventing and using more machinery, producing more material goods, increasing the population regardless of its quality, increasing wealth, multiplying physical and sensuous wants and the means for their satisfaction, making education (in diluted and incoherent forms) accessible to all, making art cheap and vulgar, spreading the circulation of newspapers, popular magazines and inartistic literature.

In short the vulgar idea of progress is that it consists in quantity production of material goods, human beings, minds, words and everything else. Progress is furthered by the increase of inventions, mechanical devices, creature comforts, means of rapid locomotion and communication.

The obverse of this vulgar progressivism is—the tyranny of the unthinking crowd, the rapid growth of ugly cities, the cheapening of all artistic endeavor, the decline of any genuine educational ideals, the bankruptcy of thought,

the increase of economic conflicts between capital and labor, the growth of political cowardice and corruption and the growing inefficiency of social administration.

The course of events has so completely refuted Comte, Hegel, and Spencer that one need waste no words on their theories now. The Great War and the postwar confusion and disorder have shaken the faith of even the most superficial-minded in the all-sufficiency and beneficence of the quantity ideal of progress. It is being generally recognized that a human millennium is not the inevitable result of quantity production and increasing acceleration.

Social reconstruction is in the air everywhere. But what does it mean? What should society aim at? And how may it achieve its ends? The answers to these questions constitute a veritable Babel. We are beginning to see that material progress may go on for a time coincidentally with mental and spiritual retrogression. But after this latter retrogression has accumulated to a critical point there is bound to come a social disintegration which will wreck even the results of material progress.

We still have faith in physical science, especially in its economic applications. Our great men are those who amass fortunes, through applying and exploiting mechanical devices to meet the universal desires for mechanical speed and sensuous well-being. A large part of our population thinks that a universal purveyor of some cheap mechanical device proves by his success therein his capacity to be an oracle on government and education and even on the soul, theology and metaphysics. In the meantime the problems of civilization grow more complex and difficult. The pace becomes swifter. The burdens of social organization and administration seem already to

exceed the capacity of a wholly industrialized society to meet them. There is an ever growing multiplication of inferior stocks of humanity who, in this democratic age, are getting "instruction" or "information," but are not being educated, and are acquiring money, power and influence. Family life is decaying rapidly. There is a general absence of moral courage and clean-cut and hard thinking on the part of our leaders. No intelligent public man believes to-day in pure democracy and no public man dares to express his disbelief in public. Ways for killing time and killing human beings have multiplied greatly in number and efficiency. There has been no increase in thoughtfulness, intellectual and moral independence, or rational self-determination. Great sums are raised for education and other forms of charity, but the result is not an increase in the proportionate number of rational self-respecting and self-determining human individuals. The opportunities for the individual to spend his time and energy and means are ever multiplying, but his capacity to make use of these opportunities wisely shows no increase.

Unquestionably, if we define social progress as consisting in the increase of a knowledge of the facts of physical nature and their correlations, improvement in instruments for the study of physical nature and of machines for the manufacture and distribution of physical things, increase of social records, multiplication of poor books and magazines, and the widespread dissemination of odds and ends of information and misinformation, of facts "that ain't so" and of wild theories, then there has been and is still going on great social progress in the modern world, especially in these United States.

But these things do not constitute social progress in the ethical and spiritual sense. The only meaning that social progress can bear, from the standpoint of ethics and spiritual religion, is the increase of individuals in rational self-control and self-determination, in the power of clear, consistent and independent thinking, in the spirit of justice, fair play, fellowship and coöperation. The highest type of human being is one who is rationally conscientious, impersonally just, courageously loyal to ideals and who loves his neighbor in *deed* as much as he loves himself.

Religion is not tied up with the belief in an inevitable social progress by any automatic law, either a Hegelian or Comtian idealistic law or a Spencerian naturalistic law. Indeed the belief in such a law is unethical. For it really denies the spiritual freedom and responsibility of individuals. And, making God identical with an immanent and necessary law of progress, it reduces the reality of the spiritual order to an impersonal principle of growth. It puts the perfect reality at the end of an endless process. Infinite or unending progress is a contradiction in terms. If there be progress it must have a *goal*, a *term*, a *standard*. Furthermore, to assert that the perfect spiritual Reality *is not now but is becoming* is both to deny that there is now any perfect Reality and to affirm that it will come into being by the operation of some automatic mechanical principle.

