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by

WARNER ALLEN

Author of *The Timeless Moment*

We described Mr. Warner Allen's previous book, *The Timeless Moment*, 'first of all as an account of the author's journey, starting from a personal mystical experience, to the understanding and explanation of that experience.' In *The Happy Issue* (the *happy issue out of all our afflictions' of the Collect) the author enlarges his investigation. On the one hand he extends his psychological analysis and his philosophical definition. On the other, he proceeds to *give* his answer to the question: what is the relation of the Mystic Vision to the living of our daily lives?

It is characteristic of Mr. Warner Allen's method to seek first an explanation of his mystical experience in his own terms, and to turn later for confirmation and correction to the writings of the great mystics. In consequence, he is signally successful in making the experience intelligible and rational to the modern reader. While he takes account of modern psychology, he avoids any terminology that does not explain itself. He takes up the problem of the Self and consciousness, distinguishing, in his own terms, between the *Ego* and the *Emauton*. He holds that all life is a trinity of body, soul and spirit corresponding to matter, psyche or experience and conscious subject or Ego: maintaining that it is of the first importance that men should be taught to believe again in their own existence not as machines but as the manifestation of God in time and space. He then proceeds to consider the two dangerous extremes of religious attitude—the extreme of absorption in God Immanent and the extreme of abasement before God Transcendent; illustrating by an examination of the 'Dionysian Darkness' and of the Jansenist doctrine of Pascal. While the Way of Illumination is beset with terrors and dangers, he makes clear in his final chapter, that at the end of the journey we shall find 'the laughter at the heart of things'.

THE HAPPY ISSUE

by the same author

*

THE TIMELESS MOMENT

THE HAPPY ISSUE

by

WARNER ALLEN

... a happy issue out of all their afflictions.
A Collect or Prayer for all Conditions of Men.
The Book of Common Prayer.

Tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior
summo meo. AUGUSTINE. *Confessions*, III. II.

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TO THE READER

In this book I have endeavoured to fulfil a hope expressed in the Preface of *The Timeless Moment* and to carry one stage further the story of a journey on the Mystic Way. It completes the record of a pilgrimage from the central reality of Mystic Union to the limitations of experience on the circumference of the Self, seeking its fulfilment in the reconciling of intuition and inspiration with reason and logic, and the healing of the ancient scission between the truth of religion and the truth of philosophy or science, the heresy of the Double Truth.

Another stage remains, the return journey, in which the pilgrim starts from every-day common sense by the beaten track of reason and the scientific method to the ultimate postulates of religion and philosophy and arrives at the same conclusion that Truth is one and indivisible. If the Will that Dante says is our peace so ordains, this humble attempt to explore the Great Mystery will be followed by a study of the last stage of Enlightenment, when the direction of the journey is reversed and we travel from doubt to certainty, time to eternity and mortality to divinity, with the joyful acceptance of things as they are, felt by the business man going home after a worrying day, raised to a transcendent power.

My indebtedness to fellow-travellers on the Way passes acknowledgement, and first and foremost my gratitude goes out to all those readers of *The Timeless Moment* who, either in private letters or reviews, paid my work the compliment of serious criticism and helped me to correct the many errors of my course. Among the many whose participation in the mystic experience brought untold encouragement, my special thanks are due to Mr. H. P. Shapland, who permitted the quotation of his record of the Vision printed on page 28. Once again my obligation to Dr. Inge for sympathetic encouragement is very great; as before, his *Christian Mysticism* and *Philosophy of Plotinus* have served me

I

A CHANGE OF HEART

On ne s'imagine pas facilement combien sont nombreuses sur la terre les âmes qui attendent. La plupart des hommes passent leur vie l'âme endormie. Ils ressemblent à ces vierges du sanctuaire qui sentent parfois un trouble indéfinissable; un tressaillement infiniment doux et subtil fait bondir leur cœur, mais elles baissent les yeux et sentent la froide humidité du cloître les envelopper de nouveau; le rêve délicieux et empoisonné s'évanouit, et c'est tout ce qu'elles connaîtront de l'Amour qui est plus fort que la mort.—
PAUL SABATIER. *Vie de Saint-François d'Assise*

With the same breathless hush of expectancy as that with which the early Christians awaited hourly the Second Coming of the Lord, the Western World in this year of grace, 1948, awaits it knows not what—the Advent of a New Age or the end of all things. It seems universally agreed that in either case mankind is in sore need of a change of heart to prepare it for an end or a beginning. There are many who say that they could face the end with courage, if not with equanimity, if only they could see sense in it. They could go forward into a new life with cheerful confidence, if only they could discern an intelligible design in the scheme of things which has brought us to this sorry pass.

Yet neither religion nor science can prophesy a new salvation. Again Great Pan is dead and his oracles are silent. It has become a tedious commonplace that material progress has so far outstripped spiritual growth and intellectual development that only a psychological miracle, a universal change of heart, can save the civilized world from annihilation. The high hopes, born of a blind belief in the inevitability of scientific progress, have been submerged by floods of self-pity no less dangerous to humanity than the cataclysm that caused them. It is no new cry that there is nothing right with the world: vanity of vanities, all is vanity; but the bitterness of our present agony seems

A Change of Heart

to exceed the poignancy of past catastrophes, because the mass of mankind has ceased to look forward to any compensatory life beyond the grave and can trace no purpose at all in the vanities that surround it. This is the price that must be paid for worshipping the Molten Calf of the Standard of Living and laying up our treasure in earthly Utopias.

Seventeenthcenturies ago with the Roman Empire crumbling into the DarkAges,men were complaining that they had been born too late into a world too old, and that all the curses flesh is heir to, pestilence, famine and universal war, had descended upon them as the natural consequence of its senility. Yet though they held their breath in momentary anticipation of the Second Coming, the flaming dissolution of the Universe and the awful majesty of the Last Judgment, Christians could take heart of grace, since in their Father's house there were many mansions and they had no doubt at all as to the Divine significance of Creation and the Absolute Justice that would eventually assert its sway over all things human and divine.

For this generation, there is no such comfort. In the days of our pride, we pinned our faith to material progress which has swept us with the speed of an avalanche, not to the Earthly Paradise, but to destruction. It seems but yesterday that H. G. Wells was chanting the glories of that progress and the Scientific Heaven to which it was so swiftly and surely leading us. He lived to echo the lamentation of that reactionary, Julian the Apostate, sixteen hundred years before, that the whole inhabited world was gasping on its death-bed. There are still a few altruistic Epicureans who, wishful to think reality into Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, hold out promises of regulations and formalities, which will build a City of Comfort to enshrine the Improved Standard of Living, born from bankruptcy and shorter working hours for all—no change of heart needed or even extra exertion, but only laws and agreements and controls. It is true that they usually stultify the hope they offer by insisting that they are working for a coming generation, which is more important than the generation of to-day, and for the future which is •more valuable than die present, as if they had discovered some way of being happy and good, of loving and living, not in the present, but in the future of this temporal life. Otherwise for the modern man, no pageantry of Divine Justice, no consoling dream of an abiding city beyond the changes and chances of this mortal life, allays his fears and

A Change of Heart

reconciles with his appointed destiny the trembling terror of his human frailty.

Our so superficial familiarity with the secrets of Nature has bred that spirit of contemptuous presumption which the Greeks called *Hubris*, perhaps the sin against the Holy Ghost, and we can now envisage the possible Nemesis of our scientists encompassing, through some unlucky slip in their dealings with the atom, the disintegration in the twinkling of an eye of the planet on which we have been living. They are kind enough to reassure us that such a culmination to their researches cannot be regarded as an immediate probability; but if it were, is there any power on earth that would check them in their perilous pursuit of a possibly annihilating truth? They will perhaps devise the setting for that Day of Wrath and Judgment which the first Christians were so sure would come in their time, and we can now add the atomic chain process, set in operation by scientific man, to the varied dangers such as celestial collision and spontaneous combustion, which so far our planet has survived.

Periods of disillusionment and pessimistic materialism have recurred at more or less irregular intervals since the dawn of civilization and, in this time of dark foreboding, we may reasonably turn to history and ask whether any principle, arising out of such crises and common to them all, can be detected, capable of transforming the human outlook and restoring it to health and sanity. The wounds of war, both spiritual and material, can only be healed, and the menace of even worse to come be belied, by a radical change of heart throughout the world, and human hearts cannot be changed by the release of atomic energy or any other scientific process within our reach. We turn in vain to the psychologist for the mass metamorphosis of motives and the sublimation of selfishness and ambition, which the salvation of the world demands.

In the recurrent Dark Ages, when mankind has been overshadowed by despair and dereliction, history assigns to Mysticism the function of stirring in the darkness, blowing into a flame the dying ashes of hope and reviving the lost sense of a Divine Presence behind the veil of things seen. In a world groping blindly after certainty, security and happiness, Mysticism reveals an ever-present and ever-loving Divinity, a sure, impregnable and everlasting Refuge, changing the hearts of men and reminding them of their forgotten birthright of laughter and happiness. So we may interpret the recurrent birth of the Avatar and Krishna's

A Change of Heart

parable. 'Many births have passed of men and thee, Arjuna; all these I know, but thou, O slayer of foes, knowest them not. I, unborn and soul eternal, Lord of all creations, taking upon me mine own nature, I arise by mine own power. For whensoever righteousness decays and there is a rising up of evil, then myself do I create, for the protecting of the good and the overthrow of evildoers: for the setting up of righteousness do I arise from age to age.' (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IV, 5-8.)

The revelation of the Mystery is born, partly from the direct impact of the Vision—and this is the subject of this book—partly from the dim and intermittent awareness of something lovely and enduring behind and beyond the things of sense, our 'obstinate questionings of sense and outward things'. That feeling thrills in every glimpse of beauty and inspires the magic of great Art, but in a world, befogged with doubt and cynicism, it comes and goes, an elusive and unsubstantial shadow.

„ . Ever and anon the trumpet blows
From the hid battlements of Eternity,
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again.

Awakening Mysticism sounds that trumpet, as it makes ready to dissolve the scattered glimpses of the City of God into the Vision Beautiful, summoning its followers to pierce with their spiritual sight the swirling mists of time and to gaze like Dante on the Sun of Eternity. As far back into the past as the eye of history can reach, we find this secret which lies at the heart of things becoming manifest, when need is greatest, with the bald and convincing simplicity of one and one making two, only to be lost sight of and forgotten, when the urgency for its appearance has passed. If in this age of ours, we have outgrown it, then we must have outgrown life itself, for that secret is the life within us.

Throughout the ages the mystic doctrine has been interpreted in divers figures, determined by the conditions which called it forth. Hearts can only be changed by emotions to which they are attuned. Amnystery must be translated into a living language and expressed in appropriate symbols. Languages and religions come and go with their symbols, the accented interpretation of the spiritual truth changes with the manners of the time and the death of the soul takes different forms needing different formulae of resurrection. the Orphic Mysteries and

A Change of Heart

the sublimation of their vague cravings for the Eternal culminated, after the Dialogues of Plato, in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, for all time a fountain-head of Mysticism, a source of reasonable hope and faith, to which the world can return for renewed health in such times as these. To Plato and Plotinus, we may apply the deeply significant words of Bertrand Russell in *Mysticism and Logic*:

Metaphysics, or the attempt to conceive the world as a whole by means of thought, has been developed, from the first, by the union and conflict of two very different human impulses, the one urging men towards mysticism, the other urging them towards science ____ The greatest men who have been philosophers have felt the need both of science and mysticism: the attempt to harmonize the two was what made their life, and what always must, for all its arduous uncertainty, make philosophy, for some minds, a greater thing than either science or religion.

Since the days of Plotinus, the mystic of the West has for the most part tried to crystallize his revelation in the accepted symbolism of Christianity, even when Christian orthodoxy has pronounced his doctrines heretical, and it is within the framework of Christian imagery that he has given substance to his conviction of the Presence of God. Christian Mysticism begins in the Gospel of Saint John with Love, Light and Spirit as the names of God and gradually makes its own most of the lofty and elaborate metaphysics of Neo-Platonism. For centuries, it has done its work of restoring life to beliefs that have hardened into superstition, giving new meaning to the dead formalism of ritual and worship and reviving lost memories of the Kingdom of Heaven which is within. Dr. Inge defines it as 'a revival of spirituality in the midst of formalism or unbelief', 'an independent active principle, the spirit of reformation and revivals', and more elaborately as 'the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal and of the eternal in the temporal'.

It is conceivable that Christianity or some other institutional religion may succeed in finding an interpretation of the eternal verity of Mysticism, a truth which is forcing itself upon the world's attention, appropriate and acceptable to the mind of the modern man. Then that change of heart, which the world so ardently desires and has such little hope of achieving, may be brought about under its banner—'tis a consummation devoutly to be wished!—but it is to be feared that it would demand such a resuscitation of faith in tradition and authority

A Change of Heart

as scarcely lies within the bounds of possibility. The general belief in God and a Divine Purpose, the rock on which all churches must build, has been undermined by the scepticism of the scientist and demolished by the exaltation of the scientific method as the sole criterion of truth.

There has been on the whole singularly little change in human nature during the ages lighted for us by the lamp of history. There was a time not so long ago when the optimist might have pointed to the inclusion of cruelty in the category of deadly sins as the most conspicuous evidence of progress in the recent evolution of mankind, but to-day that argument can hardly be maintained after an outbreak of cruelty on a wholesale scale unparalleled in the annals of barbarism. As it is, we may reasonably consider the transformation of the general attitude towards religion as the outstanding change in human mentality during the last few centuries. Faith, tradition and revelation, once unquestioningly accepted and revered, have been subordinated to the test of reason and the rules of logic. In this matter, the iron of the scientific method has entered the human soul and that greater part of life, which deals with what the eyes have not seen, nor the ears heard, nor any of the senses perceived, is treated as if it did not exist, in a grim determination to live by bread alone. It is not that man has suddenly become a rational animal. In many departments of life, he has never been more irrational. Politics move giddily in vicious circles of undefined abstractions, such terms as democracy and liberty are protean shibboleths which, confounded in a multitude of conflicting meanings, have ceased to be tests or warrants of good faith, and millions have embraced a creed of materialism, which bristles with self-contradictory propositions far more repulsive to reason than the religious doctrines they deny, as the reader will find most succinctly and forcibly stated in Dr. Joad's *Guide to Philosophy*.

The mind keeps side by side, as it were separated by thought-proof compartments, mutually contradictory convictions and opinions, any one of which can be trotted out, when Occasion demands, as though its contradiction was not lurking in the background, ready to be produced in its turn with equal validity. It is only in religion that absolute consistency and scientific proof are required; in his own sphere the scientist himself is given the benefit of many a doubt and even when he questions the universal validity of causation, the foundation-stone of his system, his authority remains unshaken. The pendulum has swung

A Change of Heart

to its limit from the unchallenged supremacy of faith and tradition to the equally autocratic domination of scientific dogmatism, and orthodox science is as profoundly outraged by the heresy of Psychical Research as Augustine was by the errors of the Pelagians. It is agreeable to question the authority of religious doctrines, which preach duties, obligations and moral restraints, rather than that of more comfortable manifestoes, which proclaim the rights of everyone to everything they want. Who wishes to balance a Declaration of Rights with a Declaration of Duties?

Be that as it may, it can scarcely be disputed that the religious difficulties of the average man have been multiplied a thousandfold during the past few generations. Religion can never work in him the change of heart for which the world is calling, without first disposing of the objections which hamper its operation and defeat its intentions. Fundamentally they are all connected with the well-worn problems of evil and sin, justice and mercy, works and grace, free will and predestination, all of which may be summed up as the human attempt to conceive and assess the nature of God. The attitude of many modern sceptics might, I think, be fairly represented as a refusal to accept any creed, philosophy or theory of the universe, which, when pushed to its logical conclusion, would seem to imply the inefficiency, the badness, or the madness of God as judged by human standards, whether the power that controls all things be taken as personal or impersonal.

It is to the suggestion of inefficiency that Robert Bridges pointed, when he wrote in *The Testament of Beauty* of the *Summa* of Saint Thomas Aquinas:

For I rank it among the unimaginables
how Saint Thomas, with all his honesty and keen thought,
toiling to found an irrefragable system
of metaphysic, ethic and theologic truth
should with open eyes have accepted for main premiss
the myth of a divine fiasco, on which to assure
the wisdom of God; leading to a foregone conclusion
of illachrymable logic, a monstrous scheme
horrendum informe ingens cui Lumen ademptum.

There are metaphysical problems in which it seems prudent to take refuge in the abyss of unfathomable mystery and shelter behind the screen of Peter Damian's reply to Dante's inquiry concerning predestination (*Paradiso*, xxi, 91):

A Change of Heart

Ma quell'alma nel ciel che piu si schiara,
quel serafin che 'n Dio piu l'occhio ha fisso,
alla domanda tua non satisfara;
pero che si s'inoltra nell'abisso
dell'eterno statuto quel che chiedi,
che da ogni creata vista e scisso.

But that soul which shines most brightly in Heaven, that
Seraph whose sight is most rapt in God, could not satisfy
thy request, seeing that what thou dost ask is buried in
the depths of the Eternal Counsel, sundered from all created
sight.

The only drawback to this standpoint of humility is that if the inscrutable incomprehensibility of the nature of God is pressed too far, it might turn out that within the depths of its abyss His good might be evil in our eyes, His justice our injustice and all moral values an illusion. This thought is reflected in the mental anguish with which the poet of the *Divina Commedia* again and again raises the problem of the Divine Justice. It may lead to the poisoning of the well-springs. A loophole is opened for the logical schismatic, the Manichee, whose temperament inclines him to set up a devil in the place of God.

The Jesuits against whom Pascal inveighed with such apparent justice were prudently trying to reconcile with the aid of casuistry conflicting solutions of the paradox of grace and works—orthodoxy left the faithful free to choose which solution they pleased—but Pascal insisted *either black or white*, and his Jansenist intransigence in the matter of God Transcendent illustrates so vividly one of the stumbling blocks of religious belief and the process by which science and logic have put religion and mysticism under their feet, that both Jansenism and Pascal's philosophy have been discussed at some length in the later chapters of this book. There was little to choose between the God of Jansenius and the God of Luther and Calvin. Pascal in *Illumination*, in the disjointed exclamations of his *Memorial*, translated Mystic Union into Fire and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Wrath and Vengeance. Aldous Huxley in *The Perennial Philosophy* quotes from Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio*:

This is the acme of faith, to believe that God, who saves so few and condemns so many, is merciful; that He is just who, at His own pleasure, has made us necessarily doomed to damnation, so that He seems to delight in the torture of

A Change of Heart

the wretched and to be more deserving of hate than love. If by any effort of reason I could conceive how God, who shows so much anger and harshness, could be merciful and just, there would be no need of faith.

No wonder Dr. Inge writes of Germany:

I am more and more convinced that the worst genius of that country is not Hitler or Bismarck or Frederick the Great, but Martin Luther.... It (Lutheranism) worships a God who is neither good nor merciful.

Those who find it impossible to surmount such barriers across the Way of Religion and whose confidence in the ultimate validity of right and wrong, as we know them, makes them recoil from attributing to the Divine Will either inefficiency or badness, may turn to doctrines usually associated with the East and seek the happy issue in ideas akin to that of *Nirvana* as *Liberation* and *Maya* as *Illusion*. Here at least there is no danger of ascribing incompetence or wickedness to the Divine Purpose, since in the final upshot all values, dependent as they are on time and space, are annihilated as *Illusion*. In their Western guise, these beliefs would seem to charge the Almighty with madness. Everything that has happened through miljennia of striving and agony is to be as if it had never been. That liberation from space and time and the limitations of mortal life means absorption in the bliss of the One, no mystic, Christian or pagan, could possibly deny, but that this return to complete undifferentiated unity, the annihilation of experience and the attainment of the beatitude *oiataraxia*, is the ultimate purpose of Creation and the Absolute is a belief that the writer cannot share. Saving the reader's reverence, the suggestion almost savours of Heath Robinson humour that this immeasurably vast and complicated apparatus of the Universe, from the limitless extensions of the nebulae to the infinitesimal exiguity of the electron, should solemnly revolve and endure through the aeons of uncounted time, giving birth to life and death and all the vicissitudes of existence, only to attain the glorious accomplishment of its labours, not in the bearing even of a mouse, but in bringing forth nothing at all, no, not a wind-egg, and vanishing to leave things exactly as they would have been, if it had never existed.

Mystics of the East and West share the belief expressed in the Sanskrit formula, *tat tvam asi, that art thou*. Saint Catherine of Genoa can say, 'My *Me* ft God, nor do I recognize any other *Me* except my God Himself, just as Sankara declares, 'The wise man is one who under-

A Change of Heart

stands that the essence of Brahman and Atman is Pure Consciousness, and who realizes the absolute identity.' They both acknowledge the identity of God and the true self, but the Western believer has at least an explanation for the terrific drama of the Universe, while so many of those who profess to follow the East only account for it by denying it.

There are some whose minds are so happily constituted that the objections recited above, these questionings of a heart in quest of truth, have neither significance nor validity. They are so fortified in their religion, whether it be a version of Christianity, or Oriental Mysticism, or other belief, that their faith still stands four-square to all the winds that blow and defies the assaults of the Time Spirit and scientific scepticism. They have no need of a change of heart and as for changing the hearts of others, their prayers will express their welcoming acceptance of the Will of God. In them no threat of universal disaster can arouse self-pity, nor can any cataclysm daunt their trust in the ultimate victory of good. If the Vision comes to them, they will explain its revelation in the spiritual language of their religion and, as we pass them on the way, we can wish them godspeed; for we seek the same Fatherland.

This book is addressed to those who, like its author, cannot fit themselves into the armour of light which has done such noble service for so many centuries and are forced to look outside the armoury of tradition and orthodoxy for the weapons they need to defend the reality behind the veil. It would be absurd and intolerably presumptuous, if the writer, a humble seeker after truth on the Way indicated by the Vision, were to claim to have answered questions that have puzzled the wisest in terms acceptable to others or to display to the world an unravelling of mysteries to which saints and prophets have found no solution. It is perhaps pretentious to say what he must say, unless he is untrue to himself and the light that inspired and guided him, that, to his own stupefaction, he has hit upon an interpretation of the Vision, which does answer the questions asked by *his* doubting mind, and does explain the mysteries that for *him* veil the truth, tentatively and imperfectly perhaps, but in a manner that satisfies the deepest cravings of *his* soul. The intense conviction of the Vision forces upon those who try to translate its message into intelligible terms an extremely personal symbolism, which may well be meaningless to another mind.

It is only in exceptional circumstances that the reality which underlies the Mystic Vision finds itself reflected in temporal experience.

A Change of Heart

'Without teaching,' says Avicenna, the great Moslem philosopher, 'the soul rises at one bound to the Vision of truth under the impulse of a divine 'force.' The Vision comes into time and space like the wind which bloweth where it listeth, and we cannot tell how it is that certain minds are at certain times garnished as it were and swept, ready to offer it open house. Its light often dawns on saints and ascetics, but neither holiness nor austerity is a necessary condition of its coming. It comes alike to the simple-minded and those of little learning as well as to sages, scholars and divines, to men of the world with no particularly high standard of morality, as well as to the contemplative, the Christian, the pagan, the agnostic and atheist. My experience proves that the revelation may be vouchsafed to the most ordinary of men, who cannot but know how utterly unworthy they are of such a benediction. It may have been my good fortune to profit by some inherited tendency. There is a family legend that both my great grandfather and my father had experience of 'high hours of visitations from the living God'. There must be certain arrangements, certain patterns, of the experience which forms the mind, that allow for the polish of the mirror's surface and make it receptive of the light of pure consciousness, and the mystic's gift is no doubt similar in its character to such other gifts of nature as the mathematical faculty or those artistic talents which culminate in the miracle of genius. There must be many who have walked with Browning to that far side of the moon which only love reveals.

But the best is when I glide from out them
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

The present writer started on his attempt to interpret the Vision from a purely personal and secular standpoint and did not consult the scriptures of Classical Mysticism, until he had reached his conclusion. Possibly his version of the tidings of the Vision may have significance for some of those, who have had their glimpses of the truth behind the veil, but lack the religious or philosophical framework needed to give them their full meaning. At the outset, he was appalled to find that the Vision had plunged him into speculations, which seemed at first of the most unorthodox, heretical, nay, even blasphemous audacity, but some study of the literature of Mysticism shows that he was frightened by his

A Change of Heart

own ignorance of the audacity of seekers after truth, many of whom are hailed by the orthodox as Saints and Fathers of the Church. The most heretical—as he thought them—of the ideas, of which he spoke cautiously in *The Timeless Moment*, have great names to support them and what had at the first shock seemed rank blasphemy, the conviction of God Immanent, proved to be the habitual experience of the most orthodox Christian mystics.

However it is to be feared that Mysticism and Orthodoxy have not always been the best of friends, possibly because the mystic by his vocation cannot but look at the heart of things without respect for their outer semblance. Perhaps my heresy, if it be heretical—and after all heresy by its derivation means no more than a man's free choice—and if it finds no followers to share its author's excommunication, may persuade some readers, who would have remained neutral and inactive, forgetting or dismissing a revelation only dimly registered, to express in symbols of their own experience what it means to them and so to range themselves on the side of those who defend the cause of faith in the unseen.

If they will allow the writer to suggest a course, they will steer midway between the extremes of East and West, as these divisions of Mysticism are usually understood. Who can doubt that in such a Middle Way, the reconciliation of the two aspects of a single unity, lies our salvation, the happy issue? With the East and Aldous Huxley in *The Perennial Philosophy* we will recognize the identity of Brahman and Atman, of God and the true self, that is, the spirit, and the beatitude of Liberation from the bonds of time and space, of birth and death, but we shall temper this recognition with the assurance borrowed from the West that this mortal life of ours is not all illusion, but of supreme importance, and that the ultimate purpose of the Divine Will is not the beatitude of Liberation, but Love, the Love that can only attain perfection in the imperfections of space and time. We shall agree with the East that our lives neither begin nor end with their little earthly span and that there is no need for Heaven or Hell, since every action carries in itself its own reward or punishment, but we shall part company with Mr. Huxley, when he would have us believe that the object of all existence is the extinction of that *selfness* or personality, which it has taken an infinity of strivings and agonies to compose. Rather we shall say that this *selfness*, this differentiation of the One, which is the

A Change of Heart

work of the Divine Love and the condition of its Act, is the crown of creation, and the experience that forms it, the vesture of the Absolute in space and time, temporal though it is by nature, abides indestructible so long as God is Love and Love is God. It is perpetually being re-woven and reshaped and renewed in the changes and chances of mortal life after a pattern laid up in the World Yonder, and no one who in the Vision has visited that World Yonder, which is with us always, can doubt that, though we may often see those royal robes defiled, torn and degraded, yet after all their vicissitudes they will be restored with fresh splendour, and with unceasing labour brought nearer to the model of the Perfect. Perhaps the reader may gather from these few sentences a rough idea of the general direction pursued by the present study of the Vision with its special reference to that last stage of its interpretation, which, as explained in the following chapter, I have called Enlightenment.

In conclusion, it may be well to say something as to the nature of the help and refreshment that may come to a weary world from the doctrines of Mysticism, to which so many eyes are turning. Dr. Inge in his great *Philosophy of Plotinus* describes the mystic quest as 'the journey of the soul, by an inner ascent, to immediate knowledge of God and communion with Him'. 'Mysticism', he says, 'is a spiritual philosophy, which demands the concurrent activity of thought, will and feeling, which in real life are never sundered from each other. By the proper discipline of these faculties, a man becomes effectively what he is potentially, a partaker of the Divine nature and a denizen of the spiritual world.' The Vision is concerned neither with averting temporal catastrophes nor snatching civilization as a brand from the burning, out of the flames of universal war; still less does it hold forth visions of higher standards of living or any material advantages whatever. When Christ bade his followers sell all that they had and give to the poor, he was not concerned with raising the standard of living of the needy, but with the opening of those spiritual eyes, which are blinded by the treasures of the world. The world would surely be a happier place, if more of its inhabitants lived their lives in the light of the Vision, but even so the limitations of time and space would remain and clashes of conflicting duties and ideals and the inevitable frailty of mortal flesh would still breed fears, anxieties, and distress for the world to wrestle with.

A Change of Heart

If there was a universal change of heart from short-sighted *selfishness* and a materialism, which carries its contradiction in the statement of its premises, to holiness and disinterested love, the future of our civilization would shine with golden promise; but even so the inherent incompatibility of what is and what should be must remain, since it embodies the Divine Purpose. The consummation of Utopia lies outside the scope of mortal effort, and were it achieved, our hearts would be broken. The joy of the adventure, the risk and the struggle, outruns all accomplishment and there can be no end to that which is the salt of life. The Vision sends men laughing into the forlorn hope, drowning failure in the triumph of endeavour, like the Tenth Legion that was never cast down by defeat nor elated by victory. The first Christians were not lured into the mysteries of the Faith by any hope of avoiding persecution or postponing the Day of Wrath and the Flaming End of the World. On the contrary they turned to the paradoxes of their religion to steel their courage against torture, outrage and death at the hands of those who had power to torment and kill the body, and to prepare their souls for the stern judgment of the Lord of Body, Soul, and Spirit. It is vain to look to Mysticism for an easy escape from worldly cares through some material reformation. It promises no more than courage and the patience of the peace that passes understanding to endure the worst, and a lively faith looking forward to the happy issue out of all our afflictions, in the discovery that, after all, all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Only a knowledge of the true self within, a comprehension of the Divine Purpose which is Love and the intuitive certainty that God's Will is not only supreme but good as we mortal men know good, will vouchsafe the gift of invulnerability *sub specie eternitatis*, so that if our civilization succumbs to its own inadequacy, we may see the heavens opened and the glory revealed, laughing and shouting for joy in the company of the sons of God, as we watch

The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day
Strike on the Mount of Vision.

II

THE VISION AND THE FOUR SEALS

Reason is in us what the sun is in the world. . . . As long as our mind shines brightly and pursues its appointed course, pouring its noontide beams into every part of the soul, we are within our sober selves and not possessed, out when *it* comes to *set*, *it* is not surprising that the ecstasy and madness of Divine possession should fall upon us. For when the Divine light shines, the human light sets, and when the former sets, the latter dawns and rises. . . . Our mind departs at the coming of the Divine spirit and returns when it departs. It is not lawful for mortal and immortal to dwell together.—PHILO JUDAEUS. *Quis return divinarum haeres sit.* 264

The last thing', writes Pascal in the *Pensees*, 'that a man finds in writing a book is to know what to put first,' and the preceding chapter must be regarded in the light of an afterthought; for this book was not written with a general, a national or a parochial, but merely an individual, change of heart as its primary object. The writer with a personal, not to say selfish, purpose sought to test to his own satisfaction the theories he had dared to put forward as an interpretation of the Mystic Vision and, for his own sake, to check their consistency and where possible corroborate their substance by reference to the works of far greater thinkers who had engaged in a similar enterprise. With a thankful heart, he abandons all claim to originality for the greater part of the speculations into which he was led by meditation on the mystical experience: there is very little that is new or startling in his theories, and, apart from a certain novelty in his ideas about consciousness, he has come to see them as the natural outcome of two fundamental impulses, innate in the human mind and conspicuous throughout the history of human thought, the recognition of God Immanent and the acknowledgment of God Transcendent. He has tried to sketch a patchy historical outline of the manner in which these two great tides of feeling with their opposing relations to the

The Vision and the Four Seals

unseen have emerged and asserted themselves in the evolution of mankind. What seemed in the beginning an almost blasphemous audacity fades tamely, when looked at in the light of history, into something very like a restatement of forgotten principles accepted not only by the most respectable heretics, but even by highly orthodox Divines, exception only being made for the attribution to the Divine of the monopoly of consciousness—a doctrine which seems to the writer to conform to the highest religious conception of the Deity and to be imposed as a metaphysical necessity.

In spring, Chaucer tells us, 'longen folk to goon on pilgrimages', and it was in spring that my journey began, so far as the purpose of this book is concerned, with a split second that slipped in between two demi-semi-quavers of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, just before I reached the age of fifty. The story of its first stages, which occupied the next fifteen years of my life, was told in the book called after that split second, *The Timeless Moment*, and I must apologize to those who have read it for taking them once again over the same ground in these preliminary chapters with the intention of establishing a solid basis for the later development of my interpretation of the Mystic Vision. I have never hesitated to quote myself when I have been unable to find words more expressive of my meaning than those already used. Since in this journey, in which I humbly followed in the footsteps of Dante, Bunyan and thousands of other spiritual travellers, the starting point is all important, I repeat here the account given in that book of the event which set me off on my travels, and since every word of it was checked by years of consideration and criticism, I have not attempted to improve or elaborate a description, which falls as far short of the reality it seeks to record, as the touches of fingers and the pressure of a hand are powerless to depict to a man born deaf and blind the loveliness of music and the glory of the sun.

Rapt in Beethoven's music, I closed my eyes and watched a silver glow which shaped itself into a circle with a central focus brighter than the rest. The circle became a tunnel of light proceeding from some distant Sun in the heart of the Self. Swiftly and smoothly I was borne through the tunnel and as I went the light turned from silver to gold. There was an impression of drawing strength from a limitless sea of power and a sense of deepening peace. The light grew brighter, but was never dazzling or alarming. I came to a point where time and motion ceased. In my recollection, it took the shape of a flat-topped rock, surrounded by a summer sea, with a sandy pool at its foot. The dream

The Vision and the Four Seals

scene vanished, and I am absorbed in the Light of the Universe, in Reality glowing like fire with the knowledge of itself, without ceasing to be one and myself, merged like a drop of quicksilver in the Whole, yet still separate like a grain of sand in the desert. The peace that passes all understanding and the pulsating energy of creation are one in the centre in the midst of conditions, where all opposites are reconciled.

The swiftly flowing continuity of the music was not interrupted, so that *the intersection of the timeless moment* must have slipped into the interval between two *derm-semi-quavers*.

When this Vision had flashed up lightning-wise within me, I recognized a mystic experience with startled assurance, but I was altogether unversed in the literature of Mysticism and had no idea that this something that had happened to me, this something that so confusingly combined the strangeness of the unique and inexplicable with the familiarity of a long-forgotten secret suddenly remembered, was the veriest commonplace—let the word be used with reverence—in the annals of the Great Tradition of Mysticism. With the Vision, there came an ineluctable obligation to interpret it, so far as interpretation was possible, in terms of my own personality and experience, and in this task to refrain from seeking guidance and borrowing symbols from others who had trodden the same road, except in so far as such instruction might be thrust in my way unsought. It was only when I had given to the message of the Vision the most adequate expression within the range of my feeble powers unaided that I was free to seek deliberately in the work of other, far greater minds than my own, for confirmation or contradiction of my own conclusions and for their revision and extension.

Then I learnt how countless were the ways of describing an *event* which was unquestionably the same for the whole cloud of witnesses; yet though the story has been told again and again with far greater mastery of words and vividness of style than I can pretend to, none the less my own account served my purpose as no other could just because it was the expression of my own experience, that experience which in various aspects I call my soul, my mind, my personality, my character. Since, however, my word-symbols cannot have for the reader precisely the same significance as they have for me, now in this later recension of a past narrative, I repeat and set beside my version of the experience three other records of the revelation, which may serve to bring home its nature as reflected in other minds.

The Vision and the Four Seals

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Diligendo Deo*, x, 27, defines the Vision in terms of ecstatic love; to be affected by the love of God without any taint of self is to be deified, *deificari est*.

Blessed and holy would I call him who had been granted such an experience in this mortal life even once or twice, and only for a moment. For to lose thyself somehow, so that thou art nothing, no longer conscious of thyself and all but annihilated—that is heavenly life, no human condition. And even if one among mortals can attain thereunto for an instant, yet the wretched world begrudges it to him, and the malignant light of day disturbs him, his mortal body weighs upon him, the demands of the flesh oppress him, his enervated inadequacy bids him sink to earth—and what is mightier yet, brotherly love summons him back.

A quotation from *Alfred, Lord Tennyson, A Memoir by His Son*, given poetic expression in *The Ancient Sage*, was set at the head of a chapter in *The Timeless Moment*,

A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from my boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being; and this is not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life. This might be the state which Saint Paul describes, *Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell*

Finally I quote from a remarkable letter called forth by *The Timeless Moment* from Mr. H. P. Shapland:

I know nothing of the ecstasy of the mystics except for one illuminating personal experience. A flash of insight not induced by first love, religious fervour or mental or spiritual auto-intoxication, but unsought, surprising—a split second of Time containing all Time, not so much a vision of beauty and harmony, but the certain knowledge that they existed. The briefest moment, yet so illuminating and life-giving that it still seems more vivid than all the days and years of my life. The best description I can find is that it was a marriage of the mind with the universal mind (whatever that is) satisfying and complete. There is no conscious re-seeking of such an experience. It is final and one knows there is nothing more to be sought for. A man fortunate enough to have had such an experience could never go down to his grave with bitterness, for he has tasted and, what is more important, knows that he has tasted the height and the depth and the fullness of life.

The Vision and the Four Seals

In the Beatific Vision, the mystic's soul like Saint Augustine's 'reaches reality in the flash of one trembling glance', *pervenit ad id quod est in ictu trepidantis aspectus*. Unique as it is in its essence, it must be regarded like all other human experiences from three points of view: in the first place, there is the origin and cause of the experience; secondly, there is the subject's immediate and direct reaction to that event; and finally his recollection in tranquillity of the event as he supposes it to have been and the elaboration in his mind of his first reactions to it. A bomb falls in a London street. We must distinguish between the event of the exploding bomb, the multiple and immediate reactions of the people in the neighbourhood, expressed in emotion and ejaculations, and the manifold accounts of the experience, which will take shape, when it is recollected in tranquillity. Similarly we may discriminate between the three phases of a love affair: the indescribable adventure of love at first sight, the *coup defoudre*; secondly, the lover's stammering proposal; and finally, the fulfilment of the adventure in years of married life.

The main distinction is admirably put by Bertrand Russell in *Mysticism and Logic*:

The mystic insight begins with the *sense* of a mystery unveiled, of a hidden wisdom now suddenly become certain beyond the possibility of a doubt. The *sense* of certainty and revelation comes earlier than any definite belief. The definite beliefs at which mystics arrive are the result of reflection upon the inarticulate experience gained in the moment of insight.

