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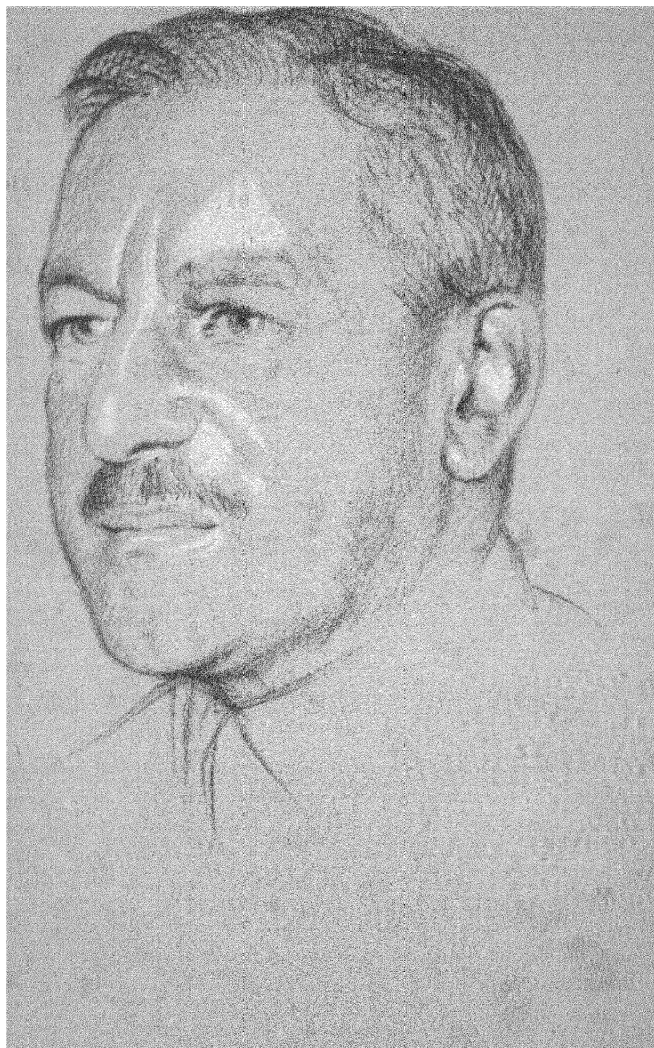

THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT SAMUEL, P.C., G.C.B., G.B.E.
Drawing by Sir William Rothenstein, 1937

CREATIVE MAN

AND OTHER ADDRESSES

by

THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT SAMUEL

P.C., G.C.B., G.B.E., Hon. D.C.L. (Oxford),
Hon. Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford

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Some of the topics dealt with in the first part of this book were also discussed in my *Belief and Action: An Everyday Philosophy*, published in 1937. A few passages included there have been repeated here.

References and Notes will be found at the end of the volume.

S.

October 1948.

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*Creative Man**

1

THE THOUGHT of the present age is tinged with pessimism. The experience of two world-wide wars, killing tens of millions, bringing ruin and suffering beyond all conception, the atomic bomb as the terrible climax—this has shaken to its foundations our civilization's faith in itself. There is no assurance that the machinery created to prevent a recurrence will succeed. The political and industrial unrest chronic almost everywhere, with the hardships of the prolonged depression between the two wars fresh in our memory, gives us a sense of instability, a fear that our whole social system is precarious.

Nor can modern man find a refuge in the simple faiths that sustained our forefathers in times of trouble and impending danger. Science throws doubt on the old theologies and their conceptions of the cosmos. There is no universal belief in a paradise where virtue will be rewarded and injustice requited, and a hell where wickedness will meet its punishment, that will be strong enough to rule the mind and control conduct. For many the ancient sanctions of morality have crumbled away. Astronomy has expelled this globe, and man with it, from the primacy in the universe that he had claimed. Evolution reveals nature as the theatre of a cruel and ruthless struggle for survival that seems inconsistent with an underlying benevolence.

*The Romanes Lecture, 1947, delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford.

All this may cause despair of the human situation.

Such pessimism would be nothing new. At different periods and in various regions pessimism has not merely tinged but permeated and dominated the thought of vast populations. Hinduism and Buddhism have ever preached detachment from a world that is worthless, if not illusory. The essence of Islam is resignation: a passive acceptance of evil inscrutably decreed by God. So Roman intellect took refuge in Stoicism: a note of melancholy pervades the writings of Marcus Aurelius; for him and his school, life was something to be endured, not enjoyed.

Two thousand years after the great Athenian age came the Renaissance in Europe: a second buoyant springtime of the human spirit; hopeful, constructive, full of adventure, of achievement; a time of discovery and invention, of dawning science and brilliant art. Then, in the eighteenth century, France set an intellectual fashion of critical scepticism. The nineteenth was a time of recovered confidence; with expanding industry and commerce, growing populations, the improvement of social conditions; the development of new lands—a century that held itself to be an era of peace, progress, and prosperity.

And our own time? We know the character of the first half of this twentieth century, and have found in it little satisfaction. What is the prospect that seems to confront the world for the second half?

2

In this address I will submit for your consideration two questions, linked together: Whether we can detect in man's history any continuing cause, not fully realized as a rule, or not sufficiently emphasized, which has contributed in

marked degree to his failures and disasters; secondly, whether, surveying the past as a whole and the possibilities of the future, the pessimistic view is right.

Philosophy and science range farther than history. The mind must take its starting-point as far back as it can reach. Consider the physical universe, aeons before the appearance of organic life on the earth.

It is an affair of electronic particles, infinitesimally small and circling at incomprehensible speeds. They are organized into atoms, which attract or repel one another; forming molecules, substances—gases, liquids, solids—stars, planets. There are electro-magnetic radiations, in a continuous series of different wave-lengths, and gravitational forces. The earth's atmosphere transmits vibrations. That primeval universe is utterly cold, dark, and silent.

On this globe, in the course of epochs, living organisms are evolved, with percipient organs, nervous systems, minds. Mammals come into being, and man. Unconsciously, out of elements in the given universe, man's sensory organs and his mind create, for himself, what we call warmth, light, colour, sound. Other organisms are similarly creative, according to their nature. But man feels emotions and is conscious of them; he reflects and reasons. From his emotions spring sympathy, love, beauty. His intelligence and his hands build civilization.

When human beings began to reflect they must soon have come to realize that the material universe they saw around them could not be all that there was. It did not explain itself. It could not have brought itself into being. There must be something else. We have named it Deity.

One other thing we can hold as certain, at all events for ourselves—that there are minds. If there are no minds, then I am not addressing you, and you are not hearing me, at this moment—if there is a moment; and we might as

well not trouble any more about it, but go back to our non-existent homes, and engage in other occupations, equally non-existent, but perhaps for you more pleasurable; if there is a You—if there is an If.

Man has developed also that strange faculty of imagination. It tries to reach out into the void of nescience all around; to see into the invisible; to 'body forth the forms of things unknown'. And imagination lets him take pleasure in play, in make-believe.

It has long been known that the human embryo recapitulates, broadly, the stages of racial evolution, from the single fertilized cell to the common mammalian foetus. The process continues after birth: the infant and the child display the instincts of primitive man. Watch the make-believe of boys in gangs hunting and fighting, of girls nursing their dolls and passionately protecting them. Fairies and sprites are readily believed in; there are fears of goblins, childhood terrors of vague shapes in the dark. The instincts continue, perhaps modified or less potent, into adult life.

The imagination is fed by dreams. We are so used to dreaming that we seldom stay to think what a peculiar phenomenon it is. When in sleep the muscles are relaxed and the perceptions, reason, and will are quiescent, the imagination may still be lively. Uncontrolled, it gives us those visions, sometimes fantastic, sometimes vividly realistic, which at the moment of waking are often hard to distinguish from actual experience.

There are states, too, of semi-conscious reverie—neither sleep nor waking. Wordsworth tells us that, at one time of his life, he often invited such moods, and found them fruitful of poetic inspiration. Once, on Salisbury Plain, time rolled back with him, and he saw, 'in vision clear', the dim past of Britain—a scene of 'human sacrifice, the clash of

spears . . . long-bearded teachers swaying to sweet music'.

There are states of cataleptic trance, induced by self-hypnotism, that may invoke, it seems, visions of ineffable ecstasy. In disease, there are the intensely realistic hallucinations of fever. The moments preceding a fit of epilepsy, also, may give an impression of extraordinary enlightenment. Dostoevsky, from his own experience, vividly described those moments, 'like a flash of light in the brain, relieving all doubts and anxieties, merging them in a lofty calm, full of serene, harmonious joy and hope'. Powerful stimulants of the imagination were discovered in various drugs—opium, hashish, cocaine, alcohol.

We may see ourselves, then, living in three worlds simultaneously—the physical universe of electrons and radiations, of which we are not directly aware; that same world made accessible, and adapted to our comprehension, by our sense organs; and another, unreal, world which has been created for us by our own imaginations; either normally in waking life, or in dreams, or stimulated in various abnormal ways, sometimes pathological.

It is to this third world that I would ask you to direct your attention. Airy, unsubstantial, it yet exerts a deep influence on our thoughts, our daily lives, the course of events. It affects religion, philosophy, science, politics, the arts. There, I suggest, seeking an answer to my first question, we may find one of the sources indeed of man's triumphs and glories, but a cause also of his undoing.

3

Since Deity exists, and since our minds exist, the question ever presents itself whether the element in the universe beyond our perception is of a mental order, similar perhaps

to our own; whether our mentality is attuned to it; whether there can be—has been, is now—revelation, inspiration, coming objectively from without. Reason offers, at lowest, no grounds for denying that possibility.

Then the human imagination, seeking such communion, soars away from the control of reason. Knowing that there must be Something-else, it assumes that it may be Anything-else. Imagination peoples the universe with figments.

Man, emerging from the Stone Age, believes himself surrounded by the ghosts of the dead, by all kinds of spirits, mostly hostile and dangerous. The child's make-believe becomes the adult's religion, and the doll grows into the idol. In time, vast religious organizations come into being, served by powerful priesthoods, with a great panoply of temples and ceremonies. Magic and superstition predominate—taboos and spells, divination and propitiatory sacrifices. With advancing civilization, the mythologies become more and more elaborate. Abodes of the dead are imagined, of various kinds, furnished in minute detail with joys and torments.

As men become more reflective, philosophy arises, supplementing religion. It purports to seek the rational and the true; but again imagination soon breaks in.

The universe gives us plurals, while our minds deal conveniently with singulars. Horses, for instance, exist; they are of different sizes and colours; but all have certain characteristics in common, distinguishing them from other animals: so language invents, for its own purposes, a non-existing entity—*the* horse. When Keats addresses the nightingale:

> Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!
> No hungry generations tread thee down;
> The voice I hear this passing night was heard
> In ancient days by emperor and clown . . .

everyone accepts the image and delights in the beauty of the verse; but no one supposes that there is in reality any such thing as a bird immortal through the centuries.

Then philosophers, taking into account the fact that there are various good actions, good thoughts, good men, observe that, while differing from each other, these all possess a common quality: they coin a useful word to express this abstract idea, and call it Goodness, or *The* Good. Soon they go farther, and say that this abstraction, and other similar qualities, are, in actual fact, extant in the universe. Finally we have Platonism: the theory that Goodness, Beauty, Truth, and all other such values, are real—perhaps the only reality; their forms following 'patterns laid up in Heaven'. It might be presumptuous to criticize a theory that has been held, with various presentations, by so many of the philosophers, and is still held in our own day, were it not that authorities of equal weight have rejected it. The matter was put briefly and bluntly by Samuel Alexander, when he said, 'Values are human inventions'. Are the Platonic forms any more real than the Zeus, Apollo, Athene, Aphrodite, imagined by the Greeks to personify power, wisdom, beauty? Would it not be true to say that the theory of Values is the mythology of philosophers?

The German thinker Hans Vaihinger, in his comprehensive study of this subject, termed all such ideas 'fictional abstractions'. The Schoolmen of the Middle Ages had carried them to the farthest point. An object was solid because it was of the nature of Substance; hot, because it had the principle of Heat, and coloured through the quality of Colour—as the doctor of Molière's play explained the sleep-producing power of opium by saying that it was 'dormitive'.

Consider again the idea of Number. A horse, let us say, is here, another there, and another over yonder. Language makes a word for that also, and says there are three horses. So man creates numbers. He finds pleasure and profit in manipulating them; elaborates at last a complicated science of mathematics. Philosophy becomes interested, and soon Pythagoras declares that Number is of the essence of things: that mathematics gives us the key to the universe, 'introducing law into the otherwise confused medley of phenomena'. Yet, as Bertrand Russell says: 'Numbers are logical fictions'.

One other example. The horses are in a certain relation with a field: we say that they are *in* the field. Similarly everything that we see is situated *in* something else. We cannot conceive that the whole complex of things—all fields, all places, stars, galaxies—should not be contained *in* something or other; so we imagine an entity and give it a name—Space. The horses were not in the field yesterday, but are there today. We assume that all yesterdays and all todays must likewise form part of something larger of the same order. This fictional abstraction we call Time. Our thinking becomes so accustomed to this framework of Space and Time that we cannot for a moment suppose that these are not real elements in the universe.

Science having accepted from philosophy the ideas of Space and Time, Einstein asserts that physics cannot separate them; there must be a Spacetime Continuum of four dimensions. Finally, Relativity Theory treats this purely mental concept as though it were a physical fact, and offers it as the ultimate stuff of the universe.*

I must admit that politicians are as prone as philosophers to myths and fictional abstractions. A belief in the Divine

*See pp. 57, 58 and note on p. 137.

Right of Kings played a great part in human affairs all through the centuries. When that began to be discredited, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau assumed, as a basis for sovereignty, an Original Social Contract, made between peoples and their rulers, of which history knew nothing. The theory of Natural Rights followed; asserting the title of all men to life, liberty, and property; or later, instead of property, to the pursuit of happiness. Societies and governments existed because they were necessary to that end. This was a revival of the idea that the Stoics had held of Nature; they meant by it the whole universe of things, guided, as they believed it to be, by reason: here was the ultimate source of morality, and here a foundation for Roman Law. The conception of Natural Law was transmitted by St Thomas Aquinas, across the Middle Ages, to modern thought.

The early years of the nineteenth century found Hegel, in a very different fashion, applying to politics his general philosophic theory; and teaching that the State was real—a living entity in its own right, and supreme. The State, he said, is the divine idea as it exists on earth. It is its own end and object It is the ultimate end which has the highest right against the individual.

A little later, when the influence of Darwinism was fresh and strong, a theory spread widely that the State—or else Society, or, as Spengler said, 'a Culture'—was literally an organism. As such it was bound to go through the biological phases of birth, growth, maturity, decrepitude, and death. And perennially, among the political myths has been the notion that all events are governed by some mystic factor under the name of Destiny, or sometimes of History. This is apparently an undefined supernatural force. It is not Deity or God, for then that term would be used. It includes what Whitehead called 'the senseless agencies'—good or

bad harvests, floods, the effects of mechanical inventions, and the like; but it is not limited to them. Oswald Spengler uses the word Destiny times without number in the thousand pages of his *Decline of the West*. He speaks of it as 'what is named by us "conjuncture", "accident", "Providence", or "Fate", by Classical man "Nemesis", "Ananke", "Tyche" or "Fatum", by the Arab "Kismet" '. He says, for example, with reference to the tendency of European Powers to add to their territorial possessions: 'It is not a matter of choice—it is not the conscious will of individuals, or even that of whole classes or peoples that decides. The expansive tendency is a doom, something daemonic and immense, which grips, forces into service, and uses up . . . mankind . . . willy-nilly, aware or unaware.'

Napoleon said at St Helena: 'Destiny did not wish that my work to consecrate the social reorganization of Europe should be completed: it brought me here; but the mystery of its actions is impenetrable.' The same conception is the theme of Hardy's epic-drama *The Dynasts*. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* ends on the same note. Arnold Toynbee's great work, *A Study of History*, advances a theory that civilizations rise and fall according to 'the beats of a general rhythmical pulsation which runs all through the universe'.

On the economic side of politics, the figment of 'the economic man' had great influence in the last century. Let us imagine, said Ricardo, a society animated entirely by economic motives—merchants concerned only to sell at the highest price, customers to buy at the lowest, workmen to put wages up, employers to keep them down; let us suppose capital, labour and supply completely fluid; and then let us examine how this would work out in practice. This was put forward consciously as a fiction; but it soon came to be treated as actual; as though such a being,

wholly materialist and egoistic, were the real unit of social life, and its doings, however ruthless, justified by political economy.

A somewhat similar fiction appears in Marxism as 'the economic interpretation of history'.

In science also imagination plays its part. The impulse that inspires inquiry and research, notably in the great discoverers, is essentially poetic. And science uses figments deliberately—numbers; the point, line, and plane-surface of geometry; the framework of space and time. Science, however, is protected—although exceptions occur—from the abuses of symbolism, by its own fundamental methods. Observation and experiment have no mercy on myths and fictions aping reality. Any discovery may be tested by researchers in all countries. It has to pass through a hard process, from speculation to hypothesis, and then to theory, before it reaches, if it ever does reach, with general assent the status of scientific law. And even that is subject to revision in the light of later discoveries.

When we turn to the arts we enter a realm where imagination is sovereign.

A piece of canvas, with coloured paints laid on by the hand of genius, becomes Mona Lisa, a Rembrandt portrait, a Turner landscape. Go into any public library, and in the novels on the shelves you may find fictitious characters enough to populate a town: we accept them as if they were real; we enter into their lives; we stay up late at night to follow their fortunes. Or go into the cinema: it is thronged with people; they sit absorbed, shaking perhaps with laughter, or deeply stirred by emotion, their eyes wet with tears. What they are watching is three times removed from reality. On a white screen are magnified photographic

images—portraying actors, pretending to be other persons—who themselves have never existed.

Not all—not architecture for example—but many of the arts are systematized illusion.

4

Now, when we turn to consider this matter as a whole, one thing is obvious at once—that we cannot say that these myths and fictions, created by the imagination, are all helpful or all harmful. Some are good and some are bad, and our need is to distinguish between them. From this standpoint let us briefly review the field that we have been traversing.

The ancient mythologies, with their vast paraphernalia, could not have endured so long if they had not rendered some useful service. The priesthoods were a leisured class, secure in a turbulent world through a supposed divine protection: it was they who first developed education, writing, mathematics, sciences, arts. The religions became ethical, teaching morality, and using taboos and magic to enforce it. A common creed, more and more elaborate and authoritative, gave cohesion to a people and stability to its government.

But remember the other side of the account. War was incessant between tribes or nations who worshipped different gods, mutually jealous and hostile. Among the Sumerians, we are told by Flinders Petrie, 'war was looked upon as a struggle of the gods, the real powers, of whom men were only the instruments'. Who can measure the sufferings of the generations of men, through thousands of years, fighting and dying for the glory of one god against another god—of one Nothingness against another Nothing-

ness? Or who can tell the misery of all the women tortured and killed as witches, for invoking evil spirits—that did not exist? Or of the victims sacrificed on the altars of those invented gods: in Carthage, the infants, or the children dressed in holiday garments and decked with flowers, cast into the furnace to die in agony for the greater pleasure of a figment named Moloch; or, in the temples of the Aztecs, the holocausts of human beings put to death by thousands?

The belief that ceremonies and sacrifices, incantations and spells, could influence the processes of nature or avert evil fortune, hindered the advance of every kind of useful knowledge. But, without doubt, the greatest injury of all was done by basing morals on myth. For, sooner or later, myth is recognized for what it is, and disappears. Then morality loses the foundation on which it has been built. Until some other is given, there may follow a time, perhaps a long and troubled time, when man's soul is homeless, and his mind wanders without a guide. Whole civilizations may sink, in moral corruption, social turmoil, and war.

The same intermingling of good and bad is seen in philosophy. On the one hand is that splendid endeavour to transcend material things—the needs of the body, the absorptions of practical life; that ambition to confront and to probe the great problems; that boundless, buoyant imagination which is the special glory of man. But, on the other hand, the tendency ever comes in to confuse conjecture with fact; to invent an unending series of abstractions which shall account for everything—knowledge, the universe, morality. If you consider the successive systems of philosophy; if you free yourself from the influence of persuasive rhetoric, intricate logic, and ancient authority; if you delve far down beneath the surface—what will you find, more often than not, but assumptions, which everyone

is as free to deny as to accept; followed by speculation and assertion, without proof? Can anyone say that philosophy, after thousands of years of effort, has produced any body of principles, generally acceptable by sincere and intelligent minds as a firm foundation for belief and for conduct?

In the lack of it, many modern thinkers have fallen back on instinct and intuition. Hence what has been called 'the retreat from reason', which has so powerfully affected the thought of the last two generations, especially in Germany. The results we know to our bitter grief.

In politics, the myth of a Divine Right of Kings helped for thousands of years to maintain order and stability, to check ambition from seeking power through violence. Yet kingship, hedged by divinity and so made absolute, has been a source of bad government as often perhaps as of good; has constantly justified revolt and provoked civil war; or, through the clash of dynastic interests, plunged nations into conflict.

Its successor, the Natural Rights of Man, inspired fervent enthusiasm and unstinted sacrifice: the American and French Revolutions were its offspring. But, as it rests either on an Original Social Contract, which never existed, or on an abstraction called Nature, which is equally fictional, when challenged it has no rational defence. A Nietzsche or a Hitler may say that rights, alleged to be self-evident, are not self-evident for him; and as for being natural, nature's law is not one of liberty and equal justice, but obviously of power for the strong and extinction for the weak. So that those who put their faith in this doctrine can, in the end, only appeal like their opponents to emotion, or else to force.

The Hegelian fiction of a living State, supreme in its own right, has done nothing but mischief—harm beyond all computation. We may say the same of the myth of a causal

factor called Destiny, or History—which can be invoked to justify anything you choose. Also the misapplication of the biological law of the survival of the fittest to social conditions.