Whether one name the supposed ultimate subject of perfection, towards which all progress moves, the *Idea of Humanity* or the *Absolute Idea*, the ethical outcome is the same. The individual members of the living generation are regarded merely as transitory contributors to a

good that always is to be, but never is. For this non-existent and impersonal Good each successive generation is regarded as a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water. The notion of an infinitely remote goal of progress, to which all the living generations are in turn sacrificed, in order that there might be a little closer approximation to the ever-receding goal, would be unethical and irreligious, even though such an Infinite Goal were not nonsense, which it is. For there can be no real measure of progress unless there be a definite end.

Lotze speaks of the Idea of Humanity as "the great and awful and tragic altar on which all individual joy and life is sacrificed to the development of the universal idea of humanity." He says, further, "He who sees in history the development of an Idea is bound to say whom this development benefits or what benefit is realized by it" (*Microcosmus*, II, p. 161). "If personal life be but a stage in the development of an impersonal absolute we should cease our efforts, or—in case we held fast the treasures of love, duty and self-sacrifice—we should have to confess to ourselves that a human heart in all its finitude and transitoriness is incomprehensibly nobler and richer and more exalted than that absolute with all its logically necessary development" (*Microcosmus*, 167-168). To regard as the goal of progress even the moral perfection of the race is an illusory notion. Only individual persons are the bearers of moral values. The moral improvement of the race can consist only in the participation of a growing proportion of individuals in the realization of moral perfection.

It is equally fatuous to argue that it makes no difference what becomes of individual selves, provided only

that the spiritual values partially realized by them endure. For spiritual values can have no reality, and therefore no endurance, apart from personal spirits.

The notion that the goal of progress may be realized some day by the perfection, through social culture, of the human race here on earth is a visionary ideal. So long as man remains man, a being with conflicting impulses and a dual nature, he will be subject to error, sin, and suffering. There are no discoverable means by which man can escape this lot. No perfection of physical or administrative or educational machinery will turn this earth into a sensuous and moral paradise. The century of most rapid progress (so-called) has ended in a holocaust of destruction, disillusionment and confusion.

The doctrines of a necessary and ever increasing progress reveal a strange blindness to the actual constitution of human nature. Each new generation of human beings, even with the best social heritage, has to work out for itself its own moral vocation, has to take its destiny into its own hands. No generation can save another generation from its moral struggles. The present living generation never learns much from history. It must fight its own spiritual battles. Since the moral vocation of man is to grow into the stature of moral and rational self-determinating personality through trial and error, struggle and suffering, *each generation*, as Leopold von Ranke said, *is immediate to God*. In other words, the individual members of each living generation must work out their own destinies and find the divine meaning of life, experience, salvation for themselves. They are not mere links in an endless chain. Each is called to be a son of the

Most High, to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

From the standpoint of ethics and spiritual religion all the material and cultural achievements of civilization, the entire social heritage of discoveries, inventions, arts, sciences, laws, and administrative, political and educational devices are mere scaffoldings and trappings for the spirit of man. Man must beware lest he lose his soul amidst the accumulation of cultural accouterments. These things have value only as means to enable him to grow into the fullness of moral personality. The true measure of social progress, the one touchstone of a culture, is this—how far does it enable its living members to become and live as self-respecting self-determining, spiritually harmonious, just, integral and loving persons, faithful to right and duty in the fellowship of persons? The interest of religion and ethics in social progress lies here and here alone. For religion that alone has value which promotes the spiritual well-being of persons as individual members of the ideal community. The only concern that ethical religion has with the externals, the material and administrative trappings of civilization is this—do these promote or retard the development and free play of the human soul in spiritual harmony, freedom and love?

The end of progress is not progress but the laying hold on eternal life by the individual soul. But eternal life is not some future state that we shall be ushered into miraculously at death. Eternal life, in the Gospels, does not mean timeless life or life after entering a different world but everlasting or enduring life; a life of intrinsic and peace-giving value which may be entered upon here and now.

Here we seem to be strangers and sojourners, and to have no continuing city. At best we catch fugitive glimpses now and here of the true and eternal life, realize it fragmentarily and interruptedly. Man's true destiny is to live in the Beyond that is within, but this Beyond lies, in potency, within man's life here and now. We are not to sit with folded hands and wait patiently for death, so that we may enter upon eternal life. It is our birthright now and here, wherever a human soul lives and strives.