Since the basic fact of the Mystic Vision, the reality that is its source and origin, is the Alpha and Omega of our journey—from it we must start and to it return—it is important that the reader should recognize the triple nature of the Vision itself and draw a clear distinction between its three phases, defined above, to which we shall give the names of Mystic Union or Union with God, Illumination and Enlightenment.

'It is one thing', says Rudolf Otto, an eminent scholar of the Eastern Religions, 'merely to believe in a reality beyond the senses, and another to have experience of it also.' Both those who are mystics by vocation, since their eyes have been opened to the Vision, and those who are zealous for and write about Mysticism without that experience of which Otto speaks, are in accord that the basic event of the Vision, which we call Mystic Union, is unique and identical, no matter of what period, race, personality or religion the Visionary may be. The heart of

The Vision and the Four Seals

the revelation is the same for all—for Plotinus the pagan, Saint Paul and Dante the Christians, the Indian ascetic and the Buddhist of Tibet, the Persian and Mahommedan Sufist or the Chinese Taoist.

The close agreement [writes Dr. Inge] which we find in these records of the mystic quest, written in different countries, in different ages, and even by adherents of different creeds (for Asia has here its own important contribution to make) can only be accounted for if we hold that the mystical experience is a genuine part of human nature, which may be developed, like the arts, by concentrated attention and assiduous labour, and which assumes the same general forms whenever and wherever it is earnestly sought.

So Miss Underhill writes:

Attempts to limit mystical truth—the direct apprehension of the Divine Substance—by the formulae of any one religion are as futile as the attempt to identify a precious metal with the die which converts it into current coin. The dies which the mystics have used are many . . . but the gold from which this divine coinage is struck is always the same precious metal, always the same Beatific Vision of Goodness, Truth and Beauty which is one. Hence the substance must always be distinguished from the accidents under which we perceive it; for this substance has an absolute, and not a denominational, importance.

As Plotinus says, the truth about the Vision no words can express and those who would really understand it must learn to see it for themselves; spiritual sight, though few use it, is a faculty common to all. Many both in the East and in the West have undertaken to teach those who aspire to the mystic revelation how to open and how to use their spiritual eyes, and how to prepare themselves by training and meditation for the realization of the Divine presence. This preparation and adorning of the soul, Plotinus tells us, is self-evident to those who practise it, but the writer must confess that it is not so to him. He has no idea why the Vision should have dawned on him of all people in the world, except that it came in reply to an earnest question and may possibly have been furthered by an inherited tendency, and therefore he must leave to wiser minds the elaboration of a rule and discipline conducive to the attainment of the mystical ideal, Union with God, or more accurately realization of that Union. The Mystic Way has been mapped out with meticulous accuracy by the pilgrims who have travelled over it and the maps of their journeys differ so much that one is forced to believe that there are many roads to a single destination.

The Vision and the Four Seals

The writer's ambition rises no higher than to persuade the reader that there is such a destination and that it lies closer to us all than even he who has known it can always remember, that the kingdom of heaven is within. The eyes of inward sight are not likely to be opened, unless the heart is turned to consider things invisible, and the impulse can only come when faith in the presence of the unseen has been* established. In these pages perhaps the reader may discern some vague shadow of the World Yonder to draw his eyes to its cloud-enwrought summit and set his feet on the path leading to a land which is so close that it may need a life's journeying to reach it, just as Chesterton's Manalive found his home by circling the earth and returning to the point from which he started.

"With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T. S. ELIOT. *Little Gidding*

The central fact of the Vision, which Santa Teresa called Union with God, is the revelation of another order of being and therefore cannot be adequately expressed in the languages of the world we know. It appears as a contradiction in the terms of that world and so all that we can know of its nature in this life must be an elaboration of the immediate reactions to its impact on experience, those stammering interjections, which form the second phase of the Vision. For this phase, I have borrowed the word *Illumination* from the technical vocabulary of Mysticism, in which it is commonly used for the stage of the Mystic Way following the Purgation of the Soul, to make it stand for the first realization of Mystic Union in experience, expressed only in a turmoil of emotions and disjointed exclamations. It is clear that this realization of an identical truth will take widely varying forms in various cases just as there are the widest differences between the response to a shock of one individual and another. The identity of the original event is necessarily differentiated in our minds and experience. As an instance of what may happen at this moment of Illumination, I transcribe a few lines from *The Timeless Moment* to be supplemented in a later chapter by an analysis of the ecstatic utterances called forth from Blaise Pascal in his Vision of Fire.

The Vision and the Four Seals

It was a time of mingled feeling and dawning thought. In the coalescence of new and old experience, inchoate phrases were beginning to shape themselves. A dim impression of the condition of the objective self might be given by a jumble of incoherent sentences. 'Something has happened to me—I am utterly amazed—can this be that? (*That* being the answer to the riddle of the universe)—but it is too simple—I always knew it—it is remembering an old forgotten secret—like coming home—I am not 7, not the II thought—there is no death—peace passing understanding—yet how unworthy I....'

After the dazzling moment of Illumination, the mind throws off the bewilderment of its passive receptivity—it has been a mere mould—and perforce resumes its functions of analysis and synthesis, recording the memories of the event in intelligible form and working them into their places in the vast fabric of past experience.

The third stage of the Vision has begun and the variety of Illumination is multiplied by the operations of each individual mind, interpreting after its own fashion and in its own symbolism a spiritual experience, the coming of a Light, which, even in the most distant recollection, makes everything else in life however splendid, like the Ghost's glowworm, pale its ineffectual fire. I have taken the word *Enlightenment*, usually employed by mystics in a less precise sense, to describe the third and final phase of the Vision, which crowns its accomplishment and which only ends with temporal death, if it can be said to end at all. Enlightenment signifies the interpretation in life of the Mystic Union, its expression in conduct, thought and words, the living of the Vision and its translation into terms of character and experience, which consecrate the final purpose of the Mystical pilgrimage.

In *The Timeless Moment*, the Vision was discussed in its aspects of Mystic Union and Illumination, but space and time forbade more than a passing reference to the third and last phase, and a few passing, very possibly misleading, glimpses of the road ahead, as it seemed to wind its way through difficult country towards journey's end. Enlightenment **forms the** principal theme of this volume and the reader may find a **key** to its arrangement in a preliminary analysis of the instantaneous impression, which flashes up in Illumination from the reflection of Mystic Union in experience. In this impression, one may trace four main elements, an intuitive certainty passing knowledge, a sense or as it were a taste of eternity, insight into the immediate proximity and actual presence of the Divine and profound humility in the light of God

The Vision and the Four Seals

Transcendent. Certainty, eternity, divinity, humility—these four word-symbols may be attached to the memories stamped indelibly on the soul after what seems to *it* the long journey into the World Yonder. They are to be noted in all records of Illumination without *distinction* of place, time, race or person, underlying all individual manifestations, and on them all theories and doctrines of Mysticism are based.

This fourfold order may serve as a rough guide in our coming journey without insistence on any exact classification. Classification is the mystic's besetting sin. The subject with which he deals is by nature so refractory to measurement in time and space and so elusive that he longs to cut it up into well-defined categories with hard and fast boundary lines, however arbitrary and hair-splitting his schematism may be. It must always be remembered that all distinctions are concerned, not with the revelation itself which is indivisibly identical, but with the symbols by which it is expressed.

In this volume, the first conception, the mystic's certainty, a comprehension passing all knowledge, leads to the discussion of Consciousness, which we take to mean the identity of subject and object, and to a defence of the permanent Ego or conscious subject. The existence of the permanent Ego, the permanent Ego of you, reader, and of me, the writer, is the foundation-stone of all religion and all belief, indeed, as we shall argue, of all life. It is impossible for a man to believe in anything, if he doubts his own existence, and everything turns on the re-establishment of the conscious subject as a truth and not a delusion, in defiance of Hume's scepticism and Bradley's denial. We must return to the threefold division of human nature into spirit, soul and body, the spirit being the divine spark or conscious Ego, the soul being formed of experience which has no consciousness of its own, and the body being the manifestation of Ego and soul in the physical world. The Vision we regard as a moment of pure consciousness, an intuition of the Divinity within.

The intrusion into time of the timeless moment of eternity as well as consciousness raises a problem which can only be stated in figurative language, in a myth of Creation and the Birth of Time, and the writer has tried to tell the story more clearly than it was told in his previous book. A regrettable amount of repetition has been necessary to make this book complete in itself; for the author's meaning would be indecipherable without an understanding of his attitude in the problems of

The Vision and the Four Seals

consciousness and time and of the special significance which the exigencies of his subject have compelled him to attach to certain words.

We take then certainty and eternity as the first two seals stamped on the soul in Illumination, first not in time or rank but only for convenience of arrangement. As for the seals of divinity and humility, which were only tentatively and rather timidly mentioned in the previous book, it is only in time and in living that the full significance of the sense of Divinity as the presence of God Immanent and of humility as the recognition of God Transcendent is brought home to the seeker after Truth on the Way of Enlightenment. The writer has ventured to discuss the presence of God Immanent at greater length and with greater freedom, since he has learnt that in the audacity of his speculations he is only treading in the footsteps of the most orthodox mystics, who have not shrunk from that hard saying, *The kingdom of heaven is within*. The sole difference seems to be that it did not occur to any of them to attribute to the Divine Ground of the Soul the monopoly of consciousness.

It is essential that the overpowering exaltation which follows the discovery of God in the inmost Mansion of the Self should be counter-balanced by the simultaneous humiliation to the depths, when the soul is plunged into the black abyss of its imperfection in the contrast of the resplendent glory of the Perfect. Concentration on the conviction of God Immanent may lead to Quietism and an ecstatic withdrawal from the troubles of time and space, which may be open to the charge of spiritual gluttony. It must be corrected by the humility which is born from the comparison of the self of experience, the soul, with that Divine consciousness which is the spring of life. Consequently the doctrine of God Transcendent, set out in one of its most extreme forms by the genius of Pascal, calls for a fuller discussion, all the more because we can trace in the exaggerated emphasis it sometimes throws on this aspect of the Vision the origin of many of the weapons which logic has so successfully employed against Mysticism in latter years as well as a certain narrowness of outlook and contempt for human ideals, which has prejudiced the cause of faith in the unseen.

The seals of certainty, eternity, divinity and humility may all be gathered up into the unity of Love and it is from the standpoint that God is Love that we set out to fathom the mystery of Evil. From this adventure we bring back the treasure of a conviction that the paradox

The Vision and the Four Seals

of Love does provide a sufficient explanation for the existence of Evil in all its forms, and the encouragement of this belief leads to a second myth in the manner of a vision in a dream, in which such imaginings as are wont to mark Enlightenment are allowed to run riot, and the tale is told of the struggles of the Self after death to reach the laughter at the heart of things. Finally an attempt is made to sum up the practical message of the Vision, returning to earth in defiance of anti-climax and finding the solution of life, not only in fiery martyrdoms and heroic defiances, but in the solemn consequences of even the pettiest experience.

III

THE SEAL OF CERTAINTY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

He was staring at the answer to the riddle that had been his obsession, but this answer was a wonder of wonders. The young man above the mantel... revealed, responsible, conscious, quite shining out of the darkness, presented him the face he had prayed to reward his vigil; but the face—miracle of miracles, yes—confounded him as his own.—HENRY JAMES. *The Sense of the Past*

Certainty, we have said, predominates in the earliest impressions stamped by the Vision on the passive and receptive mind; it might be called the first fruits of Illumination. What then is this certainty and of what? For surely the mystic must not only be certain, but certain of something. The second part of this question we shall find is answered by the second, third and fourth terms of Illumination, eternity, divinity and humility, so that for the moment our attention must be directed to the nature of the mystic's certainty.

If this book were addressed exclusively to those to whom the Vision has brought this certainty, there would be little need to discuss their all-prevailing conviction and so, indirectly, the validity of the message of the revelation. Those who are in the grip of this certainty are not open to arguments concerning a truth that they cannot but take for granted. One who has had a glimpse of eternity will not waste time in disputations conditioned by space and time about the reality of an experience outside them both. One who has known the presence of God Immanent will have no patience to spare for honest doubts and dark hints of delusion. It is not easy to tempt into a defence of the validity of his certainty one who is certain with the certainty of which Dante speaks in the *Paradiso*, II, 43.

LI si vedrà ciò che tcnem per fede,
non dimostrato, ma fia per se noto,
a guisa del ver primo, che Fuom crede.

The Seal of Certainty

There (in the union of the human and divine nature) we shall see what we hold by faith, not demonstrated, but intuitively known like the first truths a man believes.

Discursive reasoning and the scientific method attain their ultimate consummation in a subjective feeling of certainty, still open to correction. No amount of research and experiment can carry the mind beyond this conviction, which from the mystic's point of view lacks the clenching compulsion of intuitive comprehension, the presence passing all knowledge, the identity of that which knows and that which is known.

The mystic might define his certainty as perfect knowledge. 'Knowledge', says Saint Thomas Aquinas, 'existeth in measure as the things known are in him who knoweth.' In our ordinary knowledge, certain aspects and relations of the object known are abstracted from the entirety of those aspects and relations and are brought within the Self, so that we are said to know them, but there is room for error, since these abstractions may in themselves be false, cannot exhaust all the aspects and relations of the object known and, even within the Self, cannot be identified with the subject that knows them. The knowledge possessed by the subject is increased in proportion as the object is contained within himself and consequently perfect knowledge must mean that the object known in its entirety is in him who knoweth, that the thing known is one and identical with the knower. The mystic's certainty does not hesitate to claim this perfect knowledge which we shall call comprehension; for that which is known is that which knows and in Mystic Union there is no distinction between subject and object. The part of the Self who comprehends, usually called 'I' or Ego is the certainty, eternity, divinity and humility which he comprehends and there is no room for doubt or error. He is a light that sees itself by its own light, to use a metaphor dear to Plotinus.

Yet for our purpose the mystic's certainty is not sufficient in itself; for though he is certain that the Word has been spoken, his memory preserves no more than an inscription in an alien tongue, which must be translated, before its meaning can be made known among men. There has of late been a tendency on the part even of those with a pronounced *scientific* bias, who have no disposition at all to take at their face value the visions and voices of saints and contemplatives, to study seriously as a psychological fact the revelation of the Mystic Union, the

The Seal of Certainty

apparent penetration of eternity into time. It is important that the sceptic should remember that the interpretations of the timeless moment put forward no claim to the infallibility of the mystic's certainty; they are manifold and often seem to contradict one another. It is the event which they seek to elucidate that cannot be denied or ignored. Bertrand Russell, who can scarcely be accused of leanings towards Mysticism, while disclaiming any intention of pronouncing on 'the reality or unreality of the mystic's world'—'I have no wish to deny it nor even to declare that the insight which reveals it is not a genuine insight'—remarks very wisely that 'insight, untested and unsupported, is an insufficient guarantee of truth, in spite of the fact that much of the most important truth is first suggested by its means'. 'Instinct, intuition or insight, is what first leads to the beliefs which subsequent reason confirms or confutes.'

Whatever the Vision may be, it is certainly an adventure within the Self and logically an inquiry into that adventure should begin with a consideration of the environment in which it took place, though the analysis of consciousness implied is actually reached in experience as a final step of the reasoning set on foot, by the spiritual adventure. So Miss Underhill writes in the opening chapter of *Mysticism*: 'Let us then begin at the beginning. . . . That beginning of human thought is of course the J, the Ego, the self-conscious subject which is writing this book, or the other self-conscious subject which is reading it; and which declares, in the teeth of all arguments, I A M. Here is a point as to which we all feel sure. No metaphysician has yet shaken the ordinary individual's belief in his own existence.'

I am afraid that she was a little over-confident in the resistance of the average man's common sense to metaphysical suggestions, and made too little allowance for the confused notion picked up from popular science and popular philosophy that theoretically the existence of the Ego has been finally disproved by men of learning and unchallenged authority. We all behave as though we believe in our own existence. We do not usually in conversation hedge round the first personal pronoun with clauses of reservation and qualifying doubt. Yet a great number of thinking people seem to have an idea that their faith in their own reality is not entirely justified.

Hume's great intellect made short work of the permanent Ego as the unity of Self, reducing the Self as he knew it by introspection to 'noth-

The Seal of Certainty

ing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement'.

For my part [he adds] when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other of heat or cold, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any one time without a perception. . . . When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of *myself* and may be truly said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, and could I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated.

Bradley in his *Appearance and Reality*, a book which has exercised untold influence on English thought in the last half-century and which still perceptibly affects the thoughts of many who have never read it nor perhaps heard of it, disintegrated the unity of the Self with a scepticism scarcely less destructive than that of Hume. Philosophers seemed to have come to a general agreement that the conscious subject or permanent Ego, this self which masquerades as a knowing unity, was no more than a delusion, and scientists, whose logical universe had no place for a subject that was its own object and out of reach of their method, gladly took this dogma for granted. People, who were neither philosophers nor scientists and who had given little or no thought to the paradoxes of the Self, continued to live as though they were convinced of their own existence—and in this they differed not at all from the philosophers and scientists—but at the back of their minds, there stirred an uneasy, vague idea that the reality of the Self was no more than an exploded superstition. It is difficult for one whose faith in his own reality has been shaken to believe in the reality of anything else, and it is natural to ascribe to this widespread and indefinite agnosticism much of the despair and nihilism which is paralysing the modern world.

There is a manifest logical objection to a subject which is its own object as a contradiction in terms—a black which is a white does not make sense—and it is eminently reasonable that with all his searchings of heart and mind Ego fails to run Ego to earth. Yet by what inexplicable perversion has Ego fallen into the delusion of thinking both that he exists and that he knows it? How is it that it is practically impossible for him to deny this absurd conviction of his? What possible origin can

The Seal of Certainty

there be for this self-contradictory notion of a conscious subject, which knows about its own existence as well as the existence of objects, things other than itself? Nor is this contradiction in terms the only anomaly about the Self. Ego arrogates to himself a certain permanence, or at least continuity, during his life, yet surely it is clear that everyone passes through a multiplicity of selves; for what is there in common between the Self of my boyhood and the Self of my manhood or old age?

Yet the Vision with its certainty re-establishes the existence and unity of the permanent Ego and vindicates his high estate. The certainty of the uncertain would be a paradox more outrageous than the identity of subject and object. How can there be certainty without continuity and permanence? For this certainty we must try to account by exploring without prejudice or emotion the depths of our mysterious Self in obedience to the basic principle of Greek wisdom, *Know thyself*. Descartes found in these depths *Cogito ergo sum* as the rock on which to build his philosophy and Kant ruthlessly reduced this truth of truths to a tautology, *I think therefore I think*. If indeed thinking, feeling, knowing—in general the awareness of experience—is a necessary condition of our existence, Hume's dissolution of the unity of the Self follows as a necessary conclusion. If when we cease to be aware, we are annihilated, then we cannot exist at all as conscious subjects and the permanent Ego must be a delusion. Perhaps the French philosopher might have found the definition of consciousness in a single word, Ego *tout court*, the pronoun absorbed in the terminations of his Latin verbs, and it is with Ego that we must begin.

When, ignoring all the doubts and subtleties of the metaphysician or psychologist, I look into myself, it is conceivable that, like Hume, I may find only a perception, but at the background as it were of this perception lies a conviction that something I call my Ego is perceiving it; for if there was nothing to perceive it, it would be unperceived and meaningless for me. It is true that, however hard I search, I cannot perceive that which is perceiving, but none the less it cannot be identified with the perception. The result is that when I look into myself, I find an Ego with a dual knowledge, the knowledge of his own existence, and the knowledge of the existence of things not himself, non-Ego, in fact I find a subject and an object. At this moment of writing, I feel sure that I the writer exist and also that the paper and typewriter I am using,

The Seal of Certainty

the words I am writing and a great many other things exist in some sense of that word and are not identical with the Ego who is sure of his own and their existence. Take this second conviction first, Ego's knowledge of non-Ego. My inward scrutiny reveals Ego to me as a conscious subject, who apprehends, that is, grasps as an object, almost as an octopus with its tentacles, something other than himself, non-Ego. Non-Ego, the object of his apprehension, the stream of abstractions, sensations, perceptions, feelings, thoughts, memories and so on, we shall sum up for convenience under the general term *experience*.

Experience composes the only temporal world that Ego knows, the immaterial environment in which he lives, moves and has his incarnate being, his Private Universe, and though it comes into existence as the object of awareness and this objectiveness is the essence of its being, never more than an insignificant fraction of its totality is presented to Ego's awareness at any given moment. Very mysterious is the persistent existence of experience, when it has passed completely out of the field of awareness, to all appearances utterly forgotten and obliterated. Portions of it can be raised from the darkness by efforts of memory or the science of the psychologist, and, unobserved in its tomb, its continued actuality is proved by its influence on character and conduct, as the Father Confessor has known for centuries and the psychologist has more recently discovered. Past experience can only be known to us in the shape of memories and the lost memories, whether inherited or experienced, which have sunk altogether beyond Ego's reach, have been styled by the psychologists the *Unconscious* or *Subconscious*, both terms that are admittedly unsatisfactory and for us, as will be seen, incompatible with our basic definition of consciousness. Since the scientific terminology conveys a tacit denial of the conscious Ego, the very corner-stone of this interpretation of the Vision, the writer has been impelled to adopt a modification of the word which these terms superseded. The neologism of *subliminal* was coined by F. W. H. Myers in the sense of *under the threshold*, and the *subliminal self* was once almost as familiar a phrase as the *Unconscious* is to-day. *Subliminal* has the drawback that it may be given a connotation of exaltation rather than depression on the grounds of relationship with *sublime* and that other psychological term *sublimation*, and as *subliminary* is a more correct formation (*liminaris* not *liminalis* is the adjective of *limen*) on the analogy of *preliminary*, the former standing for *under the threshold* as the latter for

The Seal of Certainty

before the threshold, I propose to make use of *subliminary* in this meaning. The metaphor of the threshold must not be pressed too hard, but when we substitute for the scientific *Unconscious* or *Subconscious* such terms as *subliminary experience* or *subliminary self*, we shall regard that experience and that part of the Self as below the threshold of awareness, having sunk so deeply beyond the range of Ego's recollection that it can only be recalled to his awareness by special means or in special circumstances.

As will be seen, experience will present itself under many other aspects denoted by distinguishing names and another of those which we shall use calls for a word of explanation. Where there is occasion to emphasize the contrast between Ego and non-Ego and the objective relation of experience to the conscious subject, I propose to employ for the objective self and the experience that composes it the word *Emauton*, which I have borrowed from the Greek, opposed to Ego as the objective case of *Ego Autos*, *Eyco avroz*, *I Myself*, and as one might say *Me Myself*. In the *Svetasvara Upanishad*, the two selves within a man are compared to two birds in a tree: one bird, Ego, quietly looks on, while the other bird, Emauton, is busily pecking at the fruit of manifold experience.

This distinction between Ego and Emauton, *I* and *Me*, the subjective self and the objective self, on which everything turns, demands a weighing of the value of certain words with the utmost nicety. Practically the only theory put forward by the writer with any claim to novelty finds, in the elimination of the permanent Ego from the psychological make-up of the human Self and its merging in the remaining elements of psyche or Emauton and body, the exact equivalent to the disappearance of spirit from the theological trinity of spirit, soul and body. It demands the restoration both of Ego and spirit as one and the same reality, the conscious subject, over and against the object, Emauton or soul, the non-conscious objective self. The writer has been compelled to use Ego continually for the conscious subject, since consciousness and the first personal pronoun are inseparable, though the word carries with it misleading connotations (e.g. egoism) due to the confusion between the two selves; the reader will be able to check any equivocation by substituting the word *spirit* for Ego, which should be its exact synonym. A courteous Roman Catholic critic warned readers of *The Timeless Moment* of the *deadliness of the error* in the conclusion

The Seal of Certainty

which he drew from my argument: *We are God*. I am not sure that he would have been so definite, if that assumption had been expressed synonymously as *Our spirits are divine*. Such language, as the reader will see, would not have shocked many of the early Fathers.

Ego's knowledge of himself is on the face of it something very different from his apprehension of Emauton. If he knows of his own existence, he must in some way be simultaneously both subject and object, and logic, philosophy and science react most violently against any such suggestion of this identity of subject and object as a possibility. They insist that it is a contradiction in terms and therefore can be nothing but a delusion; for which they account in divers manners to be considered later along with Hume's denial of the unity of the Self already mentioned. Whether this deeply-rooted notion of Ego's knowledge of his own existence is a delusion or not, it is clear that this knowledge is not knowledge in the same sense as his apprehension of Emauton and should be distinguished from it; for, if it is a delusion, it is desirable that the delusion should be discriminated from the reality, since in this connection no one impugns the reality of the apprehension of experience, and if it is not a delusion, the *knowledge* in which subject and object is identical and a logical contradiction in terms is plainly of a different order, poles apart, from the apprehension which involves the normal relation of subject and object. For this internal or reflexive knowledge, whether delusion or not, I propose to use the word *comprehension*. We shall say that Ego *comprehends* Ego if indeed he really knows of his own existence, and *apprehends* Emauton or experience.

In the light of this discrimination, let us consider the word *consciousness*. Among other definitions, consciousness has been described as the faculty by which Ego knows that he and other things exist. If there is a faculty by which Ego comprehends Ego, it cannot be treated as necessarily identical with the faculty by which he apprehends Emauton; we are bound to draw a distinction between a faculty by which Ego works—or thinks he works—upon himself with identity of subjected object and the faculty by which he as subject grasps an object that is not Ego. Such a distinction is certainly necessary as long as there is a possibility of the conscious subject actually existing. As we discriminated between comprehension and apprehension, so must we discriminate between the faculty by which Ego comprehends Ego, calling it *consciousness* and using that word and its derivatives in no other sense

The Seal of Certainty

whatever, and the faculty by which he apprehends Emauton, to which we shall assign the word *awareness* with equal exclusiveness. We shall say that Ego is *conscious* of Ego, not *aware*, and *aware* of Emauton or experience, not *conscious*.

What are the logical objections to the existence of a permanent Ego, that conscious subject, in whom most of us automatically believe? And what is the line of reasoning by which philosophers have tried to explain him away as a mere fiction? As we have said, the objections stare one in the face. A subject who is his own object is a contradiction in terms. The case against this monstrosity has been admirably stated by Professor A. E. Taylor in a passage quoted in *The Timeless Moment* from *Elements of Metaphysics*: 'We cannot too strongly insist that, if by self-consciousness is meant a cognitive state which is its own object, there is no such thing, and it is a psychological impossibility that there should be any such thing as self-consciousness. No cognitive state ever has itself for its object. Every cognitive state has for its object something other than itself.' So be it, we must reply. If self-consciousness be taken in the sense of consciousness, as we have defined it, it is not a cognitive state, and it is for this reason that we have insisted on the vast gulf which is fixed between what we have called comprehension and what we have called apprehension. Comprehension is not a cognitive state and apprehension is.

The word *self-consciousness* raises problems of verbal significance in connection with the word *self* which may be conveniently dealt with at this point. The cognitive state which 'has for its object something other than itself must unquestionably be found within the Self and implies a subject and object in relation. The Self then must contain a subject. This subject is often called *self* for *self* "may be taken as synonymous with Ego, the conscious subject. The Self also contains an object. This object too may be called by the name *self* Bradley for instance says that we may mean by *self* the contents of a man's experience', that is, Emauton. It would seem then that the little word *self* may bear three totally distinct meanings, and it is incumbent on us to distinguish between them under penalty of being involved in the *deplorable confusion* arising from Bradley's paradoxes shortly to be considered. In the first place, Self may stand for the unity which includes both subject and object, the Private Universe containing both Ego and Emauton; in this wider significance we shall write Self with an initial capital.

The Seal of Certainty

Secondly, if we have occasion to use *self* as qualifying Ego or the subject, it will be written with a small initial and accompanied by some such distinguishing epithet as subjective or transcendental. Finally if it is employed in the sense of Emauton or the object, it will be similarly written with the addition of some such adjective as objective, phenomenal or subliminary. No confusion is likely to arise from the use of *self* as a grammatical reflexive, and it will appear that in such words as *selfish* and *unselfishness self* is equivalent to Emauton. It is clear then that Professor Taylor's cognitive state consists of *self* in its third meaning, qualified as objective, standing as an object to *self* in its second meaning, distinguished as subjective, both being contained within Self in its wider significance. It is scarcely surprising that without an analysis of the word selfdeplorable confusion should arise.

The word *self-consciousness* raises a further problem, which requires the distinction we have drawn between consciousness and awareness for its solution. It may mean consciousness in the sense we have given that word or it may mean awareness of consciousness. In the first case, the consciousness which we define as Ego's comprehension of Ego can never appear directly in Ego* awareness; for since it implies the identity of subject and object it belongs to another order of being incapable of full expression in terms intelligible to our space-time minds. We are conscious most of our lives without being aware of it, and we only become aware of our consciousness, when there appears in our experience a symbol or formula to stand for it, the word *I* for instance or *selfhood* or such phrases as Kant's synthetic unity of apperception or the identity of subject and object. Such awareness of consciousness would clearly be a cognitive state in Professor Taylor's definition of the term, and we are in agreement with him that the words cannot be properly applied to Ego's comprehension of his own existence, the consciousness that forms the background of all his life, even when he is not aware of it, though without it a cognitive stated inconceivable.

In the world of cognition and science, the universe of time and space, the order of the Many, the subject which is its own object is a contradiction in terms and an impossibility, but such an identity is not only possible but necessary in another order of Being, known to the metaphysician as the One or Absolute and to the theologian as God. Philosophers of high authority have demonstrated the necessity of the Absolute: Plotinus for example is echoed by the Moorish philosopher

The Seal of Certainty

Avenares who declares that God is at one and the same time 'the knower and the known'; and we can accept their demonstration with a lighter heart, since introspection shows us within ourselves something curiously akin to its nature. Reason has conducted philosophical inquiry to a belief in the existence of the omniscient and all-comprehending One as the ultimate reality, and the One could know nothing and would therefore be nothing, if it did not know itself, since by hypothesis there is nothing outside itself to know. In the Absolute there must be identity of subject and object and that is our definition of consciousness. 'The object has been completely carried over into the subject and has therefore become in all its determinations combined with the unity of the Self,' to quote Professor Watson's definition of perfect knowledge in *An Outline of Philosophy*. It is argued, however, that the One with its corollary of absolute knowledge of reality, expressed in perfect self-knowledge, lies utterly beyond the grasp of our finite minds and the limitations of human thought, so that it must be for us as if it did not exist. Yet there seems a strange relationship between this unattainable reality and the conscious subject, the Ego, who is so intimately connected with every moment of our lives. Moreover it is into these regions of the Absolute or the Kingdom of God that the mystic appears to be transported by the certainty of the Vision.

The fourteenth-century *Theologia Germanica*, which I know in the Latin version of 1630, called by Dr. Inge *one of the most precious treasures of devotional literature*, illustrates the distinction we have drawn between the faculties of consciousness and awareness in a parable. A man's soul, says this *Liber Aureus*, has two eyes, a right eye with the faculty of contemplating the eternal Absolute, the left concerned with time and the multiplicity of creatures and the life of the body. These two eyes cannot work simultaneously. For the right eye to behold the Absolute, the left eye must abandon all activity and behave as if dead; similarly if the left eye is to do its business and be occupied with temporal and created things, the right eye must be hindered in its contemplation. The allegory must not be pressed too far. In our view, the right eye's contemplation of eternity (consciousness) cannot be broken or indeed impeded, though what it sees is invisible to the left eye; sometimes, however, the left eye (awareness), if it is liberated from its appointed business in time, can catch a glimpse of the reflected glory which the right eye eternally contemplates.

The Seal of Certainty

The human mind was not designed to apprehend the Absolute and that aspect of the Absolute which we call Ego slips from its grasp, leaving nothing behind but Emauton, its cloak of experience. It is our contention that our Ego is exactly what we think him, when we are not hunting for him in places where he cannot be, a conscious subject in whom subject and object is identical, and that he belongs in his essence not to the order of our daily life, but, as Kant realized, to the transcendental order of the One. Ego for the timeless moment of the Vision is his naked self, as Plato says in the *Phaedrus*, raised from the tomb, which we call the body and have to carry about with us like oysters imprisoned in their shells. The Vision reveals as it were the mystery of Melchizidek, the mystery of the Ego, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. In virtue of his consciousness, his comprehension of his own existence, he stands outside the world of change and multiplicity, though participating in its vicissitudes through the operation of his awareness. As we shall see, the eternal Ego is one with the Divine Absolute, but for the moment we must turn our attention to some of the widely credited arguments by which philosophers have tried to explain him—and themselves—away as a delusive phantom.

In *The Timeless Moment*, I dealt at some length with one of the popular theories designed to eliminate the conscious subject and endeavoured to show that it depended on the equivocal use of the word *consciousness* an ambiguity which we have just sought to correct by our distinction between consciousness and awareness. It may be well to resume briefly that discussion, before turning to the rather different line of reasoning followed by F. H. Bradley in *Appearance and Reality*. Against the permanent Ego, it is argued that we are directly aware of nothing except experience, and that the Self consists of nothing more than an ever-changing stream of *conscious* experience or a series of *states of consciousness*, which changes so gradually as to give a false impression of permanence and stability, where there is only succession and continuity. This theory re-states Hume's conclusion already quoted that the Self is 'nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement'. It sounds plausible enough that the illusion of a permanent consciousness, an enduring Ego and conscious subject, should have arisen from the gradual transformation of our *states of con-*

The Seal of Certainty

sciousness or *conscious* experience. The only trouble is that, as a moment's consideration will show, we have been using the words *consciousness* and *conscious*, each with two *distinct* meanings, and indulging in a verbal quibble. When we speak of a permanent *consciousness*, a *conscious* subject, we are referring to an Ego who knows or thinks he knows that he exists and that something not himself also exists. When we speak of a state of *consciousness* or *conscious* experience, we do not mean that the state or experience knows or thinks anything at all. Our thoughts, feelings, memories and so on are neither conscious of their own existence nor aware of a reality outside themselves; they are merely objects of Ego's awareness. Does a *conscious* feeling like a toothache know that it exists? Does *conscious* rectitude itself feel virtuous? Does my idea of a triangle know that it has three sides? It is experience with the misleading epithet of *conscious*, which composes those *states of consciousness*, defined by the dictionary as 'the totality of a person's thoughts and feelings', and falsely said by those who deny the permanent Ego to constitute the entirety of the Self to die, exclusion of the conscious subject. There is no more reason why a stream of non-conscious experience should develop the idea of being a conscious subject than a succession of reflections in a mirror or an equally non-conscious stream of water in a river should develop to Ego and a personality.

If, however, *conscious* experience is really to be taken as meaning experience that experiences itself, thoughts that think themselves, feelings that feel themselves, memories that remember themselves and so on, and that either alone or in combination think, feel, remember, etc., other thoughts, feelings, memories, etc., then it seems to me that in straining at the gnatlike contradiction in terms of the conscious Ego, we have swallowed a veritable camel in this inexplicable experience. I have at least a familiarity with the conception of the conscious subject, since it is a necessary assumption in all my inner life and its inevitable background. No metaphysical arguments can entirely banish the first personal pronoun from my thoughts and speech. The thoughts that think themselves and other thoughts, and the other reflexive and apprehensive departments of experience, so arbitrarily imagined, convey nothing at all to my mind. A feeling that feels itself seems to me an empty abstraction detached in sterile isolation from all things in heaven and earth. Yet it is this idea of *conscious* experience under the guise of

The Seal of Certainty

sentient experience, which lies at the root of F. H. Bradley's assault on the permanent Ego.

Before we turn to Bradley's *sentient experience*, a word may be said as to his analysis of what we mean by the word *self*, to which we have already referred and which emphasizes the importance of a precise use of language in all matters relating to consciousness. As it was his intention to demolish the unity of the *self* and deny the reality of a permanent Ego, he was at no pains to simplify the problem by the introduction of a few elementary definitions; on the contrary he revels rather wickedly in the paradoxes which arise from a slipshod use of language.

As a first step in his analysis, he suggests that we may mean by the *self* of this or that individual man 'the present contents of his experience'. In that case, we shall discover this *self* by taking a section through him at the given moment. 'You will find then a mass of feelings, thoughts and sensations, which come to him as the world of things and other persons, and again as himself; and this contains, of course, his views and wishes about everything.'

But this instantaneous snapshot of the *self* furnishes an inadequate representation.' The congeries inside a man at one given moment does not satisfy as an answer to the question what is self. The *self* must be something more than the *self* of the present instant. So we must take a fresh section through the victim of our psychotomy and repeat the operation over and over again, removing on each occasion whatever may seem exceptional. 'The residue will be the normal and ordinary matter, which fills his experience; and this is the self of the individual.' So Bradley pursues the *essential self* until he reaches the conclusion: 'There seems no doubt that the inner core of feeling, resting mainly on what is called Coenesthesia, is the foundation of the self.' Coenesthesia is defined by the dictionary as 'the general sensibility of the system as distinguished from special sensations', and it appears from Bradley's later arguments that it may be regarded as corresponding to the elemental *sentient experience*.

The philosopher then attacks the crux of the problem or, as he puts it, is

brought to a most important way of understanding the self. . . the distinction of object and subject. We have made a start from the whole psychical individual, and have tried to find the self there in connection with that. But this individual, we saw, contained both object and subject, both not-self and self. At least, the

The Seal of Certainty

not-self must clearly be allowed *to* be in it, so far as that enters into relation with the self and appears as an object—If you take what in the widest sense is inside a man's mind, you will find there both subject and object and their relation——And this self, which is opposed to the not-self, will most emphatically *not* coincide with the self, if that is taken as the individual or the essential individual.

Later he expresses this *deplorable confusion*, as he calls it, in other words; 'The self is at one moment the whole individual, inside which the opposites and their tension is contained; and again, it is one opposite, limited by and struggling against an opponent.'

The apparent contradictions vanish and are transformed into two versions of a single truism, as soon as steps are taken to distinguish between the different meanings of the word *self*. With these distinctions which we enumerated above, all that Bradley's paradox amounts to is an affirmation of the obvious, that his Self as a whole is not identical with one of the two groups of experience, which he regards as composing it in the forms of an objective and a subjective self, that in short the whole is not the same as one of its parts.

Returning to the question of *sentient experience*, we find that Bradley's quest of reality carries him, just as our pursuit of Ego carried us, to the same ultimate conclusion, the Absolute, but he finds that the 'matter' of the Absolute, 'the concrete nature of the system', is experience qualified as 'sentient'.