I well remember sitting in that gallery as an undergraduate, and hearing T. H. Huxley deliver from this spot the second Romanes Lecture—fifty-four years ago. He took as his subject Evolution and Ethics. In a passage, which became famous, and which gave a fresh turn to current thought, he said this:

'There is another fallacy which appears to me to pervade the so-called "ethics of evolution". It is the notion that because, on the whole, animals and plants have advanced in perfection of organization by means of the struggle for existence and the consequent "survival of the fittest", therefore men in society, men as ethical beings, must look to the same process to help them towards perfection.'

This fallacy, he said, has arisen from the mistake of supposing that 'fittest' means 'best'; it means no more than 'best suited to the conditions'. Men in society are undoubtedly subject to the cosmic process. But social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and substituting for it an ethical process. The end of that process, said Huxley, 'is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best'.

The other political fiction to which I have referred was that of the Economic Man. At first a useful theoretical framework for the new science of political economy, treated as real it proved disastrous. This Robot came alive; it was taken to be the normal pattern of man in an industrialized society. Here was one of the causes of the appalling social conditions in Great Britain in the first decades of the nineteenth century—child labour, long hours, and low wages

in the factories and mines; the slums, the Poor Law, the bitter class-conflicts. It has taken us a hundred years to recover—the task still far from completed.

The remaining group of fictions—play and make-believe, games and sports, the theatre, the fairy-tale, the novel, the fine arts—satisfy a primitive human instinct; they offer escape from the monotony and the troubles of ordinary life. Variety is important to happiness; yet most men, in normal times, are starved of it. To them the excitements of adventure, romance, travel, the thrill of beauty, come rarely; they seek them in that other world of the imagination. Understanding it for what it is, we accept it gratefully and enter it joyfully. We revolt from the very thought of a wholly rationalized way of life—hard, drab, and unimaginative.

From this survey of the good and the bad in myth and fiction we reach this plain conclusion: that man should become more fully aware of his own creativity, as a fact of prime importance in his affairs; but should beware of it also, for it may lead him, and constantly does lead him, into disaster. In religion, in philosophy, in politics, there is nothing more dangerous than 'a fable that hardens into a dogma', or an illusion masquerading as an ideal.

5

All this has, of course, been realized again and again in times past: powerful movements have arisen to liberate man from the trammels of his own making. The founders of most of the religions now extant, and many of the thinkers acclaimed as greatest, sought to purify and to simplify. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam attacked idolatry.

Buddha and Confucius had the same purpose; in more modern times also the Sikhs. Among the Greeks, Antisthenes taught that 'the beginning of wisdom is to unlearn that which is naught'. Socrates, and many others, strove to push the lesson home. Twenty centuries later, many of the superfluous growths from ancient and medieval times were cut away by the Renaissance and the Reformation. Offspring of those movements came the English school of philosophy—Francis Bacon the pioneer. His great works, *The Advancement of Learning* and the *Novum Organum*, did more than offer a system of philosophy; they devised a method and drafted a plan: they opened the door to modern science. In this country Locke, Newton, and Hume followed on: the influence spreading to France inspired Voltaire and the eighteenth-century rationalists: the two countries together gave to the nineteenth its character.

But such is the fertility of man's imagination that, almost as fast as old injurious growths are lopped off, new ones begin to sprout; and human thought is always in danger of being choked by its own luxuriance. Let us not flatter ourselves by supposing that the vagaries of man's imagination, such as those I have been instancing this afternoon, are things only of long ago or far away. They, or their like, survive into our own time, some even in our own country. Look round the globe and you will find plenty of examples in the actual present or the immediate past.

It was only in 1945 that the Emperor of Japan renounced the claim of his family to be physically descended from a Sun-goddess. From that ancient fantasy, revived in recent years, has come the absolutism of the Japanese dynasty; which, employed by militarists for their own purposes, has just now dragged the whole of the Far East, and the United States as well, into a prolonged, cruel, and devastating war.

In Japan, as in other eastern countries, the myth also of fatalism is still widespread among the people, undermining any sense of personal and social responsibility. As an example, shortly after the surrender, the correspondent of a London newspaper, talking to a Japanese officer, asked him whether he recognized that Japan had been responsible for the war: he answered, 'Wars fight themselves; it is fate.'

For thousands of years, in China, the people have been ruled by a succession of dynasties, each Emperor sustained by the myth that he is the Son of Heaven. Consequently no organs of self-government have ever come into existence. The myth was discarded and the Empire overthrown thirty-five years ago; and since then the peoples of that vast country, nearly a quarter of the human race, have been wrestling with anarchy, together with foreign invasion following anarchy. The results have been calamitous for the Chinese; indirectly injurious also to the commerce and welfare of the rest of the world.

In India the greater part of its 400 millions of people still retain the popular Hinduism of primitive times. Day by day, in great temples or at village shrines, they still worship, with prayers and offerings, an elaborate theocracy of non-existent deities. Hence the gulf in culture, customs, and institutions, which so deeply divides the Hindus from the Moslems, creating one of the most intractable of the political problems of the present hour.

In the Buddhist countries of the East morality still largely rests on the precarious foundation of a belief in the transmigration of souls: bad men, after death, being degraded in future existences to reappear in the bodies of animals; good men exalted into a graduated series of spiritual beings. Since there is no reason to suppose that any such process does in fact occur in the universe, this is a weak sanction for the moral law.

In the Moslem countries fatalism and superstition remain rife, holding back progress. The primitive belief in 'the evil eye' is to be found everywhere: on the whitewashed walls of the village houses the traveller can see the painted sign of the open hand as an exorcism, or strings of blue beads on the necks of the camels and donkeys—and now on the bonnets of motor-cars. Not long ago—perhaps still—he might see the babies, left to lie blinking in the sun, under the protection of the blue-bead necklace, while infected flies were clustering around their eyes, blinding them with the germs of trachoma.

If you are looking for the influence of figments in politics, pass on to Russia. There you find a whole mighty nation moving in obedience to 'historical forces' that are altogether imaginary. In the years when the social revolution, long prophesied by Marx as the inevitable outcome of those forces, lingered on the way, it is recorded that Stalin and his associates decided, in the naïve words of one of their predecessors, 'that it was necessary to give history a shove'. They acted, and the revolution soon came; so the prophecy was held to have been verified.

But while History had ordained that in Russia it was Communism that was inevitable, in Germany it was apparently to be Nazism, and in Italy Fascism. The speeches of Hitler, Mussolini, and their accomplices are full of appeals to History and to Destiny. At a crisis of the war, Goebbels tells the German people that 'History is quite without grace and mercy, and the nation must make good by a battle full of sacrifices'; but, he adds, the task of this age 'must be viewed by us as a kind gesture by destiny'. Mussolini, orating to a vast throng in Rome in June 1940, proclaims: 'The hour marked out by destiny is sounding in the sky of our country. . . . The declaration of war has been handed to the ambassadors of Britain and France.'

A month later the Foreign Office in Berlin issues a statement saying, 'Nobody now contests that Germany and Italy are predestined to reorganize Europe on a new basis.' Today, the devastated cities, ruined industries, and hungry peoples of the two defeated nations, the dishonoured corpses of their leaders, are a warning to men for all time not to put their trust in figments.

Travel on westwards to this country: here you find a healthy scepticism about abstractions in general. The British, we are disposed to believe, are a sensible people. Hence the characteristics of British philosophy, and a preeminence in science rather than in the fine arts or in music. To this cause also we may attribute a comparative success in practical politics. Wary of being led astray by fantasies, this country has escaped many of the disasters suffered by our continental neighbours.

If you are looking here for present examples of harm done by the misuse of imagination, you will soon find it; but on a lower level, and in a comparatively trivial matter—in the prevalence of superstition. We usually regard superstitions as quaint and amusing; when indulged in by intelligent people, a kind of humorous affectation. But, generally tolerated, and—as there is reason to believe is the case—becoming now more widespread, they tend to blur the line between truth and falsehood; they affect, in however slight a degree, what is by no means unimportant—the habits of thought of the masses of the people.

It was not a healthy symptom in our national life that, during the recent war, there was a sudden epidemic of astrology. Several of the London Sunday newspapers with the largest circulations published, with the utmost prominence, prognostications of coming events, purporting to be based on horoscopes of the planets and stars; and, week by week, many millions of readers studied them with eager

interest. There is evidently a vast pool of credulity among our people. Fraudulent spiritualist mediums are constantly being detected, and sometimes sent to prison; but new ones can always be sure of fresh devotees. Anyone who prophesies the end of the world on a fixed date, not too far away, will attract large and remunerative audiences—until the date has passed. Stories of ghosts are readily accepted, on the flimsiest evidence. We all know that the belief is held, usually light-heartedly but sometimes in earnest, that the course of future events can be influenced according as you do, or do not, sit down thirteen at table; or according as you do, or do not, make use of a certain formula in certain circumstances. All this is a strange survival into the modern world of primitive animism and magic, a vestige remaining from a past phase in evolution: like the reminder we all carry about with us always—those four little vertebrae, curving inwards, at the lower end of our spinal columns.

6

We will not be so foolish as to suppose that the escape of imagination from the control of reason is the only cause of the plight in which we find ourselves. The principle that an end believed to be good justifies means known to be evil has nothing to do with illusions; applied politically, it is now, as it always has been, a constant source of strife, a continual curse to mankind. And cupidity, love of power, intolerance, resort to violence—these are no fictions; their effects for harm are real enough, today as always. Yet we have seen also how often myths and figments have influenced, or even dominated, the religion, the philosophy, or the politics of nations, with disastrous consequences. Arthur Hugh Clough wisely said:

But play no tricks upon thy soul, O man:
Let fact be fact, and life the thing it can.

Criticism is necessary; but it is not enough. An attitude of scepticism and detachment—the satire of Swift, Voltaire, or Anatole France, the protest of Schopenhauer, Ibsen, or Hardy—might help to keep us off the wrong road, but will not set us on the right. An age cannot live on negations. If it is not offered positive principles of action that are sound, it will, as we know only too well, grasp at unsound rather than none.

The approach to positive principles of conduct will be religious, or philosophic, or a combination of both. The religious approach is from its own starting-point, defining its own ends, and using its own means. In philosophy may we not, turning aside for a while from the deeper problems, consent, at least provisionally, to see ourselves as fellow-travellers on this island-sphere floating round the sun; and to make the best of our situation—or, as we might prefer to say, make the most of our capacities and opportunities? And then may we not try to find, within this more limited boundary, some simple first principle that all men, or almost all men, may be willing to accept—have in fact usually accepted? Perhaps we may find such a starting-point in the elementary proposition that men in general desire their own welfare.

At once we shall ask ourselves what we mean by welfare, and we come straightway to differences of opinion. But there is a way to resolve them—an appeal to the judgement of experience.

Experience shows that welfare is not a single and simple thing, to be described in a word or a phrase. It cannot be defined as consisting in happiness, or goodness, holiness, self-perfection, the full life, or any such generalization. For we find at once that none of these summary terms have

any effective meaning unless we analyse them again into a number of particulars. Welfare is a whole, built up from many inter-connected elements. It includes elements physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual; family relationships as well; and social—since the welfare of the individual depends on that of the society in which he lives, as its welfare depends upon his. Experience shows that health is better than disease, comfort than penury, knowledge than ignorance, friendship than hatred, freedom than slavery, order than anarchy, peace than war.

So age-long experience, and unending discussion, teach men what is the kind of conduct that helps towards welfare, and what will hinder. By induction, we reach general principles of right action: we term them the virtues; their opposites, the vices. Then, by deduction, we determine in the particular case what is a good act and what is bad, what conduct is right and what is wrong. Where further experience shows that conclusions reached at an earlier stage were mistaken, the same process can revise them.

We are asked where, on this basis, shall we find the motives for morality and its sanctions, why men should do right when to do wrong is pleasanter. Here again we may find the answer in the everyday practice of human affairs; and here again it is not single and simple, but multiple and complex. Society, in its own interest, trains each new generation of its members. It educates them during infancy, childhood, youth, and adult life as well; through the family and the school and the ways of the world. Working upon the innate instinct of sympathy, society builds up habits of goodwill and duty. Against the abnormal minority who are recalcitrant it applies sanctions—the pressure of public opinion; if necessary, the penal law.

In all this vast and ever-active process, religion plays its powerful part. It joins in determining what is the content

of morality, in inculcating habits of well-doing, forming conscience and character, providing sanctions. The ethical code comes of a union of empirical with emotional, of rational with spiritual. That union makes it strong.

So in all lands and through the ages, simple people, led by their prophets and sages, have evolved the rules of right action. Gradually they have built them up to meet the daily needs of their own lives—of the individual, the family, the community. The creativity of man culminates in the Moral Law.

7

This survey will help us to an answer to the second of the two questions I submitted at the beginning of this address—whether pessimism is justified. For if it should become recognized that among the principal causes of human miseries and disasters has always been the pursuit of vain imaginings, then we shall be on the track of remedy. We shall look out for the harmful figments in religion, in philosophy, in politics: we shall strive to get rid of them. In so far as we succeed, to that extent, by removing causes of evils, we shall brighten the prospects of mankind, and relieve the gloom that overshadows the future.

Further, we have to learn to see current events as a whole, and in their true proportions. Without a break, a flow of news is ever coming to us from all corners of the globe, through the newspapers, or by word of mouth on the radio. The accounts consist mainly of calamities, disturbances, threatening dangers, sensational crimes. It is necessary, no doubt, that attention should be called to what is wrong, for that demands action; what goes right needs no special notice. But the effect is to give a wholly false im-

pression. Constant advertisement, we all know, has a powerful influence: disaster and crisis are always advertised, settlement and tranquillity seldom.

Only in retrospect can we see things in their proper relations. Emerson says: 'The years teach much which the days never know.' And when we pass from the years to the centuries, and from the centuries to the whole expanse of man's story—out of chaos into life, from animal life into humanity, and on into civilization; when we see man in his cosmic setting, the latest child of a universe wedded to an eternity; his thought transcending matter, seeking Deity—then there is no room for an ignoble despair: rather will our minds be filled with awe-struck wonder, our hearts with thankfulness.

It is often said that an age is seldom able to understand itself. Perhaps it is so with us now, After all, the first half of this twentieth century has had great achievements; it may be that its failures will be redeemed in the second. It may be that posterity will look back upon this very time as one of the great formative periods in human history: the time when the mass of mankind twice banded themselves together to withstand terrible onslaughts on their liberties, and in world-wide wars, at the cost of immense sacrifices, utterly defeated them. A time when the whole race united, as never before, in a great organization to bring order, instead of anarchy, in the conduct of affairs. A time when the nations founded vast agencies to protect all their members from ignorance, destitution, and disease; when women were freed from their age-long subordination; when the half of mankind in Asia and tropical Africa, asserting their own liberties, took their place in the march of progress. Then men first learnt to navigate the air, unifying the planet, making the whole human heritage, of history, art, and natural beauty, accessible to all the peoples.

Scientists discovered atomic energy at the innermost recesses of nature; and—perhaps it may become possible to add—discovered also the means, after eliminating it as a weapon of destruction, to use it in industry and agriculture; giving to later generations an unprecedented abundance of material things, and ample leisure to enjoy them. It was a time when medicine found new ways to prevent or to cure disease after disease. And—who knows?—it may yet prove to be an age illustrious in the domains of religion, philosophy, the arts, as it is already in science. But posterity may say also that, such was the irony of events, the people of our time—even the people of this country who have contributed so powerfully to every one of those achievements and possibilities—did not recognize the age for what it was. Their own thought was tinged with pessimism.

All this, of course, is mere speculation. At any moment—next year, in ten years, twenty—some cruel events, of men's own making, may shatter such hopes to pieces. Yet that may not be so either. Perhaps we may be standing even now at the dawn of a day of splendour, of a second and finer Renaissance. There is in those hopes nothing impossible, nothing beyond our powers. The question is whether our will can rise to match our opportunity.

*Decline or Revival of Religion**

1

WE HEAR everywhere of the decline of religion. So high an authority as the Archbishop of York, Dr Garbett, has recently written, 'The dominating fact of the religious position in England today is that the majority of our fellow-countrymen have little contact either with the Church of England or any other Church. The people,' he says, 'have deep religious instincts; but the evidence is overwhelming that the ordinary Englishman, drawn from any class of society, is ignorant of the nature of Christianity, and, except for rare occasions of ceremony, regards the Church with indifference, or even with dislike as something which is irrelevant to his life.' In many countries a large proportion of the population, in some of them the great majority, stand aloof from religious institutions and observances.

All through the ages religion has been the principal source of the moral law and its mainstay, an incentive to noble minds, a guide to the peoples. The lives and teachings of the founders of Faiths, the prophets and sages, saints and martyrs, have bequeathed to mankind a precious heritage, exalted continually by poetry, music and all the arts. Imagine it gone: suppose the extreme case—the cathedrals deserted and fallen into ruin, like the medieval castles; the churches and synagogues, mosques and temples turned to

*Presidential Address to the Royal Institute of Philosophy, October 20th, 1948.

other uses; their ministers dismissed, their zealous laity disbanded: suppose that heritage of centuries all dissipated and lost—how much the poorer would be the spirit of man.

Already we have seen in our time ominous events. Underneath the fragile crust of European civilization there lay, unrealized, the forces of a pagan barbarism; their upheaval overwhelmed the world with war. Political fanaticism has led to terrorism and every kind of wickedness. Crime, for long steadily declining, has suddenly shown a rapid increase. The family, as an institution, is becoming unstable. The arts, reflecting the mood of the age, are tainted; some tend to be sophisticated and purposeless, unwholesome and perverse. These are warning signs of decadence. For the marks of a great civilization have ever been the opposite; they have been reverence and dignity, sanity and strength.

All this could not have happened if a true spirit of religion had been powerful over the world.

2

Seeking the causes of the decline, three stand conspicuous.

The first has been the long dispute between modern science and ancient theology. Physics and biology give us a view of the universe different from those of the Book of Genesis and the Byzantine creeds and the religions of the East. Hence a tension sometimes between tradition and truth, between piety and conscience. But this painful tension has been lessened through the abandonment of many dogmas seen to be obsolete; at first after acute controversy, now often almost imperceptibly and by tacit consent. Great numbers of deeply religious men and women have long

ceased to base their faith on primitive myths and legends. Cherishing the old poetry and tradition for what they are and what they can give, they allow to truth a greater sanctity. In proportion as faith accords with fact and the creeds are made credible, this cause of the religious decline is abated.

The second cause comes from the closer unification of the world through easier communications. The religion of your own country no longer appears as the only one possible. The principle of toleration and the study of comparative religion have brought a further solvent of the old unquestioning certainty. But here again there is a factor working the opposite way. While on the one hand it is more fully realized that the dogmas of the various faiths differ, are often in flat contradiction with one another, and that this is a source of division and even of enmity; on the other hand striking resemblances come to light, particularly on the ethical side; and this may lead to harmony and co-operation. The closer proximity between the peoples, at first tending to weaken religion, in the end may strengthen it.

I do not propose in this Address to discusss either of those two causes of the decline of religion—the impact of science on theology and the greater unification of mankind. It is the third, and latest, that I would ask you to consider. This is the shattering effect of two world wars on the faith in a divine Providence, watchful and benevolent. Men ask—If God is Love, why are there wars?

In this age of vast and bloody battles, of fighting to the death in the sky and under the sea, of the cold and calculated murder of millions of innocent human beings; still around us mutilated and blinded men, and the ruins of devastated cities; with the possibility of all this, and perhaps worse, being repeated, unendingly—how can we still be-

lieve in the ever-abiding care of an all-merciful and all-loving Father, ruling our destinies?

Here is a problem which faces everyone. This is not a matter for the elaborate logic of philosophers or the intricate arguments of theologians. It hits the mind of the simplest. Religion seems to clash with reality. Here is the fundamental problem of our age.

3

The exponents of religion are often disposed to forbid the question rather than to answer it. What is man that he should challenge the Almighty? God understands: man's part is to have faith and endure. It is the argument of the Book of Job. We must examine it before we go farther.

Noble in spirit, majestic in range, magnificent as art, as an answer Job cannot satisfy the modern mind. In the prologue to the drama the Lord is urged by Satan to test the piety of a man who, beyond all others, is 'perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil'. He consents. Thereupon Satan brings about the death of all the sons and daughters of Job: a conflagration burns up his flocks; robbers carry off the herds; his servants are massacred, his houses destroyed by fire and tempest; afterwards, Job himself, grieving and desolate, is stricken by an agonizing disease. Then he is challenged to maintain his faith in God. After the long argument between Job and his friends, the drama culminates with the intervention of the Lord himself: he stops the discussion by proclaiming that, because he is omniscient and omnipotent, he has no need to be just.

This is to separate religion from morals. This is to offer for adoration sublime power rather than sublime goodness. This is to declare that a Deity, who commands men to act

justly and to love mercy, need himself do neither. This is to show so false a sense of values as not to see that a righteous man, insignificant physically, morally is the superior of an imagined unrighteous God.

In the plains of the Euphrates, the Tigris and the Nile powerful autocracies arose and ruled for thousands of years. To their peoples, and later to those of the Roman Empire, the distant monarch embodied the very idea of power and majesty—tyrannical perhaps, and capricious, but too august to criticize and too formidable to oppose. In that environment Jewish monotheism had its origin, its essence afterwards continued in Christianity and Islam. What more natural than that the invisible superhuman ruler discovered beyond the skies should be conceived as a King of Kings; as an autocrat, immeasurably greater, infinitely more powerful than those of Babylon, Nineveh and Thebes, but of the same order; even farther than they beyond challenge and judgement? Whitehead has well said that this 'fashioning of God in the image of the Egyptian, Persian and Roman imperial rulers was the deeper idolatry'.

The question is asked: If God is Love, why are there wars? To say, as the Book of Job, that that question must not be put, does not answer it.