Jesus lived and taught and wrought and died to usher in the reign of justice and love which he looked to come on earth in the near future. To live and teach and work and if need be to die in his spirit in order to make his ideal prevail over the stupid selfishness, the pharisaism and mammon worship of the present is the true imitation of Jesus. His gospel is a social gospel. It would substitute for *acquisition*, as the ruling motive for work, *service*; for *greed*, *spending for others*; for *hate*, *love*; for *envy*, *sympathy*; for *self-centered individualism*, *fellowship*.

The whole purport of Jesus' teaching and work is to open up to men the way to a richer, fuller, more harmonious *Life*. "I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." He dealt not in negations and prohibitions, but in affirmations and positive insights. His entire gospel revolves around the concept of *Life*, an integrated, single-minded, whole-hearted Life which pulsates in the individual soul and flows out in service, sympathy and love to other individuals, returning to itself manifold enriched. He came to liberate the imprisoned urge of creative joy and fullness of life in his fellow men.

His disciples felt this. The crowd felt it. Thus they responded to him, because he opened up life to them. Through the Epistles of St. Paul runs the same triumphant note—the sense of a richer, more abundant, more harmonious and enduring life—the life Eternal. “For this is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ.” “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

And the *Father* for Jesus is the inexhaustible fountain of creative and loving life, ever manifesting itself, ever spending itself.

Jesus’ intimate sense of the Father springs out of the utter integrity, the wholeness, the harmony and power of the life-urge in himself.

We come back to Jesus and Paul. “The kingdom of heaven is within you. In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you that where I am you may be, also.”

The “world to come” (better translated, “age to come”) for Jesus was a new order, a new age, to come on earth, a Kingdom of God to be established in the near future and of which he was the herald. It has never come in the way in which he, perhaps, expected its advent. But we are true disciples and are laboring in his spirit when we work to establish here on earth a better copy of his Ideal Commonwealth of Mansoul by using all the means at our disposal. “The letter killeth but the spirit maketh alive.” Faith and service and life in the spiritual order should not make for indifference to worldly culture. The very infinitude and transcendence of the spirit or life in man over all material, economic and worldly cultural

concerns demands that these latter things shall be made to serve the spirit in man.

It is no part of my present purposes to estimate in detail the virtues and vices of the present social and economic order. I am concerned here simply to insist that the criterion or measure of social progress in the world of economic goods, and scientific, artistic and educational interests lies in their *values as instruments* for the upbuilding of man's moral and spiritual personality as a member of the fellowship of moral personalities which is the Kingdom of God on earth.

The nearer approach to the realization of this ideal can be made by taking hold of the actual and possible goods of our existing culture and using them as means for the advancement of the common good. Let us first consider what are the goods of our present civilization. I shall here attempt only a brief enumeration of these.

1. Its large and increasing capital of scientific knowledge and its applications. These are giving to men a much more effective and extended control over natural forces that are being used, and can to a much greater extent be used, to increase leisure and improve health and physical well-being.

During the past century much more progress has been made in the advancement of physical knowledge and its applications than in the advancement of our knowledge of human nature and its applications. The twentieth century can be, if we will to have it so, a century of great progress in our knowledge of human nature and its social applications. We are already entering upon an era of rapid progress in human physiology and psychology. It is not too much to expect that the intensive cultivation

of the psychology of human behavior will bear fruitful and almost revolutionary applications in education and social administration. A new social ethics is the indispensable guide to educational, economic and administrative reconstruction. This new social ethics will be based on the psychology of man's native powers; and on social psychology, which will determine the laws of action and reaction between man's congenital endowments and the stimuli and patterns supplied by his social environment. The pioneer work being done in these fields is only the earnest of more to follow.

2. This new era in the social sciences will be aided by the increasing facilities for the dissemination of knowledge and the widening power of education. Free or tax-supported education, from the primary grade to the college, is the great instrument for the fulfillment of the democratic dream of equality of opportunity.

The enrichment of our heritage of knowledge, especially in the social sciences, and the increase of leisure and opportunity will mean an enlarged field for the free play of human individuality.

When we have taken stock of all our present social disabilities and disorders it remains true that this industrial and scientific age, with its fluid and experimental spirit, means a society better able to withstand stresses and strains, having more power of adaptation and readjustment than any type known to history.