Experience means something much the same as given and present fact. We perceive, on reflection, that to be real, or even barely to exist, must be to fall within sentience. Sentient experience, in short, is reality, and what is not this is not real. We may say, in other words, that there is no being or fact outside of that which is commonly called psychical existence. Feeling, thought and volition (any groups under which we class psychical phenomena) are all the material of existence. And there is no other material, actual or even possible.

What does Bradley mean by *sentience*? At first sight, it might seem that 'to fall within sentience' must mean 'to come within the province of sense perception' and is therefore equivalent to describing experience as the object of awareness, exactly as we have been led to do. *Sentient* experience would be a synonym for the *conscious* experience of popular parlance and would be subject to the same danger of equivocation. Bradley hastens to explain that experience as an object of awareness is the last thing he means; he will countenance no division of the per-

The Seal of Certainty

percipient subject from the objective universe of its experience. He insists that, going to experience, his only reality, we find *not*

a subject or an object, or indeed any other thing whatever, standing separate and on its own bottom. What we discover rather is a whole in which distinctions can be made, but in which divisions do not exist. And this is the point on which I insist, and it is the very ground on which I stand, when I urge that reality is sentient experience. I mean that to be real is to be indissolubly one thing with sentience. It is something which comes as a feature and aspect within one whole of feeling, something which, except as an integral element of such sentience, has no meaning at all. And what I repudiate is the separation of feeling from the felt, or of the desired from the desire, or of what is thought from thinking, or the division—I might add—of anything from anything else. . . . You cannot find fact unless in unity with sentience, and one in the end cannot be divided from the other, either actually or in idea. But to be utterly indivisible from feeling or perception, to be an integral element in a whole thing which is experienced, this surely is itself to be experience. Being and reality are, in brief, one thing with sentience.

Bradley's standpoint cannot be easily expressed or grasped and the space at our disposal is quite inadequate to do it full justice, but it is clear that he repudiates not only the separation of the felt from the feeling, the desired from the desire, the thought from the thinking, but also, since he merges the percipient subject in experience, any discrimination between the felt, the feeling and the feeler, the desired, the desire and the desirer, the thought, the thinking and the thinker. His universe of experience taken as a whole would seem to consist of a boundless jelly-like mass of undifferentiated feeling. And when, at the end of the passage quoted above, he speaks of *a whole thing which is experienced*, he raises the question who or what experiences it, and one is driven to conclude that, since there is nothing else to experience anything at all, the feeling, the desire and the thinking, the felt, the desired and the thought, must feel, desire and think themselves or possibly one another. The toothache, the rectitude and the idea of the triangle are not being experienced by a conscious subject, as in our blindness we suppose, but they are experiencing themselves and/or one another. In fact, he finds in experience the identity of subject and object, which we ascribe to Ego.

I think that the reader will agree that this conception of self-experiencing experience is very difficult, if not impossible, to grasp or realize. Experience we know and the conviction of an experiencing Ego

The Seal of Certainty

haunts us, but nothing can be more alien from the thoughts of our mind than the thought that those thoughts are thinking themselves. Nor does Bradley's theory as to the origin of our notions about object and subject clear away any of our difficulties. Since there is no conscious Ego to play the part of subject as distinct from the object, the sentient experience contained in a Self divides itself into two psychical groups, one of which is described as the not-self or object and the other as the self or subject. With Bradley, the object always takes precedence over the subject—a reversal of logical etiquette which is, as we shall see, deeply significant. The two masses of feelings, thoughts, memories and so on are in a state of perpetual flux and their elements continually shift from one mass to another. There is no hard and fast dividing line between them, but it seems that the not-self or object is in the foreground fully presented and brilliantly illuminated and the subject self is in the background only partially or not at all presented in the field of awareness. If I feel a pain, there is, on the one hand, the not-self, the pain-experience, fully and vividly presented, and on the other, an indefinite mass of experience, dimly or not at all presented, which appears, if it does appear, as the self and subject, feeling and rebelling against the pain.

Later in connection with *self-consciousness* in the sense of *awareness of consciousness*, Bradley asks two very pertinent questions: how do we take one object as *self* and another as *not-self*? Why is the observed object perceived at all in the character of *self*? 'The all-important point', he replies, 'is this, that the unity of feeling never disappears. The mass, at first undifferentiated, groups itself into objects in relation to me; and then again further the *me* becomes explicit, and itself is an object in relation to the background of feeling. But none the less, the object not-self is still a part of the individual soul, and the object self likewise keeps its place in this felt unity.' We have then apparently an undifferentiated, single, self-feeling feeling, grouping itself—why one knows not—into differentiated groups regarded as an object round a *me* of unknown origin, which eventually becomes a subject and as such an object in the self-consciousness which we call awareness of consciousness, but it is not clear whether these differentiated objects experience themselves or one group of them experiences the other, or the whole congeries experiences itself and its differentiations.

The difficulty does not seem materially eased by the statement that

The Seal of Certainty

self-consciousness in this sense does not really entail the complete identity of object and subject; for the trouble lies much deeper—in the fact that self-experiencing experience is a contradiction in terms in the order to which experience essentially belongs, the world of time and space. For the conscious subject, we can find a lodging outside time and space, but experience is the child of time and multiplicity. Bradley explains *self-consciousness* as *awareness of consciousness* in the following way.

There does not really exist any perception, either in which the object and subject are quite the same, or in which their sameness amid difference is an object for perception. Any such consciousness would seem to be impossible psychologically. . . . Self-consciousness, as distinct from self-feeling, implies a relation. It is the state where the self has become an object that stands before the mind. This means that an element is in opposition to the felt mass, and is distinguished from it as a not-self. And there is no doubt that the self, in its various meanings, can become such a not-self. But, in whichever of its meanings we intend to consider it, the result is the same. The object is never wholly identical with the subject, and the background of feeling must contain a great deal more than what we at any time can perceive as the self.

From this passage it would appear that the subject group of experience, and not the whole congeries, experiences the object group, and is in fact the *we intending to consider*, mentioned by Bradley in the above quotation. A collection of thoughts, feelings, memories, etc., thinks, feels and remembers thoughts, feelings and memories not contained in itself, in fact is both conscious and aware in our sense of the words.

The reluctance of humanity to attribute consciousness such as its own to the lower forms of life lends plausibility to the otherwise unintelligible idea of *conscious* or *sentient* experience. They are denied selfhood and the comprehension of their own existence, since they have no first personal pronoun in their vocabulary of sounds and have never been heard to affirm I A M. Our comprehension of our own existence, it is argued, arises from the inconceivably complicated development of our minds after centuries of centuries of evolution. Animals may be aware of primitive experience more or less as we are, but conscious never. Yet since there must be some origin for the Self, the most primitive organisms, even crystals perhaps, are supposed to start with some obscure, faint, undifferentiated feeling, a kind of mental protoplasm, from which, in the course of evolution, the idea of a Self composed of object and subject has arisen. To Bradley, it 'seems certain' that 'every soul either exists or has existed at a stage where there was no self and no not-self,

The Seal of Certainty

neither Ego nor object in any sense whatever'. It is from a basis, which he defines as 'a whole of feeling given without relation' that thought and will emerge.

Our distinction between consciousness and awareness liberates us from this hypothesis of indefinite, self-feeling feeling as the prototype of all experience and of both consciousness and awareness. One may doubt whether the suggestion would have been tolerable, if the word *feeling* had not, in its form both of substantive and active participle, seemed to combine both active and passive senses in a reflexive neutrality. For us, both consciousness and awareness are co-terminous with life. It is only of awareness of consciousness that the lower orders of life are deprived.

This Self of Bradley's appears to me as a room full of varied objects all merged into the unity of invisibility by the absence of light. His self-feeling feeling in its isolation conveys nothing to my mind but darkness, or at the very best a faint glow of phosphorescence confounding all outlines. I look in vain for that light of awareness which unceasingly illuminates the experience of the waking Self and without which Self and experience are meaningless in time and space. Feeling may be given me as immediate psychical fact unqualified by any consideration of subject and object, but I cannot think of it except *as given and felt*, and the briefest and simplest reflection convinces me that it could not have *been given or felt* at all, if it had not been observed, and that its observation is conditional on the presence of awareness in the Self, the light in the dark room. This realization anticipates the findings of the more complicated introspection, which discriminates between subject and object and from which Ego emerges as a constant background to the stream of experience, a necessary assumption and unquestionable truth.

It is noteworthy that Bradley, as a follower of Hegel was bound to do, in his *sentient experience* acknowledges in *effect* the presence in the Self of an element in which subject and object are identical, that contradiction in terms which is usually regarded as the main stumbling-block to the recognition of the permanent Ego. For him indeed, it forms the entire contents of the Absolute, the Self, and all Reality. As we have said, he is carried in his quest of reality to the same goal as we are carried in our pursuit of Ego—the Absolute or One, in which subject and object are or is the same. The only discrepancy between our definitions of the Absolute may seem at first sight a distinction without

The Seal of Certainty

a difference. For us, it is a subject transcending and absorbing the object in all its determinations, the identity of subject and object which we find in Ego's comprehension of his own existence. For Bradley, the object always takes precedence of the subject, and the Absolute is the object transcending and absorbing the subject in an identity which he finds in *sentient experience*.

So long as we are in the order of the Absolute, this discrepancy may be no more than a distinction without a difference, a merely verbal discrimination. In Eternity, where the One is both subject and object, Ego and experience might possibly be regarded as interchangeable terms, but in this world of space and time, they are sharply differentiated and opposed as subject and object, and it makes a universe of difference, if that identity of subject and object is ascribed to Ego or experience. For us, Ego in so far as he is conscious abides eternally in the Absolute and only enters space and time through the operation of his awareness. Experience belongs essentially to time, for it is the creation of time, though transcendently it finds its place in the Absolute by virtue of the Divine Plan which we are trying to adumbrate. Conscious Ego in whom subject and object are, one is at home and in his place in the Absolute, where such an identity is necessary. *Conscious* or *sentient* experience with the same identity of subject and object is a contradiction in terms in the order of time and space, in which it is born and moves and has its being. *Sentient* experience seems to substitute for the conscious subject, which Bradley calls 'a metaphysical chimera', a phenomenal impossibility.

In the following passage of *Prolegomena to Ethics*,¹ T. H. Green, whom Mr. Aldous Huxley ranks among *the acutest thinkers* of the nineteenth century, comes near to stating the theory of the Self just advocated, if the distinctions drawn as to comprehension and consciousness, apprehension and awareness, are introduced into the argument.

¹ In *The Perennial Philosophy*, Aldous Huxley quotes a part of this passage and, commenting on it, says that Green writes 'or mystical union as though it were an evolutionary process and not, as all the evidence seems to show, a state which man, as man, had always had it in his power to realize.' By what is evidently a copyist's error, thirteen words have dropped out of the quotation, *What we call our mental history is not a history of this consciousness*, and the omission makes Green say exactly the opposite of what he means; for *a history of the process by which the animal organism becomes its vehicle* is made to qualify *an eternally complete consciousness* instead of defining *our mental history*.

The Seal of Certainty

In the growth of our experience, in the process of our learning to know the world, an animal organism, which has its history in time, gradually becomes the vehicle of an eternally complete consciousness. What we call our mental history is not a history of this consciousness, which in itself can have no history, but a history of the process by which this animal organism becomes its vehicle. *Our consciousness* may mean either of two things; either a function of the animal organism, which is being made, gradually and with interruptions, a vehicle of the eternal consciousness; or that eternal consciousness itself, as making the animal organism its vehicle and subject to certain limitations in so doing, but retaining its essential characteristic as independent of time, as the determinant of becoming, which has not and does not itself become. (*Prolegomena to Ethics.*)

Examining this passage in the light of the verbal discriminations mentioned above, we find that Green's *eternally complete consciousness* stands for the Absolute, which can have no history, since it is eternal and immutable. The process by which the animal organism becomes the vehicle of the Absolute, the mental history of life in fact, signifies the gradual gathering of experience through awareness, by which the Absolute is differentiated as Ego and made subject to *certain limitations*, that is time and space. This differentiation can best be illustrated by the metaphor of a circle with radii of awareness like rays of the sun, which are one at the centre in the Absolute and separate at their terminals on the circumference in space and time. It is clear that experience which is always becoming and changing belongs to time and evolution. Green's dichotomy of *our consciousness* justifies our analysis of the Self with its separation of consciousness from awareness, Ego from Emauton, and comprehension from apprehension. We should be in entire agreement, if his use of the word *consciousness* did not suggest that the organism which is becoming the vehicle of the Absolute possessed consciousness in its own right as apart from the eternal consciousness of the Absolute. The function of the animal organism, the self we have called Emauton, consisting of experience, gathered *gradually and with interruptions*, to form the sheath or cocoon, the temporal garment of the incarnated Ego, can never be conscious or aware, but only the object of awareness. The Absolute itself, which makes the organism its vehicle or rather we should say its loom for the weaving of its vesture of experience, is subject in so doing to the limitations of time and space, but in its essence retains its *characteristic as independent of time, as the determinant of becoming, which has not and does not become*. Ego in so far as he belongs to the Absolute has no history; his history, in so far as he belongs to time, is written

The Seal of Certainty

in Emauton. That history is told by Professor McDougall in *An Outline of Psychology*: 'The modes of purposive striving form a continuously graded series, from the pursuit of its prey by the Amoeba to the moral struggle of man.' The series begins in 'the vague almost undifferentiated striving of the animalcule in pursuit of its prey' and passes through the stage of 'striving prompted by desire for instinctive goals', to the 'striving regulated in the choice of goals and means by the desire to realize an ideal of character and conduct'.

For want of drawing a clear line of demarcation between consciousness and experience, between the faculty of awareness and its object, Green seeks to transport the knowledge that we acquire in time and space into the transcendental region of the Absolute and Ego—a translation that claims to be justified by Kant's identification of the synthetic unity of apperception or Ego with Verstand or understanding. True, the perfect Wisdom of eternal comprehension reigns in the Absolute, but the knowledge gathered for Ego's awareness by and in Emauton abides with the imperfections of mortality in time and space, even when it is reflecting, through the Vision or otherwise, the light of the eternal Wisdom. Our knowledge is part of the evolutionary process like the rest of our experience. Only consciousness or the Mystic Union endures eternally, enclosing within itself both time and space.

The certainty of the Vision, then, arises from Ego's intuitive comprehension of Ego, the perfect Wisdom of the Absolute, penetrating into the experience of time and space. How such a penetration from the order of the One into the order of the Many is possible, can find no complete explanation in an intelligence composed to deal only with the manifold and experience. It is enough for the mystic pursuing Enlightenment in time and space that it happened and, generally speaking, he can find no better means of enshrining the event in his memory or communicating it to others than by symbols of Light. Nothing can be more certain than that ray of spiritual light which dissipated the darkness of time and space.

The seer of the Vision, unlike Bradley, will always give precedence to the subject over the object and set Ego before Emauton, since without consciousness there can be neither awareness nor experience. Awareness implies a subject who comprehends his own existence, though he may be totally unaware of it. Consciousness, the identity of subject and object, stands behind all animate beings as the necessary

The Seal of Certainty

condition of life, and there can be no evolution of an identity. What is the same cannot become more same.

Ego, the spirit, remains in the order of the Absolute to which he belongs, though by the virtue of his awareness, inward consciousness as it were turned outwards, he is able to take within his grasp the ever-changing phenomena of the evolutionary universe of time and space and by projection identify himself with mortality. Not Ego, but the organism which supplies his awareness with new experience and the ever-developing mind built out of it are the children of evolution. Ego can never be directly aware of consciousness, for the identity of subject and object cannot in its actuality enter into his experience as a cognitive state, since it belongs to the order of Eternity and the One and contradicts the definitions of Time and the Many, which set subject apart from and in opposition to object. In this respect man is on exactly the same plane as plants and animals; all sentience or awareness, indeed all life, is accompanied by consciousness on the same level as our own, and, in the plant, the microbe or the animal, the Ego of the Absolute is incarnate just as he is in the human form. It is only the organism and the body of his experience, Emauton, that are different.

Consciousness is the imperceptible mainspring of all life, however humble in its temporal manifestation. Man differs from the plants and animals in that his experience has been so highly developed in the form of mind that he has been able to perceive, or rather deduce, the reality concealed from them, the participation of all life in the Absolute, not indeed by direct perception except in the Mystic Vision, but by means of thought and word-symbols; he can say / or speak of *the synthetic unity of apperception*. It is nothing that the lower forms of life may be totally unaware of their Ego and may find in their experience no token of his nature or existence. Man is so imperfectly aware of his own Ego that famous philosophers deny Ego's existence and set up in the stead of a conscious subject the idol of a conscious object.

To sum up, the seal of certainty stamps upon the Visionary's mind a double confirmation of reality. As a rule, the least mystical of men, if he has had little truck with modern philosophical scepticism, would be inclined to agree that his Ego did exist and that he was conscious of his own existence. Probably he would affirm this belief of his as a certainty. The Vision clenches this certainty in two ways: on the one hand, it imposes an intuitive comprehension of Ego's reality, which defies all

The Seal of Certainty

argument and ranks as one of those first fundamental principles that cannot be questioned, though no man knows whence came the understanding of them:

Per6, la onde venga lo intelletto
delle prime notizie, uomo non sape.
Purgatorio, XVIII, 55

On the other hand, it adds to this conviction of mere existence or reality a no less absolute certainty as to the nature of that reality, expressed in Illumination by those three other seals that await our consideration, the seal of eternity, the seal of divinity and the seal of humility.

SUMMARY

Self: (a) Spirit=Ego =conscious subject=subjective self,

(b) Soul=Emauton=objective self.

Experience—the contents of Emauton, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, memories, etc.

Spirit alone is conscious, that is comprehends itself recognizing its own existence in the identity of subject and object.

Spirit alone is aware, that is apprehends an object not itself.

Consciousness is the faculty by which Spirit or Ego comprehends himself, subject and object being identical; such an identity, an impossible contradiction in terms in the order of the Many, is not only possible but necessary in the order of the One, known to theologians as God. Consciousness is both eternal and divine and therefore Spirit or Ego must also be eternal and divine.

Awareness is the faculty by which the eternal Spirit apprehends in time an object not itself, that is soul or Emauton, belonging to the order of the Many and composed of experience which is neither conscious nor aware. It is the bridge between Eternity and Time, the One and the Many.

IV

THE SEAL OF ETERNITY

Quis tenebit cor hominis, ut stet et videat, quomodo stans dictet futura et praeterita tempora nee futura nee praeterita eternitas?

Who will hold the heart of man that it may be still and see how in its stillness eternity without future or past ordains times future and times past?—AUGUSTINE. *Confessions*, XI, n

It pleased thee to be born amid the lives that perish
And to bind in human fetters the swiftness of thy way,
To taste thyself the savours of brevities men cherish,
Aiid enclose thy divinity in clay.
H. S. VERE-HODGE. *Soul and Body*

The heart of man is for the most part concerned more deeply with the hope of immortality, which he can understand without effort, than with the meaning of eternity, which lies outside the circle of his apprehension as belonging to another order of Being. Life after death he can envisage in terms of present existence and can control his instinctive shuddering at the thought of extinction by reference to that Oblivion or insensibility, which sometimes tears a gap in the continuity of his experience. Eternity remains an ineffable mystery, vaguely conceived as time never beginning and time indefinitely continuing; so the pious grant the immortal and created soul an eternity that has a beginning and no end, as it were, a one-way eternity, and even Pascal the mathematician comes perilously near to the assumption of two eternities, when he bewails the shortness of human life *absorbed in the eternity preceding and following*; for eternity can neither precede nor follow the temporal, nor can it be snipped in half by any occurrence in time such as the creation of a human soul. Nevertheless, in the Vision, it is an abiding sense of eternity which solves the problem of immortality. Tennyson in his record of spiritual experience gave utterance to an impression stamped indelibly on the

The Seal of Eternity

mystic's mind—certainly on the mind of the present writer—that *death was an almost laughable impossibility*; a laughable impossibility, a fantastic absurdity, no phrase could be more accurate.

The reflection of Mystic Union breaks into experience as the image of something timeless and eternal. It is the affirmation of Ego's eternity, the eternity of spirit, and, since immortality cannot be experienced in advance of death, it is this confident attribution of eternity to the conscious subject which makes death a laughable impossibility and pronounces life immortal. 'When a man is one with God,' asks George Macdonald, 'What should he do but live forever?' As von Hiigel says so acutely in *Eternal Life*, the belief in eternity is primary, the belief in immortality is derivative. He is, however, mistaken, I venture to think, when he insists that 'the eternity ... is the very centre of the experience itself, and is the chief inducement to the soul for holding itself to be divine'. On the one hand, it is the spirit, not the soul, that holds itself to be divine. As Mr. Aldous Huxley says, 'all the exponents of the Perennial Philosophy make, in one form or another, the affirmation that man is a kind of trinity composed of body, psyche and spirit'. Spirit is the equivalent of Ego, soul or psyche of Emauton, and the message of the Vision most decidedly is not the eternity and divinity of Emauton, which is sloughed with the burden of its sins in the moment of revelation as the child of time, but the eternity and divinity of spirit or Ego. On the other hand, the impressions of Illumination are stamped with the seal of divinity as well as the seal of eternity, and the memory of God Immanent has a rightful claim to be regarded as *the very centre of the experience itself* *Visio Dei* cannot but transcend *Visio Eternitatis*.

Necessarily there can be no adequate representation of eternity in the language and thought of time; yet the mystic, who has caught a glimpse of its reality in the intuitive flash of the timeless moment, must needs try to find *in* the experience of Enlightenment some symbol to stand for the inexpressible. Eternity implies the eternal *now*, a conception that makes its appearance very early in Greek philosophy (c. 450 B.C.) with Parmenides' definition of reality: *it never was and never will be, for it is all together present in the now, one and complete*. Mysticism and eternity are inseparably connected. So Plotinus says (III, 7, 3) that when we contemplate eternity, 'we see a life which is permanent in its identity, which possesses all things at all times present to it, which is not first one thing and then another, but all things at once; which is perfect and

The Seal of Eternity

indivisible. It contains all things together as in a single point, without anything passing from it; it remains identical and suffers no change. Being always in the present, because it has never lost anything nor will acquire anything, it is always what it is.' So Saint Augustine in the *Confessions* sought words to tell how he and his mother Monica, just before her death, were borne on the wings of the Vision to the World Yonder. 'There Life is that Wisdom, by which all things are made, both what has been and what shall be. And that Life was not made, but as it is so it was, and so it ever shall be. Nay rather, in it there is neither past nor future, but only present, since it is eternal; for there is neither past nor future in the eternal.'

It seems to me that, even for those upon whom the Illumination of eternity has not yet descended, an idea of timelessness may be adumbrated as a first step towards a conception of eternity by supposing for a moment that, by a miracle, all motion has been arrested throughout the entire universe, that the electrons and the stars and all things intermediate have been halted in their courses and that the universe of experience has been paralysed in frozen immobility. Then Time would vanish from the scheme of things; for, if by a second miracle the Cosmos, in its entirety sprang into life again, if the stars and electrons, and all things, greater and smaller, and in between, resumed the busyness of their activities, and the looms of experience renewed their unending task of weaving for spirit the vesture of the soul, then there could be no measuring by time of the interval of universal paralysis. In no conceivable way could it be given temporal significance. Its duration might be computed with equal accuracy as an infinitesimal fraction of a second or millions of aeons. Its immobility would have been timelessness.

There is something of timelessness in the idea of eternity as it is developed in Enlightenment from the impressions of Illumination. The spiritual sight has looked upon enduring changelessness, and the mystic, though he has not budged but only opened his eyes, feels as if he had visited the same far country as Augustine and Monica, where there is neither past nor present but only the Eternal Now. Timelessness differs from eternity as negative from positive, as death from life. Timelessness is static, changeless duration, in very truth unconscious, unaware and dead; eternity belongs to Life and consciousness, and its changelessness is the dynamic immobility of the coiled spring, reconciling the death **that** is perfection in identity with the infinite **potentiality that** needs time

The Seal of Eternity

for its accomplishment. The top that spins fastest seems to sleep. The One, the Perfect, must include within its unity the potentiality of all values and virtues; it is the eternal potentiality of Being, containing within itself all distinctions as yet undeveloped.

To philosophers who deny consciousness, the identity of subject and object, Mystic Union must necessarily appear as timeless nothingness, since pure consciousness is the aspect in which it is most commonly revealed to us. If the Self is nothing but experience, then when in the Vision experience vanishes, nothing can be left. If consciousness is denied to the Absolute, it certainly deserves Erigena's title of *nothing*, though not in the sense which he attributes to *nihilum*, and the Western mind has often tried to equate Nirvana, *the* Liberation from Experience, with annihilation. No seer of the Vision could ever call nothing that combination of peace beyond understanding and pulsating energy, into which he was plunged. Dante with his spiritual eyesight, trained by his journey through Paradise, gazed with the eaglelike fearlessness of Beatrice into the Eternity which is reality and saw in the heart of its motionless repose the untiring energy of its creating potentiality, expressed in his religion by the symbol of the Trinity. So Plato in his Vision of the Perfect discerned the Ideas and Forms that were the thoughts of God.

The Pilgrim of Eternity—the student of the Perennial Philosophy surely has a better right to the title than Byron, though the poet had his Vision—when he has attained the goal of his pilgrimage, contemplates what the Chinese call *the centre in the midst of conditions*, and passes through the coincidence of contradictories, the reconciliation of the opposites, which, as Nicholas of Cusa learnt in his *Visio Dei*, is the wall that encloses Paradise, the place where God is found by revelation. In peace beyond words, he sees the obverse of the miracle of motion. Potentiality and Act can never be sundered in the Absolute; the Divine Thoughts must be their own fulfilment. In the One, we find eternity and potentiality: its all-Wisdom summed up in the comprehension of its consciousness; for outside itself there is nothing to know; its will swallowed up in the changelessness of complete accomplishment, its feeling absorbed in the eternal contemplation of its own perfection. Here indeed, in absolute beatitude, in Blake's *place where Contrarieties are equally true*, there is no separation such as Bradley repudiates of the felt, the feeling and the feeler; the thought, the thinking and the thinker;

The Seal of Eternity

the desired, the desire and the desirer; 'the fire-core of the universe', says George Macdonald, 'the first and the last and the living One*.

This static majesty and complacent beatitude must be counter-balanced by activity and the strivings of imperfection, the One by the Many and Eternity by Time. God in His eternity is life in time, and eternity and time may be called co-eternal; for time has neither beginning nor end, and eternity must enclose unending cycles of time. All the orders of Being must co-exist eternally.

Remembering then that in time there can be no creation of Time and the Many, and that the One is logically, not temporarily, prior to the Many, we have to pass from the solitude of the Absolute, which Numenius calls *the loneliness beyond all words, beyond all telling, the loneliness of God*, to the manifolds of the physical world and experience, and we find the key to the parable of Creation in the differentiation of God, set out in Plato's *Timaeus* as the self-evolution of absolute Thought. We may find reason to dissent from the Master's conclusion that the One can be adequately summed up as Thought and Mind. In the ages that have passed since he laid down the pen, much has been lost, but it would be heart-breaking, if nothing at all had been gained, and, some three and a half centuries after his death, a new emphasis was laid, and a new light thrown, on certain aspects of the nature of God. Do not return evil for evil, said Socrates negatively: love your enemies, said Christ positively. It may be that the real reason why Plato would write no treatise on the Idea of the Good, the corner-stone of his philosophy, lay in the feeling that something higher than Thought, something transcending Mind, lay in the depths of the Divine Purpose, veiled from the scrutiny of his eyes as the light of Paradise was hidden from the wistful gaze of Dante's Virgil. A later chapter will be devoted to 'that something higher than Thought', the synthesis of Love, and meanwhile we may take the -differentiation of God as the Ariadne's thread to guide us through a labyrinth of paradoxes and metaphysical contradictions, and this differentiation is but another word for Incarnation.

Mystical language, because it tries to express reality in word-symbols that only stand for appearances, must deal in metaphors and similes, and allegory serves to simplify the exposition of truths too complex for literal treatment by an arbitrary unravelling of their tangled elements. Just as the writer of Genesis distributed the labours of Creation over six days, so in our parable, we shall make believe that, in the

The Seal of Eternity

beginning of things that never was, the One *is* in lonely perfection and **that** the Many are yet to be. Into the hushed silence of this loneliness, we imagine the entry of differentiation, the coming of the Many, by allegorical licence. The One is to be differentiated by the limitations we call space and time, and we suppose for the purposes of our myth that God accepts first the limitation of space, and afterwards submits to the bonds of time. When differentiation is complete, we shall be face to face with **three** orders of Being, the spaceless, eternal One, the timeless universe of space or the physical universe, and the temporal but spaceless universe of experience.

In our fable, the unity of the Absolute, whose potentiality is contained in its perfection, begins to pass into plurality with the stirring of the Divine Thoughts, the unfolding of the Ideas of Plato. Perhaps we may say that within the single simplicity of the One there appears the adumbration of subject and object, as the circles of the Trinity and the image of the Sacred Humanity seemed to Dante to take shape in his contemplation of God. At once the Act follows, and God, accepting the limitation of space as the first phase of His differentiation and incarnation, dreams the physical universe, .projecting from Himself the first manifestation of the order of the Many. The manifold dream-universe flashes up before Him in space, for without space there can be no simultaneous presentation of multiplicity, and His Thoughts give shape and meaning to the variety of that objective infinity, in which they are embodied. Its design is as perfect in the stability of its plurality in unity—for the space-limited dream has sprung up in motionless simultaneity—as the manifold nature of the dream-stuff permits. Philosophers have **held** great argument about this dream stuff; Plotinus sometimes seems to suspect that in it is lodged the source of evil. In our time the curiosity of physicists has transformed the scientific notion of its substance from solidity to gossamer. *The thing in itself, the substratum of matter*—the question whether it is something outside and beyond the experience, which we believe to be derived from it, cannot trouble the mystic's mind; it is enough for us that it is a convenient fiction in our story of the universe, though it may have no more actual existence than the square **root** of minus one.

Orthodox religion sets no boundary to the universe of God's creation, **and** there is no reason why imagination should boggle at any magnifying **or** multiplying of the vastness and multiplicity of the physical

The Seal of Eternity

Cosmos. In our allegory, we postulate a universe incalculably larger and more complex than the universe with which the scientist deals and that which the theologian usually accepts. For us, God dreams a universe containing not only all that has been and all that will be, but also all that might have been and all that may be, giving multiple expression to all the potentialities of the Absolute. In this universe all physical possibilities are included, not as past or future, but as all present in the timeless *now* of changeless duration. Since there is multiplicity without change, there is space without time; for, as we have said, changeless duration is timelessness. Eternity belongs to God: timelessness to the physical world of His creation. Comparing the immeasurable to the infinitely small, we may liken this dream universe to an unrolled cinema film showing simultaneously the successive instants of its story.

The creative or dreaming God will have need of infinite space to house all the possibilities of time without beginning or end and, if the prophets of Relativity conclude that space is finite, our myth must assume that He creates or dreams an infinite number of finite universes. The Sankhya doctrine of *Pralayas*, world-catastrophes, allows for a total collapse of the universe at the end of each period of 432 million years. Each dream cycle, when time appears, runs down in accordance with Entropy, the ruthless Second Commandment of Thermo-Dynamics, to a death of undifferentiated identity, only to be replaced by a new cycle of creation. This Act is *the snap of the fingers*, which Pascal says was all that Descartes would allow to God to set the world in motion, and for the modern scientist *the finger of God agitating the ether*,

'In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.... And God said let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.' The dreaming of the One implies not only the creation of multiplicity, but also the birth of a faculty to observe it. The dawning of awareness may be compared to the turning outwards of the inner light of consciousness, the light which illumines the eternal One within, so that it shines out upon the universe of the Many, which lies without; for the dream of space creates within and without, subject and object, as relations set over against one another, and the differentiation of the One enters on its first stage. The unity in perfection of the One remains eternal, but multiplicity has appeared in the manifold unity of the spatial dream world. The One, comprehending eternally its own simplicity, apprehends Nature in all its variety as a whole and sees that it is

The Seal of Eternity

good, since it is the materialization of the Divine Thoughts. As yet Nature knows neither time nor life, neither motion nor change, neither consciousness nor awareness, and in strict truth she will never know them, though what really belongs to the One and experience will be transferred to her.

The plan of this timeless universe has been conceived in reference to the imposition of time, the second limitation following that of space, and ready for the inrush of life and motion into its stillness. All its fabric is woven of what we may perhaps call time-lines on the analogy of the world-lines of Relativity, which in time will appear as a series of sectional states like the successive pictures of the cinematograph. Many of these time-lines are gathered into complexes of conditions, which with the coming of time will be shown as organisms for the habitation of life and as instruments of Ego. They await the apparent entry of the One into the world of space, which it has created for its own incarnation. There, spread before the awareness of the One, lies the whole history of every physical organism from the simplest cell in which the vital energy, proceeding as we shall see from God parallel to His awareness, can operate to associations of cells of untold complexity, prepared to gather experience and build up knowledge far beyond human understanding; and not only the time-lines of organisms that have been and are to be, in all their generations from the first flicker of life to their extinction, but also of organisms that might have been and still may be.

In our allegorical approach to Creation, we must consider this immeasurably vast universe as a cinema film, for in our myth we fancy that time and motion with life and experience are introduced into Being on the principle of the cinematograph. The cinematic reproduction of motion depends on three elements, a light in a projector, a band of continuous still photographs and a screen upon which the images of these photographs are thrown. Only one motion is involved; the rapid passage of the film between the stationary light and the stationary screen; and this single uniform motion is sufficient to reproduce on the screen all the multiple motions that we are accustomed to observe in life. Steadily and evenly though swiftly, the film passes through the projector and the most irregular changes and agitations appear to be taking place in the scenes projected. The effect is produced by a film in motion with observer, screen and light at rest; the same effect would

The Seal of Eternity

be presented if material conditions allowed the film and screen to be stationary and the observer and the light to be in motion; when we first leave harbour, it is the shore that seems to move.

The film of the universe, which we are taking to be stationary **and** motionless, does not consist of a series of detached views or *stills* of Nature: there are no gaps between the pictures and development is shown in time-lines of unbroken continuity. All the states "from the opening of the bud to the full blooming of the flower are shown in gradual progression; each instant's changes follow on those of **the last** instant continuously and without interruption like water flowing in a stream. The film which we connect with Hollywood, when unrolled and at rest, consists of a selection of states recorded from the continuity of Nature at very brief intervals, and when we examine it we see extended in space the states which succeed one another in time. The views are detached one from the other by a perceptible gap, yet they are so briefly disjointed that they deceive the eye when thrown upon the screen; in Nature, continuity for our purposes is absolute.

Just as we can inspect a whole section of the film at once, or at least as much of it as we can apprehend at one time, so the One beholds the whole universe simultaneously in all its variety, which in time is shown as change and movement, since the field of its awareness covers all the space it has dreamed. But the differentiation of the Absolute demands more than this spatial manifold. There is little adventure or *catharsis* to be derived from seeing the *totum simul* of a cinema drama, taking in at one go all the ups and downs of its plot, the intrigue and its denouement together. The *raison d'Être* of the cinema arises from the limitation, which allows the spectator to see only one fractional section of the film at a time.

So in the differentiation of the One, the limitation of time must mean a contraction of the field of its observation, which is accompanied by its division into innumerable individual fields, a division which splits up the unity of the light of its awareness. How this is brought about and how each separate ray is one in the centre in the Absolute and isolated in the individuality of its field on the periphery will be discussed later. For the moment it will be well to consider in what manner and with what modifications we can apply to our allegory the principle of the cinematograph. Ego does not observe a reproduction of Nature, but his experience is drawn from Nature itself, so that film and **the**

The Seal of Eternity .

background on which it is thrown may be identified. The light corresponds with awareness and the screen with its field. Since we regard Nature as motionless and stationary, the light and its field must move through the physical manifold in such a way as to produce the illusion of many divers movements therein. Let us think of a passenger in a railway carriage on a night journey, stationary in a tunnel with a patch of its wall illuminated by the light through his carriage window. We will suppose that the train begins to move so smoothly and silently that there is nothing to betray its motion. So long as the surface of the wall of the tunnel is uniform and even, there will be nothing to tell the passenger that he is moving; he will think himself and his carriage at rest. When, however, he runs out of the tunnel into the country, the impression of motion will be forced upon him; he himself will seem to be stationary, but the lighted landscape will appear to be flying past him with the uniform velocity with which he is flying through it. Let us suppose, however, that he is passing between the walls of a scenic railway, adorned with a pattern which shows, like a cinematograph film, in continuity of development, some scene of action and movement; then he will think himself at rest and attribute to the objects he sees outside his carriage window changes and movements which may seem quite irregular, though they are really due to his single uniform motion and the objects themselves remain stationary. The spectator in the cinema, when he is absorbed in some story on the screen, does not interrupt his concentration to think that all these activities and passions—*hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta*—can still be reduced to a few marks on a strip of celluloid and its rapid progression before a light.

Such then is the principle of the cinematograph. The creation of a diversity of objects in the universe of possibilities, which in our myth takes the place of the film, marks the first phase of the differentiation of the One, but more is necessary; a multiplicity of conscious subjects must correspond to the multiplicity of objects and time must be added to space, if the Divine Purpose is to be fulfilled. Yet consciousness cannot be divided, for perfect unity is the essence of its Being and only the One can be subject and object to itself. How, then, can we speak of the differentiation of the One, its discrimination into individual units of awareness, into this Ego or spirit of yours and mine, whom some wise men deny and whom we know so well?

The Seal of Eternity

It is clear that the differentiation of the awareness of the Absolute must follow its distribution among the organisms of the universe, which, as we have said, the Divine Thoughts prepared for its reception. It may well be that in the whole realm of what we take to be objective Being there is nothing which is not in some way responsive to this awareness and that inert and inanimate matter is no more than a delusion due to the short-comings of our senses, as Gerard de Nerval suggests in a sonnet of magic fascination.