As an alternative, most of the religions have fallen back on some kind of eschatology, a personal life after death in which the evils of the world are cancelled, its injustices redressed. The Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and many other peoples imagined realms of the dead in great variety. Hindus and Buddhists to this day offer posthumous rewards and punishments through the strange fancy of a transit of souls in a succession of re-births into animals or other human beings of lower or higher merit, or rising into a graduated hierarchy of spirits. Medieval Christian theology based itself on the myth of Adam and his Fall; adding

a realistic after-world of human souls without bodies but with bodily sensations, a personal Devil and a localized Hell. Accepted not as symbolism but literally, this was pictured in the churches and preached from the pulpits. It was the cosmos of Dante, Milton and Michelangelo. But the present age is not convinced that this picture of the universe is true. The facts around us show beyond dispute that such beliefs do not now provide a sufficient basis and an effective sanction for morals. They do not control the wayward passions of men.

> Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
> When hot for certainties in this our life!

4

We turn for help to philosophy. A Platonist philosopher would lead us in one direction, a realist in another. Believing, as I do, that the Platonist offers only a mirage and will leave us lost in the desert, for my own part I cannot accept his guidance. The realist approaches this problem by denying that there is any such thing as Evil in the abstract: we have to deal with a multitude of particular evils. There being no absolute, evils must be relative. Relative to what? To ourselves, or other conscious beings.

If cat meets mouse, is that a good thing or a bad thing? Evidently it is good for the cat and bad for the mouse. Is a fall of rain in summer a blessing or a disaster? One farmer may be praying for it, another dreading it. Proverbs are the crystals of experience, and proverbs tell us that 'It is an ill wind that blows nobody good', and that 'One man's meat is another man's poison': in other words that evils are relative.

Some are caused by the conditions of the planet on which

we live. In the earlier phases of the earth's history, when its crust was cooling and consolidating, earthquakes were no doubt frequent, perhaps incessant during long ages. Conscious life not yet existing, there would be no meaning in describing such events as having been 'good' or 'bad'. Now tremors still occur, though rarely. And there are eruptions, floods, droughts, tempests, flashes of lightning. Evolution has produced organisms, ourselves among them, fitted to cope with the normal conditions of their environment. When abnormal events occur, we call them ills sent by nature, which, by the inscrutable will of Providence, or else through the workings of blind chance, are the unhappy lot of mankind.

Other evils are of our own making. Men came to live together in large communities; polluting the soil, the water and the air, they bred new diseases and were ravaged by epidemics. Crop failures brought famines. Complicated industrial systems, faulty in their working, caused poverty and destitution. Conflicts between classes gave rise to upheaval and misery; crime and sin brought suffering and death to millions. And among the calamities have been these two world wars.

Such evils are not the doing of a satanic spirit let loose in the world; nor of some imagined force which we name Destiny, History, Nature, or what you will. They are the consequences of men's failure to fit themselves to their circumstances, or the circumstances to themselves. To prevent the evils, or remedy them, is our own task.

5

But here comes the crux. At bottom, are we able to choose our actions? Is man really a free agent? Our dis-

cussion has led us to the general problem of Evil, and that, as we see, carries us straightway into the Problem of Freewill.

I know that the controversy between freewill and determinism has been continued so long, and with such inconclusive results, that most people are weary of it. It seems to offer a dilemma that is insoluble. Milton's lines are familiar:

> Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,
> In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
> Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
> Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute;
> And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.

Nevertheless we must make an effort to arrive at a definite view whether human free will is a reality or an illusion, for this is of the essence of the matter that we are considering.

On the one side science has taught us that every physical event is the consequence of prior events. The same combination of causes, if it is repeated exactly, will always produce the same effects.* We can find no reason to believe that, if this uniform causality applies in the material sphere, it does not also apply in the sphere of life and mind.

On the other hand, we know as a fact of experience that each of us, in his daily life, himself chooses, wills and acts. The poet writes, the artist paints this or that as he prefers; a chess-player moves one piece or another piece after reflection and according to his own judgement. Nothing will convince me, as I sit in my chair considering whether I shall go out for a walk or remain at home and write letters, that I am not perfectly free to decide as I like; perhaps to choose the one first, and then change my mind and do the other.

But that illustration shows how—as sometimes happens in philosophy—a problem may be made insoluble by the

*See also pp. 54–57 on the Principle of Uncertainty.

case being wrongly stated. '*I* decide to stay at home or to go for a walk'—for the purpose of the argument that is taken as the starting-point. The 'I' is assumed to be here, at this time, ready-made. That assumption, however, is not permissible. No such situation occurs, or can occur, in the universe. For the universe is a sequence of events that is continuous. You cannot cut a cross-section at a particular moment, and say we will begin from there. You can cut a cross-section in something static—a log of wood—but not in something dynamic—a river, or the flow of events. The man, as he now is, has a background, which cannot be left out of account—his parentage, environment, education, his own childhood and youth. The 'I' that chooses is not a commencement—spontaneous and uncaused. It is an item, like all the others, in the vast procession of events. The 'I' itself is caused.

But let us remember also this point—which cannot be contested, and is essential. The causes that have brought the Ego into being, have formed its character, and will decide its choice, are not of one kind; they are of two kinds. Some are external; some are within the individual mind and body, are part of the Ego itself.

An infant is born. Its qualities at the start depend upon the genes in the fertilized germ-cell from which it has developed; those microscopic genes, so carefully studied by modern genetics; thousands of them in a human germ-cell; all integrated into a whole; but each one having its own character, that will in due course decide organs, features, mental capacities of the person that is to be. The infant is not responsible for its own genes; nor for its nurture; nor for the kind of environment into which it has been born. The infant is passive, and not accountable. Gradually, in childhood and youth, the mind grows: it develops a memory, a will and a power of choice that is

personal. The man, when mature, holds himself responsible for his own actions, and, unless insane, is properly held by others to be morally accountable.

Something new and different has entered into the cosmic complex. Once established, this Ego shares increasingly in its own further development. It is no longer a passive product of the environment. It can even react against it; if need be, struggle and fight against it; may sometimes succeed in dominating the environment, and changing it.

The human organism is engaged in a constant interchange with its surroundings. It takes in air, water, food; absorbs and utilizes the elements that it needs and expels the rest. It accepts also various stimuli—radiations, air-waves, scent particles—which give rise to sensations and emotions. And it receives ideas. In exchange it sends out fresh stimuli and ideas. 'All life is a commerce between self and not-self.'

The mind is influenced by its own thoughts and emotions. And not alone by those of the moment. In the past many have been recorded and stored by memory, and can be evoked now to take part. Past actions also may crystallize into daily habits: these may at times stubbornly oppose the present will. So the days build the years; and the years make the character; and the character decides the choice. As Bergson puts it: 'It is right to say that what we do depends on what we are, but it is necessary to add also that we are, to a certain extent, what we do, and that we are creating ourselves continually.' Or, in George Eliot's words:

> Our deeds still travel with us from afar,
> And what we have been makes us what we are.

We see then two sets of causes ever at work. The one, the external, beginning long before birth, stretching indeed from all history; then producing the infant, and shaping

the child and the adult. The other causes, the internal, are active from childhood to death. The two sets of causes are always interacting—at every moment; usually co-operating, but often conflicting; sometimes the one dominant, sometimes the other.

When we philosophize about it, we can if we wish group together the outside factors, give them a name, and say that they constitute 'Determinism'; and the inside factors, and call them 'Freewill'. If we do that we may find there a solution of the ancient controversy, a way out from the 'wand'ring mazes'. In any event we reach the clear conclusion that individual freewill—power of choice—is a reality: not the sole factor in deciding our actions, but always essential and often conclusive: not contradicting causality, but part of it: as integral to human nature as our eyes and ears, as real as our arms and legs.

6

Now let us come back to the original question—If God is Love, why are there wars?

The philosopher will say that there are here two assumptions: first, that God exists; second, that he is moved by a quality or emotion akin to that which in ourselves we term love.

Primitive man, seeing life in himself and in the animals and plants around him, watching the sun, moon and stars, wondering about their origins and his own, imagined a realm of spirits that would account for all this: there followed all kinds of superstition and magic. Civilized man developed natural science, and science set to work to discredit the superstitions and the magic. This it did with great success and to the general advantage. Thereupon

many scientists were led to assume that all the primitive beliefs had been equally discredited; that their own methods, which had explained so much, would, sooner or later, explain the rest: a perfected chemistry and physics some day would surely solve the riddle of the universe. Hence the materialist school in science, with the Marxists as an offshoot in politics.

But among philosophers few accepted this creed. They laid stress rather upon mind, ideas, emotions, as not less significant—ultimately much more significant—than things. They refused to believe that these could ever be accounted for by chemical combinations and electrical attractions. In a book is there only the paper, ink and binding, and not, above all, a meaning? Is a house just brick and mortar, timber and tiles, and not an embodiment also of the plan of the architect and the skill of the builders? Materialism fails to account for facts that are obvious. We must infer some other reality; and a reality does not become a figment because it is beyond the grasp of human perception.

Those scientists who asserted that, when superstition and magic had been swept away, there was nothing left, went beyond their warrant. Philosophy is bringing us round to a different conclusion. Francis Bacon said in a well-known passage: 'It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered it may sometimes rest in them, and go no farther; but when it beholdeth the chain of them, confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity.'

To use in relation to Deity such words as love, power, righteousness, is to ascribe human qualities. It brings us to the question whether God is a Person.

We now know that the size of the universe is vastly greater than was supposed in the old cosmogonies. A ray of light, travelling at a speed of more than ten million miles a minute, takes about eight minutes to reach us from the sun: from the more distant nebulae at present visible in our telescopes it will have taken some hundreds of millions of years. If God is a spirit immanent throughout that span of space and time, and much more, it would seem that to speak of personality can convey little meaning.

Yet, philosophically, our scales of size and duration are not important. They too are relative. We are five or six feet high; so we look upon a thousand miles as a great distance, an inch as a short distance: we live sixty or seventy years; so we think a thousand years a long time, a second a short time. But Nature knows nothing of such standards of big and small, long or short. She works as easily on the scale of the electron as of the galaxy, or the scale of our terrestrial world in between. Nor need the vastness and eternity of the universe imply the remoteness of God. Omnipresence embraces the earth and the hour. If everywhere, then here; if always, then now.

Thus far philosophy can help us. But it can go no farther. We come to a region where there are no phenomena that, as yet, we can perceive or understand, where neither philosophy nor science can enter. Human reason soars high, but if it tries to fly beyond the atmosphere it beats its wings in vain.

7

So we come back again to religion. Religion brings in emotion, intuition, untrammelled speculation; it can take 'the leap of faith'. Philosophy works with the materials,

and within the limits, of reason; it appeals to the learned; it may teach the teachers but cannot directly move the mass. Religion appeals to the simple, and, as history shows, can often control and guide the peoples. 'Religion has a nourishing breast: philosophy is breastless,' says Meredith.

They use different languages. Among some peoples—the Chinese, the Arabs and the Greeks for instance—the national language has two forms, the Classical and the Popular: each has its own merits—the one of literary scholarship, the other of being understood by those to whom it is addressed. So in such matters as these, thinking on different levels we are accustomed to use in ordinary life a different vocabulary from that of science and philosophy.

As the evening is drawing on we do not say, 'The revolution of the earth on its axis will soon carry me eastwards to a point from which I shall no longer be able to see the sun because of the curvature of the globe.' We say, 'In half-an-hour the sun will be going down behind that hill in the west.' (And so it will, relatively to ourselves.) We know now that matter is not ultimately solid, that it consists of electronic atoms which are diaphanous. Nevertheless we do not try to drive a motor-car through a stone wall. We may realize that Time and Space are abstractions created by human thought, with no factual existence. But we will make an appointment for 'tomorrow at the usual time and place'. We do not say, 'Here is a mammalian animal, male, of middle age, which has been produced by such-and-such causes, pre-natal and post-natal, external and internal.' We say, 'This is my friend, John Smith.'

So when we pass to the rarer regions of thought and feeling, we may supplement the abstract with the human. The impersonal of philosophy is translated into the personal of religion. We need not end in a declaration that there

must be, in and beyond nature, some non-material element, whose origin, purpose and action are past our perception and understanding. We may say, Blessed be God, Creator of the Universe, Giver of Life. And when even such language fails us, and we feel emotions and hold beliefs that cannot take form in words of any kind, we can still give expression to them in other ways.

Through the centuries and over the globe the religions have been built up. They speak, not only in formulas, articles of faith, the elaborations of liturgy, but also in a common worship. It is permeated by allegory and symbolism and poetic imagination. It may be expressed in a sign, an emblem, a sacrament, a festival; in the beauty and grandeur of architecture; or in music—the music of courage and consolation, and the surging music of exultant joy. Entering the sanctified places—'the swing of a door from street to temple' —the mind is raised out of the material, the sordid and futile; it is tuned to meditation and reverence. We gain the sense of the eternities, and of our own possible destinies, that marks us from the beasts of the field—yes, and lifts us above the stars and the planets.

8

But dangers come when we agree to ascribe any kind of human qualities to Deity. It may let us slip back again into the primitive superstitions and idolatries. Or it may revive 'an archaic and technical theology', that confuses the simple-minded without convincing the scholarly. And it has led to clericalism—human beings claiming superhuman authority, which, if allowed, may be misused for very mundane purposes. Greatest danger of all, it may discredit reason and exalt intuition.

We are often told that, apart from reason altogether, we shall find a sure guide to right conduct in moral and spiritual intuitions, instinctive ideas of right and wrong, the Categorical Imperative, conscience. But the difficulty is that these guides will set up one standard in one age or country, another standard in another; they will direct one man one way, another man the opposite. Intuition may inspire in Buddha a philosophy of goodness, or a philosophy of wickedness in Nietzsche. Conscience impelled the martyrs who went singing to the stake; also the inquisitors who burnt them. The saints felt themselves under the direct guidance of Providence: Hitler continually asserted the same. Mahatma Gandhi obeyed the call of duty as he understood it: so did his assassin. It is said that the outcome will show which has been the authentic voice of conscience and which an imposture; but a guide is of little use if you do not know whether it is reliable until after the choice is made and the occasion is over.

If reason may err, so may conscience. It has been well said that, while we may hold it wrong for a man to act against his conscience, we can justly blame him for the kind of conscience that he has. And there is this difference between the two: when reason errs it can correct its mistakes through its own processes; but intuition claims finality, allows no appeal and admits no remedy.

Nor is it true to say that intuition and instinct have the higher authority because they are original and innate. Reason also is innate. It is as integral a part of our nature as they. And in the end it is the more reliable. Any appetite can be defended as instinct, any vagary as intuition. At bottom, indeed, all human action springs from them. But at top, let there be reason. For history shows, plainly enough, that when we trust to instinct or intuition uncontrolled by reason we may rush into disaster.

9

We are applying human standards when we speak of divine love, and put the question how the evil in the world can be consistent with the goodness of God. But if we seek a revival of religion we are bound to persist with that question. For unless an answer is found the religious impulse will falter. We cannot worship omnipotence and omniscience unless we feel that love and justice are there also. The heart cannot be touched while the head is doubting.

Then the imagination reaches out, trying to relate the cosmic plan to our own values.

We may conceive that the plan might have taken one or other of two forms. It might have created conscious beings perfect from the beginning; without error, without evil or suffering. Or it might have created a process for the development of living creatures, with material bodies, in a material habitat; some endowed with mind; among these, some with free powers of conscious choice. Such freedom could not but include the liberty to make mistakes—otherwise it would not be freedom at all. And by mistakes we mean actions that cause us injury, sorrow, pain, death. It may be that elsewhere in this universe or in other universes, the first plan, of perfect beings, prevails. The second is the world that we have.

On this planet a vast number of different organisms have been evolved—a million species of animals, it is estimated, and the plants in addition. In among them comes man. He alone is both conscious and aware of his own consciousness. And he alone is not only an effect of evolution, but has become one of its causal agents. We are ourselves factors in the evolutionary process; as authentic as atoms and molecules, the land or the sea.

We combine into social units—the family, the neighbour-

hood, the tribe, the nation—groups of nations; a union, now, of the whole race. We set on foot organized movements—religious, political, cultural, economic—to promote our well-being. Sometimes we can even cope with the forces of nature themselves when they are hostile. If floods drown our fields, we make dykes to contain them. Storms sink our ships; we build vessels that can outride the tempest. Diseases afflict our bodies and plagues sweep us away: we discover means of prevention or cure. We can even gather up the lightning and make it harmless. And civilization is only some six or eight thousand years old: what may we not do in the thousands to come?

If, still, we find ourselves surrounded by evils; if this human fellowship, which can do such wise and noble things, is often ignoble and foolish; and if thereby we suffer —let us not then look about in every direction for someone or something to blame. Let us not invent scapegoats for our own errors, faults and crimes—wayward Olympian gods, a malignant Satan, a sinful Adam; or figments, such as Chance, Destiny, 'our stars'; or, at last, a callous and indifferent God. Let us not cry out that we are like animals caught in a trap, and dart about, this way and that, to find an escape. If there is Fate, we ourselves, in large measure, are that Fate. If there is a trap, we are both the trappers and the trapped.

Men have usually supposed that, if supernatural powers exist, they must be expected to intervene in the process of events, to interfere with what we have now discovered to be the laws of nature. The gods of the Iliad and Aeneid, and all the primitive deities, were imagined to be constantly and arbitrarily interrupting the flow of cause and effect. And there appears to be no rational ground for denying that divine intervention may be fact; that direct inspiration may have influenced throughout history, and may be influ-

encing now, the imagination, the will, the action of individual men; or of whole peoples; or of the human race. But if intervention were frequent, overt and explicit, man's freedom of choice would be gone; and with it his responsibility. If the cosmic plan had had that responsibility as its essence, it would thereby be defeating itself. Having freedom, we complain that we have no protection; if we had protection, we should complain that we had no freedom. We may come to see that the reticence of God is his supreme gift to man.

10

Let me now draw together the threads of the argument. There has been in the present century, in this and other countries, a marked decline in religion. This has already had harmful effects: carried farther it may bring catastrophe. The causes are various. I have discussed here only one—the effect of two world wars in giving fresh point to the old question how the evils of the world, which facts proclaim, can be reconciled with the goodness of God, which the religions assert.

To evade the issue, as in the Book of Job, is not permissible. A cosmogony of earth, heaven and hell is not accepted by the modern mind. We ask what philosophy has to say. A realist philosophy tells us that there is no such thing as an abstract Evil: what we term evils are events or ideas that are injurious to ourselves. These are sometimes the outcome of environment, sometimes of our own errors. The question arises whether we are strictly part and parcel of our environment, or have freedom of choice. The problem of evil merges into the problem of freewill.

Philosophy has the duty of grappling anew with this problem. It may perhaps find a solution in realizing that the individual man, as much as anything else, is a product of causes, but that these causes are internal as well as external. Each Self—body, senses, memory, power of choice—is new, unique, responsible. Within the limits set by circumstance, the self, as so constituted, has a freewill that is real and not an illusion.

Rejecting materialism and accepting Deity, we ask whether we may ascribe to it human qualities.

Here we are outside the range of philosophy and science and back in the sphere of religion. The language of daily life is often different from that of philosophy and science; and the language of religion is, or should be, that of daily life. The question, If God is Love, why are there wars? can neither be put nor answered except on the level of human ideas and language.

We know that the disasters, cruelties and injustices that we see around us are not inherent in the cosmic scheme and irremediable, because in the past many such have in fact been avoided or ended—and this has been through human effort. Experience shows that a constant direct divine intervention is not to be expected. Reflection may reveal that it is not to be desired: it is not for the good of man that he should be saved from reaping as he has sown. The problem of evil is seen to be one of humanity rather than divinity. It shifts from theological debate to practical action, both individual and social, through ethics, politics, economics, science and, above all, through personal right doing.

'If God is Love, why are there wars?' Because man is man, and is what he is.

But the time is ripe for change.

*Science and Philosophy**

1

TO USE A term familiar at Congresses of a different kind, I appear here tonight as a 'Fraternal Delegate', bringing the greetings of the Royal Institute of Philosophy. I hope you will agree that it is desirable that scientists and philosophers should know one another better; should try to understand each other's language, and not carry on conversation, if at all, through some neutral interpreter. No doubt the unceasing elaboration of human knowledge, reaching out so quickly in every direction, compels us to specialize. But that brings dangers and needs watching.

I remember that, in my Oxford days, someone had invented a story that, in a neighbouring College, an undergraduates' society had been formed with the title 'Society for Viewing Things as a Whole'. Perhaps we ought all to regard ourselves as though we were members of some such Society. In particular, we can see plainly enough how much mischief has been done by the too sharp division that has grown up, since the Renaissance, between three of the chief activities of the human mind—religion, philosophy and science. They have gone their several ways, paying too little attention to each other's doings, glossing over contradictions between their conclusions, or even accepting such contradictions as natural and proper. But man's intellect is a whole; and if its various faculties say contrary things it

*Delivered to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Brighton, 1948.

must become confused, uncertain of itself, demoralized, ineffective. Perhaps we may see here one of the causes of the troubles and disasters that afflict our harassed times.

Philosophers, it must be admitted, find little credit in the world of today. Few listen to them. Such audiences as they once had have mostly gone off to listen to the scientists. There they would find something new and significant, self-consistent and convincing. For this, philosophy has largely itself to blame. It had offered to the world little else than conjecture and assertion, based upon assumptions: made impressive, no doubt, by logic, and sometimes attractive by rhetoric, but not substantiated by knowledge and experience. Each philosophic system in turn was superseded by the next; and the whole process was becoming more and more remote from actuality, until at last Michelet expressed a conclusion that most ordinary people had reached, when he said 'Metaphysics is the art of bewildering oneself methodically.' All this rested at bottom on the arrogant assumption, accepted from Protagoras, that 'Man is the measure of all things.' For this the universe gives no warrant. As a present-day satirist has said:

> The supercilious silliness
> of this poor wingless bird
> is cosmically comical
> and stellarly absurd.