For these reasons one need not despair of the future of our civilization. It is recuperating from the diseases of the prewar period and the war. Readjustment is difficult and slow. But the Cassandra's who prophesy its doom fix their eyes on its defects and are blind to the

## 344 RELIGION AND THE MIND OF TO-DAY

forces that make for its continuance and progress towards health.

This continuance and progress will depend upon the following conditions of the good life, as outlined in these pages, being effectually achieved.

1. Every individual must be nurtured in a healthful and decent physical environment and, in his plastic years of childhood and youth, be given a sound physical development. Great minds have functioned in sickly bodies, but it is a poor investment for society to proceed upon the assumption that good minds and characters will everywhere and always flourish against untoward physical hindrances.

2. Every individual must have free access to all the educational opportunities for growth in mind and character that he can use. These must include, not only training in the elements of language, science, civics and practical ethics, but as well the cultivation of the imagination and the feelings through literature and the fine arts and through contact with the personalities and teachings of the race's spiritual heroes.

3. Upon reaching maturity, the individual must have the opportunity to train himself for, and to practice, a vocation in which either he can find personal self-expression; or, if not this, a vocation in which the hours and conditions of work will leave him sufficient time and energy to express his normal idiosyncrasies during his leisure.

4. The individual must be able to earn sufficient by his service to society to live decently and, if a married man or a widower with children, to support his family. The same principle applies to widowed mothers.

These are the irreducible minima of a social order that recognizes the fundamental ethical and Christian principle of the inherent and absolute worth of human personality. In so far as society makes this recognition effective it is ethical and Christian and is the realization in this world of space and time of the Kingdom of God. In so far as it fails it is evil and the Kingdom of Satan.

It is a gross misreading and misapplication of the spiritual urge of the human soul, as interpreted in religion, to say that, since the spirit of man can never be wholly satisfied with earthly things, therefore it is right to deny to any man the fullest opportunity for spiritual self-realization here and now. For the Spiritual Beyond is Within, the Transcendent and Eternal Values of Life are to be laid hold on now and here. This is eternal life—to realize in its fullness moral and spiritual integrity or wholeness and harmony of life as a member of the Infinite Order of Moral Personalities. As Kant put it, the Kingdom of God is the Commonwealth of the Kingdom of Persons who are ends-in-themselves, that is, Spiritual Individuals. As a greater than Kant said, “the kingdom of God is within you.” Within the souls of men are great possibilities of spiritual richness and strength, of power and joy, that await a more just and humane social order to blossom into living actualities. Jesus, it is said, appealed to individuals. He stressed the individuality of the soul. This is true, but it is equally true that the life he wished men to lead is one of communion and fellowship, of mutual service and love. It is equally true that he ever sought and elicited the hidden or repressed and thwarted impulses, thus making for wholeness and fullness and harmony in individuals

outcast, despised, downtrodden. "For when he saw the multitudes he had compassion on them."

He offered no specific plans for education or economic reconstruction or political reform. For such plans must be devised to meet the changing conditions of every era. He came to awaken men to a livelier sense of the enormous possibilities of life latent in the human soul. But every means of science or practical administration that we can find and use, to bring wholeness, fullness and harmony of life among all souls has the sanction of his spirit and attitude.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### RELIGION AND THE STATE

We have to-day a perplexing situation in regard to the ethics of man's social allegiances. The national state, the corporate and organized political life in which the individual is a member, claims his unqualified allegiance. He owes to it duties, since he owes to it whatever personal and family rights he enjoys—the right of property, of personal safety, of good name. He owes to it the opportunity for education and for many other goods. On the other hand, he owes ethical allegiance to the universally human spiritual life witnessed to by the church. He owes allegiance to the cause of free human culture through science, letters and art.

A man has, also, moral obligations to the vocational group—professional, industrial or commercial—of which he is a member and through which he gets his living.

And his moral obligations to the state may come into conflict with his obligations to his vocational group or with his obligations as a Christian and a human being.

In ancient civilization these conflicts seldom arose. For the religious group and the state were coterminous. The religions of Greece and Rome were religions of the city state. The ethical code was the code of the city state until the spirit of critical reflection set in with the age of the Sophists. But, even after that, Socrates, Plato

and Aristotle conceived the area of ethical culture and practice to be identical with the city state. Socrates was condemned to death as a bad citizen.

Similarly, in Israel the state and the church were co-terminous until the fall of the state, when the church became the sole bearer of the race's moral life.