At first sight, one might compare the organism into which awareness penetrates to the railway carriage that carries our observer through the universe on the time-lines of Nature. But it is soon apparent that, in time, the organism is no closed and isolated box; from the moment it is ready to receive, and does receive, life or the height of awareness, to the moment when it gives up the ghost and surrenders to disintegration, it is one with the Nature round it and therefore in appearance as changing, in our allegory as changeless, as that Nature. Therefore we must, on the contrary, see the organism as a long corridor stretched out in time, and the only motion is the headlong sweep of the light of awareness through it along the time-line which is marked by the physical brain. There as it passes, it illuminates for Ego's apprehension those aspects of Nature, which are presented through the windows of the senses.

The entry of life into the organism proclaims the differentiation of the conscious Spirit. Following the example of Plotinus, we may compare the One to a Sun blazing in the centre of the universe of the Many, the system of the All. The Light of Consciousness, *self-knowing and self-known*, turned inwards on itself is one and indivisible, but the height of awareness beaming into the order of the Many and immeasurable space may be split into innumerable rays, each ray lighting its allotted and appropriate portion of the objective world through the organism of its incarnation. Like radii of a circle, the rays of awareness are all united in the centre which is the One, for ever one with God, but each beam is distinct and diverges ever farther from its fellows, as it approaches its appointed place of exile in the circumference of the Many. At its centre it is the indivisible Absolute; on the periphery; it takes on the aspect of Ego, distinguished from all other Egos by his connection with an individual organism and, as we shall see, more especially by the body of experience, Emauton, which he forms for himself. So aware-

The Seal of Eternity

ness is differentiated as light is reflected in the pieces of a shattered mirror.

We have, then, in our mythical breaking up of indivisible reality, reached, first the Absolute in the unity and loneliness of its eternity, and secondly the dream universe of the Many in the immobility of space, teeming with organisms that await the coming of life and awareness. Only time is missing, and time comes into our universe with motion just as it does on the screen. With it comes Life like the Spirit or *Nous* of Anaxagoras—*an extraneous power once visited our world and imparted a motion which could otherwise never have arisen*. Take a cinematic picture of a going clock over a period of time; the film will show as near an approximation to all the possible positions of the hands during that period as may be necessary to produce the required illusion. Examine the film apart from the projector, stretched out at full length, and its intimate relation with time will be found to have vanished. However carefully we study those accurate representations of the states, which in the clock serve to mark the progress of time, we can by no means use them as a measure of time, as long as they are at rest. If, however, the film of the clock is placed in the projector and set in uniform motion, it will tell the time as well as a real clock, while it runs. The speed at which it passes through the projector, so long as it is uniform, is of no importance, since allowance can be made for any discrepancy with ordinary clock velocity.

Creation is motion and motion is creation, says Saint Thomas Aquinas, and the more imaginative Fathers tell us that the sun was in Aries and the year was at the spring, when the Divine Love set the loveliness of the universe in motion,

quando l'Amor Divino
mosse da prima quelle cose belle.
{Inferno I, 39, 40}

In our timeless universe as motionless as the unrolled clock film, time—and life—begins with motion, when all the individual fields of awareness, each with its unique view of Nature, sweep onwards as one *now* along the time-lines, that is, following the pattern which provides for the regular succession of phenomena, under the impulsion of the One. All the fields move as one *now*, since they are indissolubly linked together by the union of their Egos in the Absolute. With a mighty sweep

The Seal of Eternity

that dwarfs the revolutions of all Dante's heavens, the awareness of **the One**, in its differentiation as Egos beyond number, speeds through **the** silence of the All. Adapting Plotinus's vision of the advent of All-Soul, we may say: 'As the sun's rays strike the darkness of a cloud and leave it all ablaze with glory, so does the light of the Absolute illumine the body of the heavens and all that in them is, bringing life and immortality, awakening that which lay low and lifeless.' All things spring into furious activity in the sight of Ego, from whose eyes, held in the blinkers of the organism and focused fixedly on the lure of life, like Dante's on Beatrice, with walls of indifference to right and left, *quinci e quindi avean pareti di noncaler*, the true source of change and motion is concealed.

The manifold *now* of life is launched by the Wisdom of the Absolute on the course best suited for the accomplishment of its purpose, but the pattern of the Many, which seen in time we call causation, cannot correspond exactly with that course; for unity can never coincide with multiplicity, in which a strife of clashing values is bound to arise. In the beginning of things that never was, we imagine the *now* gathering momentum, borne on its unswerving way by the initial impulse of the One. This is in truth Bergson's *elan vital*, for through this motion of the *now*, Ego enters the organism not only as awareness, but also as the apparent motive force of life. In this infinitely thin slice or time-section of the universe, which alone we take to be reality, this single *still* of the film thrown on the screen at any given instant, there are set before Spirit, through the awareness of its Egos, innumerable different views or aspects of Nature. To each Ego or spirit, it seems that the past is no longer, the future is not yet, and the present alone is real, though in our myth they all enjoy an equal privilege of Being, the *now* only distinguished by its presence in the field of awareness. The outlook of no two organisms, however close their position in space and similar their nature, can be exactly the same and each outlook is transformed as the field of awareness moves on.

Even now something more is needed. The One, contemplating in the plenitude of its awareness, as a whole and outside time, the manifold universe of space, may fully apprehend its reality and know it both in its entirety and its parts, since it issued from the design of Perfect Wisdom, and there will be nothing to remember in its immutability; **for** memory and change go hand in hand. Ego, in his separate **awareness**,

The Seal of Eternity

his vision hampered by the blinkers of time and the obtuseness of the senses, can only apprehend an infinitesimal fraction of the whole, in part and through a glass darkly, as time hurries him past. Even if things as they really were, were directly and completely presented to him in any given *now*, that single apprehension would tell him nothing at all outside itself, unless he could connect it with previous apprehensions. Past events mean nothing, unless, by that mystery which we call memory, they are carried into the reality of the present from the limbo of unreality into which time has relegated them. A wind-driven cloud skims over the surface of the downs with its shadow and not a trace of its passing is left behind. So for the One, innumerable fields of awareness, innumerable *nows* might shoot like comets through the universe in time unending, and yet the work of incarnation be left undone; for, in the exile of his incarnation, Ego's apprehension of Nature is confined to the data afforded by his individual organism, with the Perfect Wisdom that is his birthright laid aside for his pilgrimage through the Many. One single *now* in its infinite tenuity, that unsubstantial slice of things, which arrogates to itself the exclusive title of *real*, presents itself in isolation as something utterly meaningless. If Ego could grasp only that single state of the universe, which alone we call real, the *now* in its aloofness, past states having vanished from his ken and future states lying outside all anticipation, he could not guess or know whether it had been preceded by something or nothing, whether it had always existed as such or otherwise, and whether it would endure indefinitely as such or undergo change or changes. It is only by remembering past *nows* that he can conceive the idea of time at all; for time may be defined as a series of events and a single term of a series gives no information at all as to the nature of that series; it is only by *remembering* that he can give significance to each state of the universe presented to him and anticipate what is to come from the pattern of the past. The differentiation of the One in time implies the development of a faculty in relation to the organism, capable of seizing and keeping within its grasp the substance of past *nows*. In the eternal One, there is neither past to be remembered nor memory; time imposes upon Ego the necessity of memory. The temporal order of experience has been born.

Out of memories, Ego begins to build for himself Emauton, his Private Universe of experience, a fluid and manifold world in continual motion, and outside experience there is neither motion nor time apart

The Seal of Eternity

from the velocity of the fields of awareness. Remembering that in our myth we have reduced all motions and changes observed in the external world to the single uniform motion of a universal *now* composed of fields of awareness, we may none the less speak of these motions and changes as if they actually took place as they appear to do, just as when we are criticizing a cinema play, we are concerned, not with the real movement of the film in the projector, but only with the apparent activity of the actors and the changes of scenery on the screen. Experience arises from contact between the order of the One and the order of the Many, the gulf between them being bridged by the awareness of Ego. 'The soul', writes Eckhart, 'is created a thing between a first and a second. The first is Eternity, which ever holds itself within itself and is uniform; the second is Time, which changes and is manifold.' Life comes into the organism, bringing with it not only awareness, but also that mystery, revealed to us by the sweep of the *now* as the motive force of life, which sets the organism about its essential task of gathering experience. As the field of awareness moves on in time—it is natural to imagine with the speed of light, the highest velocity which the conditions of the physical world permit—there pours through the senses of the organism a stream of experience, which Ego takes to represent the external world of space. Like the spectator in the cinema theatre, he observes a world full of seeming bustle and ceaseless, furious activity, and it is one of the conditions involved in the realization of the Divine Purpose of Incarnation that, like the spectator at *the pictures*, he should forget that all this sound and fury and agitation is but delusion and arises from the single uniform movement of the *now*. One picture of the outer world flashes up in experience and passes to be replaced by another, but it is not utterly lost after its momentary apparition; it is as it were crystallized by memory and put away in that secret repository, which Saint Augustine calls 'the vast Judgment-Hall of memory, where are stored the treasures of innumerable images representing all manner of things ever perceived by our senses'. This vast Judgment-Hall, we style Emauton, the soul, the mind, the character, the temperament, the personality; for experience is the raw material of Emauton in all its capacities, and memories must always form very nearly the whole of experience.

What do we know of this raw material from which our temporal objective self is composed? It belongs to an order of Being, which while

The Seal of Eternity

it is a part of the order of the Many, lies between the order of the One and the order of the timeless spatial universe. It represents the final phase of the differentiation of the Absolute, being plurality in time without space, a universe of one dimension and that dimension time. Yet reflection shows that we do sometimes seem to associate the idea of space with experience and the world of our inner sense. It is true that space regarded as a facility for movement has no significance within the Self, but space as permitting the simultaneous presentation of multiplicity would certainly appear at first sight to be a dimension of the mind.

If I look out of my window, a varied manifold, consisting apparently of a multiplicity of objects, is set before my awareness. It is a commonplace to compare Ego's Private Universe of experience with a boundless dark sea, the darkness broken only by a lighted patch in its midst, on which the light of awareness shines. That illuminated zone, it is suggested, may be enlarged or diminished at Ego's pleasure to cover more or fewer objects of awareness, more or less experience, by his capacity of focusing his awareness through the faculty of attention. Certainly such metaphors postulate in the order of experience some space-like category. Again, do we not sometimes try to think of two things at once and if the results are not unlike those of divided will and action, failure in accomplishment is no proof of its impossibility?

It is my firm conviction that space has neither part nor parcel in experience, and at this point I must ask the reader to come to my assistance and seek within himself the answer to the problem; for it can only be solved by introspection and an appeal to introspection means that one judgment is as good as another and each inquirer must satisfy himself. We must for the nonce accept the standard of Protagoras, *man is the measure of all things*. In order to explore the contents of Emauton, it is advisable to reduce to a minimum the disturbing influence of the inrushing stream of experience. At the outset, one must court that tranquillity, which Philo as well as Saint Augustine lays down as the first approach to the revelation of the Vision, that state of mind in which *the voices of the senses are hushed, and all their troublesome and disturbing echoes*. In darkness and silence, with nothing to awake the sense of smell and taste, aware only of the pressure of a couch and the indeterminate muscle sense, which forms the background of waking life, and resisting the temptation to search for **the** narrow and difficult

The Seal of Eternity

path that leads to the bliss of pure consciousness, we bid Ego to turn **the** light of his attention on such contents of Emauton as may be present in our field of awareness, or rather perhaps the order is given to mind to submit to Ego's observation the experience to hand.

It will, I think, soon be apparent that at least one of the ways by which the idea of space insinuates itself into experience is closely connected with the sense of sight and our power of exercising it. That experience-shaping machine, mind, has a faculty of externalizing certain varieties of its material. When we have our eyes open and are looking at something, our perception of that object, shaped from the incoming flow of experience, is projected from the Private Universe, where it was born, into the external world and there what we shall find to be the sum of a number of perceptions, succeeding each other with what Hume calls *inconceivable rapidity*, takes on a semblance of simultaneity and consequently space. Nor is this spatialization of our visual experience confined to occasions when the eyes are open.

The vivid visual images, whether imagined or remembered, that haunted Coleridge, sprang from externalization against the background of the closed eye-lids, when his *ocular spectra* appeared before his shut eyes. That same background I have often recognized, as it were a screen awaiting the advent of the hypnagogic images, which muster in the Marches of Sleep. If the closed eyes are allowed to play a part in our exploration of Emauton, experience will be presented to Ego's awareness, not in the raw condition in which we wish to inspect it, but sophisticated, visually shaped and projected into that mysterious Limbo of imaginary space and time. For, in the world of imagination, shadows of space and time hold sway, a land nearer to the One than experience **and** of supreme importance, since there the direct influence of the One may be felt, but its significance and nature must await later consideration; for it is not by analysing the fictions of imagination that we shall uncover the fabric of Emauton.

Having then resolved to permit no muscular movement, no straining of the closed eyes, one may set oneself a simple problem, easily solved by experiment. Is *it* possible to think at one and the same time of the two tips of one's parted forefingers? I found that I could not. My efforts to think of them both simultaneously merely resulted in **the** dodging to and fro of my attention between them both. I was incapable of grasping them both together. Yet when I brought **the** two **finger-**

The Seal of Eternity

tips together and thought of them with their fingers as forming an angle, there was an end to the dodging to and fro and I could think of them both together as composing a single unity. Similarly I could think of a line without difficulty, but if I tried to think of the points at its two ends, again my attention was divided and I could not get both of them together into the picture.

Now Hume in quest of the conscious subject tells us that when he entered most intimately into what he called *himself*, he always stumbled on some particular perception or other. On this occasion we are restraining that yearning for the beatitude of Mystic Union, which urges the mystic to pursue the inmost heart of his being, that spirit, which so often slips through his fingers, like the young man with a linen cloth cast about his naked body, leaving behind only the cloak of experience. It is this linen cloth, this covering of the spirit, which was left in what Saint Augustine might have called the hand of Hume's heart, *manu cordis*, that we are wishing to examine. What is this particular perception on which Hume stumbles? To my surprise, when I entered most intimately and deeply into Emauton, I lighted on something which I could not recognize as a perception at all, something that, on the face of it, I could not connect with perceiving, thinking, feeling, wishing or anything of the kind. To call it a thing at all was manifestly to obscure its indefinite fluidity; such consistency as it possessed was that of a film background, which betrays by a flicker the dependence of its deceptive solidity on continuous repetition. Yet in the field of awareness there certainly was an object, immaterial and evanescent in the extreme, but still *not* nothing. Perhaps it might be described as an Euclidean point, a mere mark of position in time without dimensions, a wraithlike symbol, an abbreviation, one of the microscopic photographs of a photostat which only becomes intelligible when magnified, or simply x the unknown quantity in an equation of which the other terms are to be supplied.

Almost instantly I found that x stood for my thought of the tip of the forefinger of my right hand, but how that happened I did not know. So setting myself a test equation, as it were with only one unknown quantity, I told myself to think of a word, a short word easy to envisage, to make matters as simple as possible. Then I looked in my field of awareness and again I found an unknown quantity. There was an infinitesimal delay, but none the less appreciable, before in the workshop of mind x was assigned its value and for the nonce the word *pig*

The Seal of Eternity

attached to it. Experience in its primitive condition can no more be identified with the finished product than sound-waves with the effect of music on our minds. Coleridge probably came as near to thinking and imagining in words as is possible for any human being; for him the image and the word seemed to coincide, the idea and its symbol to be identical, or, as he put it, *all the images rose before him as things with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort*. Yet even for Coleridge there must have been a moment's lapse, before the image became the *thing* in the *atelier* of the imagination, and the *thing* its correspondent expression in word-symbols, attuned in the case of *Kubla Khan* to an exquisite harmony of sound in an intricate rhyming metre. The average writer, as the present one knows only too well, is aware first of *x* as a symbol of some idea that is emerging from the subliminary depths of his Under-Mind, from what Dryden calls *a confused mass of thoughts tumbling over one another in the dark*, and Henry James *the deep well of unconscious cerebration*; then there comes a shadowy inkling of what it stands for, struggling to the light, and at long last after the birth pangs of mental travail is born, if fortune smiles, the *mot juste* that defined and clarifies.

The wide oceans of experience and the lighted patch of awareness are not to be discerned by the eye of introspection; they are only what we think our experience ought to be. Nor again are we faced by that breadth of stream, which Bergson's *duree*, on no account to be confused with timeless duration, may perhaps tempt us to imagine, despite the warning of the metaphors of pearls strung in a necklace, and the notes of a melody interpenetrated and intercomposed, which cannot be separated without the death of the tune. It is rather as a jet finer than the finest spider's gossamer that the flow of experience spurts into the Private Universe, like water gushing through a pin-hole under tremendous pressure, yet with neither length nor breadth or depth. The *now* is for Ego in introspection a single object of awareness, without spatial dimension, continually replaced with vertiginous rapidity and the fluidity of liquid by other objects, some of which are indistinguishable one from the other, producing by repetition an impression of duration, and all of which stand, or can be made to stand, for something intelligible to Ego. In introspection of this kind, attention is focused on the entry of experience, whether from without or from the repository of memory, into the *now*; in ordinary waking life, Ego's attention is con-

The Seal of Eternity

fined to a later stage of its elaboration; for the unknown quantities, which we may call sense data, pass through the calculating machine of mind, where the equations are solved and eventually values in terms of thoughts, feelings and so on are substituted for the x 's, y 's and z 's. In this department, experience is dealt with by rule of thumb and custom as well as by those principles of logic and reason, which Ego as the temporal representative of Perfect Wisdom impresses upon the organization of Emauton. The calculations and reckonings are usually carried on with the lightning speed of instinctive action: the result is shown in the *now*, but the operations by which it was reached, performed with the shortest of short-hand symbols, are hidden, unless Ego applies himself to going over them again *in* slow motion. They are often inaccurate; for mind is an imperfect instrument, still in process of formation by the method of trial and error, and the electric brain may well surpass it in accuracy and capacity for dealing with complicated sums.

There is, however, another department of Emauton, which lies high above the challenge of machinery or electric brain. All new experience, which mind passes as worthy of record—Bergson ascribes to the physical brain the function of selecting rather than shaping or preserving experience—finds its way into the laboratory of imagination, where, deciphered, perhaps defined by a word or words and clothed in rich robes of associated memories, it is transformed into a coherent version of reality. The elaborated perception may be projected out of Emauton into the physical world and given a position in space. Ego thinks that smell is in his nose, taste in his mouth and touch in some given portion of his frame. Hearing is even more externalized; for what we hear is not referred to the ears as smell to the nose, but to the position in space from which we think the sound comes, while seeing is utterly cast forth into nature with colours, shapes and space dimensions as though it was not experience at all. It may be all-important for self-preservation that warning should be given of the direction and place from which a sound comes, and the life of the organism often depends on a vivid presentation of its environment by the sense of sight. One wonders if animals who depend so much for their safety on the sense of smell may not localize the scent of an enemy and consequently other odours far outside their noses in the agencies from which they are emitted. In this manner we are led erroneously to attribute, in a half-hearted way, spatial dimensions to the experience which composes Emauton.

The Seal of Eternity

In humanity, imagination may be exalted to the lower peak of that fabled mountain from whose highest summit the mystic discerns the Beatific Vision. I repeat from *The Timeless Moment* a quotation from Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, in which, dealing with Turner's genius, he splendidly depicts the mysterious magic of the imaginative mind.

Imagine all that any of these men (Dante, Scott, Turner, Tintoretto) had seen or heard in the whole course of their lives, laid up accurately in their memories as in vast storehouses, extending, with the poets, even to the slightest intonations of syllables heard in the beginning of their lives, and, with the painters, down to minute folds of drapery, and shapes of leaves and stones; and over all this un-indexed and immeasurable mass of treasure, the imagination brooding and wandering, but dream-gifted, so as to summon at any moment such groups of ideas as will justly fit each other; this I conceive to be the real nature of the imaginative mind.

Such is the magic function of imagination, the intuition of genius, and it is this power of fantasy that in our sleep ministers to our dreams, forging when slumber is on its way a phantasmagoria of tenuous images that are the raw material of visions, which make pretence of time and space. In this department of the soul, faith and hope detect the possibility of direct action on the part of the Eternal Wisdom, penetrating into the temporal sphere without the mediation of the mortal organism, the visitation of what theology calls the Divine Grace, and the revelation of the Vision, which imagination seeks in Enlightenment to interpret through metaphor and allegory.

It may be doubted whether any memory is entirely forgotten, whether indeed a single datum is cast out of Emauton's store of experience, even though its equation has never been fully solved and it appears to have slipped by unnoticed, shrouded in a twilight of anonymous indecision close to darkness. Such lost or half-formed memories may be brought back to the light by psycho-analysis or hypnotism from *the secret place*, which Augustine vainly sought in the inmost recesses of his soul as a lodging for the past and future, and perhaps nothing that has ever been presented in the field can be as if it had never been. It is well the memories in their countless multitudes having no dimensions take no room. Many of them must be packed away in the equivalent of microscopic facsimile or algebraic abbreviation, for even when they are ready to hand, they often need expansion and substitu-

The Seal of Eternity

don, before Ego can grasp them. Some may elude all attempts at recapture, but there is little doubt that they lie embalmed like the fly in amber in that associated mass of experience, which clothes the spirit with Emauton.

The differentiation of the One proceeds through endless time, the rays of its awareness striking on the numerable organisms that await them, and the universe sparkling with their resplendence as the wind-polished stones of the Sahara twinkle innumerable under the African sun. With the onrush of the universal *now*, their reflections carry with them life into places where life was not, at first perhaps into the simplest of all contrivances for its reception and for the making of experience. The coral insects in their millions, each one contributing its tiny mite, build up from the floor of the ocean vast structures for their habitation. Here and there where they have built highest and longest, the towers and pinnacles of their palaces rise above the sea in islands, separate on the surface, but interlinked below. So for the purpose of our myth we may suppose that the experience of innumerable animalcules is gathered together to form a limitless repository of what might perhaps be called psychical and mental protoplasm, since it is the raw material of soul and mind. It resembles that obscure, faint, undifferentiated feeling which Bradley postulates as the only reality, but our protoplasm is not his *sentient experience*, because it is not the only reality and because it depends for its existence on the awareness of the One and the reality of consciousness. Its equation calls for no subtle solving; for this primitive experience has only two aspects, attraction or repulsion, love or strife, which Empedocles so rightly named as the primal principles of the universe. An accumulating mass of evidence, notably systematic experiments with telepathy, seems to argue in favour of what Jung calls the *Collective Unconscious*, which we prefer to call, less tersely I fear, but more lucidly I hope, a community of subliminary experience. We cannot yet speak of Emauton; it requires a later and more minute differentiation. The coral reef must rise above the surface of the sea to attain to the individuality of an island with a name of its own. The light of the One's awareness sweeps over the multitudinous concourse of short-lived, rudimentary organisms and its swift passage accumulates experience as gathering snow may swell a stone, carelessly dislodged by a mountaineer, into a mighty avalanche. The organism disintegrates, **but the torch of awareness** is handed on, and the dim **memories of attrac-**

The Seal of Eternity

tion and repulsion begin to form individual patterns and grow gradually more complex with the interweaving of more subtle and sophisticated experience, until there emerges like the *atoll* emerging from the sea an objective self worthy of a name, the unique unity of Emauton, which Ego incarnate identifies with himself. In the great scheme of the Divine, there can be neither failure nor waste, and the veriest imperceptible scruple of experience has its part to play in the drama of the universe.

The One has laid down the law for its adventure, the rules of its knight-errantry in the guise of Ego, putting off the wisdom, the power and the glory and accepting for its entry into the world of the Many, by virtue of its Divine Nature, a ruthless probation by trial and error, known to science as evolution. The experience gathered in one existence is carried on into the next, for Emauton is bound to its Ego by the silver cord of necessity, and through countless vicissitudes and untold progressions and retrogressions the inmost mansion of the soul is built and garnished as a worthy residence of God.

There are two fundamental principles, which the differentiation of the One imposes on Ego's penetration in to space and time; at any cost life must be established and maintained, at any cost life must be reproduced. Ego, isolated in his organism from Omniscience, must through the senses collect for himself information about his environment and learn from this experience how to keep his organism alive and how to reproduce his kind. The Hindus say that eight million four hundred thousand births are needed, before Ego can enter the organism of a man, and our only quarrel with their mathematics is that they seem to err on the side of moderation. The *now* with its countless fields of awareness must have sped through oceans of light years of space, each of them between five and six million million miles, before my Ego can have accumulated round him this strange agglomeration of instincts, habits, de ires, hopes, fears, unprofitable memories and speculations, all this mscdly of experience, which makes up what in ordinary conversation I am pleased to call myself, though, from dint of thinking about it and suppressing all thought about it, I have learnt to distinguish between its essential objectivity and the subjectivity of Ego. We have marvelled at the industrious working of the coral insect, the heart-breaking plodding persistency with which such tiny creatures raise from the depths of the ocean a solid foundation on which trees can grow and men can live;

The Seal of Eternity

far more marvellous is the gradual emergence of the human mind *er precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.*

By slow degrees, the machine of organized experience takes shape, augmenting the rich complexity of its substance and its arrangement, and enveloping in the distinctive integument of personality its Ego, himself indistinguishably one with his fellows in the simplicity of the Absolute. Whatever we may call Emauton, the objective self, soul or mind, character or personality, confusion arises as soon as it is endowed with consciousness or awareness, which is the property of Ego and cannot belong to it. The influence of the phrase *conscious experience* is far-reaching and hard to eradicate, though very few people would seriously argue that their thoughts think or their feelings feel. Emauton is what Pascal called the machine or automaton, and its operations are carried on in the darkness of non-consciousness and unawareness, as though it was made of, and dealing with, inert, inanimate matter, unless Ego or spirit throws upon them the light of his awareness. Subliminary experience is not confined to the collective reservoir of primitive feeling, but the roots of each Emauton are embedded far below the threshold. Those basic activities, which experience has shown indispensable to self-preservation and the reproduction of the species, have long ago worn for themselves what Professor McDougall calls *the hereditarily determined channels for the discharge of nervous energy*, in other words the instincts, and experience is so packed and ordered as to allow of the performance of habitual actions without interference in the field of Ego's awareness, which is kept fully occupied with other preoccupations. T. H. Green's idea of our *mental history, the history of the process by which an animal organism becomes the vehicle of an eternally complete consciousness*, amounts to the elaboration of a calculating machine, constructed out of and for experience, consisting mainly of memories and giving its results in thoughts and feelings. Its workings are hidden from Ego's observation. and as a rule he pays no more attention to the manner of its operation than a bank clerk to the shifts and turning of the wheels of his calculating machine. A thought shoots up in our awareness and we know not whence it comes. When Dante was spirited from Venus to the Sun in the twinkling of an eye, he could find no better analogy for the miraculous swiftness of his flight, profound psychologist that he was, than that instantaneous suddenness, which

The Seal of Eternity

makes it impossible for a man to notice the coming of a new thought, before it is already there.

Great play has been made by psychology with the submerged experience, hidden away in the depths of Emauton and the subliminary abysses, primitive terrors and anxieties, superstitious knots and complexes of intolerable guilt, and by a strange paradox the use of the term *unconscious*, which we have renounced, has tacitly attributed to these concealed causes of derangement that very *consciousness* which the name denies them. This personification, or even deification, of dark powers within the soul, which are of exactly the same substance as the fears, anxieties, regrets, desires and repentances that appear regularly in our awareness, can only darken counsel by ascribing to Emauton the faculty of Ego, to the temporal the property of the Eternal, to the Many the prerogative of the One. No doubt the amount of submerged experience, which any given Ego can claim as part of his Private Universe, is vast beyond reckoning, infinitely greater than that nine-tenths of the iceberg which floats below the level of the sea, and no doubt it contains blood-curdling memorials of primeval Furies and curses, but there must also *he* found within it treasures of instinctive mechanism, controlling all the automatic functions of existence and keeping us alive. Moreover, the miracles of genius and intuition rise like a fountain from the profundity of subliminary experience.

"We have spoken of Emauton as having a beginning and no end, and it might be argued that such a snipped-off eternity is a highly unphilosophical conception. All things that have a beginning should logically have an end. Plato has said the last word on this problem as on so many others. Such an endless continuance of the created is justified in the *Timaeus* by the Master-Craftsman, who, after creating the gods, announced to them that all things brought into being by Him were indissoluble save by His will.

Behold, all that hath been fastened may be loosed, yet to loose that which is fairly contrived and in good case would be the will of an Evil One. Wherefore, inasmuch as ye have come into being, immortal ye are not, nor indissoluble altogether; nevertheless ye shall not be loosed nor *meet* with the doom of death, having found in my will a bond yet mightier and yet more sovereign than those wherewith ye were bound, when ye came into being.

The annihilation of Emauton would involve the mutation of the

The Seal of Eternity

Immutable, As Julian the anchoress of Norwich would have **put** it: *It lasteth, and ever shall, for that God loveth it.*

Our conscious spirit gazes out upon the manifold of his **Private** Universe from the timeless and spaceless unity of the Absolute, **like the** Blessed Damsel leaning out from the gold bar of Heaven **and** looking down *over the sheer depth In which Space is begun*. So earnest is he to live the life of experience that he casts himself into it and forgets himself in Emauton, ascribing to it the consciousness which is his alone. The truth of his own eternal nature cannot penetrate into the domain of his knowledge, which is subject to the opposition of subject **and** object and to the laws of time and space, any more than sound waves can impress themselves on the retina or light waves be registered by the ear. So Ego lives in time and space with nothing more to remind him of eternity than an implication in the personal pronoun that he does not notice, and perhaps when he has attained a certain height of abstract thinking, some abstruse philosophical phrase or a paradoxical contradiction in terms. It is only through the Vision that something of the full measure of his divine nature can be revealed to him in his temporal awareness and no man can command the coming of the Vision; for with the Divine Grace of Theology it moves according to a mysterious dispensation.

As we have said, consciousness must not be regarded as the special privilege of mankind any more than as the prerogative of angels or bacteria. It belongs in its fullness and entirety to all living things. It is the essence of life and the same through immeasurable gradations of experience, gathered by countless varieties of organisms in endless stages of evolution from the green scum on the stagnant pool to the hierarchy of Seraphim and Cherubim, if such be the titles **that the** highest celestial ranks be pleased to approve. The quantity **and** quality of all experience depends on the capacities of the organisms, which have collected, arranged and preserved it. Consciousness is an absolute. There can be no halfway house between the identity of subject and object and their antithesis, no mezzanine floor, **like** Plato's opinion between knowledge and ignorance. The eye of faith may discern in the background of all life God, eternally glowing **in** the bliss of His own perfection, yet, as it were, gazing out with His awareness on the innumerable facets of His dream of Creation **and**, as Ego, engrossed in the manifold pattern of **life, until, identifying Him-**

The Seal of Eternity

self with it in love, He becomes in very truth incarnate and suffers its sufferings.

Hume talks of the insensibility of the deepest sleep in which *he may be truly said not to exist* and the annihilation of death. For us, consciousness is eternal and time can open no gaps in eternity. Consciousness can suffer no interruption in its living presence in the eternal *now*. How, then, are we to account for Hume's insensibility of sleep, those periods of *unconsciousness*, with which sleep, trance and anaesthetics make us familiar, and the final *annihilation* of death? Ego may become insensible, his awareness may be suspended, either through his own withdrawal from the manifold of experience or the failure of his organism, but his consciousness in our sense of the word can accept no break of continuity. Even if all his experience were blotted out, he would still be conscious in his one-ness with the Absolute. In time, there may be nothing for him to apprehend and he may become utterly unaware of his objective self, lost in the Vision. He may close the doors of his awareness on Emauton, turn in upon himself in eternity and no trace of his communion with the One will appear in experience, when he is called back to earth, except by a miracle of Grace. It matters not at all whether this escape into the beatitude of the Eternal is opened by prayer and fasting and mystical disciplines, by accident, trance, sleep or drugs, the result is the same, absorption in the One, but the mystic alone brings back with him into life some reflection of that timeless moment. The scientific graphs of the intensity of sleep show that the normal sleeper plunges headlong into the depths to reach in half an hour the utmost degree of profundity, when one may believe that awareness is utterly swallowed up in consciousness. Almost at once he is summoned back into the dream stage of experience, carrying with him into waking life no more than a sense of refreshment and exhilaration from that other world from which he is torn so reluctantly. The word *unconscious* in this as well as the psychological sense is for us a contradiction in terms, and we must use for it such words as *insensible* or *unaware*, and employ *non-conscious* for the lifelessness of inanimate matter, if such a thing there be.

For the hiatus in experience, which no more breaks the continuity of consciousness than a rest in music interrupts the silence that is the background of all sound, we employ the word *Oblivion*, whatever the cause of the fissure in awareness may be. Consciousness, being divine, can

The Seal of Eternity

never sleep; for it is blasphemy to attribute sleep to the Changeless God who knows no weariness. 'Peradventure he sleepeth,' cried Elijah to the prophets of Baal, taunting them with the impotence of their false god. If Ego's awareness is presented with a blank by the temporal mind or if the motion of his experience is paralysed by some physical disability, he may be cut off from the world of sense and memory, but none the less, rather the more, he remains one with the glowing consciousness of the Absolute. He abides, as Plotinus puts it, in his own dear fatherland, that home which later mystics have called the Ground of the Soul. The chain of Ego's awareness that links him with time may be often broken, but his consciousness, which is lodged in eternity, never.

A thick black veil [says Newman in a famous sermon,] is spread between this world and the next. We mortal men range up and down it, to and fro, and see nothing. There is no access through it into the next world. In the Gospel this veil is not removed; it remains, but every now and then marvellous disclosures are made to us of what is behind it. At times we seem to catch a glimpse of a Form which we shall hereafter see face to face. We approach, and in spite of the darkness, our hands, or our head, or our brow, or our lips become, as it were, sensible of the contact of something more than earthly.

So does the enlightened mind strain to express the miracle of the Divine Presence in visions of finite beauty, which beat their wings in vain against the *thick black veil* we call *Oblivion*. In daily life, Ego's awareness pierces outwardly through the dark curtain into the world of time and space, and through it the experience, which is the purpose of his incarnation, is reflected back to him, but an impenetrable screen forbids, except on some occasions of Grace or divine fortune, the eternal light of the Absolute to penetrate the curtain's opacity and be imaged in the mirror of experience. Only with the Vision, through some happy disposition of the mind, does that splendour burst into Emauton like a lightning-flash—rather we should say, the veil of Oblivion is blown aside for an instant and reveals the glory that lies behind it. For we must not think of consciousness and Mystic Union as an effulgence that flashes up and disappears like a meteor, but as a blazing sun that shines in the constancy of its own eternity, though only manifested to temporal experience in the momentary rending of the veil. Often in the high mountains, setting out before the first streak of dawn, I have been unable to bring myself to regard the stars in their multitudes and brilliance, pressing down upon our heads from the velvety blackness of the

The Seal of Eternity

sky, as individual suns and worlds, separated one from the other by the eternal silences of infinite space: rather they seemed an infinity of pin-pricks in the black pall of night, revealing each one a glimpse, a tiny glimmer, of the dazzling vault of light behind the darkness, which burns eternally and overspreads the universe with the majesty of God.

In Ego's darkest hour, in the valley of the shadow, under the wings of death, the glory of eternity blazes behind the veil of time, and when death lifts the curtain, a step will take him to the laughter at the heart of things.

But, it may be said, all this moil and turmoil, all this accumulating of experience, all this heroic building of character and personality, through countless aeons groaning with the agony and strivings of the creature, what is it but labour in vain and wasted endeavour? If we are to take our myth seriously, does not Nature abide in timeless immutability, and neither sorrowing nor regret, neither courage nor cowardice, neither guilt nor repentance, can avail to change the order of its design or vary its pattern by a jot or a tittle? The *now* of the differentiated One, carrying with it the *nows* of every living thing is borne through space, not spinning down *the ringing grooves of change*, but fast held by time-lines of iron determinism to a preordained destination and in the achievement of winning through there is neither merit nor value. All the weary journeyings of innumerable Egos will be as if they had never been. Why should the One plunge from peace and beatitude into a purposeless whirlpool of changes and chances only to be tossed ashore at the point from which it started?

Are we then to suppose that for Ego, once he has been launched on his course through space and time, there is neither choice nor free arbitrament? Is the story of his life, before he lives it, as rigidly pre-determined as the plot of a film drama, before the first scene has been shown upon the screen? The circumstances that await him, the experience he will gather from contact with them, the personality which life will forge for him—are they all foredoomed by an inexorable fate? As has been said, what we call causality arises from the regularity of the universe dreamed by the One, and in that universe is contained all that has been and all that will be, all that is, all that might have been and all that yet may be. This infinite inclusiveness of possibilities corresponds with the perfect foreknowledge of God, but within its possibilities need not be counted that midway universe of experience, which comes into

The Seal of Eternity

being in time between the pregnant peace of eternity and the lifeless rigidity of space.

The Private Universes of all living beings combine to make this universe of experience as well as the subliminary collectivity, and all experience comes into being with the motion of the *now*, the general field of awareness, through Nature. All fields of awareness move as a single field in a universal *now*, but the course of life cannot be set finally once and for all. In the manifold, there is no simple straightforward steering along the great circle, but zigzags and circumvolutions, deflections and corrections, all gathered up and compensated in the actual direction taken by the *now* under the countless impulses of innumerable living things. When a particular Ego acts or thinks he acts, he believes that he is altering the configuration of the outer world, though, as our myth has it, he is only altering the course of his field of awareness, and the series of events that the future lias in store for him.

Very deep-rooted in human nature is the conviction of free-will, the power of choice. It is indeed almost as difficult to shake a man's belief in his responsibility for his actions as his faith in his own existence. Free-will and Predestination have given birth to foison of controversies and heresies, and in a later chapter we must summon audacity to scrutinize the mystery, which defeated Dante's Seraph. Here we need only consider the possibility of reconciling freedom of the will, credence in which is too firmly established in the heart of man for it to be safely ignored, with that constitution of the universe which we have devised for the purpose of our myth. In these days of scientific psychology, it is agreed that in all probability Ego's opportunities of exercising his free-will and spontaneously interfering in the scheme of things are more restricted than he thinks. His initiative is more limited than his dignity is prepared to admit, and many of his actions may be regarded as entirely conditioned by factors outside his control. Yet there are occasions when two or more divergent ways seem to be open to him, and it seems to depend on an effort of will, of independent resolution, which road he takes.