2

Such was philosophy without science. And such, to no small extent, it still is; although it is more than three centuries since Francis Bacon proclaimed the obvious truth that if mankind wished to understand the universe and its processes they should at least take the trouble to examine it.

But many did listen. They forsook metaphysics, and, with energy and enthusiasm, embraced science. Beginning with physics and chemistry, they rapidly achieved successes that were amazing. So striking, indeed, that some among the scientists, and more among the laymen, jumped to the conclusion that the methods they had adopted—observation and experiment, mathematical calculation, induction and deduction—could be applied to all our problems, and might be expected in time to solve them all. Although many of the leaders—in this country T. H. Huxley prominent among them—disclaimed any such belief, the world at large inclined to the view that natural science had found in materialism the ruling principle of the cosmos.

From this came an emphasis upon things as against ideas. The production and consumption of goods ranked as the matter of chief importance. It is true that civilization requires as its basis the maintenance and comfort of the whole population; but this was taken to imply that civilization consisted mainly in that. Past history and present politics were to be interpreted first of all in terms of economics. Further, science had discovered that man was not the child of a special creation, but had been slowly evolved out of the body of nature; also that nature itself was subject to the working of inexorable laws. This was thought to involve that all things, including man's own destiny, were determined by the blind working of autonomous forces. So religion became a fantasy, and freewill an illusion.

> The curtain's lifted,
> The stage is set,
> Bow to the audience
> Marionette.

From this intellectual trend have followed, during the last hundred years, grave consequences. The age has been passing through a mood of pessimism. Man has felt himself

lonely and friendless in a hostile universe. Pseudo-philosophers appeared, who were ready to drop the reins of reason and surrender control to instinct, intuition, superstition, or some fictional agency they miscalled 'History'. They won crowds of adherents and wielded vast influence. The old cynical view that politics is nothing more than a struggle for wealth and power between individuals, classes and nations, which had begun to yield ground before the advance of rational democracy, gained a fresh hold. In such an intellectual climate it was easy, in countries politically immature, for the followers of shallow but specious ideologies to seize power and establish the tyranny of a dictator, a group or a class.

Mark how this negative mood has affected the arts—particularly fiction, the theatre and the cinema. Not of course universally, but very widely, they have become frankly non-moral. Crime is entertainment, murder a parlour-game, adultery taken as a matter of course; compunction and remorse have little place, and religion never enters.

When we try to trace this mood of our time to its causes we cannot fail to find among them these discoveries of science, and the hasty deduction that materialism logically follows. Here is an example of science misused by philosophy—as wrong as philosophy without science, and perhaps more harmful.

This has become widely recognized. Nowadays, outside Russia, few thinkers, scientific or other, would declare themselves materialists. Obvious facts, around us and within our own natures, point to a different conclusion. Life and mind, the emotions, the virtues and the vices, our consciousness of the universe, these are realities as authentic as atoms and molecules, radiation and gravity. They cannot be thought of in terms of chemical formulae or mathematical equations, any more than—as the scholastics of the Middle

Ages supposed—in terms of logical syllogisms or metaphysical categories.

3

This supposed conflict between things and ideas, materialism and idealism, which appeared to be a conflict between science and philosophy, was a false issue. We may see it as an outcome of what has been called 'the philosophic craving for unity': that obsession of human thought which seeks to reduce each problem to a simple choice between two specified alternatives. Is mind, as the evolutionists seemed to say, nothing more than an accidental product of matter, which alone is real? No, said the philosophers. Then the alternative must follow, they went on, that matter is nothing more than a concept of mind: it is that which alone is real.

But why should we for ever submit to a challenge 'will you have A or B?', when often the right answer is 'both A and B'; or else 'sometimes A and sometimes B'; or very frequently 'neither A nor B, but C or D, or perhaps a combination of X, Y and Z'. I often feel some impatience when I am asked whether I am a Platonist or an Aristotelian; an optimist or a pessimist; for collectivism or individualism; a follower of Karl Marx or of Jean-Paul Sartre. It is like being asked which we prefer listening to, crooning or jazz. Often indeed the dichotomy is real and the answer must be definite. When A is truth and B is evident falsehood, or when A is freedom and B tyranny, the issue is simple, the answer clear and the duty plain. But the cases are very many when we should refuse to accept the crude challenge; when the answer to the dilemma should be Both, or else Neither. It may be so in this fundamental problem of mind and matter.

We have a test case close at hand within ourselves—the connection between brain and mind. We know more or less what we mean by those words, and we can bring them together with a hyphen and speak of 'the brain-mind relation'. But how that relationship is effected, what it is that the hyphen implies, we have no idea. That Sir Charles Sherrington is our greatest physiologist all would agree; it is he who has pushed research in that particular province farther than any man: but Sherrington has felt obliged to say, 'We have to regard the relation of mind to brain as still not merely unsolved, but still devoid of a basis for its very beginning.' And lately, in a foreword to a reprint of his classical work on the Nervous System, he ends by saying, 'That our being should consist of *two* fundamental elements offers I suppose no greater inherent improbability than that it should rest on one only.' Until further knowledge gives ground for some different conclusion, we may be well-advised to admit such a duality.

4

Another instance of the confusion brought by the A-or-B dilemma is to be seen in the perennial controversy on free-will and determinism. Here again philosophy and science are supposed to have taken different sides.*

Science had proclaimed unanimously—at all events until recently—that the law of causation is universal. Every event is the consequence of a combination of earlier events; if exactly the same combination is repeated it will always produce the same result; we say that the earlier stand to the later as cause to effect.

This causality applies, not only in the material sphere,

* See pp. 33-37 for a fuller statement of this argument.

but also in the sphere of life and mind. A farmer, when he breeds cattle or when he sows a field of corn, a gardener when he sets bulbs, manures his plants or prunes them, sees causation at work in the sphere of life: he finds that the same combination of causes will produce the same effect: if the result is different it is because one or more of the antecedents have been different. And we see all around us causation at work in the sphere of mind. Every lesson in a school, every sermon in a church, every speech at a meeting, assumes that thought and action are open to influence; in other words that causation applies in the sphere of mind. Nevertheless commonsense declares, and plain fact forbids us to believe otherwise, that individual human beings have a power of choice; can reflect, and—within the limits set by circumstance—they can decide, say or do what they will; they are therefore morally accountable, to themselves and to their neighbours, for their actions; in a word, they have freewill. It seems, then, that here is a contradiction. Many have held that it can only be resolved if we imagine some miraculous exception to the law of causation, some loophole through which, by special favour, the human will, and that alone, can escape into liberty.

But we shall need no such desperate expedient if we recognize—what should indeed be obvious—that the causes that have made us what we are, have given us our character and lead us to act as we do, are not all of one kind, but are of two kinds—some are external to ourselves and some are internal. From without come our physical and mental heritage from ancestors and parents, our social environment, economic circumstances. From within is developed our Self, which is individual and unique; with its perception, memory, intellect, power of choice, its will; built up by its own past decisions and present habits. Both sets of causes are for ever at work, interacting, sometimes conflicting. Consider

only the external factors, and you will say that our lives are determined by necessity; we are puppets in the hands of destiny, helpless victims of circumstance. Consider only the internal factors, and you may say that man is like a god, without limit to his capacities. Take both together and you will reach the conclusion that the individual man, as he is at the moment, possesses a freedom that is real, carrying a responsibility that is unescapable. Able, in some degree, even to confront and modify the physical conditions of the globe he inhabits, his power is absolute over the organizations and agencies he has himself created—societies and nations, Parliaments and Churches, arts and sciences, cities and industries. Science will be satisfied when we have realized that the individual will is not outside the cosmic complex of causality, but within it—itself the product of causes, external and internal. Philosophy and religion will be satisfied when we see that—within the limits set by bodily nature and the earth's environment—the unique individual will, once established and mature, separated, so to speak, from the matrix of circumstance as the child from the womb, is truly independent and free.

5

I said just now that 'until recently' science had always taught that the law of causation applied universally. I had in mind the Principle of Uncertainty (sometimes called the Principle of Indeterminacy) that was propounded by Heisenberg some twenty years ago, and accepted by many physicists. Certain philosophic deductions were drawn from it.

After the revolutionary discovery of the structure of the atom by J. J. Thomson and Rutherford, physicists every-

where eagerly explored its consequences. It was found impossible to push to a conclusion the researches into the motion of the electron. Its velocity could be theoretically ascertained, or alternatively its position at a given instant, but not both. And this inability could never be overcome, because the method of investigation which had to be employed itself modified the phenomenon that was being investigated. Consequently the scientist can never obtain the knowledge necessary to predict the motion of the electron. The deduction that was drawn was that there is no proof, or possibility of proof, that in the microcosmic world the law of causation reigns, and not pure hazard. If, it was said, there appears to be law it is only because our investigations necessarily deal, not with single units, but with aggregates of vast numbers; the results that we can handle are not factual but statistical, not certainties, but probabilities based on averages.

From this, Sir Arthur Eddington, who was the leading exponent of the hypothesis in this country, drew the most astonishing conclusions. 'I must make it clear,' he said, 'that the scientific doctrine of indeterminism is not that there exist occasional exceptions to deterministic law, but that every phenomenon is to a greater or less extent indeterminate.' He went on to say, 'If the atom has indeterminacy, surely the human mind will have an equal indeterminacy; for we can scarcely accept a theory which makes out the mind to be more mechanistic than the atom.' His conclusion was that 'Determinism has faded out of theoretical physics: . . . thereby science withdraws its moral opposition to freewill.'

If all this gave a shock to scientists, it came as an even greater shock to philosophers. The theory was widely discussed. It was made one of the main topics for consideration at the Ninth International Congress of Philosophy, held at

Paris in 1937. While not questioning the facts presented by physicists, the opinions expressed there were overwhelmingly against the deductions they had drawn. It was pointed out that the case rested mainly on an ambiguous use of the word 'determine'. In the premises of the argument it was used as meaning ascertained or defined; in the conclusion, in the sense of caused or necessitated. Because the scientist in his laboratory or at his desk cannot 'determine' the movement of the electron, it does not follow that, in the other sense of the word, it is not 'determined' physically by nature. Bertrand Russell has put the matter very clearly: 'In one sense of the word,' he says, 'a quantity is determined when it is measured, in the other sense an event is determined when it is caused. The Principle of Indeterminacy has to do with measurement, not with causation.'

The philosophers also urged that it is wrong to say that we may not assume the existence of anything that is not observable. That is so, no doubt, when it is a question of scientific proof. But apart from such proof, there can be inferences that reason may legitimately accept. Where, as in this case, centuries of investigation into matters that are within our knowledge have shown that events are always the effect of causes, identical causes producing identical effects, with never an exception, it is legitimate to infer that, in matters beyond the range of our knowledge, the same law holds, unless there is reason to believe the contrary. In this instance such reason is not offered, and cannot be from the nature of the case.

Nor was it only the philosophers who took this view. It was shared by three of the most eminent of our physicists—Einstein, Max Planck and Rutherford. Einstein has said, 'Indeterminism is quite an illogical concept. . . . When you mention people who speak of such a thing as free will

in nature it is difficult for me to find a suitable reply. The idea is of course preposterous.' And when it is said that a Principle of Uncertainty is the necessary consequence of Quantum Theory, we may be reminded that Planck, the originator of that theory, has written that, in his opinion, physical science must still be 'based on the strict and universal validity of the principle of causality'; and he said 'I firmly believe, in company with most physicists, that the quantum hypothesis will eventually find its exact expression in certain equations which will be a more exact formulation of the law of causality.'

It is strange, in the light of these facts and opinions, that some leading exponents of science still speak as though Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty, and the conclusions drawn from it, had been generally accepted and were to be regarded as established: they are prepared to rest upon this exiguous foundation so weighty a structure as the freedom of the human will. We can find for it a basis much broader and far less precarious.

6

I will offer one other present example of divergent trends in science and in philosophy.

The nineteenth century conception of a material ether having, whether rightly or wrongly, been generally discarded by physicists, Einstein's Spacetime Continuum has been accepted as the medium that transmits radiation. But meantime a denial of the factual existence of space and time appears to have become more general among philosophers. Commonsense, indeed, cannot do without the notions of space and time. We are disposed to regard space as a kind of very large empty box, with the top and bottom sides

removed, and time as an 'ever-rolling stream'; but what such expressions may mean we have no idea. It seems better to regard the words space and time as our names for relationships between objects or events in a universe that is extended and enduring. Essential as they are, for mathematics as well as for practical life, they are nevertheless figments. Like numbers, or the Euclidean point with no dimensions, line with one dimension, and plane-surface with two, they are necessary as tools of the mind; but they are not physical elements in the universe. Carlyle's poetic insight let him see this. 'The Where and When', he said in *Sartor Resartus*, 'so mysteriously inseparable from all our thoughts, are but superficial terrestrial adhesions to our thought. . . . Think well, thou too wilt find that Space is but a mode for our human Sense, so likewise Time; *there is* no Space and no Time.'

If that is so, then clearly a Spacetime Continuum that comprises them is a mental concept and nothing more. As such, no physical qualities or objective functions can be assigned to it. The two matters belong to separate orders. It is as though one should say that the number Eight was heavier than the number Four; or treat the census as real rather than the people.

The incisive mind of Whitehead cut straight to the essence of the matter. 'There can be no true physical science,' he wrote, 'which looks first to mathematics for the provision of a conceptual model. Such a procedure is to repeat the errors of the logicians of the middle ages.' Again he speaks of 'confining thought to purely formal relations which then masquerade as reality. . . . Science relapses into the study of differential equations. The concrete world has slipped through the meshes of the scientific net.' To confuse mathematics with reality would indeed be to establish a new scholasticism.

7

I have now offered four examples of divergences between scientists and philosophers—in the problems of mind and matter, freewill and necessity, causation and indeterminism, spacetime and reality. Clearly the conclusion is that efforts should be made to reconcile such divergences. The leaders of thought must not for ever offer to the peoples contradictory ideas on fundamental issues. They should come together, out of their professional compartments and across national frontiers, to give to the world the guidance it so urgently needs.

For, in the long run, it is ideas that rule. Not things; nor yet force. Things are valued according to human choice. Force may be used or not used, for this purpose or that, to protect freedom or assail it, to maintain justice or overthrow it, according to the ideas that men hold on freedom and justice, force or persuasion. The two great wars that have desolated men's lives and devastated the world have been as much conflicts of ideas as were the wars of earlier centuries between religions. And the present tension, as we all know, comes from a conflict of ideologies. The leaders of thought should not leave the world's affairs to 'Hissing factionists with ardent eyes', as Wordsworth called them. Only when they themselves point the way can the intellect come out of the fogs and bogs in which it has been lost and wandering for centuries, to clear air and firm ground, where the urgent mind of man may press on to fresh exploration and new discovery.

Is there any hope of such an interchange of ideas, or of any good result coming from it?

I have lately been attending the Tenth International Congress of Philosophy, held at Amsterdam. Comparing my

impressions with those of the previous Congress eleven years before, I noticed a greater tendency to the practical. The Congress of Paris had been devoted to two subjects—the Philosophy of Descartes, and what was then the new issue of Indeterminism. This one had as its central theme, 'Man, Mankind, Humanity'. Some of the seven hundred professors and students who came to it, from over twenty countries, took part in sections on Metaphysics, Mathematics, Logic, Languages and the like. But the predominant subjects were Humanism, Ethics, Man and Religion, the Philosophy of History, Sociology. The Director-General and other representatives of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) attended, and some of their special problems were discussed at a series of meetings. At the closing session, the President of the Congress, summarizing its proceedings, said that 'it had reflected the tendency of philosophy at the present time towards empiricism, and taking a part in the many activities of human life'. Philosophy indeed is tending to be less centred upon the problem of perception and knowledge; also to be less historical and critical and more positive and constructive; 'keeping an eye on the object'—the object being the cosmos of which we are a part, man's place in it and his own nature.

All this is of good augury for a closer co-operation between philosophy and science. If, pooling their ideas, they discover that differences have been caused by using the same words in different senses; or that one has been arguing from assumptions which the other can show to be mistaken; or that a discussion has proved abortive because limited to alternatives narrower than they need have been, then contradictions may be resolved. In so far as we can reach truth, sooner or later they must be, for no one truth can contradict another truth.

8

To refer again to Albert Einstein—I well remember, when I had the privilege, about twenty-five years ago, of being his host at Government House in Jerusalem, and was walking with him one day along the ridge of the Mount of Olives talking of many things, his saying that he thought the present troubles of the world had come through science having advanced faster than morals; only when morals caught up with science would those troubles be ended.

Most people, I believe, would agree with that. But some seem inclined to draw the conclusion that the fault has been with the advance of science; that it has been too fast; or even that it has been a mistake altogether.

They say that it was science that made possible the inventions of the engineer and the discoveries of the chemist which produced the Industrial Revolution. The characteristic features of our present-day civilization have come from that—crowded industrial cities, with their hurry and strain, their ugliness and dirt; mass-production of things in place of craftsmanship, of human types rather than individuals. To science also we owe the rise of materialism and the decline of religion, with world wars as the outcome and atom bombs the climax. It would have been better, they say, far better if we had never left the simple ways and abandoned the simple faith of our forefathers.

An age is prone to depreciate itself and to idealize the past. Were there no wars before the advent of science? Constant and cruel were the wars between dynasties, nations, races; and between religions—Catholics and Protestants, Churchmen and Independents, Christians and Moslems, Moslems and Hindus; with persecutions, massacres, assassinations beyond counting. In those times thought was repressed and knowledge scanty. Serfdom or slavery

was the lot of great multitudes; the common people everywhere, mostly illiterate, were born to lives of brute toil. Vagabondage, highway robbery, crimes of every kind, were rife. Epidemics killed millions; a quarter—a third of the children died; adult life was often short; old age, if attained, racked with infirmities. Two things have rescued us, not indeed from all, but from most of this: one, democracy; the other, science.

Did science do us injury in preventing disease, softening pain, lengthening life, easing death? In lightening the labour of millions by creating the slaves of the modern age—the machines, a hundred times as strong and a hundred times as long-lived as the human slaves of the ancient world; working hard, fast and unresting without cruelty or hardship? Was there injury in making our fields more fertile; giving us new materials; creating an abundance that enriches human lives through comfort, greater leisure and the amenities that art and invention can bring? Nuclear energy itself—if turned to peaceful uses—opens prospects of a material ease beyond even the imagination of our ancestors; and if that is not yet within our grasp, it is certainly within the range of reasonable hopes. Has science hurt us by enlarging knowledge, disseminating it through the printing-press, and now—most wonderful of all the mechanical inventions—the radio? The credits of scientific achievement, even at this hour, far outweigh the debits; and if we view things, not only as they are, but as in process of becoming, the balance may prove more favourable still.

That these vast new powers and opportunities should often have been turned to mischief is not the fault of those who have bestowed, but those who have misused them. Not science is to be blamed; but the treason of some among the thinkers, the weakness, the blunders or the crimes of statesmen, the passion of peoples. The scientist as a citizen

shares in the responsibility that belongs to us all; no special or final responsibility is imposed by his calling. He deals with means; it is not for him to set the ends of human action. That belongs to ethics; and ethics can find guidance only in philosophy and religion. Not science is shaken by the shock of the atom bomb: it is philosophy and religion, because of their failure to give to modern man an effective moral leadership.

'The troubles of the world have come from science having advanced faster than morals'—yes, but the remedy is not to hold up science; it is to speed up morals. Here we must invoke religion; there are aspects of the cosmos which it alone can envisage.

Religion and science, it has been thought, cannot go together. There have been, and no doubt there still are, conflicts between some of the tenets of the ancient theologies and facts that research and discovery have established. And there is plainly a conflict between any form of religion, as commonly understood, and materialism. But science is not to be identified with materialism, nor religion with dogmas contrary to the order of nature. Between science as such and religion as such there need be no conflict.

Philosophy may be the reconciler. On its empirical side it links with science; on its transcendental side it can join hands with religion: so it may serve to promote that synthesis of the three which is essential if the age is to be redeemed from its past calamities and rescued from its present dangers.

So far from conflicting with religion, science will strengthen it. Our latter-day knowledge, unveiling a universe around us and within us that was always there but hitherto unseen and unknown, has revealed an organic whole, harmonious and majestic beyond the conception of earlier ages. And this is not the speculation of a wistful

hope; nor some apocalyptic vision; nor the vague inklings of hypnotic trance. This is waking fact. This is a reality any man can perceive, here and now; brought within range of his perception and understanding, by the help of appliances of exquisite ingenuity, through the laborious constructions of painstaking thought—up from the depths of the atom, down from the height of the stars.

What a theme here for the poet! And what a text for the preacher! For this is not to undermine religion. By helping to simplify, purify and enlarge our conceptions of the cosmos and of Deity, science may join in offering to modern man a faith that can satisfy his emotions and justify his innermost beliefs, without offending and alienating his intellect. This is not to destroy, this is to exalt religion.

You, the members of this great Association, will go forward with your work for the advancement of science, sure of its worth, confident in its future.

*Francis Bacon**

AMONG THE great thinkers of all countries and all times Francis Bacon stands illustrious. His work in the field of the intellect brought an epoch to an end and opened another: he, more than any other one man, led mankind from the narrow confinements of the Middle Ages into the open expanses of the modern world.

Early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Francis Bacon was born, in London in 1561. His father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, was one of her leading statesmen; his mother also came of a family of distinction. Educated at the University of Cambridge, the young man's gifts soon became apparent. On his father's death, when he was eighteen years old, Francis Bacon entered the profession of the law; became a member of the House of Commons when he was twenty-three, and was active in Parliament and in the Courts of Law. When Elizabeth died in 1603, he gained the confidence of her successor, King James I; was appointed to the high legal offices of Solicitor-General, of Attorney-General and, finally in 1618, of Lord Chancellor, being raised to the peerage, first as Baron Verulam and then Viscount St Alban.