It was first among the Stoics and the Christians that the idea arose of an ethical order that burst through all racial and political boundaries. The rise and spread of the Stoic universalistic ethics was contemporaneous with the ruin of the Greek city states. The rise and spread of Christianity was contemporaneous with the development of Roman Imperialism, which engulfed all the small states and included a great variety of races and cultures within its domain. After the downfall of the Roman Empire, the Church became the one all-embracing cultural and ethical organization and claimed to be the source of whatever ethical authority the state might be allowed to wield.

All was changed by the advent of the modern national state as an independent political, economic and cultural unit. The principle, established by the religious wars of the Reformation period, that religion should follow the ruler made the state supreme over religious organizations. Political thinkers like Machiavelli, Hobbes, or even Locke did not admit that religion should be entirely independent of state control. Locke, the advocate of religious toleration, drew the line at atheists. Furthermore, the radical thinkers who prepared the way for the French Revolution reacted against the political power of the Church to the point of making religion wholly subservient to the state. Rousseau's deism was to be recognized by the state.

The political state is, in our world to-day the sovereign form of social organization. There is no activity or interest of the individual or of other groups over which it does not claim and exercise control. Notwithstanding the criticisms of these political pluralists who maintain that the unitary state fails to function and who would, as in the case of certain guild socialists, substitute, for a single central social governmental authority, exercising legislative judicial and administrative functions, a plurality of functional groups or guilds representing the great industrial and other economic activities of society, it does not appear how the central authority of the political state can be dispensed with "because of the hardness of men's hearts." Indeed, guild socialists, such as Mr. G. D. H. Cole, do recognize that even a pluralistic distribution of power on a functional basis will still require a central government as arbiter in the interests of the people as consumers and subjects for cultural activities. The syndicalists, who are anarchists, would abolish the state.

In medieval Europe the two great contending social powers were the Church and the State—the Empire and the Papacy. The Papacy won for a time and suppressed intellectual and spiritual liberty. The modern world is characterized by the supremacy of the national state, with the church in most cases, until quite recent times, a part of the state. Even the Roman Catholic Church has had to acquiesce in the separation of Church and State when it has not had to submit to seeing, as in England, another church established. But it has never admitted the moral right of the state to control education; nor, indeed, the moral independence of the state over against the church. Western civilization is now committed to the separation

of Church and State and apparently to state control of education.

In the meantime, other groups than the church are challenging the all-sufficiency, the omniscience of the state. Organized labor does not admit the right of the state to issue injunctions and to use its own police power to suppress or control strikes. Organized capital, in the form of trusts and combines, has fought strenuously against state regulation.

Meanwhile the power of the state grows by the logic of events. The collectivistic character of our great industrialized society, the increasing economic interdependence of its constituent groups and the growing demand for collective action and regulation in industry, education, health, road building and many other activities, have led to the practical abandonment of the older liberal theory that the state exists only as a police power to protect the individual in the exercise of his natural rights. More and more the state extends its functions. It is becoming a positive cultural agency, as well as an economic and legal agency for the furtherance of the common weal. It makes and enforces laws to restrain vice, to regulate industrial and labor combinations, to promote education and the means of communication, as well as the production and distribution of goods. The national state is fast becoming a great economic and cultural agency. It demands increasing service and loyalty from individuals and groups.

The national state, so magnified in its economic and cultural activities, is a source of grave danger as well as a fountain of good. War is due chiefly to the conflicting economic interests of modern states, to the hypertrophy

of nationalism through the growth in the direct economic interests of the national states. The World War undoubtedly originated chiefly in the supposed clash of economic and cultural interests between the great states. Thus the development of the national state has brought a great danger to peace.

Furthermore, the conflicts of group interests within the state keep the nation in a condition of internal unstable equilibrium. In times of peace the motive of patriotism is insufficient to prevent incessant internecine conflict between economic groups with divergent interests. The individual's sense of citizenship will not prevent him from regarding his own national state, or a subdivision thereof, as an instrument whose primary use is to safeguard and advance the interests of his own economic group. This holds true both of capitalistic and labor groups. Furthermore, the bending of the power of the state in subservience to the advancement of economic group interests is a chief cause of war. War to-day is the by-product of the competition of powerful capitalistic groups, organized under the protection of the national state and using the state as an agency for the promotion of markets, the obtaining of concessions and other favors in the international arena.