To open a loophole for free-will, we must turn back to our application of the principle of the cinematograph to the universe and modify our fancies of the film offered by Nature to our observation. Just as we imagined a physical world far vaster and more complicated than that with which the scientist deals, so we must elaborate our film with a

The Seal of Eternity

complexity of alternative reels such as no earthly producer ever dreamed. Instead of a story running on a single course to a definite conclusion, we must have a plot that forks again and again into as many alternatives of intrigues and climaxes as imagination can conceive. In days gone by, the expert writer of the newspaper serial was armed at the back of his brain with a diversity of alternative plots, into any one of which after any instalment he could switch his tale, in accordance with its reception by the public. From time to time, the film of each Ego presents moments of choice when two or more possible continuations are set before him, and his choice decides which of these possibilities is to be the actuality, the other or others being left behind by the hurrying *now* in the darkness of mere potentiality. They may yet have their part to play, if the Divine Will, in which there can be no room for waste, ordains that Nature shall be explored in recurring cycles of time from every side and in every direction. It is as if Ego in that railway carriage, which with the fluidity of Wonderland turned into a long stationary corridor, came now and then to a junction, where the time-line branched, and, having control of the points, could travel straight on, following the line on which he started with its own particular scenery and stations, or switch down some other line running through different country. The route that he chooses will be the only one that seems real to him and other lines he might have taken will be no more for him than the might-have-been.

So far as the motion of time is concerned, his *now* must keep level with all the other *nows* of life: he cannot move arbitrarily into yesterday or to-morrow; but he can alter the contents of a future *now* by correcting the course of his awareness in space. Every deflection in an individual field of awareness affects the course taken by the universal *now* through the physical world; for it is delicately balanced like a great rock which will swerve and sway at the touch of a finger. Ego, informed by Emauton's memory of the past as to what the pattern may hold for him in the future, may dislike the prospect and switch to a new time-line to avoid it.

V

THE SEAL OF DIVINITY: THE REVELATION OF GOD IMMANENT

... I rest not from my great task!
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
Of man inwards into the Worlds of Thought, into Eternity
Ever expanding in the bosom of God, the Human Imagination.

WILLIAM BLAKE. *Jerusalem*, Chapter I.

A passage from Saint Augustine's *Confessions* (VII, 10) may serve as a bridge of transition from the seals of certainty and A eternity to the seal of divinity, the revelation of God Immanent, since it combines these three aspects of Mystic Union in the identity of the Divine Light and the final synthesis of Love. 'I entered into my inmost self with Thee to guide me.... I entered and I saw the Light Immutable. ... He who knows the Truth knows that Light, and he who knows that Light knows Eternity. Love knows that Light. O eternal Truth, and true Love, and loving Eternity!' Truth stands for the mystic's certainty and from the timeless moment of eternity he passes to the Light and Love which are the names of God Immanent.

Augustine has no qualms in confessing that he found the Light Immutable, the Divine Presence, within his inmost Self—*interior intimo meo*—but for many mystics, after the revelation of God Immanent, the rest is silence. There was one aspect of the Vision', wrote a reader of *The Timeless Moment*, 'I deemed sacrilegious even to mention. The pulsating energy, the power and the glory were in me and through me, by me and for me. I was not a spectator—not merely some fractional part of that blessedness. It has no parts. It was, and is, wholeness and unity—a moment during which it is enough not to be doing but TO BE.' It was in the heart of his heart, the soul of his soul, Beatrice, that Dante beheld his own transfiguration, when he was caught up from the

The Seal of Divinity

Earthly Paradise to the Sphere of Fire, and he alludes both definitely and deftly to that sense of deification, which has set a trembling forefinger on the lips of so many.

Nel suo aspetto tal dentro mi fei
qual si fe Glauco nel gustar de l'erba
che 'l ft consorto in mar de li altri Dei.
Trasumanar significar per verba
non si poria; pero resempro basti
a cui esperienza grazia serba.

So inwardly I gazed on Beatrice that I became as Glaucus did, when he tasted the magic herb that transformed him to the Sea God's fellowship. *Transhumanization* (really *deification*, though Dante is careful not to say so) no words can express; but let the example of Glaucus suffice for him for whom grace holds the experience in store.—*Paradiso* I, 67

No further hint is needed, if Grace will grant experience: as Santa Teresa says, *only he who knows can say, for there is no understanding it, let alone saying it*. It is hard for sinful man, accustomed to confound under the single heading of Self or the first personal pronoun all distinction between spirit and soul, Ego and Emauton, to claim union with God, since the self which he knows and calls 'I' is so obviously anything but divine, or even to admit to himself that that Self has something within it which is divine; for he can only call that *divine something* T—yet, as Tennyson says, his knowledge of that union, the presence of divinity, is *not a confused state, hut the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words*. With such unearthly clarity is the truth perceived that the most humble and god-fearing mystic is forced to whisper to himself the appalling blasphemy, *I am God*, before he recovers sanity with the realization of the very special sense he must attach to 'I'. By an adroit classical reference to Glaucus, the Boeotian fisherman, who was turned into a god and a god of that strange element the sea, to whom Virgil tells us seamen paid their vows, the greatest of poet mystics avoids the presumption of the downright claim that in the transformation of his humanity he was made God. What he meant would be plain to all who had shared his spiritual experience. In the mental turmoil of Illumination, that immediate sequel to the thunderbolt revelation of Mystic Union, there are constant elements which no

The Seal of Divinity

emotion can **overlay or confuse and which all the terrors** of **orthodoxy and the** influence of religious education **are** powerless to suppress. Every mystic is agreed, with the reservation which calls for prostration beneath the feet of God Transcendent, that the Vision leaves behind it the memory of an unalterable certainty, a certainty which is not of this world, and that this certainty signifies, in things temporal the happy issue out of all our afflictions, in the order of the eternal the identity of God with the core of the Self.

After the Vision has passed, no sense of guilt and unworthiness, no impression of God's awful Transcendence, of which we shall have cause to speak at length in the following chapters, can quite obliterate the remembrance of the breathless recognition of God Immanent, the actual Divine Presence within the soul. For the majority of mystics—for all at any rate who belong to William James's category of *healthy souls*—the thought of God's nearness, His seeming coalescence with what we vaguely call the *self*, overshadows the revelation of Omnipotence and Perfection. Thus in the fourteenth century the Lady Julian, the saintly anchoress of Norwich, *a simple creature unlettered*, was *astonished for wonder and marvel that I had, thai He that is so reverend and dreadful will be so homely with a sinful creature living in wretched flesh. For in us is His homeliest home and His endless dwelling.*

Possibly the appreciation of God's intimate proximity overwhelms with less bewilderment those of religious habit, who, like the anchoress, are accustomed to close converse with the Deity, than ordinary worldly men like the writer with no definite religious views beyond an instinctive belief in the existence and transcendent inaccessibility of the Absolute. The inwardness of the Vision leaves no room for doubt. Mystic Union has no part in space or time, but its revelation most indubitably takes place within the Self.

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness.

BROWNING. *Paracelsus*

The identification of consciousness and the Absolute, the belief in **the** divinity of life, carries back our inquiry to the origins of thought, **to** those forgotten memories, which lie buried beneath mountains of **later** experience in the underworld of the soul. How early in the history of

The Seal of Divinity

its evolution did Emautcm **rise** to the mirror-like capacity of **reflecting** the light of Mystic Union, so that Ego could be aware—as well as conscious—of his eternal and divine nature, if only for an instant of time? While the soul is a mere embryo of barely differentiated feeling, lost in the community of subliminary experience, Ego can still hold aloof from his life in time with almost the detachment of the gods of Epicurus or the Neo-Platonic Absolute. There can be no question of his losing his identity—forgetting, as Plotinus says, his noble birth and lineage—in the first shadowy impressions of attraction and repulsion, the only objects presented in the field of awareness. As seen in terms of time, the incarnation of the One appears as a process of innumerable stages and only after oceans of years can the walls of the prison ordained to hold him in his exile be amassed strong enough and thick enough to shut out almost entirely the vision of his heavenly home.

Animals by virtue of their acceptance of the experience that is their lot and the aloofness of their spirit, whom their awareness cannot know, may well enjoy a fuller communion with the divine than is vouchsafed to humanity except on rare occasions. They are less engrossed in past and future and the bliss of deep slumber with its plunge into pure consciousness seems more easily available to them. Celsus, the Epicurean philosopher whose attacks on Christianity were countered by Origen, was quite serious when he so charmingly described the birds as a race particularly dear to the gods, *θεοφιλέστερον γένος*. I have seen an animal, knowing at last that his time was come and that the master whom his temporal self had regarded as God was powerless to ease his agony, yield up his spirit, resigning himself to death and withdrawing with one last sigh into the solitude beyond all awareness, where pain cannot follow. The inferiority of animals lies in the less complete incarnation of the One within them; the more highly developed the mind, the more closely is the spirit enclosed within the soul, the more unquestioned Ego's identification with Emauton. In the animal, there can be no question of the light of Mystic Union penetrating into experience, but the animal Ego finds less in his experience, limited by the capacity of his organism, to absorb his attention and masquerade as the essential self. Early in human history, the Vision irradiates the world, and Ego is enlightened in his awareness, if imperfectly, of his divinity. He finds himself in Seneca's words, *deus hospitans in corpore humano*, a god lodging in a human body as a passing guest, and though too often the faith

The Seal of Divinity

is weak and the hope faint, yet this idea may be found at the base of all our religious emotions and thoughts.

We moderns are prone to be mightily puffed up at the marvels of this age and to celebrate the revolutions worked by science in the space of a century as events unparalleled in all the cycles of time. Yet two thousand five hundred years ago, the world beheld in little more than fifty years a far more profound and far-reaching miracle, the Great Awakening of the Human Intellect, that movement of the soul, which with the teachings of Pythagoras, Buddha and Confucius between 550 and 500 B.C. stirred the whole world to its depths from Greece to China. Even earlier the Vision had laid the foundations of the Perennial Tradition. Its revelation is manifest in the doctrines, which in India the Ksatriya or warrior class opposed to the Brahmanism of the priests, and the essence of that faith was summed up in the formula *tat tvam asi, that art thou*, or as Mr. Huxley puts it: 'The Atman or immanent eternal self is one with Brahman, the Absolute Principle of all existence.'

Brahman [writes Dr. Bussell in his *Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages*] is conceived as the *ens generalissimum* . . . supreme cause of all physical and psychic potencies, and yet best expressed by their negation. The highest *without* is identical with the highest *within*, 'the Inward Controller' . . . and this simple axiom expresses the whole cycle of doctrine, Brahman equals Atman, God equals the Self. . . . The Absolute has nothing in common with the Vedic gods. It is not even conceived as their parent: like everything else, they are the product of its dreaming. Though it transcends all being and every predicate, it is very near us, being our own self: through our minds the Absolute looks forth with myriad eyes (which are yet the same) upon a world of mirage which He (or it) has produced by somnambulism. There is much delight in the discovery of this secret; the *Upanishads* are not steeped in melancholy, and like the *Bhagavad Gita* . . . show a glad appreciation of the nearness of the divine.

Again:

Our Atman is the only real, is itself unknowable, and cannot be *object*, since it is the eternal *subject* of knowledge. . . . The Atman, once existing alone, thought: 'I will be manifold and make the worlds issue forth'; and having created them he entered his creation as its soul. . . . Therefore the Highest is already within us; and we have no need of prayer or magic to bring Him nearer. Salvation (if only we knew it) is already realized and assured.

This doctrine of spirit and soul, Ego and Emauton, the revelation of the Vision, finds a counterpart in Egypt in a dualism of the Self, the soul, which Dr. Bussell describes as 'the sum of the faculties which rise

The Seal of Divinity

out of the use of our bodily organs and die needs of intercourse with a tangible world,' and the Ka, the immortal demon within, of whom it is written on a tomb, *Thy Ka is thy God, He parted not from thee and so thy soul liveth eternally*. Professor Breasted tells us that the Egyptian believed 'that the body was animated by a vital force, which he pictured as a counterpart of the body, which came into the world with it, passed through life in its company, and accompanied it into the *next* world. This he called a *Ka*.' The Professor mentions in this connection the Christian doctrine of body, soul and spirit. The Ka provides an exact parallel to the Christian Synteresis, the divine principle that preserve the soul, which will shortly demand attention. 'The Ka', says Flinders Petrie, 'became a divine principle, indwelling and saving the soul.'

Again, in Greece, from 600 B.C. onwards, the Orphic Mysteries preached salvation through the acquirement of the Divine Nature, and the tombstones of the Orphic Brotherhood bear such epitaphs as *Happy and most blessed one! Thou shalt be a god instead of a mortal!* or *Thou art a god from being a wretched man!* Sometimes the Orphic Proficient carried with him to the grave an amulet with the words, *I am the offspring of earth and the starry heaven. I too have become God*, while the initiate of Mithras, who appears as a god intermediate between Ormazd and Ahri-man in Iran, claims deification in the words, *I am your fellow-wanderer star*. **σύμπλανος ἀστήρ.**

Did the Orphic Mysteries play some part—or did the Vision itself that his master Plato knew so well?—in introducing into the philosophy of Aristotle the mystical conception of the **νοῦς ποιητικός**, the *intellectus agens*, the higher creative Reason, which is immanent in the human mind, and in the external world, separate, unmixed, pure, impassible, eternal and immortal? It comes into the soul from outside and is its only divine element. The definition would stand for our conception of Ego, were it not for the emphasis that is thrown on mind and intellect, which we ascribe to Emauton.

The reader will find in Dr. Inge's *Christian Mysticism* a most valuable and learned Appendix on *The Doctrine of Deification*, to which the following pages are deeply indebted. Its erudition makes it manifest that the audacious claim of the individual spirit to identity with the Divine Spirit has been continually advanced in all the known stages of human history. It is impossible to assign limits of place or time for this knowledge of the indwelling of God, which is so intimately bound up with

The Seal of Divinity

the development of religious thought. The divers manners in which it is expressed in divers religions denote the difficulties and-dangers, which their founders foresaw would arise from the presence in the believer's heart of this ineradicable certainty.

It is clear that the seal of Divinity Immanent involves two possible stumbling-blocks: on the one hand, the mystic may fall into the sin of spiritual pride and presumption; on the other, he may sink into a lethargy of complacency and self-satisfaction. As concerns the first error, his realization of God Immanent may lead him to take Emauton for Ego and transfer to the manifold imperfections of his temporal experience the perfection of consciousness in eternity. It was after the Spirit of God had descended like a dove and alighted on Christ that He was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. In the Vision, the might of eternal Omnipotence is reflected in time like distant lightning flickering on the darkness of a cloud, and the reflection of the Creator's might, which clenched the bonds of the Universe, makes child's play of the natural forces, atomic and otherwise, which we think we command, further removed from the Supreme than the sluggish flow of Dante's Chi?na from the speed of the swiftest all-inclusive heaven. Like all great forces, when it strikes into the manifold of time, it may be fraught with a power for immediate evil, sweeping life off its course with a violence which can only be corrected by the exercise of the Omnipotence that allowed it to happen.

Was Hitler with his genius for intuitions and the colossal tyranny of his blind Emauton taken up into an exceeding high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and did he fall down and worship the Tempter, his temporal self? *If thou has not seen the devil, look at thine own self* Did the Vision in very truth present itself to him in such a guise owing to the defects of the mirror in which it was reflected? It may well be so. In nothing is the wisdom of the Church more justified than in its insistence that the validity of the spiritual experience can only be judged by its fruits. 'Because of the Shewing,' writes the Lady Julian, 'I am not good, but if I love God the better; and in as much as ye love God the better, it is more to you than to me.' Dante prescribed the test:

per sentir piu diletanza
bene operando, Fuom di giorno in giorno
s'aecorge che la sua virtutc avanza.

The Seal of Divinity

By feeling more delight in good action, a man realizes from day to day that his goodness is increasing.—*Paradiso*, XVIII, 58

If we are unable to believe in a Devil with power to appear as an angel of light and acknowledge no source for the Vision except the Perfect, yet it is all too true that it may work good or ill in accordance with the nature of the soul in which it is received; it is not the origin, but the destination, which makes the difference. Had Hitler's mind but had a framework of religion or philosophy in which to fit the revelation, if revelation there was and his history is more than a tragedy of ignorance and of that selfishness which worships Emauton as a God, if there had been any principle to control and direct the power entrusted to him other than arrogance and the lie in the soul of the Chosen Leader and the Chosen People, there might to-day be less reason for despair, apart from the direct intervention of the Perfect in a revelation more widely cast abroad among humble souls of pious inclination.

Hitler's are happily rare monsters of Nature, but in souls of less depravity, indeed in souls not ungifted with charity and virtue, the enthusiasm of the Vision calls for self-restraint and the control of the noblest ambitions. Its message must not be read as a sign of encouragement to the mystic to devote himself to correcting the lives of others, before he has set his own in order, so true it is that charity in its highest sense can only begin at home. Good actions are only good, when they proceed from goodness, and one who would mend the world should be sure that he has repaired the cracks in his own soul, before he sets out on his campaign. Outward and visible demonstrations of love and charity are but a mockery without its inward reality. All mystic literature is agreed that the Vision calls for no eccentricity among its followers, but rather that they should pass unnoticed in the crowd, and its interpretation in any other terms than those prescribed by institutional religion or a proved philosophy imposes a probation of many years. The world is full of sick Messiahs and litde good will it have of them.

The second and more subtle peril, which may follow the revelation of Mystic Union, may, through the sense of the divinity of life and the memory of the beatitude of Eternity, drown the activity of Emauton in a tranquil ocean of content and complacency. If Mystic Union is not a state to be attained, but an eternal presence, what purpose can there be in earthly struggles to bring Emauton nearer to *the* likeness of the

The Seal of Divinity

Divine model and mould life and the world more into conformity **with the** Perfect, so far as the feeble powers, which Ego exercises in **time and** space through the agency of Emauton, can avail?

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar.

To some the Vision comes as a summons to withdrawal from the world. Like Plato's Great Pilot, they throw down the tiller, leave the ship and retire to a *πρωτή*, a watch-tower from which they can **contemplate** the universe in perfect peace.

Turning back to Dr. Inge's exhaustive account of the Doctrine of Deification, may we not discern in the very word *deification* what is perhaps an instinctive attempt to guard against the dangers of presumption or complacency? Deification implies Mystic Union not as eternal union with the Divine, knowing neither beginning, interruption nor end, but as an object to be achieved, a reward for merit to be acquired in time, a conception that seems to deprive the words *divinity* and *eternity* of **all** possible meaning: surely there can be no going in and out of eternity, as if it were a place or a period of time, since, as Boethius says, it is *interminabilis vitae tota simul et perpetua possessio*, and divinity cannot be a condition to be attained and enjoyed by the praiseworthy mortal. Perhaps, then, we may regard *deification* as an euphemism for the downright claim to divinity forced upon the mystic, and the deification of man was numbered among the subjects freely discussed by the Fathers of the early Church. Dr. Inge quotes Harnack as saying that 'after Theophilus, Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Origen, the idea of deification is found in all the Fathers of the ancient Church, and that in a primary position'. It is indeed the obverse of Incarnation and Athanasius declares, *He became man that we might be deified*.

'To modern ears,' writes Dr. Inge, 'the word *deification* sounds not only strange, but arrogant and shocking.' Yet it is less shocking and arrogant than the bald and brutal claim of identity with God in the phrase *God and I am one*, though its presumption turns on the meaning we assign to I; is it spirit or soul, Ego or Emauton? Ego, as we understand the word, is as far removed from Emauton as heaven from earth, eternity from time, the One from the Many: in all Being there is no wider gulf than that which separates them, for all that together they form the Private Universe. The abyss, which the average believer of

The Seal of Divinity

to-day sets between his God and himself, forms no more insuperable barrier than that which *ex hypothesi* holds asunder the order of the **One** and the order of the Many, perfect Ego and sinful Emauton. In the *one* case prayer, in the other awareness, is the name we give to *the* bridge that spans the impassable. The sense of blasphemy, which may shock in the mystic's recital of his creed, arises from verbal confusion. There is nothing in the doctrine of God Immanent to shock the most orthodox; indeed it has been held heretical to deny *it*. In the experience of time and space, Ego is as unfathomable as the Absolute with which he is one. The statement *I am God* sounds far more sacrilegious than the affirmation *I am the Absolute*, because we tend to ascribe to the Perfect a personality of experience, which can only belong to time. 'The Western consciousness', says Dr. Inge, 'has always tended to emphasize the distinctness of individuality, and has always been suspicious of anything that looks like juggling with the rights of persons, human or divine.'

In its early days, the Church welcomed the doctrine of deification with special stress laid on the promise of immortality, and the following instances are selected from a number brought forward by Dr. Inge. 'Man, by keeping the commandments of God, may receive from Him immortality as a reward and become God.' (Theophilus.) 'To be imperishable is to share in Divinity.' (Clement). 'Thy body shall be immortal and incorruptible as well as thy soul. For thou hast become God. All the things that follow upon the Divine Nature God has promised to supply to thee, for thou wast deified in being born to immortality.' (Hippolytus.)

Plotinus had no doubts as to the divinity of that centre round which the soul revolves, not as a temporal acquisition, but as an eternal identity, and the idea of absorption in the Absolute and unity with God found its way into Christian doctrines with the metaphysics of Neo-Platonism, opening the door to a legion of possible heresies. It is only a step from the argument that the soul, if it were not essentially god-like, could not know God at all, let alone enjoy that complete union with Him, which Dr. Inge defines as *the ideal limit of religion*, to the heretical conclusion that man is of the same substance as the Father, a conclusion repudiated by Origen and Clement. It is indeed a knotty **point** where the line is to be drawn between orthodoxy and heresy in so delicate a matter, and Methodius seems to admit the possible divinity

The Seal of Divinity

of human nature, when he says that every believer must, through participation in Christ, be born as a Christ, and insists that the indwelling Christ constantly repeats His Passion in remembrance, 'for not otherwise could the Church continually conceive believers, and bear them anew through the bath of regeneration, unless Christ were repeatedly to die emptying Himself for the sake of each individual'.

So Saint Augustine cries: 'Let us rejoice and give thanks that we have been made not only Christians but Christ.... Marvel, exult; we have been made Christ!' This conception of Immanence and the abiding suffering of the crucifixion squares well with our interpretation of the Vision; for it is our faith that God in His Incarnation, the One in its differentiation, suffers in the sufferings of every living thing. This same mystery was disclosed to Coventry Patmore. 'There is one secret, the greatest of all ... the doctrine of the Incarnation, regarded not as an historical fact which occurred two thousand years ago, but as an event which is renewed in the body of everyone who is in the way to the fulfilment of his original destiny.'

In Eastern Mysticism, the impersonal conception of the Deity, that is, the idea of God as unconditioned by time and experience, accepted without question the identity of Atman and Brahman, the final purpose of life being defined as the recognition of that truth, but the mystics of the West could hardly be contented with the halfway house of deification regarded as a temporal process. It obviated the danger to morals arising from the presentation of Mystic Union as an *opus operatum* and encouraged effort and self-control in daily life, but it did not really account for the seals of eternity and divinity stamped in Illumination so indelibly on the mystic's mind. The Vision leaves behind it the certainty that Mystic Union is an accomplished fact that has never known and never can know interruption, and if it had occurred to the seers of the Vision in the days before systematized psychology that a key to the problem might be found in the consciousness of Ego, the conscious subject, they might well have accounted for their revelation by the identity of subject and object parallel to that of God and Ego, an identity that Plotinus acknowledges, when he says that in the Vision the spectator and the spectacle are one and the same. As things were, there grew up a doctrine of the *Spark*, *Scintilla*, the apex of the soul, known more technically by the odd name of *Synteresis*, and, apart from the failure to make any mention of consciousness, there is very little

The Seal of Divinity

difference to be detected between this principle of many names and the Spirit or Ego of our solution. Dr. Inge traces back its origin to Tatian in the second century, who says: 'In the beginning, the spirit was a constant companion of the soul, but forsook it, because the soul would not follow it; yet it retained, as it were, a *Spark* of its power.' In Tertullian's *De Anima* xli, we find a similar idea.

Tatian's Spark, dignified with the high-sounding title of Synteresis, reappears in Jerome as *scintilla conscientiae*, not the spark of consciousness as one might be tempted to translate it, but the spark of conscience which was not extinguished even in the breast of Cain. Synteresis, sometimes misspelt *sinderesis*, a Greek word derived from the verb *συντηρειν*, to keep or preserve closely, means *protection or the preservative principle* with a distinct similarity to the Egyptian Ka mentioned above and in the *The Book of Enoch* I find God described as *Συντήρησις καὶ Ελπρῑρῑ*, *Protection and Peace*, for the elect, so that we may take it to mean the divine principle in the soul, which preserves it and holds it together. According to Josephus, the same Greek verb was used by the initiates of the Essenes, when they swore to *preserve* the secrets of their Scriptures and those words of power, the names of the Angels. Saint Bonaventura the Franciscan furnishes another synonym, defining Synteresis as *apex mentis seu scintilla*, and expressly states that Synteresis signifies for him conscience, the faculty with the double duty of protesting against evil and encouraging good. This apex of the soul with its spatial connotation takes us at once to Plotinus's centre of the soul, which coincides with the Absolute, the Supreme Centre of Centres.

In the fourteenth century, the greatest of all Christian speculative mystics, Meister Eckhart, and the Ecstatic Doctor, John of Ruysbroeck, made their own this doctrine of the Synteresis, the apex of the soul, which is so akin to God that it is one with God and not merely united to Him. 'This Spark', says Eckhart simply, 'is God/ *Diess Fiinkelein, das ist Gott*.

There is in the soul something which is above the soul, Divine, simple, a pure nothing; rather nameless than named, rather unknown than known. Of this I am accustomed to speak in my discourses. Sometimes I have called it a Power, sometimes an uncreated Light, and sometimes a Divine Spark. It is absolute and free from all names and forms, just as God is free and absolute in Himself. It is higher than knowledge, higher than love, higher than grace. For in all these there is still distinction. In this power God doth blossom and flourish with all His Godhead—It is satisfied only with the superessential essence. It is

The Seal of Divinity

determined to enter into the simple Ground, the still Waste, the Unity where no man dwelleth. Then it is satisfied in the light; then *it is one*: it is one in itself, as this Ground is a simple stillness, and in itself immovable; and yet by this immobility are all things moved.

This Ground of the soul is but another name for the Spark and apex. 'Speaking generally/ writes Dr. Inge, 'the earliest scholastic mystics regard it [Synteresis] as a remnant of the sinless state before the Fall, while for Eckhart and his school it is the core of the soul.'

In a later chapter, we shall speak of the Lady Julian's revelation of the presence in every soul of a Godly Will that never assented to sin nor ever shall. 'I saw no difference', she writes, 'between God and our substance, but, as it were, all God. And yet my understanding took, that our substance is in God: that is to say, that God is God, and our substance a creature in God.' We too believe that Emauton is *a creature in God*, and for our definition of Ego may turn to Eckhart's *aliquid est in anima quod est increatum et increabile; si tota anima esset talis, esset increata increabilis: there is something in the soul, which was not and could not be created; if the whole soul were such, it would not have been and could not have been created*. We should not indeed identify this *something* with intellect, as Eckhart proceeds to do, even if intellect be taken to mean Aristotle's *intellectus agens*; for intellect belongs to Emauton, the temporal organization of experience, to be defined in one of its aspects as mind. It may be doubted whether this distinction can avail to save our theories from the condemnation of heresy pronounced on Eckhart's *increated et increabile*. We are certainly in agreement with him when he says that from the sheer Godhead a simple light shines into the simple being of the soul, which the soul's powers cannot receive. Such we believe to be consciousness.

The doctrine of God Immanent is accepted in one form or another by theologians of the most unquestioned orthodoxy, and the theory of the Divine Spark, which is favoured by some of the most respected of Christian mystics, needs but a little modification to justify belief in the Divine nature of consciousness and the impersonal Ego, formulated by the writer in his attempt to interpret the Vision. If God, is indeed immanent in the human soul, who should He be but Spirit, Ego, the subject whose consciousness marks him as of the order of the Absolute? As will be seen, the doctrine of Immanence needs to be qualified by the doctrine of Transcendence, the seal of Divinity corrected by the seal

The Seal of Divinity

of humility: the two aspects of Mystic Union revealed in the Vision must play their appropriate part in its interpretation, neither one obscuring the other. For the moment, pursuing our study of Immanence, we will consider a form of Mysticism, officially pronounced heretical, in which an excessive emphasis is thrown on this single aspect of the revelation, and the recognition of God Immanent almost obliterates the sterner aspect of His Transcendence.

Dr. Inge sums up the perils, to which extravagance in the preaching of God Immanent may lead, in three warning extracts from the *Theologia Germanica*:

The false light dreameth itself to be God, and taketh to itself what belongeth to God as God is in eternity without the creature. Now, God in eternity is without contradiction, suffering, and grief, and nothing can hurt or vex Him. But with God when He is made man it is otherwise.

Therefore the false light thinketh and declareth itself to be above all works, words, customs, laws, and order, and above that life which Christ led in the body which He possessed in His holy human nature. So likewise it professeth to remain unmoved by any of the creature's works; whether they be good or evil, against God or not, is all alike to it; and it keepeth itself apart from all things, like God in eternity; and all that belongeth to God and to no creature it taketh to itself, and vainly dreameth that this belongeth to it.

It doth not set up to be Christ, but the eternal God. And this is because Christ's life is distasteful and burdensome to nature, therefore it will have nothing to do with it; but to be God in eternity and not man, or to be Christ as He was after His resurrection, is all easy and pleasant and comfortable to nature, and so it holdeth it to be best.

The false light is that misinterpretation of Mystic Union, which confounds time and eternity, makes a God of sinful Emauton and seeks for the beatitude of perfection in a place where there can be neither beatitude nor perfection, in the imperfections of experience. The message of the Vision is misconstrued as the promise of an easy time in this world, a life of ease and spiritual indulgence as if the battle had been finally won, and that flattering of the shortcomings of Emauton, which is selfishness in its basest sense, with the certainty in the world to come of bliss everlasting. Quietism, that heresy which owes its origin to the learned and saintly Miguel de Molinos, a Spanish priest, who came to Rome in 1670 and in 1675 published in Italian his *Spiritual Guide*, the crown and forefront of his offending, if it did not cultivate the false light to the extent condemned by the *Theologia Germanica*,

The Seal of Divinity

nevertheless displayed a definite tendency towards the errors there denounced; there was an excess of complacency in this school of inward contemplation founded on the conviction of the Divine Immanence. The Pope Innocent XI was deeply impressed by Molinos' sincerity and piety and, in the beginning, Quietism was not merely a fashionable creed, but a passionate revival of the mystic spirit in a time of great spiritual aridity. Its early popularity and eventual condemnation can be easily explained; it expressed some of the fundamental truths of the Vision in soothing language, which sounded in the ears of the devout like sweet, familiar music, and which could all too easily be misrepresented by Molinos' enemies and the weaker brethren as an exhortation to indolence and blank indifference. Rightly anticipating the hostility of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in general and the Jesuits in particular, Molinos insisted that the exercises of devotion which he recommended should be carried out under the close scrutiny of a ghostly Father and in the strictest obedience to his direction, but even this stipulation with its explicit reinforcement of the Confessor's authority did not reconcile orthodoxy to his doctrines, when their protest against the lifeless formalism of religion attained a dangerous degree of popularity. Molinos, the champion of God Immanent, succumbed more easily to the onslaught of the Jesuits than Pascal, the champion of God Transcendent, who, though he could not save the Jansenist faith from eventual condemnation, dealt the Society of Jesus a deadly blow from which it has never completely recovered. As we shall see, there could scarcely be a more striking contrast than that between the gentle passivity preached by Molinos and the fiery tortured zeal, which allowed Pascal no surcease. Molinos, accused of heresy in 1685, was condemned, saved his life by recantation and died in a dungeon of the Inquisition.

The enthusiasm with which the *Spiritual Guide* was received and the revival of mystical fervour which followed its publication inspired a well-known passage in J. H. Shorthouse's *John Inglesant*:

The unsatisfactory rotation of formal penitence and sinful lapse, of wearisome devotion and stale pleasures, had given place to an enthusiasm which believed that, instead of ceremonies and bowing in outer courts, the soul was introduced into heavenly places and saw God face to face. A wonderful experience, in exchange for lifeless formality and rule, of communion with the Lord, with nothing before the believer, as he knelt at the altar, save the Lord Himself, day by day, unshackled by penance or confession as heretofore. Thousands of the best natures in Rome attached themselves to this method; it was approved

The Seal of Divinity

by a Jesuit Father, the Pope was known to countenance it, and his nephews were among its followers.

The quotations from Molinos' work, which follow, are taken from the English translation published in 1688 with the title 'The Spiritual Guide, which Disentangles the Soul and Brings it to the Inward Way, to the Getting of Perfect Contemplation, and the Rich Treasure of Internal Peace,' and they have been checked by the Latin translation, *Manuductio Spiritualis*, of 1687.

Undoubtedly Dr. Inge is right in saying that the *Spiritual Guide* contains *some highly dangerous teaching, which might easily be pressed into the service of immorality*, but, as will be seen, a similar accusation, from a different point of view, might be brought against Pascal's Jansenist creed, which stands over against the doctrine of Immanence as an uncompromising expression of the most extreme version of Transcendence. Neither aspect of Mystic Union is complete without the other, and, their separation results in a deplorable scission of indivisible Truth. Certainly Molinos' treatise states a number of profound verities, which can only be put into words with the greatest difficulty and are therefore always liable to be misconstrued by those on whom the Vision has not conferred the supreme gift of tongues, the understanding of the spiritual language. History does bear witness that his gentle creed, with its resignation, suppression of self-will, and unruffled tranquillity, did bring about a change of heart for a number of seekers after truth, though it was suppressed in its infancy.

Those who seek in Mysticism the happy issue out of all their afflictions must have a certain vocation; for there are some whose blindness to the things of the spirit seems irremediable without a miracle of grace. They must recognize within themselves a craving for the unseen, with faith in the reality behind the veil and hope for its full realization in this world or the next. They must like Wordsworth have raised *the song of thanks and praise for those obstinate questionings of sense and outward things*, and have caught if even only a fleeting glimpse of the immortal sea which brought them hither.' 'Tis a general rule,' writes Molinos, *and also a maxim in Mystic Theology, that the practice ought to be gotten before the theory. That there ought to be some experimental exercise of supernatural contemplation, before the search of the knowledge and an inquiry after the full apprehension of it.'

The Seal of Divinity

The present writer has tried to follow the example set by Molinos caution in buttressing the doctrine of God Immanent with the support of unimpeachable authorities.

Saint Augustine [says Molinos] complained, in the time when God led him to the Mystical Way, saying to His Divine Majesty: % Lord, went wandering like a strayed sheep, seeking Thee with anxious reasoning without, whilst Thou wast within me. I wearied myself much in looking for Thee without, and yet Thou hast thine habitation within me, while I am longing and panting after Thee. I went round the streets and places of the City of this World, seeking Thee, and found Thee not, because in vain I sought without for Him, who was within myself.'

Next Molinos appeals to what Dante calls the *discreto latino* of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

The Angelical Doctor, Saint Thomas, for all he was so circumspect in his writings, may seem to jeer those, who go always in search of God without by means of ratiocination, when they have Him present within themselves. There is great blindness and excessive folly', says the Saint, 'in some who always seek God, continually sigh after God, often long for God, invoke and call upon God daily in prayer; they themselves (according to the Apostle) being the living temple of God and His true habitation, since their soul is the seat and throne of God, where He continually rests. Who then but a fool will look for an instrument abroad, when he knows he has it fast shut up within doors? Or who can refresh himself with the food he desires and yet not taste it? Such exactly is the life of some just men, always seeking and never enjoying, and therefore all their works are imperfect.'

Secure in his belief that the body is indeed the temple of the Holy Ghost, the Quietist sets 'little store by the bodily mortifications, in which the worshipper of God Transcendent is apt to indulge without stint. Molinos regarded them as discipline for beginners to be replaced for the proficient by inward devotions. A quarter of an hour of *prayer with recollection of the faculties and with resignation and humility* does more good to the soul than five days of penitential exercises, hair shirts, disciplines, fastings, and sleepings on bare boards. Also it is more pleasing to the Divine Majesty to have the soul in quiet and devout prayer for the space of an hour than for it to go on great pilgrimages. Extravagance in austerity may, like the column on which Paphnuce tried to save his soul, be no more than a snare of the Evil One.

There are some souls who, to make too great advances in holiness, become much behind-hand in it, by doing indiscreet penances, like those who would

The Seal of Divinity

sing more than their strength allows them, and instead of doing better worse.

The worst of these indiscreet penances is that, by the use of these barren and dry severities, is begotten and naturalized a certain bitterness of heart toward themselves and their neighbours, which is a great stranger to the true spirit; towards themselves, because they do not feel the sweetness of Christ's yoke, the sweetness of charity, but only the asperity of penances; whereby their nature becomes embittered; and hence it follows that such men become exasperated with their neighbours to the marking and reproving much their faults.

The *Spiritual Guide* sternly discourages all fussiness however well-intentioned, and reads the beginner in Mysticism a valuable lesson in minding his own business and in the due control of his own Enlightenment.

No sooner dost thou find in thyself any new and fervent light, but thou wouldst lay thyself wholly out for the love of souls; and in the meantime, it is odds but that is self-love which thou takest to be pure zeal. This uses sometime to put on a garb of disordinate desire, of a vain complacency, of an industrious affection and proper esteem, all enemies to the peace of the soul. It is never good to love thy neighbour to the detriment of thine own spiritual good. The true zeal of souls, which thou oughtest to strive for, should be the true love of God.

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Similarly Molinos would have his followers keep their repentance and remorse for the faults they would inevitably commit within the bounds of moderation. So Julian of Norwich would not countenance uncontrolled indulgence in penitence for sins committed. 'Be not greatly aggrieved with sin that falleth to thee against thy will. . . . For this passing life asketh not to live all without blame and sin. He loveth us endlessly, and we sin customably, and He sheweth us full mildly, and then we sorrow and mourn discreetly.'