The career of a statesman in a monarchy of those times was precarious. To win and to hold the favour of the sovereign, talents were not enough; it was necessary to be skilled in the arts and artifices of the courtier. Bacon had talents of the highest order; he added to them, during a somewhat tortuous career, the methods of advancement usual at the time. Fond of magnificence, earning much he

*Broadcast by the BBC (Overseas Service), 1947.

spent more. He took pride in the pomp of his great houses with troops of retainers, and shone in the glory of high office and the favour of the King. His extravagance led to his downfall. Lord Chancellor of England, presiding over one of the highest courts of law, he had the opportunity of acquiring great sums from bribes, and he yielded to the temptation. Complaints were made to the House of Commons; inquiry showed them to be justified. Brought for trial before the Peers, Bacon had no choice but to admit his guilt: he was dismissed from his offices, and sentenced to a heavy fine and imprisonment in the Tower of London during the King's pleasure. But so high had stood his reputation and so great had been his services to the State, that his imprisonment was only for a few days, his financial difficulties were relieved, and he was permitted to retain his titles of honour. After all, the acceptance of fees and presents, as part of the perquisites of office, was the custom of the time; and if Bacon had carried it too far, that was regarded by this contemporaries as a mistake rather than a crime. Five years after his downfall, in 1626, at the age of 65, he died.

But it was not his political career that won him lasting renown; it was the originality and the outstanding value of his intellectual achievements. Parallel with his life at the Courts of Elizabeth and James, in Parliament and in the law, ran the thread of a different life altogether—of mental enthusiasm, philosophic thought and industrious scholarship. In public worldly and ambitious, in private he laboured continually at the things of the mind and the spirit.

The age into which he was born was one of brilliant activity—in learning, art, invention, exploration. The Renaissance was at its culmination. From Italy its influence had spread, during two or three centuries, to France and then to England. But many acute minds were deeply dis-

satisfied with the continued survival of medieval ways of thought. It had been the age of the Schoolmen—the painstaking, and often able, students and thinkers who regarded knowledge as the interpretation of established authority—Greek philosophy and the orthodox Catholic Christian Church. Aristotle, who had lived and taught in Athens just two thousand years before, and the early Fathers of the Church, had told us, so the Schoolmen believed, all that was known, or could be known, about God and man, the universe and nature. St Thomas Aquinas, three hundred years before, had once for all woven natural science and theology into a consistent and coherent whole.

Against this Scholasticism, the inquiring and fearless mind of Bacon was in revolt. Beyond all things he cared for truth. Above tradition he put truth, and reason above reverence for authority. Examining the works of Aristotle and Aquinas and their interpreters in a fresh and critical spirit, he found that the whole elaborate system was based mainly upon guesswork, dressed up in rhetoric. 'Here is the first distemper of learning,' he wrote, 'when men study words and not matter.' He called this a 'kind of degenerate learning'; chiefly practised by the Schoolmen, who had 'sharp and strong wits and abundance of leisure, and small variety of reading, . . . their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle, their dictator), as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges.' When the mind of man works upon the facts of nature, it works, said Bacon, 'according to the stuff and is limited thereby'; but with the Schoolmen the mind 'worketh upon itself, as the spider worketh his web; then it is endless, and brings forth, indeed, cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.'

From his youth up Bacon felt the urgent need for a wholly new approach to the great problems that have ever

beset the mind of man. And he felt also the power within himself to find and to proclaim it. He set out his philosophy in two great works—one entitled *The Advancement of Learning*; the other, written in Latin, called *Novum Organum*—'The New Organ', that is 'Method'. It was a vast scheme: too vast, as he himself knew and stated, for any man to complete in a single lifetime. He urged, with all the authority of a well-stored mind and the persuasive power of literary skill, that we must start, not with speculations, but with facts; not with preconceived dogmas, but with painstaking observation of 'the stuff' that Nature gives us. We must explore the unknown from the basis of the known; and try to reach at the end, not what we have wanted to find, but whatever truth has to tell us. Bacon was not himself a discoverer. He was more. He organized the whole process of discovery.

In his last years, expelled from his former practical activities, he wrote, among other things, a Utopia. He imagined an island in the Southern Pacific where men had adopted, to their own great advantage, just such a general plan as he had advocated. The book, left unfinished at his death, was published by his secretary, with the title, *The New Atlantis*. It has been read, in edition after edition, ever since. It shows the daring ingenuity of Bacon's mind that, in the last chapter of this book, he clearly foreshadowed—three centuries in advance—the airplane, the submarine, the telephone and all kinds of manufacturing machinery. But the main purpose of the book was to advocate the establishment of a great college, which he called The Society of Salomon's House. This would be what we should term a vast institute of research into every branch of science.

Even more widely read was a book of short essays, in which Bacon embodied his views on a great variety of subjects, relating not only to the enlargement of know-

ledge but to the general conduct of life. Sometimes marred by a touch of cynicism, but always suggestive, informative and readable, Bacon's *Essays* has ever since his day been one of the classics of English literature.

So high has his reputation stood in the world of letters, that the fantastic theory has been advanced that the other writer of his time regarded as pre-eminent was really Bacon in duplicate; that the plays purporting to be Shakespeare's had come secretly from his pen. It is unnecessary to say more than that the idea is scouted by almost everyone whose knowledge of the subject would entitle him to speak.

Bacon's philosophy soon began to bear fruit. His principles were gradually adopted everywhere: first, doubt; followed by inquiry, through observation and experiment; resulting in prediction; which, if correct, leads to discovery; to be verified finally by scrupulous tests. The door to modern science had been opened.

A generation after his death, with the active assistance of James I's grandson, Charles II, The Royal Society was founded in London, its mission to promote research into all branches of natural science. It was 'the House of Salomon' realized in fact. To fulfil the purposes of its foundation the Royal Society has laboured unceasingly ever since, and with marvellous success. It stands now at the height of its reputation and authority as the senior scientific institution of the world. Charles Darwin wrote in his Diary, 'I worked on true Baconian principles'; and every great pioneer of science everywhere, and today as always, might say the same.

When, for some years, I had the honour of serving in the British Cabinet, my seat at the long green table in the Cabinet Room at No. 10 Downing Street was opposite the only picture in the room, over the mantelpiece. It was a portrait of Francis Bacon.

At the moment of his downfall, he made his last will and testament: in it he wrote, 'For my name and memory I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages.' Nor is he forgotten.

*Democracy: Its Failings and Its Future**

1

IN THE DAYS of Herbert Spencer—in whose memory this lectureship was founded—the principle of democracy was taken almost for granted. There might be controversies as to its form; there might be delay in extending it to the backward regions of the earth; but its excellence as a system for the government of mankind few would question. By the end of the nineteenth century elected Parliaments had been firmly established in all the countries of Western and Central Europe, of America North and South, of South Africa and Australasia, and in Japan; with few exceptions the Governments were dependent upon the Parliaments. In the early years of the present century the movement was advancing still farther—into Russia, India and China, three countries which together contain one-half of the human race. It seemed that the time was not far distant when all mankind would be politically free.

Now there has been a sudden change. A cataclysm, quite unforeseen, has arrested the steadily advancing tide and turned it violently back. A school of thinkers and groups of men of action have arisen to whom democracy and all it stands for is abhorrent. Liberty, whether of individuals or of nations, international law, lasting peace, every humanitarian idea—these are to them a scorn and a derision. By the ruthless and efficient use of force they have had great

*The Herbert Spencer Lecture, 1941, delivered at Oxford.

success. We meet here in Oxford this afternoon very conscious of the fact that this country is now the only foothold of political freedom in Europe, with two or three small and precarious exceptions, from the Urals to the Atlantic and from the Arctic Ocean to the Mediterranean. A large part of Asia is in the same case, and more of it is threatened.

Taking stock of this situation, we ask ourselves how has it come about; and how far has it been due to the failings of democrats themselves. By seeking answers to those questions we may prepare our policy for the future, for the time when these years of nightmare shall have passed away and mankind awake again to a sunlit morning.

2

Anyone who casts a backward glance over these centuries sees at once that the feature that most distinguishes the present age is the advance of science. It cannot be claimed as a great age of religion, or of philosophy, or of art. It is the rapid development of science, pure and applied, and the consequences that have followed, which specially differentiates this period from all that have gone before. When we are seeking an explanation of the changing fortunes of democracy we may well begin, therefore, by asking in what ways, direct and indirect, this factor, suddenly thrust into our civilization and so largely dominating it, has been responsible.

The development of practical science has had its widest and most obvious effect in the sphere of industry. The first Industrial Revolution, based on the steam-engine and the invention of textile machinery, had quick and marked result on the social systems of most of the western countries. We are now living, although we are hardly conscious of the

fact, in the full tide of a second Industrial Revolution—based on the internal combustion engine, electricity, and industrial and agricultural chemistry. As the outcome of the two together, vast populations have grown up, collected mainly in large towns and cities. Wealth has immensely increased; the average level of comfort has risen greatly; swollen individual fortunes stand out conspicuous. Yet poverty and precarious living remain, widespread among the peoples. Easier transport and ample supplies of capital have brought a rapid expansion of international commerce, contributing further to the increase of wealth; but cycles of world trade have come in its train, with recurring depressions, unemployment, and suffering.

These swift developments on the economic side of life have had some effects favourable to democracy and some unfavourable. Populations, concentrated in millions, have become class-conscious; they have claimed political power, and have been able to wrest it from kings and oligarchies. Education has been made general, but not yet thorough. There is more comfort among the peoples; not enough, however, to satisfy, but enough to make them realize the more keenly the discomforts that remain. Almost everywhere has been manifest a chronic discontent. It has been embittered by the knowledge that poverty is no longer due to any niggardliness of nature, but to the failure of statesmanship to make use of an abundance which the new science has brought to our hand. It has been intensified further by the obvious injustices of class inequality, by the ever more glaring contrasts between the extremes of rich and poor. Hence vast social movements have arisen among the peoples, taking different forms at different times and in different countries—Trade Unionism, Socialism, Communism.

Lazarus, hungry,
Menaces Dives;

Labour the giant
Chafes in his hold.

This surging of the peoples swept democracy into power. Sometimes the system succeeded, in considerable measure, in bringing about the economic results at which it chiefly aimed. For usually the impulse behind the democratic movement was social even more than constitutional; in most men's minds among the working-classes, from the time of the French Revolution onwards, the changes were viewed chiefly as political means to economic ends. But elsewhere the results that were promised and expected were slow to come. Then the democratic principle itself tended to become discredited. Low wages and successive waves of unemployment still submerged millions of homes, while vast fortunes were still being accumulated. Often the electorates found their demand for social progress thwarted by the strife of parties, the instability of governments, the untrustworthiness of politicians. And the complicated machinery of the democratic constitutions obscured the issues and confused the minds of the voters. I remember seeing years ago, in a town in Italy during an election, a scrawl across a wall: '*Operai non votate—il parlamentarismo è una mistificazione*'!* And I have been told that in Paris, more recently, among a display of competing election placards—'*Vive le Parti Socialiste*', '*Viva l'Action Française*', '*Vive Blum*', and so forth, there was to be seen a simple and appealing inscription, chalked up by someone, in big letters: '*Vive moi*'!

The trends unfavourable to democracy were intensified by the last great economic depression, the most widespread and most severe ever known. In the years following the trade collapse of 1929 the number of unemployed workers in the chief industrial countries rose to a peak of thirty

*Workmen don't vote—Parliamentarianism is a mystification.

millions. Currency inflations had already ruined the middle classes in Germany, and had gone far to bring ruin elsewhere. Communism was spreading in the Continental countries. The Fascist and Nazi parties grew in power and dominated Italy and Germany. The present pattern of European politics took shape.

These, then, were among the broad effects, direct and indirect, of the impact of modern science upon the economic and political systems of the western world. Not less momentous were its effects in the sphere of mind. For many centuries men's conduct had been controlled by a code of morals based upon systems of revealed religion. Imperfect as the control might often be, there was a code, and it was generally accepted. Organized churches cared for the moral education of the young, and guided the lives of the adult, in the light of theological doctrines that few would challenge. And all the western faiths had been teaching theories of the universe—its creation, its nature, and man's relation to it—which, varying in particulars, were fundamentally the same; they sprang from a common origin in a distant and pre-scientific age. Then came the discoveries of astronomy, of geology, of biology, crowned by the recognition of evolution as a basic process in nature. The cosmogonies of the ancient creeds were seen to be inconsistent with those discoveries. Orthodoxy, from its nature, was reluctant to change. There followed what was termed the conflict between science and religion, but which we now see to have been a conflict between science and current theologies. Owing to that conflict, western thought, and to some extent eastern thought as well, passed into a phase of doubt and uncertainty. A great part of the populations questioned the validity of the ancient creeds. Multitudes found them no longer binding, and conduct tended to run loose from ethical control.

When the Germans felt themselves, after the last war, humiliated and repressed, many among them took advantage of this religious confusion to repudiate definitely the Christian ethic. Under the influence partly of philosophers —Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche and others; partly of a superficial school of racial theorists; partly of Wagnerian romantics; and partly of crude militarists, a dynamic creed took shape —hard, ruthless, non-moral, essentially pagan. Rejecting Christianity as a 'slave-morality', it embraced a slave-owner's morality. Democracy—ethical, humanitarian, and, in the wide sense of the word, religious—found its fundamental axioms challenged and denied. There were no agreed spiritual standards by which judgement between the antagonists could be given. The anarchy in the thought of yesterday brought the chaos in the world of today.

In addition to these consequences of the impact of modern science in the sphere of economics and politics, and in the sphere of mind and spirit, there is a third province, very distinct from either, in which also the effects have been striking, and portentous for democracy. It is in the conduct of war.

Changes in military methods have always been a leading factor in shaping the development of institutions and in determining the course of history. There would have been no Roman Empire without the Roman legion—its weapons, its discipline, its tactics. The knight of the Middle Ages, man and horse invulnerable in armour, riding down the spearmen and archers of the commonalty, established the feudal system. Gunpowder knocked out the knight in armour; it gave great advantage to national armies and centralized States. Incidentally it reduced primitive peoples to impotence, opened the way for the conquest by Europeans of the other continents, and made possible the modern empires. Now, at this moment, we are witnessing the results of another

great change. Science has given us the internal combustion engine, and its offspring, the airplane, the submarine and the tank. The tank column is the knighthood of today, the tank both horse and armour.

The whole fortune of democracy is being influenced, very obviously in these days, by the deadly efficiency, and the costly complexity, of these weapons; and that in two ways. First, a populace cannot face a government in command of the present implements of war, and of a force that will use them. How could the Liberals and Socialists of Spain withstand unprotected the Italian airplanes; or the Viennese even attempt to resist Hitler's armoured cars, tanks and artillery? There may perhaps in the future be civil wars between contending armies; but it is unlikely that ever again there can be popular uprisings, the tocsin and the barricades, or the taking of a Bastille; nor ever again an 1848.

Secondly, the small nations are placed at a far worse disadvantage even than before in face of the great ones. In old days the Dutch with their inundations, the Greeks or Serbs or Swiss in their mountains, might have some hope of withstanding even a mighty aggressor. But not now. A great Power can, in a few hours, concentrate against a small neighbour an air-force and a mechanized army that can overwhelm at once any attempt at resistance. Patriotism, valour, sacrifice are of no avail. We see in these years the effect upon national freedom of the new panoply of war. Throughout the world the independence of every small State, and its free institutions, stand in deadly peril.

3

Such being the situation, let me ask you now to turn your

attention to the question how far the mistakes of democrats themselves have helped to bring it about.

Speaking to a university audience, in a lecture associated with the name of Herbert Spencer, it is with some trepidation that I venture the suggestion that the democracies have suffered through paying too much deference to political theories. Yet I feel bound to do that; and I shall submit instances, which I hope you will agree are relevant, to show that time after time great sections of opinion have been misled by general principles, propounded, with excellent intentions and much learning, by intellectuals of distinction, but which when put to the test have proved in practice to be mistaken and hurtful.

Take first the principle of *laissez-faire*, and its effects in this country during the period of its dominance, and after.

In an age that was becoming the great age of science it was natural that politics and economics should be brought into the general framework. Bentham and his school set out to apply the scientific method, thoroughly and consistently. The Philosophic Radicals rendered great services in many ways, which it is not necessary here to recapitulate. But when they laid down, as a general conclusion of their reasoning, that Governments should altogether abstain from what was termed 'interference with natural economic laws'; when they strenuously opposed State action to better the conditions of employment, to improve the housing of the people, or to effect other social reforms; when they declared that an unchecked competition in industry was the first condition of social progress—then, we now clearly see, they did harm.

Darwin's discoveries, coming soon after, were enlisted in support of the most extreme claims of individualism. Natural selection, Struggle for existence, Survival of the fittest, were ideas that came suddenly into the forefront of dis-

cussion. Hastily adopted from biology they were misapplied to politics. It was claimed that natural science itself endorsed the principle of unmitigated conflict in human society. Let employer compete without restriction against employer, workman against workman, and each class pull against the other; let landowners in town and country freely compete to sell their land for whatever use might be the most profitable to them; let Governments keep aloof from social questions altogether; and—some added—let nation contend against nation, even to the point of war, for that is only one more instance of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest—all this must be accepted as right. The process might be cruel but the end was beneficent. It was Nature's law, which man should not presume to question, and could not disobey without disaster.

The results were seen in the features that disfigured and disgraced the Victorian 'age of prosperity'—the low wages and long hours, the sweated industries, child labour, miseries of unemployment; they were seen in all the social strife that followed. And they are seen still in the kind of towns that we have, which the present generation has the heavy task of transforming; and our countryside, which it has to rescue and redeem. The fallacy that international war is a form of natural selection, absurd though a moment's reflection shows it to be, tended to confuse men's minds. Its specious appearance of scientific authority lent support to the disastrous doctrine that perhaps war may be, after all, a good thing in itself, on the whole to be approved rather than condemned.

John Stuart Mill early recognized that *laissez-faire* was a principle of partial and temporary value. He wrote in 1833 in a letter to Carlyle: 'Your criticism on Miss Martineau is, I think, just: she reduces the *laissez-faire* system to absurdity as far as the principle goes, by merely carrying

it out to all its consequences. In the meantime that principle, like all other negative ones, has work to do yet, work namely of a destroying kind, and I am glad to think it has strength left to finish that, after which it must soon expire, for I doubt much if it will reach the resurrection.' Spencer, on the other hand, held to it uncompromisingly. He expressed it in the most unqualified form in his *Social Statics* in 1851, and reaffirmed it, in all its fullness, in *Man versus the State* in 1884. The verdict has gone against this view; not because we care less for man's liberty, but because it is recognized that, although no law compels him, man still may not be free, for there is economic compulsion also. We have, indeed, to be always on the watch against excessive legislation, but there are many occasions when only State intervention can rescue the individual, helpless under the coercion of economic circumstance; when more law may mean more liberty.

The theory of *laissez-faire* being gradually discredited by its results, other theorists at once arose to propound another to replace it. If to confine State action to a minimum was wrong, then to expand State action to a maximum must be right. Individualism being rejected, the alternative must be Socialism; in the recoil from Ricardo arose Karl Marx. Once more millions of people fell under the fascination of a system claiming to be logical, all-embracing, a universal panacea. Now, after a hundred years of discussion, not one of the fundamental ideas of Karl Marx has won any general measure of assent among thinkers—his Hegelian dialectics applied to politics; his theory of economic value; his materialist view of the universe and of human society; his interpretation of history as above all an economic process; his belief in the existence of 'forces', constituting some 'historical necessity', which would bring about this or that 'inevitably'; his faith in mass revolution as the instrument

of that necessity—not one of these doctrines has been able to withstand close examination. Yet Marxism was powerful as a protest, as a cry of anger and revolt; its presentation in scholarly form lent it authority among the uncritical masses; its sincerity and fervour aroused enthusiasm. Whether in Russia it will bring benefits, as great as those that might have been obtained in less cruel and less costly ways, it is too soon yet to judge. Elsewhere the rise of Communist parties has further divided the forces of progress, while their revolutionary programme has evoked strong counter-revolutionary and reactionary movements. Communism has contributed not a little to create that confusion in European politics which has been a principal cause of the set-back to democracy.

Meanwhile that other general theory was taking shape in Germany, with 'Blood and Soil' for its cry, again with a mystical belief in some imagined 'Destiny' or 'Historical necessity'. Charlatan philosopher-historians like Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Oswald Spengler furnished it with a pseudo-factual basis. It gave a kind of intellectual justification for Nazi violence; a similar doctrine had done the same for the Fascists of Italy. The peoples, bewildered by these ideologies, not knowing what to believe or which way to turn, surrendered their liberties without a blow and submitted to whatever system was imposed upon them.

4

Another cause of the troubles of the democracies may be found in defects in their political structures.

Pope's couplet:

> For Forms of Government let fools contest;
> Whate'er is best administer'd, is best,

is often held to be full of wisdom; on reflection it proves to be an example of what Lowell called Pope's 'careless thinking carefully versified'. For there are things that matter more than good administration—liberty matters more, and social justice; and these depend largely on the kind of government that there is. Nor is good administration often the product of a bad constitution, and if it is, then seldom for long. A personal form of government may administer well during the lifetime of some exceptional man who creates a dictatorship or founds a dynasty; but rarely under the immediate successor, and hardly ever for longer. Only once, in all the recorded history of great states, has the system of personal rule provided comparatively good government for even so short a spell as eighty years; the achievement of the Antonines, from Nerva to Marcus Aurelius, is unique in the annals of mankind. A democracy is broadly based upon a people; but a dictatorship is the pyramid on its apex, and when the apex crumbles, as sooner or later it always does, the structure crashes down.