The patriotic motive in our own country is made the cloak for the cultivation and expression of racial and religious antipathies. Witness the Ku Klux Klan, which, under the guise of one hundred per cent Americanism, is using the ballot, as well as unlawful means, to exclude Jews, Negroes and Catholics from the enjoyment of the privileges of citizenship.

*The state* in itself, notwithstanding the goods it furthers through the maintenance of law and order and the

furtherance of economic justice and opportunity and even of health and education, *fails by itself alone to humanize and universalize the motives of its citizens.* It fails to prevent economic, racial and sectarian conflicts. It fails to maintain international peace. Patriotism is not only sometimes the last refuge of scoundrels. It turns too easily into sectarian rancor, economic injustice and special pleading, and international jingoism. Patriotism must be cleansed and sublimated by a spiritual conviction which is humanitarian and universal in its motives and standards of value. The basis of a genuinely ethical patriotism must be found in a universally human vision and devotion.

The religion of humanity has been offered as supplying this need. In many respects it is admirable. Its central guiding principle is devotion to the universal human values. It stresses the inherent value of man as man, the worth of human nature as the end or standard of value for conduct and social order. It sets up, as the object of worship and of the dedication of the will and the mind, the furtherance of the welfare of man. It presents as the Great Being the ideal of Humanity, past, present and future. In these respects its ethical ideal or standard of value is that of Stoicism and early Christianity. (The reader is reminded that the ethical motives and ideals of Stoicism and Christianity were fundamentally the same. Indeed, the Stoic strain of thought is very marked in the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul.) Short of faith in the cosmic supremacy of spiritual values, the religion of humanity is the noblest and most generous vision of humane ideals.

But the religion of humanity falls short. For it sets up as the object of worship and service an abstraction

and is all too human. What is Humanity? Is it the sum of human individuals, past and present, and to come? The individuals to come are nonexistent. The individuals past are equally nonexistent, unless the life of humanity be grounded and conserved in the Cosmic Life, unless the past is not past but somehow lives now in the Eternal Spirit. One can scarcely regard the actual living generation of human beings as a wholly satisfying object of worship; or as supplying a sufficient standard of value and inspiring motive for the noblest conduct.

No, man's life, with its weal and ill, is part of the Cosmical Life—Man's spirit cannot flourish apart from faith in, dependence on, communion with the Cosmic Spirit. That which lifts man out of the turmoil, confusion, despair and vanity of his noisy years is communion with the Eternal Spirit. Human goodness, in aspiration and achievement, must sicken and wither without the faith that reposes on a Superhuman Goodness. Limit human aspiration, endeavor and devotion to the merely human and it becomes less than human. For this is the supreme and paradoxical truth of the human lot—*the most truly human is more than human*. And if more than human then it is rooted and grounded in the Cosmical Order. If there be no absolute truth in the faith that our highest goodness, love and beauty bring us nearest to the Eternal and Divine, then goodness, love and beauty are but deceptive phantoms, will-o'-the-wisps. There must be an eternal unity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. The ultimate meaning of the Cosmos must imply that; neither the impersonal and disinterested quest for truth in regard to nature, man and their relations; nor the sense of beauty through which man feels the kinship of his soul

with nature; nor the creative impulse which leads him to body forth new forms of beauty in color, form and sound; nor the indomitable striving of his will for justice; nor the unquenchable longing of his soul for love and fullness of life and joy; are homeless in the universe.

Ethical religion demands that the social order and the political state shall be made more truly instrumental to the perfecting of the human soul than they are now or ever have been. But neither now nor ever will these earthly social orders measure up fully to the striving and the aspiration of the soul. Only a spiritual religion, which takes up into itself and synthesizes into one living whole all the scientific and historical truth that man can find, all healthy and harmonious experiences of beauty, all the insights and effectuations of justice and, beyond and transcending these, all the love and spiritual power and joy that the human soul is capable of; only such a religion can satisfy the soul of man and, in so doing, make him always discontented with less than the more abundant life of righteousness, love, harmony, and beauty of spirit.

“He that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.”