When [says Molinos] thou fallest into a fault, in what matter soever it may be, do not trouble nor afflict thyself for it; for they are effects of our frail nature stained by Original Sin. . . . If when thou fallest into a fault or a piece of negligence, thou dost disturb and chide thyself, it is a manifest sign that secret pride doth still reign in thy soul. . . . At all times therefore thou oughtest, when thou seest thyself in fault, without losing time or making discourses upon the failing, to drive away vain fear and cowardice, without disturbing or chiding thyself, but knowing thy fault with humility, looking on thy misery, throwing thyself with a loving confidence on the Lord, going into His presence, asking Him pardon heartily and without noise of words; keep thyself reposed in doing this, without discoursing whether He hath or hath not forgiven thee, returning to thy exercises and retirements, as if thou hadst not sinned. . . . Would not he be a mere fool, which running at tournament with others, and falling in the heat

The Seal of Divinity

of the career, should He weeping on the ground and afflicting himself with discourses upon his fall? Man (they would tell him) lose no time, get up and take the course again; for he that rises quickly and continues his race is as if he had never fallen.

As to the goal and prize of the race, it is to be found in the Ground of the soul, which is the habitation and kingdom of God.

The bottom of our soul, you will know, is the place of our happiness. There the Lord shows us wonders: there we engulf and lose ourselves in the immense ocean of His infinite goodness, in which we keep firm and immovable. There, there, resides the incomparable fruition of the soul and that eminent and sweet rest of it.

In Mystic Union abides eternal beatitude, Dante's *dolcefrui*.

As often as the end is obtained, the means cease, and when the ship arrives in harbour, the voyage is over. So if the soul, after it hath been toiled and wearied by means of meditation (the exterior road) arrives at the stillness, tranquillity and rest of contemplation (the interior road), it ought then to cut off all reasonings and rest quiet with an amorous attention and simple Vision of God. . . . When the soul attains to this state, it ought wholly to retreat within itself, in its own pure and profound centre; where the image of God is, there is amorous attention, silence, the forgetfulness of all things, the application of the will with perfect resignation, hearing and talking with God hand to hand, and in such manner as if there were no other but them two in the world.

In these last words, Molinos was no doubt thinking of Santa Teresa, who learnt to converse with Christ as they converse in Heaven, as two people who love one another dearly, as two lovers gazing into one another's eyes. As for the exterior and interior roads, meditation belongs to the discursive reason and is a matter of inquiry and search, while contemplation is the elevation of the mind raised up into God, *mentis in Deum suspensae elevatio*. Of necessity, the Vision leaves behind it a sense of finality and full accomplishment, and the mystic may in the moment of Illumination echo Simeon's prayer, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.. for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation*, but in the time of Enlightenment it will be borne in upon him that the end is not yet and the repose and refreshment but a breathing space in the race that is set before us.

The Quietists were accused of an other-worldly and self-complacent idleness, which drowned the faculties in a vague contemplation of nothing in particular and paralysed the will for action in this world,

The Seal of Divinity

expressed in its extreme form in the heretical doctrine of the *One Act* Miss Underhill defines this doctrine in the following words: 'It taught that the turning of the soul towards Reality, the merging of the will in God, which is the very heart of the mystic life, was *One Act*, never to be repeated. This done, the soul had nothing more to do but to rest in the Divine Life, be its unresisting instrument.' 'All activity', she adds, *was forbidden to the soul; all choice was a negation of its surrender; all striving was unnecessary and wrong. It needed only to rest for evermore and *let God work and speak in the silence*.' She argues that such a belief is utterly at variance with all the laws of life and growth, and von Hiigel says that it was most rightly and necessarily condemned.

At first sight it might seem that all the arguments that can be brought against the *One Act* apply with equal force to our conception of Mystic Union as eternal. There does lie at the root of the Quietist doctrine an undeniable truth; Mystic Union being eternal might be described as *One Act* or rather *One State* enduring eternally. It can never be repeated, for there can be no repetition in eternity. Yet in so far as Quietism can be justly accused of building on the *One Act* and the impossibility of its repetition a philosophy of *dolce far niente*, it erred in confusing the reality of Mystic Union, that is the eternal identity of Ego and the Absolute, with the apprehension of that reality in temporal experience. There would be little profit in appealing to Mysticism for aid in solving our present problems, if we did not look to it for life more abundant. The Vision is not Mystic Union, but the penetration of Mystic Union into experience so far as that is possible, and there is nothing in its message to conflict with energy and zeal in all our doings; rather it is a trumpet call to new efforts and higher aspirations. The insight of God Immanent may come into temporal life, perhaps once, perhaps twice, perhaps often, but God's Immanence abides eternally, unconditioned by that insight or the limitations of time and space. Many mystics both of the West and of the East regard the realization of Mystic Union in experience, as it were through the continuity of the Vision, as the final goal of all existence and the unitive life must surely be counted among the highest ideals. Yet if there is any meaning in the universe, if it is the Divine Purpose that each Ego should build for himself an Emauton in which Love can find its full manifestation, if all life is conscious and divine, then we are bound to wonder whether there is not even for the mystic a higher life than flight from time and the Many

The Seal of Divinity

and absorption in eternity and the One—if indeed the unitive life should not find its counterpart in a full participation in the occupations from which experience is born. Surely we have not come to earth to spend all the time allotted to us in perpetually returning to our eternal home, however blissful that return may be, but rather to live our lives in the fullness and variety of experience according to the rule of Love.

The doctrine of the *One Act* is set out and defended in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the First Book of the *Spiritual Guide*.

Thou oughtest to go to prayer that thou mayest deliver thyself wholly up into the hands of God, with perfect resignation, exerting an act of faith, believing that thou art in the Divine Presence, afterwards settling in that holy repose with quietness, silence and tranquillity; and endeavouring for a whole day, a whole year and thy whole life to continue that first Act of contemplation by faith and love. It is not your business to multiply these Acts.

If, says Molinos, we give a jewel to a friend, we do not remind him every day that we have given it him, but leave him to keep it as his own.

But thou'lt say, at least art thou not to remember when thou art in the presence of God and often say to him, *Lord, abide within me, and I will give myself wholly up to thee?* I answer there is no necessity for that, seeing that thou has; a design to pray. Faith and intention are sufficient and these always continueth, the more simple that remembrance be, without words or thoughts, the more pure, spiritual, internal and worthy of God it is. Would it not be impertinent and disrespectful, if, being in the presence of a king, thou shouldst every now and then say to him, *Sire, I do believe Your Majesty is here?* It is the very same thing. By the eye of pure faith the soul sees God, believes in Him, and is in His presence, and so when the soul believes, it has no need to say, *My God, Thou art here.*

There is more to be said for this taking of the truth for granted, this silent welcoming of God's will, than the sentimental critic is disposed to grant. In Paradise, Dante has no need to utter his thoughts and desires, because Beatrice and the blessed have seen them, before they were formed in the poet's mind, within the Divine Light that mirrors all things in the universe, past, present and to come. In the matter of seeming laziness, purposelessness attained through purpose, as the Taoists say, inaction through action, Molinos shared the belief of the modern psychologist, who holds that the most important changes in the soul occur without any awareness of their happening. Jung writes:

I have often seen individuals who simply outgrew a problem which had

The Seal of Divinity

destroyed others ____ What, on a lower level, had led to the wildest conflicts and to emotions full of panic, viewed from the higher level of the personality, now seemed like a storm in the valley seen from a high mountain top . . . What then did these people do in order to achieve the progress that freed them? As far as I could see they did nothing, but let things happen ____ The art of letting things happen, action in non-action, letting go of oneself, as taught by Meister Eckhart, became a key to me with which I was able to open the door to the Way. The key is this; we must be able to let things happen in the psyche. . . . Consciousness [we should say *awareness*] is forever interfering, helping, correcting and negating, and never leaving the simple growth of the psychic processes in peace. (*The Secret of the Golden Flower*.)

In the same strain Molinos writes:

The senses are not capable of divine blessings; hence if thou wouldst be happy and wise, be silent and believe; suffer and have patience; be confident and walk on; it concerns thee far more to hold thy peace and let thyself be guided by the hand of God than to enjoy all the goods of this world. And though it seem to thee that thou dost nothing at all and art idle being so dumb and resigned; yet it is all of infinite fruit.

No one has expressed more lucidly than Molinos that annihilation of the mind and blotting out of experience, which is a necessary preliminary to the Vision. Plotinus himself does not lay more emphasis on the need to slough the vesture of experience and present the mind as a *tabula rasa* in that ineffable calm by which the advent of the Vision is heralded. There must be nothingness in Emauton, so that nothing may distract Ego's attention from the light of his own nature that is to be mirrored there. 'It concerns thee only to prepare thine heart like clean paper wherein the Divine Wisdom may imprint characters to his own liking.' *Sileat anima mea*, says Saint Augustine, *et transeat se, non se cogitando*; *Let my soul be silent and pass beyond itself by not thinking of itself*

Dionysius the False Areopagite is mainly conspicuous as an exponent of the doctrines of God Transcendent and as such finds his place in a later chapter, but his influence is apparent in Molinos' essays to make Union with God intelligible by talking of Nothing and Anihilation.

Emauton must die to be cleansed of *its adherency not only to temporal and natural blessings, but further to supernatural and sublime ones, such as internal communications, ecstasies, raptures and other gratuitous graces, whereon the soul rests and entertains itself* The Quietist looks for no celestial visions or supernatural phenomena to interrupt by their invasion of

The Seal of Divinity

Awareness from the depths of Emauton that revelation which we take to be a glimpse of pure consciousness.

You must know that the Lord will not manifest Himself in thy soul, till it be denied to itself and dead in its senses and powers; nor will it ever come to this state, till, being perfectly resigned, it resolves to be with God all alone, making an equal account of gifts and contempts, light and darkness, peace and war. In sum, that the soul may arrive at perfect quietness and supreme internal peace, it ought first to die in itself and live only in God and for Him.

The supreme conclusion is that annihilation which is *not* no-thing, because it is the realization of Union with the conscious One, but it can scarcely be denied that Molinos' language here is dangerous and apt to mislead. He is stirring up just such a hornets' nest as the word *Nirvana* used to excite in many a Western mind.

The soul that would be perfect begins to mortify its passions, and when it is advanced in that exercise, it denies itself; then with the Divine Aid it passes to the state of Nothing, where it despises, abhors and plagues itself upon the knowledge that it is nothing, that it can do nothing, and that it is worth nothing; from hence springs the dying in itself and in its senses, in many ways and at all hours; and finally from this spiritual death the true and perfect Annihilation derives its original, insomuch that, when the soul is once dead to its will and understanding, it is properly said to be arrived at the perfect and happy state of Annihilation, which is the last disposition for Transformation and Union, which the soul doth not understand, because it would not be annihilated, if it should come to know it.

By the way of Nothing thou must come to lose thyself in God (which is the last degree of perfection) and happy wilt thou be, if thou canst so lose thyself; then thou wilt get thyself again, and find thyself most certainly. In the same shop of Nothing, simplicity is made, interior and infused recollection is possessed, quiet is obtained and the heart is cleansed from all manner of imperfection. O what a treasure wilt thou find, if thou shalt once fix thy habitation in Nothing! and if thou once gettest but snug into this centre of Nothing, thou wilt never concern thyself with anything that is without (the great ugly large step that so many thousands do stumble at), unless it be as thy office may call thee to it—Who must awaken the soul out of that sweet and pleasant sleep, if once it comes to take a nap in nothing? This is the way David got a perfect annihilation without so much as knowing it. *Ad nihilum redactus sum et nescivi*, Ps. xvii. Keeping thyself in Nothing, thou wilt bar the door against everything that is not God; thou wilt retire also from thine own self and walk towards that internal solitude, where the Divine Spouse speaks in the heart of His bride, teaching her high and divine wisdom. Drown thyself in this Nothing, and there shalt thou find a holy sanctuary against any tempest whatsoever.

The soul that is annihilated must be unclothed of raptures, ecstasies,

The Seal of Divinity

vehement affections, gifts of Light, divine effects and infinite other graces, 'if it would not have them be a hindrance to it in its way to deification'. 'O what a happy soul is that which is thus dead and annihilated! It lives no longer in itself, because God lives in it: and now it may most truly be said of it, that it is a renewed Phoenix; because it is changed, spiritualized, transformed and deified.'

Molinos expresses one side of Mysticism in its extremest form and the extravagance of his language often outstrips his intention, but he emphasizes one aspect of the truth, which, in this age of fussiness and hustle, is singularly liable to be overlooked. With down-turned eyes, we fix our attention on our feet and are far less likely to stumble or wander astray through star-gazing than to miss the glory of the heavens through concentration on the earth. In a world of materialism, Martha's carefulness about many things is exalted above Mary's contemplative love. Leah picking flowers in the Earthly Paradise to adorn her beauty, Dante's symbol of the active life, utterly outshines her sister Rachel, whose eyes never leave her mirror, lost in the contemplation of their own loveliness. There is to-day no imminent danger of the outward activities of the world being paralysed by devout contemplation. We need to be reminded of the activities of silence and meditation and that men cannot live by facts and figures alone.

The shortcomings of language, evolved for our temporal necessities, must not lead the critics of Mysticism into the error of confusing the dazzling revelation of the Vision with a state of blurred awareness of nothing in particular, which has nothing at all in common with the Illumination of experience by the intruding light of Mystic Union. Juan de la Cruz was right enough when he said that the soul must lose all human knowledge and human feelings—*calva y rasa* are the words he uses—before it could receive Illumination, but he most certainly did not mean that they can be lost by indolence and sluggish indifference. In this debatable country, the Borderland of Reality, hallucinations, fantasies and visions have a way of assuming a quite unwarranted semblance of solidity, and Molinos was wise when he bade his followers unclothe themselves of raptures and ecstasies and gifts of light. 'So,' writes Plotinus, 'for those who draw near the Sacrament of the Mysteries, there are prescribed purification, the putting-off of the garments they wore and the approach to the altar in utter nakedness.' Mechthild of Hackborn was persuaded that her soul swam in the Godhead like a fish

The Seal of Divinity

in water and that God had so united Himself with her that she saw with His eyes, heard with His ears and talked with His mouth, but such glosses on the truth of Mystic Union, however pleasing and essentially true they may be, must be dismissed at the moment of attaining the Vision, because they emphasize separation not unity.

The realization of the Divine Presence, the beatitude of being one with Love and not merely loving, may well lead in the first moments of Illumination to some such extravagance as the glorification of Nothingness, unless it is instantly corrected by the humility and abasement that follow the blinding recognition of the Divine Transcendence. The certainty that the problem of the ten thousand things is solved, that all is right with the world, might lend itself to a trance-like stupor, a lotus-eater's languor, if it was not accompanied by the spurring sting of shame at the hideousness of the lower self, betrayed by the light of God's glory, and in some cases this stimulus is reinforced, though this call seems far from universal, by the inexorable urge and determination to express the spiritual experience in terms of daily life and a theory of the world.

Our interpretation of the Vision is equally opposed to the jelly-like calm and wallowing in ocean of blank content, to which the exaggerations of Quietism may lead, and to that contempt of life, inhuman mortification and frantic pursuit of salvation in fear and trembling, to which an excessive emphasis on Transcendence gives birth, as will be seen in the review of the Jansenist creed that follows. We take our stand on the Divinity of the Synteresis, that spark which we call Ego or Spirit, and its identity with the Absolute. For us, all life and consciousness is like Eckhart's *scintilla animae, increata et increabilis*, eternally outside time and creation. We accept the doctrine of God Immanent without rejecting that of God Transcendent; for the Divine Ego whose nature is hidden from his intellect by impenetrable darkness, except through the revelation of the Vision, far outstrips the grasp of the finite mind and utterly transcends Emauton, that self of experience with which he is wont to identify himself. Some mystics, shrinking from the claim to divinity, hint that the Synteresis may be such a tiny little spark of the Divine as not to be worth counting, until it has been fanned into a flame at the coming of the Vision. The substance of the Spirit is neither to be weighed in a balance or measured with a rod. If the Divine spark is in life, God must be in life and all God must be in the spark, for He cannot be divided.

The Seal of Divinity

When the Vision breaks into the annihilated soul, it brings, on the one hand, as we have said, exaltation in the knowledge of the Divine Presence, and, on the other, a profound humility bordering on despair. The rapture of deification, if so we may call the stamping of the seal of divinity on experience, cannot obscure the contrast between the glory of the sinless One and the sinful corruption of the soul, which **has** been momentarily sloughed, the contrast between Ego and Emauton. The objective self, which for so long was taken as the only self, is seen **as** despicable and foul with sin, and there is deep humiliation at the discovery of so poor an achievement.

We are in agreement with all the mystics of the world that the Vision reveals the presence of a Divine principle within the soul. The timorous may call it by diminutive titles such as spark, point or centre, but it is **in** truth like Lady Julian's hazel nut, which stood for the universe, alike infinitely great and infinitely small, for it has no dimensions. Dante saw God in a point of splendour, so small that by comparison with the smallest star visible to us that star would seem the moon, and on that point, Beatrice tells him, the heavens and all Nature depend. As we have said, many Christian thinkers have¹ believed that the Passion of Christ was not a single historic act, but a never-ending process. For us, all life is the never-ending Incarnation and Passion of God. The One, the Absolute, perfect within its All-Inclusive Consciousness, goes out from the changeless bliss of Eternity into time and space to suffer and to die.

VI

THE SEAL OF HUMILITY: THE RECOGNITION OF GOD TRANSCENDENT

Negation itself hath a positive more or less; and closed
eyes would seem to obscure the great obscurity of midnight.

CHARLES LAMB. *Essays of Elia*

Eternal God (for whom who ever dare
Seek new expressions, do the Circle square,
And thrust into strait corners of poor wit
Thee, who art cornerless and infinite)

I would but bless Thy Name, not name Thee now.

J. DONNE. *Upon the Translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip
Sidney and his Sister*

The seal of humility, the recognition of God Transcendent, is impressed on the soul in Illumination no less distinctly than those stamps of certainty, eternity and Immanence, of which we have already spoken, and goes to complete the reflection in experience of pure consciousness, though in a sense—if it were possible to speak *of before* and *after* in the timeless moment—it heralds and follows the realization of Mystic Union rather than accompanies it: for God Immanent is naked consciousness in solitude and unbroken light; the Transcendence of God implies something other than the Divine Presence in its loneliness, since its seal is essentially a sense of contrast and in absolute unity there can be no contrast. In the apprehension of God Immanent, Emauton is merely a blank mirror, in which the Light is reflected too brightly for cracks or flaws—or indeed the mirror itself—to be perceived. In the apprehension of God Transcendent, the defects of the mirror are terribly apparent as contrasted darkness unpardonable.

Transcendence is the Everlasting No without which the Everlasting Yea cannot be born; it is, as it were, the opposition of light and darkness at the moment of dawn and the death of the temporal self, which unbars

The Seal of Humility

the door to the life of the spirit, and later its agony remains in the agony of returning from the Highest into the depths of time.

O dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see;
When the pulse begins to throb—the brain to think again—
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less;
The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless;
And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
If it but herald Death, the vision is divine.

EMILY BRONTE. *The Prisoner*

The attempts to analyse Illumination are fraught with endless perils of misunderstanding; for the unity of Mystic Union is absolute and analysis amounts to nothing more than breaking the mirror of experience in which it was reflected and counting the broken fragments. The Beatific Vision comes as poetry came to Shelley *with the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own, and its footsteps are like those of a wind, over the sea, which the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only as on the wrinkled sand which paves it*. It is a vain task to reduce to rule the wind that bloweth where it listeth and the comings and goings of the spirit by categories of the ribbed patterns moulded on the sea-shore and in the shifting sands of memory. Yet sober convenience and clarity do call imperiously for the making of some distinctions and some setting in order.

The terms Transcendence and Immanence bulk large in the history of Mysticism, and it is important to remember that their seemingly irreconcilable contradiction depends on the attribution to the Absolute of categories utterly alien to its conception. They represent only discriminations in the human mind, not in the Reality they seek to express, which contains and reconciles them both, *the ubiquitary and omnipresent Essence of God*. It is with difficulty that the metaphysician can bring himself to ascribe to the Absolute any quality beyond negations; yet these two words would seem to subject it to the tyranny of space. Such doctrines demand the closest scrutiny; for an assumption of spatial relations is intruding itself into the spaceless One. In the One, there can be neither up nor down, neither this way nor that, neither within nor without. Yet Transcendence professes to mean a God who is infinitely above, beyond, and therefore outside all created things, **and Immanence**

The Seal of Humility

finds God in all things and therefore ever-near and ever-present. These doctrines appear mutually exclusive owing to the intrusion of the spatial notion. For the true mystic, God is at once both Transcendent and Immanent.

What is Above is Within, for Everything in Eternity is translucent;
The Circumference is Within, Without is formed the Selfish Center,
And the Circumference still expands going forward to Eternity,
And the Center has Eternal States.

W. BLAKE. *Jerusalem*, III, 71, 6.

So for Dante the Empyrean has no dimensions except Light and Love, and every *where* and every *when* is gathered up in the point which is God.

Transcendence and Immanence stand for the reverse and obverse of a single truth, as Miss Underhill remarks in her *Mysticism*. 'In that consummation of love which Ruysbroeck has called *the peace of the summits*, they [the experience of God Transcendent and that of God Immanent] meet; then distinctions between inward and outward, near and far, cease to have any meaning, in *the dim silence where lovers lose themselves*.⁹ So for Dante, when Beatrice was rapt from his side to the third rank of the Saints in Paradise, his eyes were as far from her as they would have been at the bottom of the deepest ocean from the highest thundercloud, yet distance was no separation; for there was nothing between them and Beatrice to blur her image. Miss Underhill concludes her argument with a quotation from *De Adhaerendo Deo*: 'To mount to God is to enter into one's self. For he who inwardly entereth and intimately penetrateth into himself gets above and beyond himself and truly mounts to God.'

In the Vision, the mystic is dumbfounded and enraptured to light on God within the secret inmost mansion of the Castle of the Soul, and at the same time humiliated to the depths of abasement, because the revelation of the Divine Perfection so utterly transcends and so cruelly reproaches the unworthiness of that dwelling-place, the mortal vile-ness and corruption of the soul. If he is raised to the heavens by the sinless nature of Ego, whom he dare not include within his Private Universe, he is brought down to hell by the shame and degradation of Emauton.

Reactions to the Vision are necessarily conditioned by the experience which reflects it and the consequent impressions made in Emauton. As

The Seal of Humility

was remarked in the last chapter, its impact on the temperaments **and** *sninds*, which William James classified as *healthy* souls, is likely to throw into conspicuous prominence the beatific revelation of God Immanent, the Divine Presence within, and to pass more lightly over the sterner aspect of the Awful Majesty and Perfection of God Transcendent, though the sense of deep humility and penitential abasement enters Illumination in the acknowledgment of unworthiness and humble confession. The sick soul, on the other hand, finds its temptation in active hatred of this life, a loathing and denunciation of God's creatures as all tainted with *sin* and evil, and a denial of, and a flight from, experience, as though it had not been sent into the world expressly to live.

The healthy soul, having realized the Divine Presence in an ecstasy of Love and comprehension of the Divine Beneficence to be something so near and so dear as to be the very Ground of the Soul, must beware lest its faith in the all-pervading goodness of Omnipotence tends to obliterate the difference between Good and Evil on the score that all things are divine, lest trust in the Ever-Present Perfect make conduct and works superfluous and of light account, and the sense of God's universal Immanence lend countenance to moral lawlessness and the extravagance of undifferentiated Pantheism. The man, who is by nature prone to pessimism and a morbid view of life, the *sick* soul, will find, when he returns from the timeless moment, that his old enemies are waiting for him, though with abated deadliness. Something of his old anxiety, his sense of guilt and frustration, his conviction of sin triumphant, may insinuate its way even into the first flush of his rapture and entwine its maleficent coils about his Enlightenment.

Since a course must be steered between this Scylla and Charybdis, it is prudent for the helmsman to hug more closely the coast from which the current of his temperament sets and give wider berth to the shore to which it instinctively carries him. For this reason, the writer, being well aware that his nature errs on the side of optimism and that in the light of God Immanent he is in greater danger of exaggerating the good in the world than the evil, has sought to approximate the balance of the golden mean by loading more heavily the scale of God Transcendent and devoting four chapters to the study of the seal of humility as opposed to the single chapter allotted to the discussion of God Immanent. This purpose is made the easier of fulfilment, becausep

The Seal of Humility

a genius, mystic and scientist, who was most certainly a sick soul and with unparalleled qualifications for the reconciliation of Religion and Science, has discoursed with the greatest eloquence and insight on the creed of Jansenism, an extreme example of the worship of Transcendence to the exclusion of Immanence. The reference, of course, is to Blaise Pascal and his classic *Pensees*. Before, however, we turn to his belief and philosophy, it will be well to consider more attentively those elements in Emauton, which accept with almost exclusive sympathy the image of God Transcendent, and their manifestation in the mental history of mankind.

Margaret Fuller, an American 'transcendentalist', once wrote to Carlyle saying that at last she had learnt to accept the universe. 'She had damned well better,' was the philosopher's grunted reply. Rather surprisingly he seems to have made no allowance for that ineradicable rebel in human nature, which with unbowed head rejects the universe, or for that vast cleavage in the depths of the soul between mutiny and acceptance, the craving for darkness that holds the light a burden, the fundamental dualism of experience. The psycho-analyst, when he delves into the depths of the Emauton, detaches and brings to the surface coagulated masses of experience, which may hamper and misdirect the divine vital energy in its task, just as malformations of tissue or abnormal cell patterns may obstruct the circulation of the blood and otherwise prejudice the machinery of the physical organism.

It is easy to see that discord and conflict cannot but arise in the differentiation of the One and that evil must appear in the manifold of experience through the clash of temporal aims and purposes. The first law of life is its own preservation, the second the preservation of the species, and between the two laws there must often be conflict, for the preservation of the species must frequently call for the sacrifice of the individual and the infringement of the first law. Relatively low in the scale of the animate, we see life in the present sacrifice itself for life to come. Both laws are absolute and necessary, if the purpose for which the organism was designed and created, the collection of experience, is to be fulfilled. Both of them are the offspring of mortality and time; for they are called into existence by the menace of physical death, and the primordial necessity of maintaining life in the manifold. 'Thou didst implant in me', says Augustine, 'all the impulses necessary to maintain the integrity and safety of a living organism/ The first law

The Seal of Humility

we may call the selfish principle, referring *self* to Emauton which in obedience to its rule is particularly occupied with its own preservation, the second being the unselfish principle, which provides in certain cases for the instinctive sacrifice of Emauton. As the organism is developed **and** the mind elaborated, the selfish principle, which is not always at variance with its opposite and cannot easily be disentangled from it, extends and enriches its intention to cover countless departments of life, gathering, classifying and shaping the more and more complex experience required for the maintenance and enjoyment of an ever more highly differentiated existence. It is not the will or motive power, for Ego in Union with the One is the fountain of all motion, but it canalizes and applies the energy proceeding from Ego or in the language of our myth provides one of the two rudders by which Ego steers his *now*. It is, however, the unselfish principle that undergoes the greatest transformation and expansion; for in time, love is born from the imprescriptible ordinance to pass on the torch of life, and thereby the Divine begins to penetrate more intimately into time, bringing with it the supreme urge to introduce into the manifold of experience the Perfect Love of the One. From it, under Divine guidance, such as is vouchsafed by the Vision, arises all that is loveliest and best in human life.

The first principle is as necessary as the second; for if the desire of life were lost, universal suicide would defeat the Divine Purpose. Equally would the intention perish, if the rule of self-sacrifice were to fail; for Love is that intention. Neither one nor the other must predominate. If the Vision comes to a soul utterly tyrannized by selfishness, the recognition of God may mean presumption, *Hubris*, madness or worse, through the confusion of Ego and Emauton. If this principle still prevails, though less pronounced, it may lead, as we have said, to indifference and spiritual luxuriousness paralysing action. When unselfishness predominates, the revelation of the Divine Transcendence combines with all those elements of experience which represent shame and disappointment at the failure of Emauton! to achieve the ideals that have been implanted in it, and may turn in fury against the first principle which is always foiling its efforts, against life itself without which no unselfishness is possible. There follows hatred of the life to which selfishness clings, the withdrawal from action and experience, the denial of the will to *live*. Salvation, we believe, lies midway between these **two** extremes, the selfish side of the soul clinging enough to life' **to take a**

The Seal of Humility

due part in its trials and blessings, and the unselfish side pursuing its ideal of love without yielding to the despair, which may be engendered by exclusive absorption in the mortal weakness of Emauton.

It has been the triumph of Christianity that for so many centuries it succeeded in maintaining a fair and sane balance between these warring principles: in its youth, there was a danger that unselfishness might disturb the equilibrium with the pursuit of inhuman austerities which amounted to a denial of life; in our time, the scale of selfishness has been weighted down so heavily that it has torn the balance from religion's hands. Corresponding to one side of this basic cleavage in the soul, this unselfishness, which is the highest manifestation of the Divine in time, though—*corruptio optimi pessima*—in exaggeration it may lead to a tragic surrender to Sin and Evil victorious, to the despair of a mind which hopes for nothing but the wrath and vengeance of God Transcendent and to a yearning for the end of all things and the bliss of nothingness—corresponding to that principle, the student of comparative religion traces a continuous series of myths and beliefs, which give to its supremacy divine sanction and authority even unto death.

'Never to have been born is best' said the Greek tragedian, 'next best is to return with all speed to the place from which we came.' This mood of hopelessness wrestles in a death grapple with faith in God Good and Omnipotent, since God is shown as the Creator of Evil, and many a thinker in ages gone by was driven by the agony of this problem to adopt a Dualist solution of the Universe, the separation of the Powers of Good and Evil and the setting up of an independent kingdom of Darkness over against the kingdom of Light. The writer can claim no specialist knowledge, which would entitle him to unravel with authority the inextricable tangle of common sources, mutual reactions and independent origins, which makes up the history of comparative religion, nor is it necessary for his purpose, which aims no higher than roughly tracing the various forms of belief throwing special emphasis on Transcendence, wherein the interpretations of the Vision have been incorporated from the earliest times down to the seventeenth century, when Jansenism, the principal object of our study, made its appearance. He must again acknowledge his indebtedness to *Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages*, the encyclopaedic work of the late Dr. F. W. Bussell of B.N.C. Oxford, and his **work** has been enlivened by

The Seal of Humility

memories of one who boasted himself *the last of the Patcrians* and whose amiable eccentricities unfortunately did not include respect for orderly arrangement and comprehensive indices.

In our approach to Jansenism, we are specially concerned with that aspect of Transcendence which appears in experience as pessimism, and the world centre of despair and the nucleus of ancient pessimism was to be found in Chaldaea and its capital Babylon. From a jungle tangle of tribal gods, the priestly astrologers of Babylon developed, by associating these primitive deities with the heavenly bodies and their imperturbable revolutions, a system of iron fatalism, which in very truth hitched the wagon of every living being to a star, and a maleficent one at that, and abandoned them in abject helplessness to be towed through the wretchedness of life to a death even less enviable on a course inexorably predestinate. The heavenly bodies, in particular the Seven Planets—Sun and Moon making up the number—reigned above as merciless taskmasters, gaolers and tyrants, and the astrologer, the *mathematicus*, who by his calculations professed to give warning of the future and perhaps suggest some way of evading imminent disaster, became lord of life and death on earth.

The date of Zoroaster is a matter of dispute, but certainly many centuries before the Christian era, there arose in Persia and the Near East the religion known as Mazdaism, in a later age Parseeism, with its Scriptures the Zend-Avesta, rebelling against the gloomy fatalism of Chaldaea. Zoroaster's interpretation of the Vision established a frankly Dualist theory of the Universe, and he founded a world religion, which has endured down to this day and in which Ormazd, the Lord of Light and Goodness, is assailed by Ahriman, the Prince of Evil, who arises from the abyss of Darkness as an independent Potentate, creating hosts of evil spirits for his war with God. Instead of hopeless resignation to the inscrutably evil will of the Planets, he preached a gospel of action, bidding man take his share in the Holy War against Evil, enlisted in the legions of Ormazd, and holding forth the final certainty of the downfall of Evil and the triumph of Good. The chief weakness in his system was that stumbling-block of all religions and philosophies, the cause and origin of Evil. He did not account for Ahriman's sudden emergence from Chaos and the explanation put forward by the Magi of the Medes scarcely solved the problem. These Wise Men of the East, who shared with the Chaldaeans that interest in the stars which introduces them into

The Seal of Humility

the narrative of the first Gospel, **were** surprisingly enough devil-worshippers as well as god-worshippers, and they attributed this otherwise inexplicable and most lamentable birth of Evil to an unpardonable piece of absent-mindedness on the part of Ormazd. By some ill chance, he happened one day to wonder, *If I had an adversary, what would he be like?* Instantly Ahriman, his exact opposite in every particular, was embodied from the void just as the visions of Santa Teresa and the terrific theophanies of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* surged up from the subliminary depths of Christian Saint and defunct Buddhist. A rather similar explanation of this primal paradox, mentioned below, was put forward by the Zoroastrian heretics known as Zervanites.

Another weakness of Dualism is lodged in the probability that, when the two independent and warring orders of Good and Evil have been established and their common origin denied, the question may be raised, *What ground have we for our confidence that in the long run Good will prevail?* In times of disintegration and revolutionary scepticism, inevitably the answer is given that there is no such certainty. Since to all appearances Evil has gained the upper hand in the world below, the quicker mankind makes its peace with Sin the better. Good-bye to optimism and virtuous service in the armies of Ormazd; let us do obeisance to the Devil after the fashion of the Magi, who offered sacrifice *to things of darkness to avert evil*, *Deo Arimanio*, throw up the struggle against wickedness and look forward to speedy annihilation as the highest of possible beatitudes. In some such manner, the combative Dualism of Mazdaism was modified and watered down. The Zervanite sect referred to above enthroned a new Deity Zervan, unlimited Time, who rose spontaneously from the depths, to be Lord and Father of both Ormazd and Ahriman. It was Zervan, not Ormazd, who was careless and evoked the Devil. He had prayed for a son for a myriad years save one without result and in his despondency the thought struck him, *Perhaps the world is nothing after all*. From this thought sprang Ahriman, *the spirit who denies*, and so he was own brother to Ormazd, whose birth needed no explanation. 'Therefore', writes Dr. Bussell, 'evil was not so very evil after all, being a necessary phase or complement of God... and the unpleasant heat of the ethical struggle was really needless. Nor was the final triumph of the good anything more than a metaphor for the ignorant and exoteric: perfection was no question of time or slow achievement and the universe could never be different from its present

The Seal of Humility

state.' So we are back with the old pessimistic fatalism of the Chaldaeans against which Zoroaster had raised the banner of Ormazd.

It was in an amalgamation of the tenets of Zoroaster and the Babylonian Star-Worship that the Gnostic sects, which had already established their distinguishing beliefs before the birth of Christ, sought for a remedy to the disease of gloom and despair which lay heavy on **the** world. They undertook to liberate humanity from its slavery to the Powers above its head and from the distrust and terror with which it regarded their unswerving, fate-fraught courses through the sky, without actually dethroning these inscrutable tyrants. They accepted the Seven Planets as the merciless and malignant Arbiters of Fate in whose hands we are but trivial automata, mere playthings of their caprice. All happenings that have been and are to be are written in the stars. Do not we dwell in the sub-lunar sphere among the lees and dregs of the universe, the abode of the basest intelligences, of demons and crass matter? Yet there was hope. Somewhere high aloft above the seven planetary heavens, the Gnostics espied the home of a more exalted God, the Supreme One, in the glory of the Heaven above the Heavens, the abstract number Eight, the Ogdoad, the fullness of the Divine, the Pleroma, transcending all things as Dante's Empyrean transcends all the inferior heavens. To that far distant Paradise man must learn to win his way through the heartless, hostile sphere of the planetary Archons, there to attain the felicity of his heart's desire.

The gospel of Gnostic redemption promised salvation, not so much by the purging or elevation of the intellect, or discipline of prayer, or the mortification of the body which expressed their hatred of life, as by an intuitive comprehension of reality, a sudden lightning-flash, which instantly released the soul from its fetters, *Gnosis*, that knowledge which is more than knowledge, since that which knows and that which is known are one; *Gnosis* in fine is the Vision, round which the whole of the Gnostic creed is marshalled. 'It is', says Theodotus, 'the knowledge, who we were, what we have become, where we are and into what place we have been thrown, whither we are hastening and whence we are redeemed, what is birth and what is re-birth.'

The Vision is no more to be regarded as a reward for saintliness than artistic genius a prize for morality, though it may come to a saint just as genius may inspire a highly virtuous man. Its coming may be encouraged by fleshly mortifications and ascetic discipline, but such self-

The Seal of Humility

denials and inward exercises are no infallible sign of a godly heart and virtue in the soul. One man may fast and fast, pray and pray, just as another may smile and smile, and be a villain. Deliberate disciplinary preparation is by no means an indispensable preliminary to the spiritual experience, though usually, I believe, it only follows much searching of the heart and deep inward meditation. It follows that morality must find its place in that philosophy of life, which issues from the interpretation of the Vision in Enlightenment; in simple language, the mystic must be transported, not only by the rapture of revelation, but also by a burning eagerness to make himself worthy of the blessing vouchsafed, a blessing that presumption and an emotional weakening of the reason may turn into a curse. The inspiration of an artistic genius will avail him little without humility to submit to the rules of his art; a translator of Greek or Latin into English will not attempt to impose the grammar of the classical language on the syntax of his translation, but will gladly be subservient to the grammatical laws of the modern tongue! In the One, there is neither value nor values; for there can be no comparison, no clash between this and that, positive and negative, good and evil, but when the pure simplicity and innocence of Mystic Union is transmuted, however imperfectly, into the manifold world of values, its manifestation must be subordinated to the laws that hold good for that order of being and fitted into that framework of right and wrong, which holds it together and which is itself a blurred reflection of the orderliness of the Absolute.