Of the bad results of ill-framed constitutions we may see various instances around us. Modern Japan gives a striking example. By the fundamental law a veto on the actions of the civil power is, in effect, vested in the heads of the army and the navy; the military services are entitled to have their own spokesmen in the Cabinet; whenever they choose to intervene they can impose their own policy, irrespective of the wishes of Parliament, Government or public opinion. Hence the triumphs, in crisis after crisis, of a persistent militarism, which seems likely to bring the country to ruin. The constitution set up representative institutions, but it included also a provision that has made them futile.

Consider again the Weimar Constitution in Germany. Proportional representation may take various forms, some good, some bad. Weimar undoubtedly chose the worst. It

divided the whole country into no more than thirty-five constituencies, with an average population of nearly two millions, sending to the Reichstag from ten to thirty members each, with an average of twenty-one. It was impossible for the elector to vote for persons; he had to choose between lists, and these were drawn up by the political parties. The consequence was to give ultimate control to the party managers; and as the parties were numerous, and proved unable to unite to create stable ministries, the parliamentary system was a failure, and an easy victim for its enemies.

Even in the United States, where democracy has had on the whole such high success, its achievements might have been still greater, and certainly far speedier, if it had not been hampered by one unfortunate principle embodied in the constitution by its framers. They were much influenced by Montesquieu's description of the English constitution. His logical mind discovered there a definite separation, between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary which in fact did not exist. The founders of the Republic, thus misled, accepted such a separation and perpetuated it; with unhappy results whenever a President elected with one policy is associated with a Congress pursuing another, or when either is frustrated by a Supreme Court with power to overrule both.

In our own country, the eighteenth century, believing what Pope had said, bequeathed to the nineteenth an unreformed, antiquated constitution which proved wholly unable to cope with the immense problems that the upheavals in ideas and in industry had thrown up. The Great Reform Bill, delayed by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, and long overdue, came just in time to prevent a violent outbreak; and, for nearly a century after, a great part of the political energies of the nation had to be devoted to the settlement of a series of constitutional issues.

Who can measure the injury done by the delay in social readjustment caused by the long succession of controversies, over extensions of the franchise, redistribution of seats, payment of Members, the relations between the two Houses, and, worst of all, the Irish Question? Without doubt these distractions hindered the removal of social grievances and left discontent to fester. If, in the present century, large measures of amelioration had not been undertaken, they might well have rendered the democratic system here as insecure as it has proved to be among our neighbours.

5

An informal but highly important element in every democratic constitution is the party system; and this has often been another source of weakness. That some form of organization by parties is indispensable no one with practical experience of the working of democratic politics can doubt. Somebody must undertake the duty of choosing candidates for the representative assemblies, and of supporting them; somebody must frame policies and present them to the nation; somebody must organize the proceedings in the legislative assembly. The party system is often denounced, but an alternative, other than the Totalitarian State with its denial of liberty, is never suggested. Disraeli said, 'I believe that, without party, Parliamentary Government is impossible', and it would be hard to find grounds for a contrary opinion.

That the system is liable to abuse is not to be disputed. Party organizations, at the centre and in the constituencies, may fall into weak, or incompetent, or even dishonest hands. Parties may split up into a multiplicity of groups and become ineffective. In times of grave national crisis,

when unity of action is imperative, their controversies may persist and prove disastrous. As Lecky wrote: 'Party must exist. It must be maintained as an essential condition of good government, but it must be subordinated to the public interests, and in the public interests it must be in many cases suspended.'

In this country, with its long experience of parliamentary institutions, this is well understood. Some of us, engaged in public life for a number of years, have taken part in the formation of three Coalition Governments at moments of national danger—during the last war, in 1915; during the economic crisis, in 1931; and in this war, in 1940. Had that course not been taken on each of those occasions the results might have been most grave. But in other countries, less mature, such accommodations have often been found unattainable; and in France, Germany, Italy and Spain, the failure of the politicians to form stable combinations and to maintain strong governments has undoubtedly been a main cause of the downfall of their democracies.

A party Government, again, is often tempted to seize some propitious moment, when its opponents are at a disadvantage, to advise a dissolution of Parliament, and to hold a general election. This is a serious injury to the working of free institutions. An electorate has a right to expect that the issues it is to decide shall be put before it fairly, with time for argument and full consideration. A sudden election, when millions of people are asked to vote on complicated issues without proper guidance, perhaps under the stress of some passing enthusiasm or some immediate fear, is an injustice to democracy. There have been examples of this abuse of the party system in this country in recent times—in 1900, 1918 and 1931. The Parliaments elected in those years have left no great reputation of success.

Another weakness to which democracies are notoriously

liable is the failure to unite free government with firm government, Especially in countries where representative institutions have not been long established, there is always a haunting fear that a strong ministry may prove to be too strong, and, by a *coup d'état*, destroy political liberty itself. Hence the chronic weakness of the executives in France, Spain, and most of the Central and South American Republics. There is, indeed, danger both ways. 'As too much power,' said Alexander Hamilton, 'leads to despotism, too little leads to anarchy, and both eventually to the ruin of the people.'

Democracies sometimes suffer also from the defects of their qualities, from being 'righteous over much'. They are passionately attached to principles—government by consent, persuasion rather than force, toleration of dissent, respect for law. The system works when these command a general support. But when a minority rejects them, and merely makes use of the liberty that is conceded to prepare and to consummate the overthrow of liberty itself, then the result is as we have seen. Democrats have scruples and their opponents have none; so Jacobins will always defeat Girondins, Bolsheviks defeat Mensheviks, and Fascists and Nazis put to flight the too consistent Liberals. The advocates of force first tie up the advocates of persuasion in their own principles, before sending them to the guillotine, the firing-squad or the concentration camp. They must derive much amusement from this simple-minded innocence.

6

I would invite you now to tread again over the ground that we have surveyed, but with an eye less to the past than to the future. I began by suggesting that the troubles have

been partly due to too much abstract theory. The conduct of industry and trade had been a chief subject of controversy, because the industrial revolutions, the consequences of modern science, had created problems that affected every country, every occupation, every home. Thereupon the world was invited to make a choice between the two principles—individualistic *laissez-faire* on the one hand and nationalization on the other. But why should we be limited to those alternatives? Things are not so simple as that. The dilemma, so dear to the Germans—'*entweder*, *oder* . . .'—more often than not is a false position altogether. In this case there is a whole series of possible methods, each of which may be the right one to employ in particular instances. Industry is not unified and of a single type, but consists of a great variety of separate industries needing different treatments. One, such as the Post Office, may be best run as a monopoly; its work is comparatively simple and free from financial risk; nationalization is clearly the best method there. Others, changing, speculative, involving risk and requiring much initiative, may be carried on most successfully by private enterprise. But private enterprise itself may be subject to public control in various degrees—general statutory conditions of employment, special regulation of monopolies or quasi-monopolies, and so forth. And in between State and municipal industries on the one hand and private industries on the other are a great variety of Public Utility Corporations and Co-operative organizations which belong to neither type. In certain cases, even, one principle may be applied in one section, and the other in a different section of the same industry. In coal-mining, for instance, it has become clear that the ownership of the mineral and the lay-out of the coalfields should be unified and in the control of a public authority; while the actual working of the mines and the disposal of the product may

be best managed by industrialists and business men, subject, however, to a whole code of necessary regulations. Again, with regard to urban land, experience seems to point to a policy of public or trustee ownership of the soil, with control of sites and of the character of building; combined with a large measure of private enterprise in construction. And so in other cases.

The moral that may be drawn is that democracies should be sceptical of attempts to reduce the immensely varied phenomena of politics and economics to a few sweeping general laws; and might do well to bear in mind the saying: 'He who generalizes, *generally* lies!'

I reminded you, next, that the troubles were partly caused by defects in the framework of the constitutions. Without going farther afield than our own country, it is clear that there is urgent need to relieve our Parliament from the chronic congestion of business, which has prevented it from dealing smoothly and expeditiously with the growing complexity of the issues of our time. It is too much to expect one Parliament and one Cabinet to cope, both with our domestic problems—education, health, labour conditions, agriculture, industry, land-use, environment, finance, and all the rest, and at the same time with international affairs, relations with the Dominions and India, care for the Colonial Empire, and Imperial defence. Nor is it fair to the people to submit to it every few years all these varied issues, intermingled, at a single general election. I do not know whether it will be Scottish and Welsh patriotism that will bring the question of Devolution into the forefront of our politics; but however that may be, this is clearly a matter of high importance, not indefinitely to be postponed. And among constitutional issues that still remain unsolved are the system of voting at parliamentary elections, and the composition and powers of the Second Chamber.

When we come to the working of the party system and the need for strong and stable Governments, we are brought at once to what is in the end the most important question of all: How far the individual citizens are willing to take part in political action, to give it time and thought.

The quality of anything must depend upon the material of which it is made, and the material of a democracy is its citizens. Its virtue resides there; and also its weakness; its virtue, for as Walter Lippmann says: 'Liberalism commits the destiny of civilization, not to a few finite politicians here and there, but to the whole genius of mankind'; its weakness, for a people may not be equal to the task. When backward races in Asia or Africa accept, as a stage in their development, the protection and guidance of nations more advanced, they may be very wise. And if Germans, Italians or Russians declare themselves incompetent to carry out the duties of free citizens, perhaps they know best. But the English-speaking peoples, and the French, and the smaller democracies, have made no such confession. Proclaiming our resolve to be free, we have the obligation to accept the duties that are the conditions of freedom.

The political philosophy of T. H. Green, following Hegel, assumed the existence of some metaphysical General Will, residing in the nation and expressed through the State. But that is no more than a 'fictional abstraction'. The reality is in the individual will of each member of the society, in his action or inaction, deciding right or deciding wrongly, taking a share in political life or standing aloof; in all individual wills inter-related. And there, above all else, is the source of the triumph or the tragedy of nations; for other things can be remedied and redeemed, but failure there is fatal. If the citizens of character and intelligence take no interest in the practical working of democratic institutions; refuse to be candidates for the Legislative Assembly or

Local Councils; leave to worse hands the management of the party associations—then a democracy must needs fail.

Every student of politics in the United States recognizes that this factor is there a grave source of weakness, far more important in its consequences than any defect in the structure of the constitution. When the citizens of goodwill stand aside, finding politics unsavoury and beneath them, government inevitably sinks to a low level. In America the quality of municipalities, of State legislatures and of Congress itself has unquestionably suffered, with effects that are generally admitted and deplored.

Here the position is very different; but anyone who has been engaged in the actual working of our political organizations must feel anxiety at the dearth, in normal times, of the best class of candidate for Parliament and for Local Councils; the indifference of the great body of the population to the membership and maintenance of the party organizations; and the little interest that there is in Local Government elections. That the wrong type of people are sometimes in control is no reason for the right type to abstain, but the contrary. There is another eighteenth-century couplet, often quoted as sound, from Addison's *Cato*:

> When vice prevails and impious men bear sway,
> The post of honour is a private station.

Nothing could be more false. It is then above all that men of honour should spring into the arena, chase out the vicious and install the upright.

But the State should try, more than now, to make public service easy. Parliament and local administration often involve such heavy sacrifices, of time, of money, of home life, that many are deterred. Only those are sure to come forward who are either animated by a high sense of public duty. or else by a keen sense of personal advantage. Some

are deterred also by diffidence. 'Modesty,' it has been said, 'is one of the seven deadly virtues'; it is responsible for the loss to public life of many good men and women. Only from a wide field of able and energetic candidates can a strong House of Commons be made, and only from a strong House of Commons can strong Governments be drawn.

Here is a chief need of all free countries; and above all now in these dangerous times. Feeble, divided Ministries, yielding to threats, tolerating intolerance, too slow and too late, must bring democracy down. The whole future depends upon firmness and capacity in the Executive. This does not involve the supersession of the electorate and giving to ministers dictatorial powers. There will still be popular control. But only firm leadership in the great democracies can save them; can rally the others for mutual defence, and create that new structure for Europe and for the world which alone may safeguard the independence of the small nations and the full freedom of all.

7

I make no apology for having taken as the subject of this lecture the failings of democracy; for it is right, on occasion, to make a candid survey, and to concentrate attention on our deficiencies, so that remedies may be looked for and dangers averted. But when we have done that, we will wish to take a view that is more comprehensive, and to see the whole field in its proper proportions. Then we shall find in these failings no cause for despair or reason for surrender. Is it indeed too much to assert that our present British system, with all those faults and failings, taken as a whole may yet challenge comparison with any other, present or past? Where else will you find so much stability combined

with so much freedom; so great a care for the welfare of the whole body of the nation; so many social evils redressed or reduced within so short a time?

Under democracy we have got rid almost entirely of financial corruption. If the question were put what single feature has conduced, more than any other, to the comparative success of British administration, both at home and oversea, I would suggest that the answer should be the incorruptibility of our judges and officials. It was not always so. Let it be remembered that the period when our politics were most corrupt and disreputable was not under democracy, but when the government was in the hands of a stately aristocracy, full of stars and ribbons and Latin quotations; and that it was only when the people gained control, that the fresh air of publicity, blowing through the lobbies of Parliament and the corridors of Whitehall, swept out the corruption that had infected the eighteenth century.

That the ultimate power should be vested in the masses of the population, and not in the best educated, seems irrational. But the principle of the jury also seems irrational. If it did not exist, no jurist, sitting down to plan a system of law, would dream of proposing that cases should be put to the judgement of twelve men and women chosen haphazard. But there are few lawyers of experience, judges or advocates—and I have asked many—who are not ready to testify to the soundness of juries and their value to the law. The electorate is nothing else than the jury writ large. A people, like a jury, may be misled when issues are not clearly laid before it. But when at a general election a case has been fairly put, rarely, if ever, does it appear in historical retrospect that, in the circumstances of the time, the verdict was perverse or mistaken.

It is often asked whether it is possible for a democracy to govern an Empire. Our democracy does better—it trains an

Empire to become a Commonwealth governing itself. And when in all history has any nation willingly borne such heavy sacrifices as we are bearing in these wars, not only for the sake of our own welfare, but for the common liberties of mankind?

For ourselves, then, let us not humbly and silently take our seat on the penitents' bench; but rather, in answer to the challenge, proclaim aloud from the steps of the altar the achievements of this free people—and, greatest of all, that we have ever upheld, as we are striving at this hour to uphold, the dignity of the human soul.

*Persuasion or Force**

WHEN OUR friend Ramsay Muir died five years ago, some of those who loved and admired him founded a Trust to perpetuate his memory. A volume was published in 1943 comprising his unfinished autobiography and a number of appreciative essays. It was decided, also, to establish some scholarships, to be held at Liberal Summer Schools, and an annual lectureship. I have the privilege today of delivering the first lecture. And there could be no more appropriate occasion than this meeting of the Liberal Summer School, for, as Miss Sydney Brown wrote in one of those essays, 'from 1922, when he opened the School, to 1939, when he spoke the closing words, Muir, among all the men and women of distinction and world-wide fame who have addressed the School, was the outstanding figure'.

He spent his life striving to form right ideas on the needs of human welfare, and to promote right policies for putting those ideas into practice. He became a historian, recognizing that experience is the best guide in life, and that history is at bottom the science of human experience. University teaching he took as his profession; he found there work best suited to his purpose and to his own abilities. He was a politician, for he saw how largely men's welfare depends on good government, and good government on the active participation of each citizen. And he was a Liberal—staunch, consistent, undefeatable; because he ranked high the value of liberty in all its forms. He fought for national independence, constitutional freedom, personal liberty, and, not

*The Ramsay Muir Memorial Lecture, 1946, delivered at Cambridge.

least, economic liberty—the freedom of men from the oppression of poverty and evil circumstance. For the promotion of Liberalism he saw the Liberal Party as the natural agent, and served it, with complete self-sacrifice, all his life.

Muir had the gifts of a strong intellect, high character, sound health, a fine presence, a manner that inspired confidence and goodwill. Eloquent in speech and fluent with the pen, he was active unceasingly—at his studies and at his desk, in the lecture hall, on the platform, in committees, contesting constituencies, for a short time as Member of Parliament. In every way open to him he devoted all his talents to persuading people to endorse his ideas and to support the movements he cared about so deeply. If indeed one were to look among our contemporaries for a figure that should personify the very spirit of persuasion, one could not do better than choose Ramsay Muir. And the present crisis in our civilization—its wars, its revolutions, its clashes between nations, classes, parties, creeds—reflects on the surface a struggle deep down between reason, goodwill, conciliation, on the one side, and a ready resort to force on the other. That is why I take as the subject for this first Ramsay Muir Lecture the choice between persuasion and force.

1

Most animals fight among themselves and with members of other species from time to time, and *Homo*, not yet presumptuously arrogating to himself the title of *sapiens*, no doubt did the same. There were hand-to-hand combats, family feuds, tribal raids. When nations were evolved, neighbouring peoples fought with one another. Kings be-

came great by conquests abroad, and were humbled again by defeat.

Pride, passion, combativeness are elements in human nature no doubt; and some consider that it is they, with certain other unamiable qualities, that actually constitute human nature. But there they must be wrong; for reason, clearly, is as integral a part of the human make-up, is just as 'natural' as anything else. So are love, sympathy, the capacity to co-operate. If man is by nature a fighting, egoistic animal, he is also a rational and social animal. So when he began to realize his own capacity for sapience, it gradually led him to see that the more he developed the rational and social side of his nature, and the stricter control he kept over his combative instincts, the better it would be.

Fraternity seems to have started badly, however, according to Genesis, since the first brothers were also the first men to murder and be murdered. Later on things went better. Slowly, at the dawn of man's history, the restraints developed of religion, morals, conscience, law. Thereby civilization became possible. But the primeval instincts kept their hold. Right down to the eighteenth century of Christianity, single combat continued as an accepted means of settling private quarrels, and the duel as an institution was held to be fast-rooted in human nature. Armed raids to kidnap peaceful villagers in Africa in order to transport them as slaves to America was still a legitimate commercial activity. And hardly anyone doubted that, because there always had been wars, therefore there always would be, and that war, like the duel and enslavement, was human nature.

Some of those practices, however, were becoming discredited. The more progressive countries came to prohibit duelling by law, as the only means of getting rid of it. Slave-raiding, and then slavery itself, were also suppressed;

in spite of the specious plea that they were the only way of bringing multitudes of negroes out of the darkness of pagan Africa under the influence and into the light of western Christianity. Some voices were even heard timidly suggesting that war itself need neither be admired for its benefits nor accepted as inevitable.

At the same time, in the latter part of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth, came the conflict between science and the ancient theologies, at first wrongly supposed to be a conflict between science and religion itself. The accepted basis for morality being undermined, an intellectual void was left. All kinds of new doctrines rushed in. Hegel, Fichte and Treitschke founded schools of philosophy which idealized the nation and exalted the State, fostering totalitarianism as a policy, with militarism as its agent. Karl Marx, setting up materialism as the successor to religion, tried to prove the economic factor to be the essence of civilization and of history, and a conflict between social classes to be inevitable: he preached a crusade for proletarian revolutions and armed dictatorships. Sorel in France purported to vindicate violence as a rational expedient.

The peak was reached in the perverse but brilliant writings of Nietzsche, whose meteoric genius ended in the blackness of insanity. 'This world is the will to power,' wrote Nietzsche, 'and nothing else.' Again: 'Man shall be trained for war, and woman for the recreation of the warrior: all else is folly.' And yet again: 'Several warlike centuries, which have not had their like in past history, may now follow one another—in short, we have entered upon *the classical age of war*, war at the same time scientific and popular, on the grandest scale (as regards means, talents and discipline), to which all coming millenniums will look back with envy and awe as a work of perfection.'

Mussolini declared that his Fascism was based largely on

the ideas of Sorel, but Hitler's favourite philosopher, as we can well understand, was Nietzsche.

It happened that at that moment, in the middle of the nineteenth century, out of science itself there came an unforeseen reinforcement to the non-moral forces that sought to justify war. Darwin and his followers established that evolution was a process fundamental in biology, with a struggle for existence, resulting in the survival of those best fitted to survive, among its methods. Straightway it was assumed, not only that the same principle must be universal, but the same methods as well. Some said that, in economics, unlimited competition, an unqualified *laissez-faire*, was 'natural'; therefore divinely ordained, and consequently to be piously accepted as best. In world affairs also it was held that a struggle for existence between nations, with success in war as the test of fitness, was equally natural and divine. But the competitions among employers and among workmen and between the two classes, and also wars between nations, did not bear the least resemblance to the competition for living-room, or for food and mates, between individual plants or animals. Nevertheless, in the intellectual confusion of the times, the fallacy, went undetected. Its pseudo-scientific air of authority gave it much influence. The fallacy was exposed by Thomas Huxley, in his last and most famous lecture, on *Evolution and Ethics*, and little is heard of it nowadays; but in its day it brought in a fresh current from the rational side itself to swell the tide of irrationalism that was rapidly mounting.

And all the while, an inheritance from the earliest ages, there was ever the glamour shed around human combat by poets, novelists, dramatists, romantics of every sort, with their praise of 'the merry days of battle'. Lord John Russell, received as a young man by Napoleon at Elba, records that Napoleon said to him, '*La guerre est un grand jeu, une belle*

occupation.' Lockhart, writing of a visit paid by Sir Walter Scott in the following year to the allied armies after Waterloo, said that Scott felt 'a pulse of physical rapture for the "circumstance of war".'

So we, in these present times, find how we have been led down by perverted philosophy, misapplied science and mere romance, step by step to the horrors and miseries through which our generations have been passing. There has been little of the 'merry days of battle', little occasion for 'rapture', little of the 'great game' and 'fine occupation', about the blood and mud of the Flanders trenches; towns blown to pieces from the air; great battleships sunk in a moment, submarines slowly drowning, merchant ships going down with all hands: or in the slave labour, the concentration camps, or the gas-chambers of the Nazis; or in our own atomic bombs. Nineveh was spared, 'that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle'. But Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not spared.