A spiritual religion for to-day and to-morrow must be a *Yea-sayer* to every legitimate interest and value in human life. It must not deal in tabus and superstitious fears. It will include a reverent awe before the mysteries of life, but an open-minded and fearless regard for facts. It will honor and include all the great things of life—the love of man and woman, of parent and child, the friendship of neighbors and comrades, the spirit of service to one’s fellows, the devotion of the scientist and scholar, the joy in nature and the love of beautiful forms and sounds. It will recognize and use all science, art

and speculation as means by which the soul of man is enfranchised of fear and baser motives, is enriched in the joy of harmonious feeling and clear and harmonious thinking.

The state is destined to become, probably, more and more a great agency for furthering human welfare—a great cultural, and therefore a moral instrument. Human life is a living unity and cannot, without being ruined, be separated into water-tight compartments. Whatsoever promotes human well-being is a moral instrument. A state whose conduct is divorced from ethical principles becomes an instrument of evil. The evils of our governmental agencies are due, in the last analysis, to the attempt to divorce politics, legislation and administration from ethics. Organized society cannot endure the permanent separation of economics and law from ethics. It is essential to the realization of the good life that economic justice and the equalization of opportunity shall be furthered by all the means possible—by legislation and administration, by the extension of state activity in the economic order, by more efficient public educational and welfare agencies, including remedial care for defectives and delinquents and a great increase in preventive physical and mental hygiene.

Thus the state is capable of being made into a much more effective agency for the realization of the good life. The liberation of public administration from the vicissitudes, the inefficiency and corruption that go with partisan control is absolutely essential. So long as departments of education and other public welfare agencies are subject to partisan political control we shall make no real progress. These things must be put on a strictly civil service

basis. To this end we must have generally diffused a more alert intelligence and moral passion, by which the state may be turned into a genuinely ethical and humane agency.

The widespread diffusion of this public-minded intelligence and moral passion is the supreme social service that religion, in its corporate capacity, can render. The church must jealously preserve its independence of state control. By a self-denying ordinance, it must refrain from participation in partisan politics. It must be above the battle. It must keep clear of all entangling alliances and stick to its sacred task, which is to serve as critic, guide and inspirer to a higher type of civic life. Religion, when it is loyal to its meaning and vocation as the supreme spiritual power, speaks with an authority higher than any social organization, higher than any state or any church—the authority of God, the Cosmic Spirit of Righteousness and Love, speaking through the human conscience and reason. Thus, there is no duty more incumbent on religiously minded persons than to endeavor that the state and all its subdivisions, down to the smallest civic unit, shall become through all its agencies a sure instrument of human good.

The invisible state, the ultimate spiritual state that is identical with the invisible church, is the international order of humankind. To make the visible states of the earth more and more the instruments of the spiritual state church is a paramount duty of religion. For true ethics and religion is at once personal and international. The universal principles of ethics and religion know no nationalistic boundaries.

The church that limits its outlook, even in time of

war, to its own nation is no Christian church. It is false to its origins. The first universal and cosmopolitan ethics was Stoicism, which emphasized both the inward and spiritual character of the good life, its personal nature, and the universality of moral relations. Indeed, these two principles—the inwardness or personal quality of moral values and their universality—are but the two poles of one principle, namely, that all intrinsic values inhere in persons. The stoic ethics and religion, blended with Neo-Platonism, was taken into Christianity and vitalized with a new dynamic emanating from the person of Jesus and the vision of the Kingdom revealed by him.

The universally humane outlook of the Gospel was the master passion of its first great missionary, Paul, who dedicated his life to proclaiming to mankind the spiritual liberty, harmonizing power and universality of the Christ-spirit. Indeed, Paul, by taking up and fusing with the Christian principles of love and service the permanently valid insights of Stoicism and Neo-Platonism, became the second founder of Christianity.

The duty and opportunity of the Christian church is plain. She can only regain her moral and spiritual supremacy by reaffirming the regnancy of the universal moral values over every state and in every international relation. This is a tremendous task, which the Churches cannot achieve without some sort of working unity of effort. In principle the Roman Church is right, though in practice she has often been wrong because she has, owing to her fateful heritage from the Carolovingian and Hildebrandine ages, attempted to carry out the principle by using the weapons of worldly force. Of course the

Protestant churches did the same in Reformation and post-Reformation days.