The Gnostics borrowed a good deal from Plotinus and his successors, and they preferred the extravagances of the later Neo-Platonists to that unswerving reverence for Reason, which always inspired the Master. They pursued the easy way of interpreting the Vision in the gibberish of magic. Since they knew from Babylon that man was sundered from God Transcendent by seven malignant heavens, swayed by the evil tyranny of the Planetary Archons, means had to be found to transport the human soul through the hostile Planet spheres to the home of the God of Light in the Pleroma, and magic, which is the death of true mysticism, was called in to bestow diplomatic immunity on the pilgrim travelling through the enemy territory of these foes of God and man. The believer could pass unscathed through the hosts of Darkness, if he were duly armed with the ritual pass-words, the words of power. Great is the power of the word. To know the name of your enemy is half the

The Seal of Humility

battle, nay, more than that, victory, for the secret of potency lay in the hidden names of the World-Rulers, who, once called by their esoteric title, could only yield free passage to the soul who addressed them. Christ whom the Gnostics adopted as an Aeon, an angel of the Lord of Light, had been exceptionally well-armed with a veritable master-word capable of unlocking the portals of all seven heavens, what Lewis Carroll would have called a portmanteau word, rolling all the titles of all the Archons into one, the terrific syllables CAULACAU, if we may beheve Basilides. Magic is profitable to magicians, a privileged class, and the Gnostics cut the Gordian knot of man's ascension to the Divine by the elaboration of magic formulae, which could be imparted to the initiate with the confident hope that they would make his journey easy. Questions of ethics and conduct were thrown into the background, since spells act equally well for the good and the bad, though it might be profitable for a man, before the intuitive flash of *Gnosis* descended upon him as befitted the inner circle of the elect, to prepare himself for its advent by cleansing body and soul.

The Gnostics applied to their own purposes the emanation theory of Neo-Platonism. Something was said in *The Timeless Moment* of the Plotinian Trinity: how the Absolute in the plenitude of its perfection overflows into the Second Person of the Trinity, Spirit, *Nous*, and how in its turn its exuberance pours forth into Soul, the Third Person, whence the Divine floods through the whole universe down to the almost non-existent impalpability of evil and matter to return again in a gigantic cycle to its source. This system of systole*§nd diastole, while it acknowledges God Transcendent, opens a loophole for that recognition of God Immanent, which can never be entirely effaced from the interpretation of the Vision, and already in Gnosticism we catch a glimpse of the doctrine of the Spark or Synteresis. If a soul is to find salvation in the Pleroma, the Heaven above the Heavens, it must surely be oflike nature with the Supreme Being, who dwells in this Transcendence, and, to account for this kinship, there appears the myth of the Fall of Deity in the person of Primal or Archetypal Man. This conception, which seems to be based on the ancient Persian legend in which Ahriman slays Gayomart, Primal Man and champion of his Creator, the Lord of Light, makes of this prototype of humanity a god or demi-god who died and rose again, a saviour hero who was overthrown by die Powers of Darkness and held in captivity, who has been or is yet

The Seal of Humility

to be set free and raised from the dead by the Lord of Light. Gayomart, entangled in the darkness of matter, stands for the Divine Spark, fallen from its celestial home into an alien world, whence it must seek deliverance; for in this world it can neither feel itself at home nor find fitting employment or interests. 'Man is a part of God which has fallen into matter; by the use of his highest faculty, the capacity to receive enlightenment, he must reconquer his freedom and win his return to the heaven he has lost.'

In the third century A.D., a very important stage in the history of Transcendence was reached with the appearance of a great religious Teacher in Persia, Mani, who reformed and revived the tenets of Zoroaster, which had fallen into decadence and corruption with lapse of time, by combining them with a variety of Gnostic doctrines and a leavening of the Babylonian Star-Worship. Born about A.D. 215, he met with little honour in his own country and travelled as a missionary far and wide through the East, eventually returning to Persia, where he was martyred—it is said on the cross—in A.D. 276 or 277. Manichaeism calls for attention from the student of Mysticism as expressing under a multitude of forms in a singularly effective and vivid symbolism the exaggeration of what we have called the unselfish principle, which discerns essential and positive evil in life and experience, and in the end craves no more from the mercy of God Transcendent than the liberation of extinction. The ideas for which Manichaeism stands are never likely to be entirely uprooted from human nature, until a far more advanced stage in this cycle of life has been reached; indeed, it is more than likely that in this age of selfishness and materialism they will be seen to boil up more furiously than before, wherever asceticism and contemplation have been most ruthlessly suppressed by a materialist outlook and mode of life. Its outward forms are still present among us. 'Its worship,' says Dr. Bussell, 'which through the influence of the Western sectaries, has set the example for all modern nonconformists, was simple, chiefly prayers and hymns and reading of scripture.'

Manichaeism eventually borrowed many trappings from Christianity, so that it is usually described as a heresy, though its origin is pagan. For Mani, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, have existed in independent sovereignty side by side from the beginning, each principle with its own ruler and its own dominion. The King of the Paradise of Light, the Glorious One, held sway over the Kingdom of Light

The Seal of Humility

and his realm included an Earth of Light, governed by another eternal ruler subordinate to him, whose *members* or attributes, the elements **that** composed the world he ruled, were of the fairyland rather than the scientific order, the west wind, the cooling breeze, light, fire and clear water, all of these in their most beneficent aspect. This World was just such a Paradise as, Dante tells us, the Supreme Good gave to man as an earnest of eternal peace. Everything lovely and delightful in this world of ours grew there without a struggle in higher perfection and in more generous luxuriance, and the Courts of the Monarchs of Light were thronged with glorious Angels, Aeons, who ministered to their holy will.

Far distant in the infinities of space, the Lord of Darkness had his Court of Darkness with a World of Darkness attached, which was the exact opposite of the Kingdom of Light. In that world was gathered in superlative strength everything that is unlovely, repulsive and destructive on the present earth—precipices, gaping abysses, swamps and poisonous springs, from which rose pillars of flame and smoke. Here each element of good in the World of Light had its counterpart in evil; evil vapour took the place of the balmy west wind, scorching Sirocco ousted the cooling breeze, instead of warming and cleansing fire flames of disastrous conflagration spread ruin far and wide, and the sweet clear water was fouled with a mingling of murky mist.

There was no dividing wall, no impassable frontier, between the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness, and it befell that on a day the Prince of Darkness espied from afar the glory of the realms of Light and in his envy prepared to make war upon them, creating innumerable legions of Dark Angels to form his array. The King of Light would not call on his Aeons to defend his kingdom against the Powers of Darkness; for love was their calling and peace their mission, and strife and conflict were unworthy of their essence. Therefore the Glorious One created Primal Man as his champion and sent him forth to fight against the enemies of Light. Once again Gayomart appears, to do justice to the seal of God Immanent and to account for the presence of the Divine Spark within the human Self. Primal Man, for all the armour of Light with which his Creator and Sovereign girded him, was worsted in the battle. He was overthrown and taken prisoner. There in the dungeons of Darkness he was held in chains, until the Lord of Light had armed himself and taken the field in person to rescue his

The Seal of Humility

fallen champion. He was victorious, Primal Man was set free and given the Sun in which Darkness has neither part nor parcel, as his residence.

Unhappily during Gayomart's captivity, the Powers of Darkness had succeeded in sequestering and absorbing portions of his essence of ethereal Light, and the divine rays had become so enmeshed in the tangled skeins of evil that they could not be unravelled. To release these unhappy sparks of divinity, smothered and half-absorbed in the welter of evil and darkness, the Lord of Light ordained the Creation of this world, which he entrusted to one of his Angels. Perforce the Angel composed its fabric of mingled good and ill; for the only material available was the combination of light and darkness, good and evil, which the Prince of Darkness had concocted during the captivity of Primal Man. The good elements of the World of Light had been almost inseparably intermingled with the hateful elements of the World of Darkness. The world, then, was God's creation through the intermediary of the Angel, but Mam absolved God of responsibility for the creation of man. The Lord of Light had created Gayomart and was not tempted to run a second risk of that kind. It was the Prince of Darkness Satan, who, taking a leaf out of the Glorious One's book, created Adam, the first earthly man, to help him in his war against the Light. In Adam he incorporated all the stolen particles of Light that he could amass and eked them out with darkness, so that he might have complete control over them. From the very first, earthly man was a house divided against itself.

For Adam, the elements of Light in his soul were of some compensation for the darkness that composed his body, but Mani allowed no such redeeming feature to Eve. Both in her soul and in her body, darkness predominated and she bequeathed her inferiority to all her sex. With that Oriental terror of sex, which found its way into the West and was in some way countered by the cult of the Virgin Mary, the Manichæan Eve stood for sensuality which deprives man of his birth-right, and sensual indulgence was symbolized by the apple which brought about the Manichæan Fall. Cain and Abel were Satan's sons by Eve, and Seth was the only true son of Adam. Jesus was sent from the Kingdom of Light to teach Adam the difference between light and darkness, and Adam cried, *Woe to him who created my body and enslaved my soul*. Thenceforward he sought the Light and was taken to Paradise along with Seth, but Eve, who remained the willing handmaid of the

The Seal of Humility

Powers of Darkness, was sent down to Hell. Meantime all the Angels of Light were hard at work freeing the light particles from their slavery, gathering the rescued rays in the great storehouses of the Sun and Moon, the homes of Primal Man and the Mother of Life respectively. They distill the Light in its purity from the adulterated amalgams of earth just as the alchemist distilled the elixir of life from the lees of wine, and all that they have purified is conveyed to its solar or lunar destination by the vast apparatus of the heavens, which transports it in the series of dredging buckets provided by the Signs of the Zodiac. The day will come when all the Light that can be saved by these means has been gathered into the Sun and Moon; then the good Angels who support our earth like Atlas will drop their burden and the world will fall in flames and ruin. The God of Light will come in glory surrounded by his retinue of Aeons and *just men made perfect*. A fire will rise out of Chaos and burn for 1,468 years, until the light that still remains in bondage has been refined from its abasement and a complete cleavage between Light and Darkness has been accomplished. Then Darkness will be sealed down by a mighty stone for evermore, so that it may never again invade the realms of Light, and 'sinners will be cast into Hell, whence they will cry in vain for mercy from the Powers of Light.

Pending the advent of this Apocalypse, Mani called on the faithful to devote their lives to assisting the Angels in their task of freeing good from evil, strengthening and encouraging the light particles by lives of the most severe austerity. No belief could be better calculated to drive home the utter Transcendence of God and the nothingness of man than the dogma that he was the creation of the Devil, even though a spark of Light might be included in his composition and promise some faint hope of problematic salvation. If man was the spawn of Satan, the world was mainly evil and to be shunned in all its works and all its pleasures. The idea that sexual pleasure had been the secret weapon used by the Devil against Adam and Eve, the horror of everything connected with the reproduction of life as though it involved some in-expiable curse, was reinforced by contempt for woman as the heiress of Eve's damnation. The strange cult of virginity, which runs so directly counter to the divine command to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth—it is true that Mani regarded Moses and the Jews with detestation—took a leading place in Manichaean doctrines and the asceticism needed to liberate the Light rays was so severe that it could only be

The Seal of Humility

imposed upon a small proportion of the believers, who were divided into the Inner Circle of the fully Initiate, the Perfect or Elect, and lay-brethren or Auditors who followed a less rigorous though still austere rule.

There was a time in the fourth century, when Manichaeism was a most formidable rival of the Christian Church, as it became again in a later age, and some of its doctrines subtly percolated into Christian orthodoxy. It responded very definitely to one of the demands of human nature, to one of the aspirations which the Vision throws into high relief, since it absolves God of all responsibility for sin and emphasizes the abyss between Him and man at the cost of denying all value to life and the world. Christianity, thanks to the example of its Founder, was victorious, pursuing a middle way less logical and more human, reconciling with the aid of ambiguity and vagueness the doctrines of God Immanent and God Transcendent. It is some such balance as this that the world is seeking to recover to-day. Though Saint Augustine and his successors seemed to have put Manichaeism under their heel, the Church carried ineffaceable scars from the struggle and for centuries to come the sectaries of a Dualist religion menaced, sometimes overtly, sometimes secretly, the unity of the Catholic faith. It was not for nothing that Saint Augustine was for nine impressionable years of his life, from the age of nineteen to twenty-eight, a Manichaean Auditor, and to begin with a very enthusiastic and active believer. For the ordinary man to whom Mysticism is a sealed book and to whom Immanence and Transcendence mean nothing, there is a good deal to be said for the doctrines of Mani and, though the Saint was very far from being an ordinary man, his first religion did answer some of his spiritual requirements. 'In Manichaeism', says Dr. Bussell, 'he started with a rationalist theory of the world, which, with Buddhism perhaps, alone satisfies the demands of ordinary reason as a complete cosmody.' 'The doctrine gives a simple solution to the problem of Evil and for the average man answers perhaps better than any other hypothesis (except Buddhism) the actual experiences of life.' Mani's dualism left a permanent impression on Saint Augustine's mind and therefore on the fabric of the Church which he built, leaving to Gregory the Great only the finishing touches.

It was not only in the corrective envelopment of Catholic orthodoxy that some of the most subversive ideas of Mani lingered on, more or less disguised by that general weariness of life and that passion of pes-

The Seal of Humility

simism -that descended on the world during the crumbling of the Roman Empire. 'For many centuries', says Dr. Bussell, 'Manichaeism was a world religion, a standing menace in the West, not only to Papacy but to Catholicism, until the Albigensian heresy (its latest form) was stamped out with cruel necessity.' Even after that heresy of the Cathars had been blotted out with fire and sword, not a few of the Reformers wielded against the Church weapons that resembled the two-edged sword forged by Mani, and we shall find in Jansenism the same over-emphasis on the utter wickedness and wretchedness of life and a world which surely cannot be the work of God.

If, in the West, Manichaeism represents the main stream of those religious doctrines, which arise from almost exclusive insistence on the Transcendent aspect of the Vision, a side stream, which, by a curious accident of mistaken identity or perhaps rather literary mystification, was swelled to the proportions of a considerable river, calls for consideration, before we glance at the tragic history of the Albigensian crusade. For some unexplained reason, Syria in general, and in particular the town of Edessa, was a veritable hot-house of strange religions, throwing up a crop of heresies and sects, which seemed to bear the mark of artificial forcing in their lush extravagance, and in this congenial environment Manichaeism long preserved something of its pristine purity, being not without responsibility for the upshoot of an odd and audacious system of mystical speculation. No doubt late Neo-Platonism was the principal ingredient in this Syrian philosophy of religion, which essays to present Christianity in terms of Hellenic metaphysics and the traditional Mysteries, and Dr. Inge characterizes it as 'the ancient religion of the Brahmins, masquerading in clothes borrowed from Jewish allegorists, Half-Christian Gnostics, Manichaeans, Platonizing Christians, and pagan Neo-Platonists'. And the chief exponent of this religious hotch-potch was that Christian Saint, who Dante tells us saw most deeply into the nature and ministry of the Angels, Saint Dionysius the False Areopagite. The main tenets of this Syrian school need not detain us long: their chief interest for us is concerned with the significance they attach to a single metaphor in their interpretation of the Vision, the concept of Darkness, which for them forms the expression by contrary of the dazzling Light of Mystic Union, and entered into the vocabulary of certain orders of Christian mystics with a variety of ambiguous meanings.

The Seal of Humility

We are told in the Acts of the Apostles that Saint Paul, when he had seen the altar with the inscription *To the Unknown God*, was taken to the Areopagus, the Supreme Court of Athens, and that there he spoke of the God in whom we live and move and have our being and to whose family according to the Greek poet Aratus we belong. 'And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit, certain men clave unto him and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite.' And that is all the Scripture tells us of Dionysius, judge of the Supreme Court of Athens and Christian convert. His name was fated to authenticate, almost to the extent of inclusion within the Canon, apocryphal and highly unorthodox works, in which Christ was regarded as a type of a universal process, whereby (in unspeakable fashion) the Incommunicable communicates itself, to quote Dr. Bussell's parody of their style.

Towards the end of the fifth century, some of the Syrian monks to whose activities we have referred seemed to have thought of giving to their speculations more than philosophical authority by fathering them on converts made by Saint Paul during this visit to Athens. They may have perpetrated this mystification with the best of motives as a pious fraud to establish theories which, for all their extravagance, they regarded as the sober truth. In China, Mr. Waley tells us in *The Way and the Power*, an author might shelter his book behind the name of an Ancient Worthy in deference to the convention of primitive authorship which imposed a ritual of self-effacement. They certainly made no attempt to deceive the reader by any camouflage of their late Neo-Platonic theories in trappings of earlier philosophy, but they did go rather far in addressing a letter to Saint John the Divine still in the island of Patmos and dedicating treatises to Timothy and claiming to have been present at the death of the Virgin Mary. Perhaps we may say that in the excitement of interpreting the Vision, their imagination ran away with them. *The Book of Hierotheus on the Secret Mysteries of God's House*, discovered at the end of the last century, professes to be written by a holy man, a convert of Saint Paul and the teacher of Dionysius, so that he is as it were one step back from the Areopagite. It develops a theory which its modern commentators designate as Pan-Nihilism, everything emanating from 'the Chaos of bare indetermination which Hierotheus calls God' and eventually returning to it.

The Seal of Humility

Hierotheus whose real name was probably Stephen bar Sudaili did not claim to be a Biblical character, but his pupil, who worked up his master's teaching into a complicated and less heretical system, based on the utter ineffability, inaccessibility, incomprehensibility and all those other negative polysyllables that are intended to emphasize the Transcendence of the Perfect, was more audacious, definitely assuming the identity of the Areopagite. Miss Underliill calls Dionysius *a great natural mystic*, but Dr. Inge is much nearer the mark when he says that he was not a visionary but a theologian. The Vision came to Hierotheus, as Dionysius tells us, and the pupil interpreted it after the fashion of his intelligence. It was Hierotheus's Vision that Dionysius elaborated at second hand into the Celestial Hierarchy, the Names of God and the Mystical Theology, artfully commending his speculations to the authorities of the Church by drawing the parallel between the Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchies. Saint Paul talked to his Athenian audience about life beyond the grave; moreover he had been caught up into the third heaven. No one then could have been more intimately cognisant of the mysteries which were the subject of these Syrian lucubrations, and what could be more plausible than that the Saint himself had given his convert an eye-witness account of the third heaven and all the other heavens and all that went on in them? Without fear of contradiction, the false Dionysius could give a free reign to his imagination and adapt any Gnostic fancies or Neo-Platonic theories which fitted in with his compilation of a heavenly Peerage. Gregory's attempt in this connection could be dismissed by Dante as lacking the true hierarchical authority.

Not only did he shelter his cogitations under the shield of transferred inspiration, but he added a further touch of realism by addressing them to Timothy, Paul's fellow worker. As a convert of Saint Paul, he had no business to know anything of the philosophy of Proclus (A. D. 410-85), but he made no attempt to disguise his acquaintance with the last of the great Hellenistic philosophers, taking over wholesale his similes, terms and doctrines. He had no need for camouflage; for inspiration accounts for any anachronism and one of his commentators congratulates him on refuting the Manichaean heresy, before it came into existence. In those uncritical ages, the false Dionysius's claim was accepted without a thought of scepticism, and his more or less pious imposture was rewarded by canonization with the almost apostolic authority to which

The Seal of Humility

a friend of Saint Paul might pretend. In the ninth century, when the blackness that must always follow the loss of classical Greek had closed down on the Western world, his works were revived in a Latin translation by John Scotus Erigena and, as will be seen, exercised a formidable, if irregular, influence on mystical theology. Saint Dionysius, Saint Paul's own convert, proved a doughty champion on the side of the Christian mystics and the Powers of the Church had often unwillingly to bow to his toleration or encouragement of mystical eccentricities; for mystics with their personal religion are apt to be thorns in the side of an established Church. 'In spite of their maddening eccentricity,' writes Aldous Huxley in *The Perennial Philosophy*, 'the men and women who followed the Dionysian path had to be tolerated. And once left free to produce the fruit of the spirit, a number of them arrived at such a conspicuous degree of sanctity that it was impossible even for the heads of the Spanish Inquisition to condemn the tree from which such fruits had come.'

Mysticism deals with an element of the universe which defies verbal expression; it is concerned with *En Sof* of the Cabbala, the Boundless One above being and thinking, ineffable, even to be called *ayin*, *nothing*, after the fashion of Erigena. It is unnecessary to dwell at length on the sesquipedalian paradoxes with which Dionysius darkens the darkness which from the intellectual point of view enshrouds the Transcendence of God. It is one of the proofs of the incomparable perfection of the classical Greek language that when nonsense is set out in its translucency it remains transparently nonsense. In a modern language with its slurring over of logical distinctions and plethora of indefinite abstractions, nonsense can be dressed up in robes of high-sounding magnificence as a pretender to the throne of reason. Dionysius is far more impressive in translation than in the original in which the jejune meagreness of his thought is manifest.

Undeserved glamour still seems to enhalo Dionysius's reputation: the way he maltreated the Greek language was criminal. From time to time he becomes almost speechless with a sputtering plethora of negatives or, obsessed by the prefix hyper = super, like an advertiser who can find no superlative sufficiently superlative for his wares, by dint of over-emphasis reduces everything to a dull level of nonsense. The following literal translation from his *Mystical Theology* which opens with an Invocation of the Trinity will illustrate this point: 'O Trinity, Super-

The Seal of Humility

Essential, and Super-Divine, and Super-Excellent, Ephor and Guardian of the Theosophy of the Christians, guide us to the Super-Incomprehensible and Super-Illuminating and loftiest Peak of the Mystic Scriptures, where the simple, absolute and immutable Mysteries of Theology are disclosed (or enshrouded) in the Super-Luculent Darkness of the Silence that unveils Secrets in Secrecy, Super-Brilliantly Super-Radiant in the deepest depths of Obscurity and in the utter Intangibility and Invisibility of the Super-Beautiful Splendours Super-Saturating the eyeless Minds.'

Whether man and the creature are negligible, absolutely as nothing over against God, or in substance and essence wholly divine, the result is the same. The differentiation of God is wiped out in His undifferentiated Unity, and the Manifold losing all finite definition is swallowed up in the One as though the Many had never been, and the huge process and apparatus of the Universe is left without meaning and without purpose. God's infinite incommunicability (Proclus's ἀμεθεξία) without contact with, or participation in the creature, His Super-Essential Indetermination, the All-Transcending Secrecy of the All-Transcending Super-Essential Super-Existing Super-Deity—these hyperbolical titles are followed by a formidable catalogue of oxymora, the Word that is no Word, the Name that is no Name, the Vision that is no Vision, the Knowledge that is no Knowledge, culminating in the Absolute No Thing which is above and beyond all existence. All these contortions of language and self-contradictory asseverations bring us to a comparatively simple admission of bewilderment, Divine Darkness, θεῶς γνόφος. It is Divine Darkness that Dionysius means, when he is ravished to Transcendence, accented almost to the elision of Immanence, to the Unplumbed Abyss enwrapped in the Cloud of Unknowing, the Unfathomable Blackness. In this Super-Brilliant Darkness, we see and know, through blindness and ignorance, actual not-seeing and not-knowing in their reality beyond sight and knowledge. 'It is the Unapproachable Light, in which God is said to dwell. And Invisible as it is owing to its Superlative Brightness and Unapproachable on account of the Super-Excessiveness of its Light-Outpouring, every man deemed worthy of knowing and seeing God enters this Darkness, and by the very fact that he neither sees nor knows rises above sight and knowledge to know this very thing—that He is in all things.' Once or twice a pleasant breath of common sense

The Seal of Humility

comes in as an astringent relief; the question is asked whether in the category of incomparables it is not better to liken God to life or goodness than to air or a stone and whether, in our catalogue of descriptive negations, we should not deny him loss of temper and crapulous headaches rather than thoughts and words. As a rule, however, God is dismissed as indeterminate beyond thought or word and eliminated from the world of His creation with so many whirling words and such stammering of contradictions in terms that a man scarcely dares to make up his mind whether the Creator is God or Devil so mysterious are His ways.

Darkness may be taken to imply a conception of God as the abstract Unity not so much transcending as excluding all distinctions, and mystics will do well to ponder Dr. Inge's comments on its dangers. 'Nearly all that repels us in medieval religious life—its otherworldliness and passive hostility to civilization—the emptiness of its ideal life—its maltreatment of the body—its disparagement of family life—the respect which it paid to indolent contemplation—springs from this one root.' These words deserve the serious attention of all those of us who are looking to Mysticism for help in our present troubles; for they explain with admirable clarity the unmerited discredit into which the philosophy of the unseen has fallen. The same authority outlines the recognized approach to the Vision through the darkness of unmitigated Transcendence:

Since God is the Infinite, and the Infinite is the antithesis of the finite, every attribute which can be affirmed of a finite being may be safely denied of God. Hence God can only be *described* by negations; He can only be *discovered* by stripping off all the qualities and attributes which veil Him; He can only be *reached* by divesting ourselves of all the distinctions of personality, and sinking or rising into our *uncreated nothingness*; and He can only be *imitated* by aiming at an abstract spirituality, the passionless *apathy* of a universal which is nothing in particular.

Even under this *reductio ad absurdum* of the Via Negativa, the initiated will descry a shadow of the Truth in which Immanence and Transcendence are reconciled. *Melius scitur Deus nesciendo*, says Augustine.

Miss Underbill says that to Dionysius' Christian literature owes the paradoxical concept of the Absolute Godhead as the *Divine Dark*, the Unconditioned, *the negation of all that is*—i.e. of all that the surface consciousness [awareness we should say] perceives—and of the souTs

The Seal of Humility

attainment of the Absolute as a *divine ignorance*, a way of negation'. Western Mysticism no doubt largely owes the introduction of this concept to the False Dionysius, though the Psalmist had already seen the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the thunder cloud, the image of the Almighty who made 'darkness His secret place, His pavilion round about Him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover Him.' * Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?' These poetical metaphors may be connected with the use of the Dionysian phrase as a technical term of the Mystical Vocabulary. It is loosely employed with a variety of unspecified meanings, which need precise definition, if confusion of thought is to be avoided.

Primarily it is used by Dionysius and some of the later mystics as the symbol of the Absolute or what comes to the same thing, the symbol descriptive of the basic reality of Mystic Union, expressing the immediate reaction to its revelation in experience. It appears then as, on the face of it, an incongruous synonym of Light, of the word that springs to the lips of most normally constituted mystics in the first moment of Illumination, of its very opposite, usually qualified with such epithets of oxymoron as *luminous* or *bright* on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, which, I opine, is no more satisfactory in Mysticism than in philology or literature.

So long as the Dionysian Darkness is confined to this negative significance, its application to the Vision leaves things exactly as they were, if it does not make obscurity more obscure. It adds to the inexplicable one word more that explains nothing. A new term does not originate some new manifestation of the Presence of God; it merely provides an additional symbol for the emotions of Illumination under the crushing weight of Transcendence. The indefinite passivity of negations may represent for the metaphysician the least questionable approximation to the equation of the One; the mystic whose calling is practical and whose concern is life and living demands a more positive affirmation of activity. A negative fills the niche of an ideal most inadequately. The world loves Saint Francis not because he loved that negative abstraction Poverty—no one loves Diogenes—but because he loved God in all his creatures. 'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.'

The Seal of Humility

If Darkness stands only for the absence of Light, the negative quality of a dead universe, the death of non-consciousness, its application to the Absolute, the living God, is blasphemous; on the other hand, insistence on the darkness of Emauton, though it cannot but follow the blinding flash of Transcendence, may tend to encourage a morbid strain of masochism in a sick soul, such as underlies some of the Manichaeon doctrines. It is too like that Nothingness which is the materialist Heaven, and the Chinese Sage was surely right, when he spoke of falling a victim to the ensnaring world, where five kinds of dark demons disport themselves, as one of the *wrong paths* that might lead his children astray. 'One has chiefly thoughts of dry wood and ashes, and few thoughts of the resplendent spring on the great earth. In this way one sinks into the world of darkness. The power is cold there, breathing is heavy, and many images of coldness and decay display themselves. If one tarries there long, one enters the world of plants and stones.'

There was a place in Hell for those who confessed to Dante:

Tristi fummo
nell' aer dolce che dal sol s'allegra,
portando dentro accidioso fummo.

We were gloomy in the sweet air that the sun makes gay, filled
with the smoke of sullen mirthlessness—*accidia*, one of the Deadly
Sins.

Inferno, vii. 121-3

How many times was Dante blinded by excess of Light in his progress through the ever more dazzling glory of Paradise? How terrible that shock, when, after straining vainly to pierce the resplendence of the light which enveloped the soul of Saint John the *Divine*, he turned to gaze at Beatrice—*Oh Beatrice, dolceguida e caral*—and found that his sight had failed him! No longer could he see his Beloved, blind and broken-hearted at her side in the beatitude of Paradise, *presso di lei nel mondofelice!* Yet terrible though the blow was—*Ahi quanto nella mente mi commossi!*—he wasted no time in moralizing on darkness or trying to identify it with light, but, reassured by the Apostle of Love, took heart of grace and discoursed with him on the Love of Beatrice and the Love of God, until his sight was restored by a glance from her eyes.

I feel a little doubtful about what Miss Underhill calls 'the dim and ineffable contemplation of Unnameable Transcendence, the imageless

The Seal of Humility

absorption in the Absolute', of which she says Dionysius provides the classic example and on which she lays great stress. However obscure and tortured the words of Illumination may seem—as Santa Teresa says, the spiritual language is so difficult—the revelation in itself is as startlingly clear and definite as the jagged track of a flash of forked lightning on a dark night, with nothing dim or vague or faint about its immediate purport. Mystical contemplation has nothing in common with the condition of indeterminate muzziness and jelly-like awareness of nothing in particular, which is one of the obstacles that every mystic has to overcome on his way to the Vision. Miss Underhill also argues that 'the dark Transcendence, reported and dwelt upon by all mystics of the Dionysian type, is nearest the truth of all our apprehensions of God.' In its purely negative significance, does it not approximate too closely to the blank dead darkness which represents Oblivion, that gap in experience opened when Ego, with senses and memory suspended by some physical disability, is withdrawn into pure consciousness and not a ray of the Light filters into his experience? 'The darkness', writes George Macdonald, 'knows neither the light nor itself; only the light knows itself and the darkness also.'

So far had I gone with my doubts and reservations about the Dionysian Darkness, when intuition broke abruptly *in* upon my reasonings and was pleased to prove to me that Darkness might be an emblem of the Everlasting Yea. There came to me unawares what Julian of Norwich might perhaps have called a Shewing of Darkness. I had not sought for it: at least I had made no more effort to attain inaction through action—'the secret of the magic of life', says the Chinese Sage, 'consists in using action in order to achieve non-action'—than was entailed in the regular habit of a short meditation before sleep, meditation standing for thought and reasoning, which may sometimes pass into contemplation or intuitive comprehension. As I had been thinking deeply on Dionysius' Darkness, my thoughts continued to follow where Darkness led them, until they faded out, and their place was taken by this very Darkness, which broke into the order of their continuous series, when they tried to assert themselves, not once or twice, but many times, with a gentle violence that nothing could resist. That Darkness was not the soft darkness of sleep nor an eyeless and lightless blackness of utter obscurity; for somehow it was positive, not a mere negation, and from it there seemed to issue a dark light, as though

The Seal of Humility

bright light reflected from a black mirror or from the polished surface of black marble could become dark. This radiant obscurity, as I became aware of it, appeared to bring with it equally the recognition of God Immanent and the realization of His Transcendence, and it seemed to me later, when the Shewing was past, that my mind, long occupied with this problem, had thrown to the temporal surface of experience a dark symbol of Mystic Union, to prove to me that Darkness must not be exclusively associated with the negative aspect of the Vision. It was correcting the all-too-facile conclusion to which it had been led by reasoning, and Ego had been empowered to see a reflection of the Truth in a mirror of Darkness.

Dionysius mainly uses the term of Divine Darkness in the sense which we have been discussing, though he also applied it by a slight extension to that naughting of the mind, the annihilation of experience, through which the soul dies to be born anew in the Vision; perhaps indeed it was the insistent memory of that preparation, which stamped his interpretation of the Vision with the seal and symbol of Darkness. Certainly there can be no boggling as to the appropriateness with which Darkness describes, in all its stages, the preliminary approach to that revelation. The Way lies through the Valley of the Shadow. The forest in which Dante was lost in the mid-course of his life was not only thick and wild and rough, but also dark, dark almost as death. If there is one rule, one regularity, which controls the comings and goings of the Vision, it must be that it is only born after long travail, and that its advent is invariably preceded by a period of storm and stress and spiritual crisis.

In the beginning, the word comes—it may be a battle signal from without or a secret inner compulsion—for the knight-errant to ride forth. *That a quest there is, and an end, is the single secret spoken.* It is certain that the road must pass through deep darkness and that the soul must be prepared for *the siveet Vision of the Holy Grail* by trials and disciplines, which may seem accidentally imposed by force of external circumstances or deliberately designed and practised in accord with *the reasons of the heart* and with mystical tradition. In one sense, there is no approach to the Vision except by the Negative Way and through Darkness; for the light of Mystic Union can in no wise enter experience, unless the clamorous cries of that experience demanding notice from awareness be silenced and the brightness of its variegated appeal to

The Seal of Humility

attention be obscured. This naughting of the mind, the simplification or dulling of Emauton, the very alphabet of Mysticism, must precede the revelation without respect of Immanence or Transcendence. No one, says Plotinus, can attain the Vision so long as he has in his soul some active thought alien to the One. The mind must withdraw from all things and turn inward on itself, inclining to nothing outside itself, blind to all worldly things. 'Lovers put out the candles', writes Coventry Patmore, 'and draw the curtains when they wish to see the god and goddess; and in the higher communion the night of thought is the light of perception.'

Even if, as we believe, the Divine Purpose has not set the attainment of continuous revelation as the goal of temporal life, it is very meet, right and their bounden duty that those to whom a glimpse of Eternity has been vouchsafed should try from time to time again to draw aside the curtain of Oblivion and let in the Light for a further reflection of Mystic Union in experience. Then they must seek that self-annihilation of which we have spoken and follow the rule laid down in *An Epistle of Private Counsel*, a fourteenth-century treatise, quoted by Miss Underbill:

Look that nothing live in thy working mind but a naked intent stretching unto God, not clothed in any special thought of God in thyself, how He is in Himself or in any of His works, but only that he is as He is. Let Him be so, I pray thee, and make Him on none otherwise speech, nor search in Him by subtilty of wit: but believe by thy ground. This naked intent, freely fastened and grounded by very belief, shall be nought else to thy thought and feeling but a naked thought and a blind feeling of thine own being. Think no further of thyself than I bid thee do of thy God, so that thou be oned with Him in spirit as in thought.

'To see God', says Dr. Inge in *Christian Mysticism*, 'is the goal of the religious life, and the Vision of the One is only the highest and deepest kind of prayer, which is the mystical act *par excellence*,' Ego, the spirit, cannot be aware, even in the faintest degree, of himself and his blessedness, until the manifold of the objective self with which he identifies himself has—for the timeless moment—ceased to be. The *tabula rasa* of the mind, the extinction of awareness, has always been a stumbling-block to the West, busy about many temporal things and finding it hard to grasp that the zero of awareness may be—must be—the plenitude of consciousness, not a matter of knowledge with subject and object apart

The Seal of Humility

and contrasted, but the truth transcending knowledge in which subject and object are one in every determination.

The zero of awareness corresponds to the total blotting out of experience. Emauton departs as if it were no more and the self of experience seems dead, when Ego returns to his eternal home and his awareness is gathered up into the divine unity of consciousness. The story of this dying is admirably told by Dr. Inge in a series of quotations from Hylton's *Scale of Perfection*.

The darker the night is, the nearer is the true day. This is the darkness and nothing spoken of by the mystics, a rich nothing, when the soul is at rest as to thoughts of any earthly thing, but very busy about thinking of God. But the night passeth away; the day dawneth. Flashes of light shine through the chinks of the walls of Jerusalem; but thou are not there yet. But now beware of the midday fiend, that jeigneth light as if it came from Jerusalem. This light appears between two black rainy clouds, whereof the upper one is presumption and self-exaltation, and the lower a disdain of one's neighbour. This is not the light of the true sun. This darkness, through which we must pass is simply the death of self-will and all carnal affections; it is that dying to the world which is the only gate of life.

Divine Darkness rightly habits place in the mystical vocabulary, but perhaps the reader will agree that as a symbol of Mystic Union, Dante's apotheosis of Light in the *Paradiso* extinguishes—or should we say makes light of?—the Dionysian Transfiguration of Darkness just as the poet's genius reduces to absurdity the Syrian monk's paradoxical linguistic distortions. In later days, the image of Darkness, especially the Darkness of Darknesses that is felt in the Dark Night of the Soul, became almost inseparable from the name of San Juan de la Cruz. This Spanish mystic, a follower and contemporary of Santa Teresa, distinguishes with a truly mystical passion for classification and an equally characteristic lack of precision between three nights in the journey of the soul to Union with God. A word may be said as to his conception of this Union. God dwells and is present *substantially* in every soul, even that of the greatest sinner in the world, as Santa Teresa learnt from Saint Thomas's *Stigma* that He is present in every tiling. 'And so', he goes on, 'when we speak of the Union of the Soul with God or its Transformation into God, we do not mean this substantial presence, which is always an accomplished fact, but only when likeness has been effected by love ... the will of the soul and the will of God, conforming one to the other and neither having anything that repels the other.' Is the gulfs o

The Seal of Humility

wide between God's substantial presence in the soul and the immanence of a divine conscious spirit? And where should the secret of the Vision be hidden, if not in Love's transformation of the soul into its own likeness? The error of the *One Act* of Quietism arose from the confusion of the substantial presence of God with Love's transformation of the Soul.

As for the three nights of the soul's journey, they begin with the night of sense, which is the first stage of approach to the Vision in the obscurity of sorrow, perplexity and repentance; there follows the night of reason and intellect which are blinded by faith and plunged in the deepest blackness of midnight; and finally there comes the night of memory and will, the darkness before the dawn, in which hope and love utterly blot out all experience in the death which heralds a new birth.

Over and above these three *nights* of progress towards the unseen, which run into one another and overlap, there lours the *Noche Oscura del Alma*, the true night of the soul, the night of the spirit, a night of seeming regress, a condition of the Self, which has nothing in common with them; for it is the terrible blankness of dereliction which may descend on certain souls after the Vision, after the revelation of the Divine Presence, or perhaps more accurately after some appreciable approach to that consummation. 'The greatest affliction of the sorrowful soul in this state is the thought that God has abandoned it, of which it has no doubt.'