2

Force now is so discredited, it has become so hateful to all men of intelligence and goodwill, that the question arises whether, being wrong, it can ever be right to employ it. So we have the great debate between the pacifist and the ordinary man. For common sense sees that, if peace is a good of the first order, so is justice and so is liberty. And if in fact someone seeks by violence to commit flagrant injustice, or to stifle liberty at its birth or kill it later, is no one to resist him?

The same age that has produced Hitler and Mussolini also produced that astonishing phenomenon, the highly

organized gangsters of Chicago and New York. Shall there be no armies to cope with the one set of criminals, or police with the other? France still honours year by year the victors of the Bastille; Greece, the founders of her independence; Italy, the name of Garibaldi; Hungary, Kossuth; South America, Bolivar; China, Sun-yat-sen; Russia, the rebels against Tsarism. So Britain erects a statute in Westminster to Oliver Cromwell, and another nearby to George Washington. Have we all been wrong? All those men used violence as a just counter against violence that was unjust.

It has been said: 'Force without justice and justice without force—terrible misfortunes.' The Nazis and Fascists had force without justice, and the results are plain for all to see. The League of Nations had justice without force: we recognize now that that too was a disaster. So the common sense of mankind, fully understanding the case put by the pacifist, is obliged to reject it. Setting up now a new organization of the nations who condemn war in principle and seek to prevent it in practice, it has decided to equip it with armed power.

Then another question arises: if we are right to use force to stop and defeat violence, would we also be right to use force to prevent the preparation of violent action? For example, if men are being openly enlisted in a private army with the purpose of overthrowing a democratic government and substituting a dictatorship, ought that to be stopped by the police or, if need be, the military? Clearly the answer will be: Yes. But take now a more difficult case. Suppose that men are not being enlisted, but that a political campaign is being carried on, parties formed, speeches delivered, elections contested, with precisely the same ultimate purpose—what then?

The Fascists and Nazis said to the democrats all over Europe, 'You believe in Liberal principles; we do not. You believe in persuasion, not force, in free speech, free elec-

tions, majority rule; we despise all those things. But since you believe in them, you must not repudiate them. You applaud the declaration, "I disagree with everything you say, but I will fight to the death to defend your right to say it": *you* disagree with what *we* say, but you must not attack, you must defend *our* right to say it. While you are in power, you are bound in honour and conscience to act upon your own principles. When we come into power we will act on ours.' So the Liberals gave them scope; and one day they woke up to find a dictatorship established, free elections abolished, all counter-propaganda suppressed, a tyranny clamped upon the nation; and next day that they themselves were being brought for trial before mock courts of justice, or more likely sent to concentration camps, and killed there.

But the definition of liberty has always been, not simply that men should be free to do what they will, but that they should be free to do that, provided they do not interfere with the equal freedom of others. That proviso is as integral a part of the creed as the rest. Without it the murderer and the thief, the dictator and the aggressor, would be given free rein, and instead of the liberty we sought we should have either anarchy or tyranny, or an alternation of first one and then the other.

John Stuart Mill, in the *Essay on Liberty*, spoke of 'the right inherent in society to ward off crimes against itself by antecedent precautions'. Here, indeed, we must be very careful, for what, in one age or by some people, might be regarded as a crime aimed at the destruction of a society, might be recognized in another age, or by other people, to be a legitimate movement for its reformation. So it seems the general principle should be that we should tolerate everything—except intolerance; that Liberty should suppress nothing—except attempts at its own suppression.

There is a further question that constantly presents itself: granted that the use of force is legitimate in order to overthrow tyranny or to end anarchy, when should it stop? The temptation is great, after force has been used for a proper purpose, to continue it beyond the need. Apart from well-established democracies, history gives instances when the temptation has been resisted, but they are not very many. Asoka in India, Augustus and the Antonines in Rome, Washington in more recent times, and in our own day Mustapha Kemal Atatürk are examples that come to mind. The classic instance on the other side is, of course, Napoleon. His career may in general be justified in its first phases, but not after the turning point of 1802. Napoleon was great; but not great enough to know when to subordinate his own greatness to freedom. For us in these years it is a practical question of great moment; which course will be taken by Stalin and his associates?

It has been said that those who have made revolutions will not suffer other revolutions to be made after them. To surrender one's own power, or even to diminish it, is difficult and may be dangerous. We remember the Chinese proverb: 'He who rides on the tiger can never dismount.' Nearly thirty years after the revolution in Russia, although certainly the importance of public opinion is recognized and there is plenty of persuasion, it is only allowed on one side. In time of peace, Government control of the Press and the radio, censorship of information, official news agencies—the whole apparatus of mental and spiritual isolation—is always a sign, not of the strength of any régime, but of moral weakness. A people, not freely knowing whatever there is to be known, is in a state of continual apprehension. Like a man with a bandage over his eyes, he can never tell what is coming to him; he starts at a touch; blinded, he is inclined to strike out blindly. It is a terrible disability—and

imposed, not by foreign conquerors, but by a nation's own leaders. For them it may indeed be a great convenience, for it is easier to keep a country united by fear than by hope; and if the people are constantly kept apprehensive of some external attack, the régime is more likely to be supported indefinitely, whether good or bad, than if the bond were no more than the hope of internal progress and prosperity.

But the system is dangerous to the last degree. If you set out to persuade your people that they are surrounded by enemies, you are likely to conduct your policy in such a way that you will convert neighbours, only anxious to be friends, into the enemies against whom, you have said, provision is essential. Then, when some crisis occurs, the lines are set for disagreement, conflict, war. Seldom, indeed does a people wish for war; and rarely will it engage in war, if it is allowed any say at all, unless it believes that its cause is just. But if it is not permitted to know the whole of the facts, how can it tell whether it is just or not? Of all the crimes that rulers may commit, of all the injuries governments may inflict upon their own peoples and upon the world, the worst is the withholding of facts, the perversion of knowledge at its source. 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do': but can there be forgiveness for those through whose own deliberate act it is that the people do not—cannot—know?

3

The strength and stability of the political systems of the English-speaking nations, and of the small States in western Europe—Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland—are based on the fact that their peoples do know, or at all events have unrestricted access to truth

if they wish for it. As Victor Hugo has said, '*Rien n'est stupide comme vaincre; la vraie gloire est convaincre.*' And in the end, when it comes to the test, as two mighty wars have shown, it is the democracies who, through establishing conviction, are able to achieve conquest as well.

The English-speaking peoples—under the influence fundamentally of the Christian ethic, trained also by long practice in the science and art of self-government, and supplied from all quarters with factual information—did not allow themselves to be submerged, or even to be appreciably affected, by the tide of irrationalism and reaction that swept over central Europe. Here the movement led by Sir Oswald Mosley touched hardly one in a hundred of the electorate. Nor did Communism, also to a large extent irrational and reactionary, command any larger support. If it had been otherwise, if Great Britain and the Dominions and the United States as well, had allowed themselves to be converted to the Fascist and Nazi creed, or if they had thrown themselves into confusion by Communist revolutions, then the course of events would have been very different, and at this moment the state of the world would be dark indeed.

And if anyone were to allege that great political movements can never be carried to success by persuasion alone, the English-speaking peoples can offer proofs to the contrary. The passage of our own Great Reform Bill of 1832 was a classic instance. It is true that, before the final stage, the country had been brought into a somewhat explosive state by the stubborn resistance of the Tory Party. The fact remains that the convinced support of the Whig half of the aristocracy and of most of the middle class carried the Bill into law without revolution. So it has been with the long series of subsequent measures that, stage by stage, have brought about universal suffrage, and the supremacy, in the State, of the representative assembly. In the present

century we are witnesses also of an evolution of our social system which has been completely transforming it, without the smallest sign of the class war which Karl Marx, a hundred years ago, postulated as inevitable.

In another sphere, we find a complete transfer of power within their own territories from the United Kingdom to the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, brought about entirely by friendly agreement and co-operation. Once the principle had been decided by the outcome of the American War of Independence, the rest followed peacefully. It was only by a narrow margin that the Conservative Party succeeded in blocking, until it was too late, Gladstone's policy of Irish self-government; otherwise it would have been the same in Ireland. And in India the use of force to prevent a transfer of power has been renounced altogether.

Nor does the English-speaking world offer the only examples. Sweden, Norway and Denmark have effected, within the last hundred years, fundamental changes in their constitutions, their social systems and their relations with one another, entirely by peaceful methods. Other instances might be quoted.

4

Such tendencies, wherever and whenever they could be found, rejoiced the heart of Ramsay Muir. His last book, written in the spring of 1941, was a survey of the war, then in its second year, and the prospects of the future. It was written in the form of a series of letters, with the title *A Better Britain in a Better World.** He died when he had reached the final letter and almost completed it. In it

*Published by King & Staples.

he wrote that there were three things about the war which filled him with hope and confidence for the future. The first was that it had so fully revealed the true character of the British Empire—not military domination, but a fellowship of peoples, infinitely diverse, held together by a spontaneous loyalty, enjoying, or seeking, liberty. The second was a revelation of the character of the British people themselves; their courage, their staunchness, their freedom from rancour, their unflagging humour. 'The third,' he wrote, 'and the greatest result of the war is that we have all revised our values. We have learnt to estimate the value of material things, property, wealth, comfort, even life itself as less than the spiritual things, freedom, justice and peace of mind. We are learning to put less weight upon class distinctions, and to esteem the great qualities of valour, steadfastness, kindliness and helpfulness, wherever they . . .' 'Wherever they . . .' He stopped. He laid down his pen—not to be taken up again.

But the qualities he rightly assigned to his people—valour, steadfastness, kindliness, helpfulness—were they not his qualities? In his own last words we may write his epitaph.

*Is the Criminal to Blame— or Society?**

1

IN ANCIENT or medieval times, dealing with a criminal was a simple matter. You caught him when you could, and then you punished him—with prison or pillory, flogging or branding, torture or hanging. The subject was then disposed of. In a more enlightened age this will not do. We are conscious that we belong to a social organization, which has duties to its members—to all of them; and which must recognize that it is faced by problems and do its best to solve them. The existence of crime presents a problem and points to a duty. And when we come to closer quarters we find that the matter is by no means simple.

We ask why it is that the criminal commits his crime. Seeking the answer we soon find that psychology comes in, and heredity and environment. We may discover in a particular case that the man had never had a decent home, or a helping hand, was living precariously, perhaps without regular employment for years. We are bound to admit that, never having had a fair chance, it could hardly be expected that he would turn out other than he did. A former Prison Commissioner for Scotland gave evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons a few years ago; in the course of it he said, 'Taking some of the young prisoners I have had talks with, they persistently defend their atti-

*The Clarke Hall Lecture, 1938. Delivered in the Hall of Gray's Inn, London.

tude. . . . They tell you it is no use talking to them about reform. They say: "I didn't make myself; I didn't ask to be brought into the world." . . . They are determinists of a kind. A man says: "Well, I can't help it; that's the way I'm made. I couldn't help doing it".'

A humane and rational age asks whether, after all, the criminal may not have a genuine grievance. We have an uneasy feeling that his complaint against society may perhaps be at least as well-founded as society's complaint against him. We begin to wonder whether our whole system of penal law has any real moral justification. That is the question to which I would invite your attention this afternoon.

2

We know that every person—his body, mind, character—is the outcome of prior causes. There are pre-natal causes and post-natal causes. All his ancestry contributes to his qualities. Embryology has revealed to us the sets of genes which make up the two primordial cells, from whose union each body evolves. Different individuals originate with different sets of genes. I quote a biologist of accepted authority: 'The way a given individual develops,' he says, 'what he becomes, what characteristics he gets, what peculiarities he shows, depend, other things being equal, on what sets of those substances he starts with. . . . We know that such matters as dullness, stupidity, and their opposites, various diversities of temperament, and the like, depend on the genes.'*

There are also the post-natal causes. The human being

*Prof H. S. Jennings. *The Biological Basis of Human Nature*, pp. 1, 157. (Faber & Faber, Ltd.)

coming into the world with his inherited endowment, whatever it may be, finds himself acted upon by his environment. The climate, the nation mould him. The home, the school, the laws, economic conditions, public opinion—all contribute to form him. The personality, created by the past, is shaped by the present. These influences, says the authority I have already quoted, 'may change the behaviour that would without them result from the genes present in the individual. In some of these matters the effects of genes and environment are inextricably intermingled. Behaviour is bound to be relative to environment, it cannot be dealt with as dependent on genes alone.'*

So much is clear, and will not give rise to dispute. Into the making of a man both heredity and environment undoubtedly enter. But is this all? Is an individual the passive product of external causes? If so, there would be no such thing as personal responsibility. The young men in the Scottish prisons would have been right to say that, as they had not made themselves, they could not have helped doing what they did. In that case our penal law would indeed have no moral basis; punishment would merely be cruelty, and our system of justice fundamentally unjust.

We are brought at once face to face with the problem of freewill. As soon as that subject is mentioned most people are inclined to say, almost automatically, 'Ah, there you have an insoluble mystery. No philosophy has ever been able to explain it, and further discussion is a waste of time. Let us pass on to something else.' But you cannot evade it if you are trying to deal with the questions that lie at the root of criminology. If you agree that the criminal is nothing more than the product of external causes you cannot avoid the conclusion that he is not blameworthy for his acts; he is what he must be, and your laws, if they are to be humane,

*Ibid p. 229.

must shape themselves accordingly. If, on the other hand, you hold that there is such a thing as personal moral responsibility, you will be justified in taking another course. We must decide one way or the other. We cannot be like the man who said, 'I will look my difficulties firmly in the face and pass on.'

[*The argument supporting the reality of freewill was outlined. It has been elaborated in one of the preceding Addresses in this volume* (*see pp.* 33-37), *and the passage is omitted here.*]

When, therefore, the young criminal pleads that he is merely the product of circumstances, that he has not been able, and will not be able, to do other than he is doing, and that it is both useless and unjust to subject him to punishment, there is an answer. The answer is simply that what he says is not true. Prior causes have given him the character which has yielded to the temptation to commit crimes; but they have also given him a conscious will, which, by an effort, might have enabled him to shape his actions differently, and to resist the temptation. Other people, with a similar inheritance and environment, and similar temptations, have not become criminals. Many who have, do in fact liberate themselves from their past and change their way of life.

3

There is a second answer. One of the factors in deciding a man's choice is the probable consequence of his action. Imagine a man of criminal type contemplating a burglary. If he can be quite sure that he will not be caught and sent to prison, we may suppose that he will certainly do it; if there is a risk, he will hesitate, and may commit the burg-

lary or not; if there is a certainty that he *will* be caught and punished, he will not commit it. There is no room to doubt that, were we to abolish all the police forces, and if no one were ever prosecuted or sentenced for an offence, the number of persons who would choose to commit crimes would be far greater than it is now. It is false to say, therefore, that whether a man is to commit a crime or not is predetermined by his heredity and his environment, and that the existence or non-existence of a penal law does not enter into the matter. The penal law is itself one of the elements that help to determine the choice.

We reach the conclusion that three factors combine to cause criminal actions, as indeed any actions of any kind. The first is the physical nature of the person who acts; this is primarily the product of heredity, but is affected by environment and by the habits that he has himself formed. The second is the complex of influences continuously brought to bear upon him by society, in infancy, childhood, youth and adult life. The third is his own power of choice: in a particular case he may not exert himself, and may passively, as it were, continue on the line traced by his past; but on the other hand he may, by an effort, apply his will and exercise his judgement and with full consciousness choose his course.

When fuller knowledge, based on patient research, establishes a new fact we are often tempted to regard it, because it is novel, as the one fact that really matters. The important is stretched to be all-important. Modern psychology discovers the sub-conscious, and a school arises which enthrones and reverences the sub-conscious. What it commands is not to be gainsaid. Biology traces the evolution of man, and the sub-conscious is explained as an inheritance, ultimately from simian ancestry. If, therefore, from time to time we behave like apes, what else can you expect, and why should

you disapprove of us? Sociology shows how largely conduct is influenced by surrounding conditions; we know, for instance, that if we develop education, crime will diminish; when trade declines crime increases. Because it is plain that social environment has a great deal to do with individual action, we jump to the conclusion that it has everything to do with it. Yet we may observe that some criminals come from the comfortable classes, from an environment by no means unfavourable. A Crippen or a Landry cunningly murders a series of women; a kidnapper holds a baby for ransom, and when it is not paid, strangles him; or some solicitor embezzles over a period of years the fortunes of trusting clients: I do not see why we should say, 'Poor fellow, he is the victm of an imperfect social system, or perhaps of a mis-shapen gene in one or other of his protocells; or it may be his sub-conscious was too much for him; he is more sinned against than sinning; to impose a penalty would be a survival of barbarism.' The saying, '*Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*' is often accepted as an obvious truth. I suggest that it is nothing of the kind, but on the contrary a very dangerous principle, to be applied with much caution. After all, the victim of a crime is also entitled to some sympathy; perhaps even to greater sympathy. There is another French saying, with a good deal of force in it—'*qui sauve le vautour est responsable de sa griffe.*'

So my answer to the question, 'Is the criminal to blame—or Society?' would be—Sometimes the one and sometimes the other, but usually both.

4

If this answer is accepted, to what course of action should it point? It would not be worth while to pose the problem

and to seek a solution merely for the sake of the dialectical exercise, as though we were members of a debating society trying to sharpen our wits. Crime exists; eighty thousand persons are tried for indictable offences in Great Britain every year; there are twelve thousand men and women confined in our prisons today, as well as ten thousand boys and girls in the Approved Schools. What ought we to do about it?

Since there are those three causal factors—heredity, environment and individual choice—our remedial measures must have regard to each of the three. Heredity is the province of eugenics. We have to consider what steps are possible—so far as any are possible—to encourage breeding from good types rather than from bad types. The question arises here of the control of the feeble-minded. It is known that a substantial number of offences are committed by people who are more or less mentally defective. But these are specialized subjects, which require separate and expert examination. It is not for me to enter into them here.

Environment raises questions of a more general character, and is more amenable to social action. It is not less important than heredity. For after all, a man's future is not pre-destined from birth; he is not born a saint or born a gangster. There is pre-disposition, true; but not pre-destination. Crime, like alcoholism, or phthisis, or many other things, is not an inescapable inheritance; but a tendency to it may be inherited; a man's family history may be such that it would be well for him to be on the watch. Society, however, cannot as a rule go into these matters in the individual cases. It has to frame its system so that all alike are encouraged to do right and discouraged from doing wrong. The potential criminal would be influenced with the rest.

Education is society's best instrument. Other things being

equal, a well-educated nation will be at a higher level of civilization than an uneducated nation and will have a lower percentage of crime. I use the term 'well-educated' in its widest sense, as including moral and physical training, and the qualities of character—temperance and the rest—that various social movements outside the schools seek to develop. The effects of education are cumulative generation after generation—not through physical inheritance, the biologists tell us, but through personal contact and example. Other things equal again, a youth whose parents and grandparents have been well-educated, in that broad sense, will have a better prospect of avoiding bad ways than one who comes of a family with different traditions. Dr Inge's observation has much force: 'The proper time to influence the character of a child is about a hundred years before he is born.' Certainly the institutions and customs which we of the present generation have inherited from our ancestors influence us profoundly; and what we do, or leave undone, today must powerfully affect the people of a century hence. The more, therefore, we can extend and perfect the national system of education the more we shall ensure an environment that will be unfavourable to the future growth of a criminal class.

Housing conditions are another part of social environment which is important in this connection. Slums breed a degraded population, and keep it degraded. You will not find a Bill Sikes or a Fagin in a garden-city—at least I do not imagine that you will. Everyone looks for support for his conduct from the people immediately around him; it may be moral support, or it may be immoral support. In Dickens' time, and long after, there were pockets of public opinion which approved and encouraged crime; in dark and dirty corners the anti-social germs lodged and multiplied. The best disinfectant is fresh air. Well-planned, wholesome

towns and cities will be less likely to foster centres of crime, as of disease.

The economic factor counts for even more. Poverty is, without question, the chief cause of crime. Anatole France said: 'Our law in majestic equality forbids the rich no less than the poor to steal bread and to beg in the street.' But it is not on account of the law, so nobly impartial, that they do not do so. More than from any other one cause, people become criminals because they are urged by need and yield to temptation. Visiting the local prisons, I was often impressed by the large proportion of the men who are obviously of a weedy and weakly type, and apparently of poor intelligence. Unqualified for any artisan's trade and not strong enough for unskilled labour, our economic system is not friendly to them. They try to live by their wits, but they usually have none. These are the men who wander in and out the workhouses and the gaols. In the convict prisons that type is seldom found. This difficult problem may find at least a partial solution through better nutrition for the children of the present and future generations, greater facilities for technical training, and a helpful watchfulness by the After-Care Committees of the schools.

For the rest, whatever will tend to improve and stabilize the country's trade and industry will help also to lessen crime. Every student of social conditions knows that the crime curve goes up when the prosperity curve goes down, and goes down when the other goes up. Regular work and good wages is the best prophylactic against crime.

5

But even if the social system were perfected, even if everyone in the land were well-educated, well-housed, well-

paid, regularly employed—would crime disappear altogether? We can hardly believe it. That offenders would be reduced to a fraction of their present number might be confidently expected; that they would cease to exist would be too much to hope. There would be still crimes of passion, sexual perversions, temptations to fraud. In any event our present social system is far from that stage of perfection. In the conditions that we now have, criminals do in fact appear. Although society may have to admit that the existence of many, or even most, of them is due, partly at least, to its own fault, there they are; and they must be dealt with, in one way or in another. Because our eyes turn eagerly to a better future, we cannot ignore the plain facts that are now about us.

The lesson that society should have learnt very early—but it has proved to be one of the latest—is that individuals differ, and that we ought not to treat them all alike, under a standard tariff of punishments apportioned merely to the character of the crime. It has taken a long time to get away from that crude and cruel rule. We realize now that we must study the offender first before deciding how to deal with him. Not every patient needs a dose from the same bottle.