We are to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. But we must remember that these words were spoken by the founder of Christianity when Cæsar symbolized a foreign and heathen power, with whom the enemies of Jesus were seeking to embroil him. They cannot be literally applied to-day. Our states are professedly committed to a humane ethics. They even claim to be Christian. They pay lip service to the name of Jesus. The duty of the Christian is plain. Cæsar must be put in his place. In so far as the conduct of the state, especially in international concerns, is in clear violation of the ethics of Jesus, the Christian cannot be a one hundred per cent patriot. The principle, "my country right or wrong" is better than "my ego right or wrong"; but, from the Christian standpoint, it is immoral and impious doctrine. In international, as intranational affairs the Christian must put first the rights that follow from the inherent worth of human personality. There is neither Greek nor barbarian, Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. For all are Christ's and Christ is God's.

The earthly state is too much the creature of man's economic greeds, of his individual and group selfishness, of his fierce competitions and rivalries, his craven fears and natural lusts, ever to be an adequate copy of the Heavenly State. It is too much to hope that an institution based on force and maintained largely through the unstable equilibrium of its citizens' baser motives can ever be made into a seemly likeness of the Kingdom of God. Law, police power, the power to tax and regulate the economic life, even when coupled with some effort to pro-

mote the cultural welfare of its members, do not constitute spiritual forces and do not by themselves make for spiritual goods.

It is the Christian's duty to do his best to make the state an instrument for the furtherance of the moral and cultural life of its members, a means for removing all the hindrances to the realization of the good life that can be removed through a political system. But the clear-sighted Christian will never expect too much from the state. He will look chiefly to the family, the school and the church for the fulfillment of all these goods that are beyond the scope of law and force. There has never been a really Christian state. The nearest approach to it was medieval Europe when the Hildebrandine Church ruled it. But the Church was corrupted by the possession of supreme temporal power. "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." The nobler and sweeter motives, the qualities of self-control, service, self-sacrifice and love can not be nurtured by any other means than the spiritual influence of mature persons on immature persons. Education is the great instrument for the improvement of human society.

The dream of a day when the state shall function as the great spiritual agency is a daydream that will probably never pass into a waking reality. Wherever two or three are gathered together in love and devotion to the service of their fellows and of truth, beauty, justice, fellowship and love, something ethically greater than the state is there in the midst of them.

Higher and nobler than any visible state or ecclesiastical organization is the Invisible Church which is the Invisible State. It is the spiritual community of dedi-

cated lives—of personalities living in devotion to whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are true and whatsoever things are lovely and of good report. It is the one communion and fellowship of those who are striving to live after the eternal pattern. For we have a building from God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." For the faithful who would serve the Highest Values this is no mere dream but the eternal reality. Of old time both Plato and Jesus taught men that the earthly goods, the spiritual values, which mundane society can realize, are but shadows and copies of the Eternal and Perfect Order of Truth, Beauty and Love. For Jesus and all who are touched by his spirit this Eternal Order is a *Community*, a *Fellowship*, of all who hunger and thirst after righteousness and love. The heart of Jesus' gospel is that their hunger shall be satisfied, their thirst quenched.

It matters not whether he supposed or not that the Kingdom should soon come to earth in all its power and glory by the miraculous act of God. What matters chiefly is that he proclaimed the eternal reality and supremacy of the one communion and fellowship and made the test of membership in that communion the fact that men had done acts of service, of mercy and love to the least of his brethren, even though they had not in the doing thought of him.

Jesus' tests of membership in the Kingdom are simple to understand even though they be hard to follow. They have nothing to do with subscribing to and repeating one's belief in old or new creeds, whether clothed in concrete sensuous images or in abstruse metaphysical terms.

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” “He that heareth my words and doeth them, I will liken unto a man that builded his house on a rock.” “He that doeth the will shall know of the doctrine.” “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

#### CONCLUSION

I have in this book been at some pains to disentangle and state what I deem to be the essential message of Jesus and to put it into the setting of our thought and our problems to-day. But I would be the last to claim that any one who would practice the religion of Jesus must think in these terms. I have been concerned only to free the ethical import of the Gospel from unnecessary and out-worn impedimenta.

It has been said many times, and it cannot be said too often, that the best witness to Christianity is a Christlike life. This is the living rock, and not any system of dogmas and politics, ancient, medieval or modern.

One can live the Christ life and discard the traditional dogmas. One can live the Christ life and be a theological and metaphysical agnostic. One can live the Christ life and swallow all the dogmas of medieval Catholicism. What matters above else, indeed, what alone matters is the service of one's fellows in righteousness, integrity and love according to the mind of Christ.



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