It has long been recognized, indeed, that an offender who is insane presents a special case. Where the boundary line lies between responsibility and irresponsibility is a difficult matter, which has given rise to much discussion, and has needed the careful framing of legal definitions. On which side of the line a particular case falls is a question which has often to be put to the jury. Sometimes the Home Secretary has to decide it, and he seeks the advice of specialists. But there are also degrees of irresponsibility short of insanity. A man's mind may be slightly abnormal; or he may have suffered from a temporary aberration. The Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency has come into being

largely in order to study such cases. The Institute's Clinic, The Tavistock Clinic, and others, have been established to cure them. Considerable success has already attended this work. You will remember that in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* the people of that country sent to prison anyone who had allowed himself to become ill, having thereby been guilty of a serious offence against the community; but anyone who committed a crime—since he could only have done it through being in bad mental health—was at once sent to a hospital. We cannot go so far as that, but some movement in that direction is called for.

Until quite recent years the Courts sent wrong-doers wholesale to prisons and reformatories. Only after they got there was any attempt made to study their characters, to find out the facts behind the offence, and to consider what kind of action would really be best for them. This was made the duty of the prison chaplains, of the Visitors and of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies. The rule was treatment first, diagnosis afterwards. When we established the Juvenile Courts and passed the Probation Act thirty years ago, we began a new system—diagnosis first, treatment after—which seems on the whole more sensible. Remand for inquiry has become the rule in a large class of cases. Observation by a Probation Officer before a final decision is reached; a careful adaptation of the sentence to the character of the offender—these are the methods which the Courts are expected to follow. Foremost among the pioneers was Sir William Clarke Hall, in whose memory this Fellowship was founded. His principles and practice are our guide.

6

It must be admitted, however, that cases occur where

these methods do not succeed. Some offenders prove intractable, do what we will. In the last resort it is they themselves, and not we, who must decide whether they will be law-abiding or not. If they finally decide not to be, society must have some recourse for safeguarding the life and property and peace of orderly citizens. In the world as we have it unilateral disarmament unfortunately is not the path of safety. There must be a deterrent and there must be a penalty; and it is difficult to see what can be devised other than some form of prison system.

The sociologist may visit one of our prisons and may say, 'Here is an institution the very existence of which proves its own failure. The fact that all these hundreds of men are gathered here shows conclusively that prison after all does not deter.' But that is a hasty conclusion. It has failed with those who are here, but it may have succeeded with many who are not. Those who have in fact been deterred by fear of a sentence of imprisonment are, for that very reason, outside and unknown. Hardly anyone would doubt, as I have already reminded you, that if the law imposed no penalties, if all prisons were abolished and no other punishment substituted, the number of crimes committed would immediately increase. The measure of that hypothetical increase is the measure of the effectiveness of the present system.

An important point in this connection is the standard of efficiency attained by the police. If every offence were certain of detection it would not be worth while for anyone to commit offences. There would be nothing to gain and much to lose. The nearer we can approach to that perfection the less need there will be for prisons.

But as matters stand, clearly we cannot dispense with them. The important thing is to make sure that, while deterring those who keep outside, they do not deteriorate

those who are brought within. Looking at the past, we now realize how largely the prison system used to make things worse rather than better. It has been said that 'English prisons were engaged in the manufacture of hardened villains out of reclaimable criminals.' Cold severity, not infrequent floggings, no alleviations of strict confinement, did not give us fewer criminals but gave us worse ones. Leaving prison, even less qualified for normal life than when they had entered it, the men came back to gaol in thousands, in spite of all the severity. Recidivism seemed to be an insoluble problem.

All that is becoming a thing of the past. We are far from believing that every desirable reform has already been effected; but at all events many great and beneficial changes have been made, under the guidance of enlightened Boards of Prison Commissioners, and with the cordial approval of public opinion and of Parliament. Others are at hand. We look forward hopefully to the Penal Reform Bill, about to be introduced by the present Home Secretary. I am glad to note, also, that the Departmental Committee on Corporal Punishment, consisting of ten able and impartial men and women, has recommended, after hearing much evidence and long and painstaking inquiry—unanimously—that judicial sentences of birching and flogging, whether for boys or for men, do not serve the purpose in view, and should be abolished for all offences. That form of penalty has been abolished in every civilized country in the world, except in the British Empire and in a few among the United States of America, and I trust it will not be long before it is abolished here also.*

Gradually the spirit of anger and resentment has been eliminated from our penal system. The surgeon who cuts open his patient to remove a diseased organ, or a Health

*It has been abolished by the Criminal Justice Act, 1948.

Authority who detains a sufferer from infectious fever in an isolation hospital, is not animated by any feeling of vindictiveness. A fully civilized society will deal in something of the same spirit, in spite of the fact that they are at fault, with those who have to be segregated in prisons for its protection. Has any of us the right to deny all sympathy? Which among us is without fault? Confucius said, 'When you see a good man, think of emulating him; when you see a bad man, examine your own heart.'

Heredity, environment, individual conduct—it is clear that the work to be done, day by day and year by year, in these three relations is vast and varied. It demands intelligent direction by the State and considerable financial provision; it demands also the efficient and devoted service of vast numbers of men and women—salaried officers or voluntary workers. Complexity involves specialization. There must necessarily be an elaborate division of labour. Each person who takes part may see at times only his own section. Yet each will be aware that he is sharing in a great piece of social organization, which serves a purpose that is beneficent, and is indispensable to an enlightened community.

*On the Fiftieth Anniversary of Gladstone's Death**

FIFTY YEARS after, the greatest personality is but a name. The known man recedes into history. Only the oldest among us can remember the sense of national loss when we heard that Mr Gladstone was dead. In Westminster Hall a tablet marks the spot where his coffin lay, while many tens of thousands of the citizens slowly filed past to pay their tribute. A statue stands in the Abbey near the grave where we saw him lowered, in the presence of the leaders of the nation. I remember vividly the little bent figure of his wife, Catharine, his life-long devoted and loving companion, shrouded in black from head to foot; and the Prince of Wales, who had been chief of the pall-bearers, after the ceremony, bowing to kiss her hand. For two generations Gladstone's name had been a household word. Millions of people had followed his leadership and sustained his policies with a devotion such as no other man inspired.

William Ewart Gladstone was born in Liverpool in 1809, of a Scottish family settled there. His father, Sir John Gladstone, was a leading merchant of the city. After a brilliant career at Oxford, the young Gladstone entered the House of Commons in the first Parliament after the Great Reform Bill of 1832. At the outset a member of the Tory Party, his views gradually changed. In the split over the repeal of the Corn Laws he was with Peel; after the years of political confusion that followed he ranked himself with the Liberals. Already in the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade

*Broadcast by the BBC, May 19th, 1948.

in 1843, he became Chancellor of the Exchequer in various administrations. He was Prime Minister in the Liberal Government of 1868 to 1874; again from 1880 to 1885; a third time in 1886; and returned to the Premiership yet once more in 1892 to 1894.

A man of powerful mind, widely read in the classics, history and general literature, his principal interest, apart from public affairs, lay in matters of religious faith and practice. He was a devoted member of the Church of England; untouched by the new scientific tendencies of his day, his theological beliefs remained unaffected. A strong constitution and great endurance supported an industry and power of concentration that were phenomenal. James Bryce said of him that 'no pressure of work made him fussy, nor could anyone remember to have seen him in a hurry'. His private character was without blemish, his family life happy and genial. With a temperament active, eager, often vehement, he was keen in conversation, impressive in debate, excelling as an orator at great assemblies of the people. He was ever more intent on forwarding his own ideas than on denouncing those of other people. Serene under attack, he did not stoop to reprisal. The stormy seas of controversy—far more boisterous in those days than in ours—he faced without dismay, upheld and carried forward on the tides of democracy.

I heard Mr Gladstone speak twice—the first time delivering a lecture at Oxford; the second in the House of Commons during his last premiership. I had the privilege also of meeting him at a private dinner-party. He was not tall; but broad-shouldered, with a massive head, strongly marked features, flashing eyes, and a countenance of power and dignity. His voice was deep, harmonious and pleasing. His style of oratory, over-elaborate, no doubt, by our standards, was nevertheless easy to follow, the sentences

fluent and well-shaped. His speeches were seldom lightened by humour; but often made incisive by epigrammatic phrase, and impressive by sincerity of feeling and fervour of eloquence. I shall never forget, after his lecture delivered in the Hall of the Union Society at Oxford, the final words of his reply to the vote of thanks; spoken in his deep tones, with a slight northern accent, and with an emotion evoked by long memories of youth and middle life, recalled now in late old age—'And as for Oxford,' he said, 'I love her; I love her from the bottom of my heart.'

He seemed of a different calibre from any statesman of that day, or since—Edward Grey perhaps the nearest, but lacking the gifts of oratory. Of all the men, illustrious in our history, he resembled, I think, most of all the elder Pitt, Lord Chatham. It might be said of Gladstone—or indeed of Grey—as Emerson said of Chatham, that 'those who listened felt that there was something finer in the man than anything which he said'.

Entering Parliament four years before the reign of Queen Victoria began, he quitted it only five years before it ended. In those sixty-two years, what changes! At the beginning, the constitution of the country had been essentially aristocratic; at the end all classes had been enfranchised, the ballot had replaced open voting, the pocket-boroughs had been abolished, and the House—except as regards women suffrage—made fully representative. With the growth of democracy, and largely as a consequence, the monarchy, which had been discredited and unpopular in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, at its close was more firmly established in the confidence and affection of the people than at any previous time. Education had become universal. Trade unions, no longer outlawed, were active in lifting the working-classes out of their former miseries. Throughout the whole period, with the exception of the

short and distant campaign of the Crimea, the country was at peace. The population of Great Britain had doubled; industry and commerce had vastly expanded; taxation been lightened; the cost of living lowered; and the worst social evils of the beginning had been in great part remedied at the end. Religious equality before the law had been established. Disaffection in the great colonies had ceased after the grant of full self-government. All these reforms, which in other countries had been accomplished, if at all, at the cost of tumult or revolution, had been brought about here by the peaceful processes of intelligent democracy; by discussion and persuasion; through the machinery of parliamentary and local institutions, free and powerful.

In all those great progressive movements Gladstone took an active part. Viewing them as a whole, one can see no single man who had had a larger share. At that time, in politics and in economics, in this country and elsewhere, opinion was predominantly against State action carried beyond the necessary minimum. But Gladstone had not identified himself with the strict theory of *laissez-faire*. His great education Act of 1870 was proof to the contrary. The policy of his last administration included a number of social and financial reforms which were the precursors of the large body of legislation, initiated ten years later by the next Liberal Government, of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith.

If I were asked to select the most important of the many constructive achievements which marked this long and active career, I should name these four. First, the sweeping changes, most beneficial, which he brought about in the structure of the national finances during the years when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer; they were the massive foundation of his reputation as a statesman. Second, the creation of our system of national education, contributing

more than any other single measure in modern times to raise the country in the scale of civilization. Third, his strenuous and unceasing effort in the latter part of his life, to solve the Irish question, to end the long and bitter quarrel between the two islands by admitting the right of the Irish people to govern themselves. Those exertions were defeated during his lifetime through the stubborn resistance of his opponents and the defection of many of his friends—to the incalculable loss, as we can now see, of both countries and of the British Commonwealth as a whole. And fourth—a matter which is little heard of now, is in fact almost forgotten, but which may perhaps rank, in the final analysis, as the most important of them all—the settlement of a dangerous issue between two great Powers, for the first time, by arbitration instead of war.

This was through what was known as the Alabama treaty of 1871. During the American Civil War a small sloop, of a little over a thousand tons, had been allowed to leave the Mersey for a fictitious destination. In the Azores she took on board officers and armament brought in other vessels from England, hoisted the Confederate flag, took the name of Alabama, and set out to sink or capture the merchant shipping of the United States. The war over, the American Government claimed compensation on the ground that to have allowed the vessel to escape, although warning had been given of its true character and purpose, was an act of negligence, and wrongful in international law. A bitter controversy arose between the two countries, which at times seemed likely to lead to a third war between them. Finally, in the face of widespread and sometimes passionate opposition in the country, the Gladstone Government agreed that the dispute should be referred to arbitration. The American Government concurred; a treaty was signed accordingly, and a tribunal was appointed. Its award, the

justice of which was admitted, was against this country: it required the payment of more than £3,000,000 in compensation. So, thanks to the self-restraint, at a critical moment, of the two great English-speaking peoples, the precedent was established that States—without loss of prestige, but rather with gain—could subordinate their sovereign right of action to the independent judgement of others. The way had been opened for the great number of international arbitrations that have taken place since then—the awards in every case honoured and obeyed; and for the establishment of the permanent International Court of Justice. Lord Morley, in his biography of Gladstone, writes: 'For the moment the result did something to impair the popularity of Mr Gladstone's Government, but his association with this high act of national policy is one of the things that give its brightest lustre to his fame.'

It happened that I was visiting the House of Commons one evening in 1893 to listen to a debate on this very topic —on a private member's motion, advocating a general treaty of arbitration between Britain and the United States. Unexpectedly the Prime Minister came in and took part. I was privileged to hear a short, but very noble speech, beautifully phrased and finely delivered, in support of the principle, vital to the peaceful intercourse of nations, which twenty years before, he had himself done so much to promote. In 1894, he felt himself constrained to resign the premiership. Increasing deafness—before the days of hearing-aid appliances—was a serious handicap. The Cabinet could no longer hold its meetings round the long green table in the usual room at 10 Downing Street, for the Prime Minister could not hear what was being said; they were moved to the drawing-room upstairs, the members sitting close around him in a circle. Failing sight troubled him also. In the following year, when the parliament

was dissolved, he did not present himself for re-election.

Let me give one example of Mr Gladstone's untiring attention to detail, continued even into extreme old age. I had stood for parliament at the election of 1895, and he had very kindly sent me a personal letter of support. Two years later I ventured to ask him for a similar letter on behalf of the Liberal candidate at a critical by-election then taking place.I received a reply, on one of the postcards such as he often used. Eighty-seven years old, his eyesight failing, he took the trouble to write with his own hand this answer to a young supporter with whom he was hardly acquainted: I have the card before me now—difficult to read, but marked by his own stately style: 'My dear Sir, Notwithstanding the numerous attractions of the request that you are good enough to make, there is one preliminary objection of a conclusive nature, namely that the duty proposed is one for the actual leaders of Parties and not for a wholly retired politician. My wishes however are all with you. Your very faithful, W. E. Gladstone. Jan. 26 '97.'

In the early months of 1898, his marvellous health at last gave way. He began to suffer acutely from a painful malady; before long it was found to be incurable. He received the verdict with relief and complete equanimity. Lord Morley writes: 'When May opened it was evident that the end was drawing near. On the 13th he was allowed to receive visits of farewell from Lord Rosebery and from myself, the last persons beyond his household to see him. He was hardly conscious. On the early morning of the 19th, his family all kneeling around the bed on which he lay in the stupor of coming death, without a struggle he ceased to breathe.' So, on this day fifty years ago, the life of the greatest Englishman of that time ended.

*In My Experience**

WHEN I BEGAN to think what I should say in this talk, I jotted down a few points—more or less bright and amusing—with one or two epigrams and quotations and the like. In fact, there seemed to be the material for quite a lively little talk. But when I looked at those notes as a whole, I saw that that was not at all what I wanted to say. And when I asked myself what it was that I really did want to say—and it is often useful to ask that when one is preparing anything of this kind—I found that it was mostly very simple and very obvious. Perhaps it may be none the worse for that; for the one thing that often seems to be not obvious is the value of the obvious. This is true in public life as well as in private. I have been engaged in public affairs now for more than fifty years. I will give one or two examples of what I mean from my own experience.

The greatest crisis in which I was ever concerned was in 1914 in the days that preceded the outbreak of the first world war. I had then been a member of the Cabinet for five years. As to the right course to take in that critical moment, we were at first divided in our views. For my own part, I was quite clear on one point, which seemed to me to govern the whole situation. It is that nations have the duty to honour their treaty obligations. Unless that rule is regarded as absolute, the world will become an anarchy, the scene of continually recurring conflicts. That is a point that seems quite obvious. But it was so little accepted as obvious that Germany deliberately broke that rule. The Great

*Broadcast by the BBC in a series with that title, 1948.

Powers had agreed, years before, to establish Belgium as an independent state, pledged to neutrality, to be a buffer between Germany and France; and they had guaranteed to support her if she were ever attacked from either side. Germany was one of those guarantors; but finding it expedient to march through Belgium in order to invade France in the war that was then breaking out, she did so. The Belgians fulfilled their own pledge to defend their neutrality by armed force, and appealed to this country to fulfil our treaty obligation to support them. Here was a direct and simple issue. There might be doubts on other points; it seemed to me that there could be none on this. If we had refused, then for all future time treaties would be valueless; guarantees no security; the world a cockpit of war, and the history of mankind food for the laughter of cynics.

Another thing that is obvious is that what matters most, whether in private life or in public, is to reach right conclusions. That sounds like a very ordinary platitude. I remember a friend of mine in the House of Commons defining a platitude as 'a truth we are tired of hearing'. Nevertheless, there are a great many people who think that what matters more than being right is to be eloquent, amusing, persuasive, forceful, dominant. It is that mistake which has thrown the world into turmoil and brought great nations to disaster.

In my lifetime I have seen the rise of three grandiose schemes for the direction of human affairs—Fascism, Nazism and Communism. The last, it is true, has had a redeeming quality in that it has been inspired by an aim that was humanitarian. The writings of Karl Marx were a passionate protest against the cruelty and injustice of the conditions of life imposed on great numbers of the working classes, in this country and in other countries of Europe

during his time, a hundred years ago. Such conditions still continue indeed in many parts of the world. The other two, Fascism and Nazism, have no such redeeming feature. All three, as philosophies of life, interpretations of history, systems of economics, are little better than nonsense. To the multitude they may seem impressive because they are presented in an elaborate pretentious jargon of their own, which purports to be scientific, although the ideas are at bottom irrational. And all three have accepted the disastrous doctrine, fatal in the long run to all who adopt it, that the end justifies the means; that a purpose, because it is believed to be good, may be pursued by methods known to be evil.

The British have generally shown themselves to be a sensible people. This leads them to be very sceptical of all such sweeping generalizations. We have watched how that, perhaps more than any other quality, has saved them from many of the disasters that have overtaken their neighbours —through wars, revolutions, tyrannies. But being sensible —or being honest, or truthful—does not mean that you must be humdrum and dull; that you can never be adventurous, or, if need be, heroic. The young airmen in the Battle of Britain, and the forces generally in those two wars, and the behaviour of the ordinary people in the blitzes, proved plainly enough that there is, in this country and in this age, plenty of heroism. Nor need it mean that we should be ascetics, without comfort, pleasure or joy.

> The puritan through Life's sweet garden goes
> To pluck the thorn and cast away the rose.

All the same, it is as well to remember that if the puritan—I am using the word in its narrowest sense—makes a mistake, the profligate makes a much greater mistake. And the addict as well. I have known several brilliant men who

ruined their lives altogether through drinking; and many more men and women who injured their health through incessant smoking. If we use alcohol, it is well to remember that it may be dangerous; it is a drug disguised as a drink; and nicotine, a drug hidden in a vapour.

I was brought up in a Victorian middle-class household where many things seemed simple and obvious which now are often ignored and neglected. Chief among them was the stability of the family. The normal Victorian home was solid. Its permanence was taken for granted—as in the nature of things. Divorce was unheard of, almost unthinkable; it would be a disaster and disgrace, like bankruptcy, or even crime. The little discords and differences that arise from time to time in almost every marriage were kept within bounds, and were overcome, because they had got to be overcome. Things are different now; and it is for the worse that they are. A home that is secure; a houseful of children; to see them grow up to be healthy, happy, upright, educated, efficient men and women, and the grandchildren following after—that is a great joy for a man, and the greatest of all joys for a woman. Sacrifices are involved, yes; but the things that need sacrifice often bring more satisfaction than those that come easily.

I was brought up also to the strict observance of the weekly rest-day. Although less strictly, I have kept to that all my life. It is a good custom. Dr Jowett, the Master of Balliol—I was one of his pupils in his last years—left behind him some brief notes, afterwards published, which he headed 'Maxims for Statesmen and Others'—Never this . . . Never that . . . Among them were two that I have always thought very wise—one was 'Never spare', and the other 'Never drudge'. Let us work at what we have undertaken to the fullest of our capacity—without sparing; but not carry our labours to the point of drudgery. One day's rest

in the week, and sufficient holiday in the year—in the long run you get through more work, and better work, that way than the other.

If you expect me to end by telling you about the sad experiences of old age, that I cannot do, for I have not yet had any. Although I find myself, according to the calendar, not very far from eighty, this Polonius is not qualified by personal knowledge to add to his moralizing any disquisition on the infirmities and disabilities of old age. Nor do I propose to tell you how much worse the rising generation is than its predecessors, for my view is just the contrary. The young people of today seem to me, so far as I can judge, of greater promise than were either of the two previous generations that I knew. How great may be the difficulties and dangers with which they may be faced no one can foresee. But they are of a fine quality to meet them. And expected dangers often do not occur.

People sometimes ask me whether I am an optimist or a pessimist. I answer—neither. In the present state of the world optimism is fatuous; and pessimism always is ignoble. George Eliot, when she was asked that question, used to answer that she was a 'meliorist'—meaning one who held that on the whole things were better now than they had been in the past, and might be better still in the future, but that we needed effort to make them so. Meliorism is a good word, expressing a sound view of life, and it is a pity it has not come into common use.

There are many other things on which I might have spoken on this text of personal experience. The need, made evident by the present state of human affairs, for a drawing together of philosophy, science and religion in order to offer to the world a way of escape, is a theme which fills my mind in these days. That, in fact, is the main conclusion from my life's experience. But there have been other

opportunities for discussing that large topic. I have spoken here as one who may be going away before long might write a letter to tell his friends some of the things he thinks they would do well to bear in mind.

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