If we arc to understand that *Dark Night of the Soul* as what Miss Underhill calls a *swing-back* from Illumination and Enlightenment, a very difficult and delicate problem is raised for the student of Mysticism. It appears to be the peculiar privilege of Christian mystics and one may carry back its origin, long before the False Dionysius, whose Divine Darkness is far too intellectual a conception to be associated with so emotional an idea, to those early simple days, when holy hermits were regularly tempted in the desert by relays of devils. For Eckhart, it was as if a wall had been built up between God and man, as if the eye that had looked upon Eternity had been darkened and put out. Ruysbroeck also experienced the sense of the loss of God, speaking of it as the autumn season of the soul, when the riches of the summer are changed into a great poverty. 'Where now are the ardours of love, the intimacy, the gratitude, all the pleasures of grace, the interior consolation, the secret joy, the sensible sweetness? How have all these things failed?' Even more impressive is Madame Guyon's exclamation: 'It is an amaz-

The Seal of Humility

ing thing for a soul that believed herself to be far advanced in the way of perfection, when she thus sees herself go to pieces all at once.'

The pagan Plotinus, absorbed in contemplation of the Light of the Perfect, knew little or nothing of the eclipsing obscurities of sin and the impenetrable clouds of Remorse, which from time to time descended on many of the holiest of Christian Saints. For him, the bliss of the Vision was only broken by the cruel necessity of return to earth, never by the torturing conviction that Union with the One had been severed and that he had been abandoned by God; for his reason—the grand Reason that was King—told him that in eternity there was neither change nor interruption and that the presence of the Absolute was eternal. If die Light were eclipsed, it had not moved, but he had turned his spiritual eyes away from it; for its absence would have meant utter dissolution.

Nor do the Eastern mystics undergo the agonies of this sense of dereliction after closest communion. The Tibetan Buddhist is not haunted by his nightmares until after death and one looks in vain through Mr. Huxley's anthology of *The Perennial Philosophy* for Eastern quotations referring to the Dark Night of the Soul. Dr. Inge's *Philosophy of Plotinus* contains a noteworthy passage contrasting the serenity of the Neo-Platonist in his aspiration towards the One with the dark conflict called up in the Christian's breast by the conviction of sin.

The Christian struggle for spiritual victory is more intense than the Platonic, because the contrasted blackness of evil is felt more vividly. Plotinus knows of no devils, and no active malignancy in the nature of things. There is no sense of horror in this philosophy from first to last. The temper of the Platonic Saint is to be serene and cheerful, confident that the ultimate truth of the world is on his side and that only *earth-born clouds* can come between him and the sun. It is a manly spirit, which craves for no divine caresses and fears no enmity from *the world-rulers of this darkness*. The Christian may be reminded that the words of the Johannine Christ, *Let not your heart be troubled*, reflect the whole line of Christ's teaching better than the more sombre outlook of many Christian Saints.

The conception of the Dark Night of the Soul as the denial or temporary cancellation of the Vision is inseparably bound up with the recognition of, and insistence upon, the Transcendence of the Absolute. 'Never forget', says Juan de la Cruz, 'that God is inaccessible. Ask not therefore how far your powers may comprehend Him, your feelings

The Seal of Humility

penetrate Him. Fear thus to content yourself with too little, and deprive your soul of the agility which it needs in order to mount up to Him.' The One cannot be expressed in terms of the Many and God to the intellect is impenetrable night. The incommunicability, which Dionysius borrowed from Proclus, finds its place here; since an infinite gulf seems to be fixed between God and His creatures and there is no essential likeness or communion between them. 'Neither the creatures, nor intellectual perceptions, whether natural or supernatural, can bring us to God, there being no proportion between them. Created things cannot serve as a ladder; they are only a hindrance and a snare.'

There is a price to be paid for the ruthless stifling of reason. For San Juan, faith extinguishes reason as an extinguisher smothers a candle; as Dr. Inge acutely remarks, it is with him the antithesis, not to sight as in the Bible, but to reason. Reason and faith, the intuitive certainty of the Divine Presence, should supplement one another and, *in so far as the Dark Night of the Soul accentuates their difference and sets them in opposition one to the other, it can scarcely be regarded as anything but a hindrance to the mystic's progress. What that Night may mean can best be told by repeating and completing the quotation from the *Noche Oscura del Alma* given above.*

That which afflicts the anguished soul most deeply is the conviction that God has abandoned her, of which she has no doubt; that He has cast her away as an abominable thing. . . . The shadow of death and torments of Hell are most acutely felt, and this comes from the sense of being abandoned by God, being chastised and cast out by His wrath and heavy displeasure. All this and even more the soul feels now, for a fearful apprehension has come upon her that as it is now so it will be for ever. She has also the same sense of abandonment with respect to all creatures and feels that she is the object of contempt to all, especially to her friends.

It is a relief to turn to the steady common-sense of Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist; he extols the supremacy of Reason with no less emphasis than Plotinus and his fellow Cambridge Divines who did not shrink from declaring that *Reason is the Divine governor of mans life; it is the very voice of God*. The point is made in quaint and striking language by More in a passage quoted in Dr. Inge's *Christian Mysticism*:

He that misbelieves and lays aside clear and cautious reason, in things that fall under the discussion of reason, upon the pretence of hankering after some high principle, which, a thousand to one, proves but the infatuation of melancholy,

The Seal of Humility

and a superstitious hallucination, is as ridiculous as if he would not use his natural eyes about their proper object till the presence of some supernatural light, or till he had got a pair of spectacles made of the crystalline heaven, or of the *coelum empyreum*, to hang upon his nose for him to look through.

Certainly many great Christian mystics have undergone this ordeal of dereliction and their sufferings must add to the reverence with which we of the common herd regard them. The Dark Night of the Soul has been exalted as a special mark of Divine favour and as it were the badge of admission to the inmost circle of the initiate; Miss Underbill esteems it a supreme privilege of the highest order of mystics. Does this state of negation and unutterable misery provide the culminating test of extreme holiness? Is it its function to purify, combine and transform experience into the rarest and most ethereal of personalities, instinct with the acutest sensibility for shades of good and evil, sloughing the dross of earth and trembling, we may imagine, on the threshold of a higher phase of temporal existence than any life known to us? It is tempting to answer these questions *in* the affirmative, but it must be remembered that neither ecstasy nor dereliction are anything more than the reactions of temporal experience.

Many followers of the Vision whose names are famous in the history of Mysticism, both in the East and *in* the West, have passed along the Way of Enlightenment, not indeed without meeting many dragons in the road, but none the less without encountering this particular trial. Having through the Vision apprehended the truth of Mystic Union, like Plotinus, they knew and could never forget that God could not conceivably be sundered from them and that, however blackly the storms of life might envelop them, the light of the Divine Presence, once reflected in their souls, could never be totally obscured. There is no reason to suppose that the mystics of the East belong to a lower order of Mysticism than their Western brethren. *Voces diversae, semitae multae, sed unum per eas significatur, unus quaeritur.* Transcendence, Immanence,* the names of God are many, but their significance is one: Illumination, Darkness, the paths are many, but to the One they all lead.

It would be misleading to attach to the Dark Night of the Soul some mysterious potency and secret virtue of redemption through suffering as though it marked a special intervention of the Divine, an exceptional irruption into life and time of the Power that is always present. As has

The Seal of Humility

been said many times before, the Vision can only be interpreted in terms of the experience available in the Emauton in which the Divine has been reflected, and the emotions it leaves behind are conditioned by the nature and ordering of that experience. The Dark Night of the Soul, like the visions and auditions which so often seek to clothe the naked loveliness of Mystic Union, has no existence outside the objective self. Miss Underhill very rightly associates the devils that used to make a football of Santa Teresa's soul with the phenomenon of *dark contemplation*. The Clear Light of the Void, the Light of Consciousness, is as effectively blotted out by the Dark Night of the Soul as by those blood-curdling Theophanies, which haunt the Tibetan Buddhist in the interspace between death and a new life, and like them has no other reality than its apparition in experience.

All the spiritual aridities and mental anguish, which grieve and refine the soul of the dark contemplative, belong to the order of Emauton. It is not God or Union with Him that varies—the thought is blasphemous—but the emotions and memories of Emauton, their equilibrium lost after the impact of the Vision, are in a state of flux and tumult, swinging this way and that and colliding in their quest of a stable balance. When experience has been set in order and conflict eliminated, the Dark Night of the Soul gives place to a blaze of Light.

This point of view is startlingly confirmed, when we look more closely at San Juan's *Noche Oscura del Alma*, which gave its name to the relapse from Illumination. It consists of a poem embedded in a prose commentary rather after the fashion of Dante's *Vita Nuova*, though the Spanish commentary is far more detailed and voluminous. If the poem did not rank as one of the loveliest gems of literature, it is likely that less would have been heard of the Dark Night of the Soul. San Juan has taken the Biblical Song of Songs, has purged it of its earthiness and fleshly passion, and etherealized its voluptuous yearnings into a celestial spirituality that makes it worthy of the lips of Beatrice in Dante's Paradise. In the eight stanzas of this poem, perhaps the nearest approach to an adequate expression of the beatitude of realized Mystic Union in any human language, San Juan's genius has distilled the quintessence of his mystical saintliness. For all its title of darkness, there is not a breath of agony or torture in its unearthly gossamer beauty. It tells of a dark night of love, a hushed house, a beating heart, a garden of cedars and lilies, lover and Beloved in one another's arms, oblivion and rapture,

The Seal of Humility

cares amid the lilies forgotten, but of pain, loss and dereliction not a word, not a thought of love's parting or abandonment.

Quedeme, y olvideme,
El rostro reeling sobre el Amado,
Ces6 todo, y dejeme
Dejando mi cuidado
Entre las azucenas olvidado.

I was still and I forgot; I bowed my face upon my Love; all
ceased and I was lost; losing my cares among the lilies forgotten.

Miss Sackville-West speaks of a *certain fragrance and diaphaneity which seems to envelop his whole slight being*; yet in spite of liis seeming fragility San Juan had won his way through the dark labyrinth of spiritual torment to the Lover's secret stair that leads past the *santa ociosidad* *olvido*, the holy inactivity and forgetfulness of the night of experience, to the beatitude in which his soul is (*es i.e. is essentially*, not *estd*, wliich would mean *is accidentally*) *God by participation*, the soul giving to God all that God had given her and God giving Himself *in* the mystical love-gift, when He rested in His love's embrace.

With a fiercer confidence, Saint Augustine marched singing to the heights of the Vision, borne aloft by the soaring flame of Love. 'We are on fire with the gift of the Holy Spirit and are carried aloft. We burn within and we go. We ascend the ascents within our hearts and sing the Song of Degrees [the psalms of David distinguished by Hebrew letters]. With thy fire, with thy good fire, we burn within and go, since we go on high to the peace of Jerusalem.' *Dono tuo accendimur et sursum ferimur; inardescimus et imus. Ascendimus ascensiones in corde et cantamus canticum graduum. Igne tuo, igne tuo bono, inardescimus et imus, quoniam sursum imus ad pacem Hierusalem.* Augustine for all his repentance and remorse, *conterritus peccatis meis et mole miseriae meae*, shows himself to us as one of those at whose hands the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, one of the violent who took *it* by force. San Juan, for all that his transparent holiness seemed untarnished by *taint* of sin, crept humbly into the kingdom through the deepest shadows with such gentle mouse-like patience that one might be excused for failing to recognize the fullness of his beatitude, from which there was no turning back, no relapse, since it was registered in words that can never die.

In his' poem, the Saint's heart was speaking to itself; in the prose

The Seal of Humility

Commentary, the Ecstatic Doctor, a leader of the Counter-Reformation, speaks to the army of Christ's followers. If fate had not prescribed for him—with Santa Teresa—the role of champion of the Counter-Reformation, his gentle soul might have been less heavily overcast with darkness and the oppression of pure Transcendence. A voluntary scape-goat, he took upon his frail shoulders all the sins and excesses, all the corruption in spiritual places, which had accomplished the impossible, the splitting in fragments of the indivisible Catholic unity, and welcomed for himself and his followers every hardness and every mortification not only of the flesh but also of the mind. In this heroic self-abnegation lurked the danger of nihilism, that Manichaean hatred of Self and the world, which aroused doubts in the minds of the ecclesiastical authorities as to his orthodoxy.

The tireless energy and devouring zeal of the two great protagonists of the Spanish Counter-Reformation called into existence a widespread passion of self-sacrifice, which took shape in monasteries and convents thronged with monks and nuns afire to deny the world in the cause of the One Church and win through to Union with God. Spain was filled with ascetic contemplatives, and, if as Mr. Huxley suggests, 'a minority of contemplatives is necessary for the well-being of any society', her present aloofness from Western materialism may be due to their prayers and sacrifices.

These hundreds of men and women, seeking their love-union with God, consented to every hardship, welcomed every self-denial, but, as we have said, no discipline can command the Vision. There is no doubt, however, that visions, auditions, locutions, ecstasies and hallucinations poured in upon their tormented bodies and tortured souls and in some degree relieved their sufferings. Such alleviation could only be spasmodic and ephemeral and, when the beautiful dream faded, the starving hearts of those who were striving after God were wrung even more bitterly with the agony of dereliction. It was with these penitents and their confessors that San Juan was particularly concerned, and a great part of his work is taken up in the *Ohras Spirituales* with exhortations to count for nothing and ignore all the delicacies of spiritual sweetness, which may well be the work of the Devil, who in sixteenth-century Spain was always lurking in person just round the corner. *Golosina de espíritu*, *spiritual gluttony*, spiritual avarice, spiritual debauchery—such are the phantom doubles of the Deadly Sins of the

The Seal of Humility

senses, which San Juan denounces as dogging the pilgrim's steps. Desolation and despair overtake him, not because he has achieved his quest and the achievement has failed him, but because he has dallied on his pilgrimage, tempted by the blameless loveliness of ethereal delectations, which hold back the soul from God no less effectively than the pleasures of the senses.

It stands to reason that the Vision, however far-reaching and profound its effects on Emauton, that is on character and personality, cannot still the troublesome waves of this temporal life into an unending halcyon calm or ensure for all the days that remain a continuous level of content and tranquillity. Exaltation will be followed by depression, rapture by disappointment and ecstasy by the humdrum monotony of everyday life, and these ups and downs of mood and temperament will not be raised to a higher level of significance by being merged into a state of negation and utter misery, even if the state be called the Dark Night of the Soul. In all human nature there is a strain of masochism, that exaggeration of unselfishness, which finds pleasure *in* humiliation and self-torture, and its cultivation and encouragement must be shunned like the very devil, for it is indeed the thought which was the birth of Ahriman, the spirit that denies. Moreover lives cannot be lived continually under the extreme pressure of the keenest emotion such as the Vision initially produces *in* a sensitive soul. The violence of the reaction will be proportionate *to* the tension of the strings and the pitch *to* which the lute was strung. There must be times when, as San Juan says, even the most enlightened soul feels a profound emptiness and destitution of the three kinds of goods, temporal, natural and spiritual, which are ordained for its comfort.

Very sternly the Saint insists that the mystic must not seek after sweetness, but after bitterness in God. There must be no pursuit of the rapture of contemplation for the rapture's sake; for the way of God consists not in sweetness and devotion, though these may be necessary for the novice, but in surrender to suffering.

The fly that touches honey cannot use its wings, so the soul that clings to spiritual sweetness ruins its freedom and hinders true contemplation.

He, then, is very unwise who, when sweetness and spiritual delight fail him, thinks for that reason that God has abandoned him; and when he finds them again, rejoices and is glad, thinking in that way he has come to possess God. More unwise still is he who goes about seeking for sweetness in God, rejoices

The Seal of Humility

in it and dwells upon it; for in so doing he is not seeking after God with the will grounded in the emptiness of faith and charity, but only in spiritual sweetness and delight, which is a created thing, following herein in his own will and fond pleasure.... It is impossible for the will to attain to the sweetness and bliss of the Divine Union otherwise than in detachment, in refusing to the desire every pleasure in the things of heaven and earth.

There is more than a touch of Manichaeian gloom and perversity in the Ecstatic Doctor's glorification of suffering for suffering's sake, and one wonders how his conscience reconciled this attitude with the beatific loveliness of his Song of Songs. Yet it is certain that every mystic must beware lest he succumb to the temptation of spiritual gluttony, and the Dark Night of the Soul, as San Juan must have learnt from many of his penitents, is particularly liable to be born from the disappointed craving for those *divine caresses*, that hankering after the deliciousness of divine communion, which Dr. Inge contrasts in the passage quoted above with the manliness of Neo-Platonism.

'All that I would say of these inward delights and enjoyments', says William Law, 'is only this; they are not holiness, they are not piety, they are not perfection; but they are God's gracious allurements and calls to seek after holiness and spiritual perfection.' A man would be more than human, if he did not cry in the first moments of Illumination as Peter cried in the Transfiguration, *Master, it is good for us to be here*, and not knowing what he says to call upon his fellows to build tabernacles, so that the glory of the Vision may abide with them for ever.

The mysticism of Saint Francis [says Paul Sabatier in his life of that Saint] is the mysticism of Jesus leading his disciples up to the Mount of Contemplation; then when, amazed with joy, they wished to make tabernacles and dwell there on the heights, until they had drained the sweetness of ecstasy to the dregs, he turned to them and said, *Foolish ones, ye know not what ye ask*; and shewing them the multitude astray like sheep without a shepherd, he brought them back to the plain into the midst of the people, who were groaning and suffering or blaspheming.

The quest of spiritual delight for delight's sake is doomed to disappointment, when the bliss is withheld, as it surely will be. Disinterested love is the key to every problem, though it may lead men into perilous paradoxes. Saint Thomas a Kempis once wrote that it was better to go to Hell with Christ than to be without Him in Heaven, but on a wiser second thought erased the words from his manuscript.

The Seal of Humility

Love, *the hierophant of the mysteries of God*, is not love, when it looks towards a reward, and the love of God is no exception to the rule. Spinoza said that if a man would love God, he must not ask God to love him in return; it would seem that the Divine love would fall short of the human, if the Creator on his side demanded that the creature should return his love—a paradox which contains no contradiction, if all life is the incarnation of the Divine. 'He who tries to be holy in order to be happy will assuredly be neither,' says Dr. Inge, or in the words of the *Theologia Germanica*, 'So long as a man seeketh his own highest good, because it is his, he will never find it'.

It might seem that this disinterestedness, even in the quest of that celestial bliss which finds expression in time, corresponds to the instinct of death and darkness, which yearns for the extinction of the temporal self and the annihilation of individuality as the goal of life, but it will be seen, I think, rather to emphasize the exaltation of Love over Happiness as the supreme purpose.

In pursuing the development of the Dionysian Darkness to its conclusion in the Dark Night of the Soul, we have been carried past a curious and significant off-shoot of the False Areopagite's speculations, which makes a direct appeal to the present writer. For in the ninth century there was based upon them a system of philosophy, in which he was surprised to find much that approximated to his own interpretation of the Vision, and much that corroborated his hesitant attempts to give utterance in Enlightenment to the message it had conveyed to his mind, though their conclusions as to the final issue of the Divine Plan stand poles apart. This system *mutatis mutandis* represents just such an approach to our modern problem, just such a reconciliation of faith and reason, based on the theory of their fundamental harmony or rather final identity, as that after which the world of to-day is so painfully groping, and it does not scruple to give the last word to reason with the dogmatic assurance of a twentieth-century scientist. It marks perhaps the last perfect coalescence of the two sides of the Double Truth, that dualism of thought which was to the Hellenic mind inconceivable, the last invisible mending of the tear, opened by *the learned knife*, in a vesture woven in one piece. We are told that the divorce between the truths of faith and reason may be traced to the expulsion by the Emperor Zeno of the heretical scholars of Edessa, who carried away with them the philosophy of Aristotle and later introduced to Islam Syriac

The Seal of Humility

and Arabic translations of his works. Aristotle's wisdom was regarded as supreme in its domain just as the Koran in the domain of faith was left unaffected by the wisdom of the Greeks, and when Aristotle was brought back to the West from the Moors, the distinction between philosophical and religious truth remained.

John Scotus (A.D. 800-c. 877) whose pseudonym Erigena or rather Eriugena betokens an Irish origin—for Hierugena provides a punning reference to the Isle of Saints after the manner of Hierusalem for Jerusalem—came from those Northern lands where Galloway and Antrim arc sundered by the North Channel, so that John the Scot was both Scottish and Irish. These Scoto-Irish monks boasted a tradition of scholarship and a reputation for audacious, not to say heretical, speculation. Four hundred years before, his fellow-countryman, Morgan, also a man of learning, had shaken the early Church to its foundations by raising in its most undiplomatic form the most formidable of all religious controversies, the problem of human responsibility, and had damned himself, if he had been included in Dante's Hell, to a burning coffin within the City of Dis with the title of Pelagius the Arch-Heretic, the champion of Free Will against Diving Grace. The warfare that he waged with Saint Augustine, to be eventually struck down by the Saint's Olympian thunderbolt, -was destined to leave on Christian doctrines an impression that has not yet been obliterated, and the whole dispute with its bitter theological odium broke out anew in France in the seventeenth century, when, as we shall see, Jansenius refurbished the Augustinian armoury to attack what he declared was a revival of this heresy.

Erigena knew Greek even better than Morgan in a time when it was indeed a dead language, and, in the pride of his scholarship which bubbles up throughout his writings, he trailed his coat after the manner of Pelagius and their nation, inviting the lightning of orthodoxy and defying the avenging wrath of the ecclesiastical authorities. There was nothing that the men of the South to whose lot fell the thankless task of quelling these indomitable Northern heretics found it harder to stomach than the barbarism of that dull diet of oatmeal of which they were so inordinately proud, and John the Scot called Erigena had hurled at his head the very same jibe that Jerome's bitter tongue had launched at Pelagius: *stolidissimus et Scotorum pultibus praegravatus, a blockhead with porridge-sodden wits*,

The Seal of Humility

In that age of characterless desolation, John the Scot shines as a real person with a sense of humour and a most impudent contempt for authority, as well as an original and fearless thinker and one of the most remarkable figures of the Middle Ages. He found an enlightened patron in Charles the Bald, the grandson of Charlemagne, and Hincmar, the great Archbishop of Reims, called him in to justify the condemnation of Gottschalk, a vagrant priest (*gyrovagus*) and ill-starred poet, who had deduced from Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin, not one, but two predestinations, the one to beatitude, the other to damnation, and upon whom neither scourging nor durance vile could prevail to abjure his dismal heresy. In his defence of Free-will against an iron fatalism worthy of the Chaldaeans, Erigena upheld with flying colours the heretical repute of his forerunner Pelagius. 'Before the Irish philosopher could be checked', says W. P. Ker in *The Dark Ages*, 'he had refuted Sin and Hell.' It is asking for trouble to meddle with that most thorny religious topic, predestination. Pelagius awaits those who escape from Calvin. Erigena was rewarded for his intervention in so ticklish a debate by arraignment before two ecclesiastical councils, followed by condign condemnation,' but his withers were unwrung, since he remained secure under the protection and favour of his royal patron.

John the Scot and Charles the Bald were on the most intimate terms. The King who was wont to style his philosopher Magister—one wonders if he was the Discipulus who discourses so intelligently with the Magister in *De Divisione Naturae*—took pleasure in showing off the gifts and acquirements of the unique, wise man whom he had beguiled to his Court, whom *solum omnium acutissimum Galliae transmisit Hibernia*. One day at dinner, Erigena, who was a tiny wisp of a man, was sitting apart at a table with two fat clerics of giant mould, and the King with a twinkle in his eye sent his Magister a dish with two whopping big fish and one little measly one to serve for the three of them. Quite equal to the schoolboy humour expected of him, Erigena transferred the two big fish to his own platter and conscientiously divided the little one between his two big companions. 'That is not fair,' exclaimed the King who was watching. 'Quite fair/ retorted John the Scot. 'Here am I a small man with two big fish and there you have two huge priests with a tiny fish to balance me.' In another tale that is told, he was sitting at the royal table opposite the King, when the wine was flowing freely,

The Seal of Humility

and something he said in the way of Irish humour upset the courtiers in attendance. '*Quid distat inter sottum et Scottum?*' asked the King in his dog Latin. 'What divides a sot from a Scot?' The irreverent scholar looked across the table and replied, '*Tabula tantum*, only the breadth of the table'.

Louis the Pious, also known as the Debonair, had received as a precious gift from the East the Mystical Writings of Dionysius in their original Greek and, as no one at the Court could understand them, had set his heart on having them translated into Latin, but in those days it was almost impossible to find in the West a competent Greek scholar. An Abbot named Hilduin was put in charge of the manuscripts as head of the monastery of Saint Dionysius and seems to have undertaken to translate them, but nothing was ever heard of his version and it was left to Charles to impose on his Irish Sage the royal command to do them out of Greek into Latin—and very creditably he did them. Neither King nor scholar seems to have been seriously perturbed, when Pope Nicholas I wrote to complain that these translations had not been submitted to his censorship, though John the Scot for all his learning was notoriously unsound in doctrine, and demanded that he should be dismissed from Court.

Erigena necessarily took the False Areopagite at his face value as directly primed with celestial information by Saint Paul, but he held Plato the greatest of philosophers and toned down many of the extravagances of the Syrian monk, working his lucubrations into a consistent system with a ruthless exercise of reason that laughed at heresy. *The belated disciple of Plato*, he has been called, *the last representative of the Greek spirit in the West*, and his influence was only exercised, and his heretical audacity was only condemned, some four centuries after his death. The opening sentences of his principal philosophical work, *De Divisione Naturae*, come as something of a shock to the modern reader; for they calmly define the main division of Nature referred to in the title as division into things which are and things which are not. This cataloguing of the non-existent as part of Nature is soon seen to arise from those *super-compounds* of Dionysius, which, as the Magister's Discipulus acutely points out, are really negatives. God is super-essential, super-good, super-resplendent, super-divine and so on, because as He transcends these qualities they cannot be predicated of Him: He is not, because He *super-is*. *Esse enim omnium est, superesse Divinitas, Being be-*

The Seal of Humility

longs to everything, Super-Being is Divinity, says Erigena, quoting his own translation of Dionysius.

The Disciple asks for an explanation of the Mystical meaning of the word, *nothing*, and receives the following reply:

I should say that the ineffable and incomprehensible and inaccessible Brightness of the Divine Goodness, unknown to any intelligence whether human or angelic—for *it* is super-essential and super-natural—is signified by that word: while it is being thought by itself, it neither is, nor was, nor will be. For it is apprehended in no existing thing, because it transcends everything: while, through its ineffable condescension into the things that are, it is seen by the eyes of the mind, it alone is found in all things as Being, and is, and was, and will be. Since, therefore, it is comprehended as incomprehensible, by virtue of its transcendence it is called not without reason *nothing*. But since in its manifestations it begins to appear as something proceeding out of nothing and since that which is properly thought to transcend all essence is also properly recognized in all essence, every creature visible and invisible may be called a Theophany or manifestation of the Divine. (*De Divisione Naturae* (Migne) 680-1.)

Reading this *charabia*, at first one feels that one is again lost in the Nothingness of the impenetrable Dionysian Darkness. But as I read on, it suddenly flashed across me that both Dionysius and Erigena were groping after the same tenuous, elusive reality which I had been chasing for so many years. This *nothing* that was yet something and more than something, nothing, because the mind could not grasp its timelessness and its spacelessness, and because *it* was a contradiction in terms of our cognitive system and therefore an impossibility: and yet something, because an unknown factor, the *x* of our life equation, the mystery of our being at all and knowing anything at all, haunts every thinking person, just out of reach, and tempts everyone of us to try and catch in the net of our reason the will-o'-the-wisp, that must always slip through its meshes, because it escapes into another order of Being, God and Eternity. In our version of the message of the Vision, consciousness, understood as the identity of subject and object, supplies an answer to the riddle; for it is 'the most familiar, indeed the ever-present, aspect of the *ineffable condescension*, which brought down Erigena's *nothing* into the imperfect world of time and space, that condescension which he elsewhere calls *theosis* or deification and which we call the Divine Incarnation.

For the rest, John the Scot accepts no compromise in his championship of reason against all-comers. What is prior in nature, he argues,

The Seal of Humility

must take precedence over what is merely prior in time. Reason is prior in nature, but authority only prior in time. Nature and time were created together, but authority did not start with the beginning of time and nature. Reason, on the other hand, was born with nature and time at the very beginning of things. 'Authority indeed proceeded from true reason, but not reason from authority. For all authority, which is not approved by true reason, is seen to be unsound, but true reason, fortified and unchangeably established by its own principles, needs no additional support from authority to confirm it.' Philosophy, therefore, is a superior phase of religion. In the exercise of his highest faculty, the Vision, *intellectualis Visio*, man transcends the manifold and particular and comprehends the *One* and Absolute, and God thinks in each separate man, who is no longer himself—Aristotle's doctrine of *νοῦς ἑκάστος* which needs but a touch of psychology to transform it into our theory of Ego and consciousness.

The differentiation of God proceeds for Erigena as the sun shines in virtue of an inward necessity, and the Incarnation of Deity is not to be regarded as a single historical event of unique significance, but as an enduring and continuous process. It cannot be called everlasting as there is to be a complete *restoration of all things, apocatastasis*, which means that all things, sinners and the Devil included, will return to the One, the Divine Goodness, from which they emanated. After the creatures' resumption into God, there will be no further creation, but God will enjoy the sabbath rest of the seventh day, existing only as *Natura quae nee creatur ne creat*, Nature which is neither being created nor creating. The troubled interlude of the world process is an uneasy period of wakefulness between two eternities—they do not shock Erigena's mathematics—of silence, repose and dark *unconsciousness*.

Erigena with his philosophical temperament lays less stress on Transcendence from its emotional aspect even than Dionysius and we can welcome his affirmation that the *visio intellectualis* and reason are the arbiters of belief. One weakness of his position—as we have said, it is shared by all who postulate absorption in the One as the ultimate goal of life and the universe—lies in its failure to produce the shadow of a rational explanation for the circular movement from the One to the Many and back from the Many to the One. All these gigantic happenings are to be as if they had never been. Again, Pantheism is a charge that is brought against this philosophy, since it denies any true or sub-

The Seal of Humility

stantial being to sin and evil. God does not know of diem, since knowledge and being are identical, and sin is only the illusion of the individual believing something to be good which is not. These all-important problems and the solutions which the writer ventures to put forward will be the subject of discussion in a later chapter.

Before we pass to the specific instance of the Vision transcendently interpreted in the *Pensees* of Pascal, a word may be said as to that mysterious wave of Manichaeism, which swept over the South of France in the twelfth century and by the terror that it inspired in the Church evoked the Albigensian Crusade and the tender mercies of the Inquisition. It represented that dark side of the Vision and human nature, which focuses attention on the wickedness of the world and the worthlessness of life, never to be cured but only forgotten in universal suicide. The reader will find in *Passion and Society* by Denis de Rougemont a suggestive outline of the survival of this cult through unending persecution and oppression, and its secret presence in the art and manners of our civilization as the worship of Passion unhallowed and unfulfilled. The Cathars, the Albigensian descendants of the Manichees, saw the only hope of salvation in escape from an evil world, in the denial of all things that made *it* beautiful and carnal love *in* particular because it prolongs the fatal chain of births and deaths, and in a culminating Annihilation which they confounded with perfect Love—the Liebes-Tod of Wagner's Tristan. This was with a vengeance a gospel of God Transcendent and the very existence of mankind turned on its defeat by that established religion, which had shown itself capable, at some sacrifice of logic and consistency according to its enemies, of holding the balance level between Immanence and Transcendence.

Some three centuries after the Provençal heresy had been outwardly suppressed, there arose, again in France, a religious movement, which, though its founders indignantly denied any relation with any heresy, nevertheless docs reflect that hatred of life, that fear of beauty and that obsession of guilt and sin, which belong to the exclusive realization of God Transcendent and which were the distinguishing characteristics of the sects based on the tenets of Mani. In our time, this movement calls for special notice; for it seemed to promise the solution of our chief problem, the reconciliation of faith and reason, through the exceptional gifts and qualifications of its greatest exponent, Blaise Pascal.

VII

SCIENTIST, JANSENIST, AND MYSTIC

Ce pieux misanthrope, Heraclite sublime,
Qui pense qu'ici bas tout est misere et crime.

VOLTAIRE

The first origin of the whole Pelagian heresy and all the enemies of Grace is Philosophy. . . Just as it is the mother of heresies, so is philosophy, applied to the definition of the divine mysteries, the mother of error.—JANSENIUS. *Augustinus*.

In the seventeenth century, the warfare between Faith and Reason, in which Religion and Philosophy had been the protagonists, began to take on the form in which it has been waged continuously down to our time, the struggle between Religion still appealing to revelation and authority and Science with its irreverent reliance on experiment and iconoclastic speculation. In a great part of Europe, the schisms of the Reformation had preserved their religious and Christian character, and consequently the danger of an utter denial of revelation and God was less apparent than it was to become in a later age. In France, however, where the Church in a centralized State retained its nominal authority against all sects and heresies, after the bitter dissensions of the previous century, Religion found itself immersed in an atmosphere of smiling indifference and well-bred scepticism, which threatened to end in avowed rebellion. Pyrrhonism, the fashionable agnosticism named after Pyrrho of Elis, the doubting philosopher, was the watchword of French intellectual society. 'What other philosophy was possible?' asked the French intellectual of the day. The strides that Science had just begun to make were dumbfounding; yet all the world's accumulating knowledge brought with it an even more amazing corollary, the revelation of the abysmal and incurable ignorance of the human mind. Tradition, buttressed by faith, had furnished a complete explanation of the Universe and imparted to man the wisdom of

Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic

God. Under the light of Reason, suddenly removed from beneath its bushel, both the explanation and the wisdom disintegrated. Religion and Philosophy became mere question marks and Science could find no answer to their queries.

To meet the crisis of the Faith, which followed the first sensational triumphs of the scientific method, the official champions of the Church, the Society of Jesus, concentrated on keeping within the fold as many of the wavering as they could, especially people of influence and position, by a policy of Fabian temporization, relaxing the rigid rules of confession, toning down the austerities of penance and generally widening the gates of Paradise. So broad-minded did they become in their tolerance of human frailty that their penitents—so said their enemies—were left with scarcely any sins to confess and repent. Foremost among these enemies were the followers of Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres. This sect which owed its origin to the Belgian Divine's *Augustinus*, published in 1640, was a sturdy, if forbidding, branch of the Counter-Reformation, but it would be no more to our purpose than Calvinism, the heresy which, apart from its passionate insistence on its own orthodoxy, it most closely resembles, if it had not counted among its converts one of the greatest minds of the century, Blaise Pascal. It was an appropriate occasion for Mysticism to appear in its historic role of spiritual revival, and appear it did, through Pascal's genius, clothed in the incongruous garments of Jansenism. Inspired by the Vision, he endeavoured to convert an intellectual and ethical protest against the latitudinarianism of the Jesuits and their verbal compromises with morality into a full and final solution of the dispute between Faith and Reason by allotting to each its province and powers as defined by revelation and sanctioned by a miracle.

His interpretation of the mystical experience has for us a very special value; for this attempt to assign to Religion and Science each its appropriate sphere and to effect a reconciliation between them was undertaken by a man of exceptional endowments and unequalled qualifications for the task. The problem with which he had to deal is, in an aggravated form, the problem of our time, and since his day no one has dared to hazard so complete a division of powers between the warring parties. They have been left urging against each other irreconcilable claims and the unity of truth has been shorn asunder with Science continually enlarging its lion's share of the spoil. There is much to be

Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic

learnt from studying a genius, even if only to disagree with him, and in Pascal we have such a combination of mystic, scientist, and writer, as is almost without parallel. If ever there was a man who could reconcile Faith and Reason and assign to each of the opposing principles its boundaries and domain, it was he, and nowhere shall we find a more lucid statement of the problem and its difficulties than in his *Pensees*, for the most part the fragments of his unfinished *Apologie de la Religion Chretienne*.

Blaise Pascal, born in 1623, flashed meteor-like into the dawning glory of the scientific age as an infant prodigy with an amazing aptitude for mathematics and science. When he was sixteen, his precocious intelligence so impressed the circle of *savants* known as the Academie Mersenne, to which he was introduced by his father, that these leaders of French thought—and among them was Descartes—accepted the lad on an equal footing as one of themselves. His life began with the thrill of scientific adventures in vast expanses of unexplored territory. His family could afford to finance expensive experiments and the brilliance of his discoveries and the originality of his thought promised world-wide fame. While he was finishing his studies, his fertile brain conceived the idea of a calculating machine, and he concentrated his ingenuity and gift for figures on designing one to lighten his father's work as Finance Commissioner for Normandy. It took him two years to perfect what was then regarded as a marvel verging on the miraculous, the *Pascaline*, and in 1664, at the age of twenty-one, he demonstrated before the Prince de Conde, the working of an automatic arithmetical machine, the ancestor of all cash registers and other calculating Robots.

He would have been more than human, if he had not been to some extent dazzled by the brilliance of his precocity, but from his earliest childhood physical disabilities and continual suffering were set against intellectual triumphs and worldly success. It did not occur to his father that it was highly dangerous to allow a sickly infant prodigy with exceptional powers of concentration to overwork to his heart's content; indeed he was so pleased with his son's genius that he urged him on to further efforts. The boy's deadly earnestness of purpose drove him into orgies of overwork, which finally wrecked such health as he had ever possessed before he was twenty. He toiled and suffered unceasingly, mercilessly spurring on his jaded brain, partly from the ambition natural to a young man fully aware of his exceptional talents, partly from a

Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic

devouring passion for the Truth. There was a strong vein of pride and self-assertion running through his nature, as befitted his ability, and he was never a man to suffer fools gladly. Pascal the scientist could work himself into a fury at the thought of any rival stealing a jot or a tittle of the credit for his inventions and discoveries, just as in his last years Pascal the saint welcomed the extremes of mortification to drown his selfishness in humility. The light-heartedness of Saint Francis was not to be expected from a Jansenist, who in his fear and trembling might reasonably go through life with the mien of Hassan of Basra, the seventh-century Moslem Puritan, who bore himself like a man under sentence of death for whose special benefit the torments of Hell had been created. 'Il semblait que M. Pascal était toujours en colere et qu'il voulait jurer,' said the gardener of Port-Royal, who perhaps did not make enough allowance for the great man's ill health.

At first Pascal threw himself into his Mathematics and Science heart and soul as Saint Augustine plunged into the learning of his day in a very fever to unriddle the riddle of the Universe and unveil the naked Truth, and found no more help in Descartes and his own discoveries than Augustine in his Manichaeism and Neo-Platonist teachers. It was not long before he learnt—ill health is a hard master—that his agony for Truth was not to be appeased by reason or scientific experiment. He began to realize the appalling fact that was dawning upon the world, the fact that the final message of Science was man's invincible ignorance. The solution of a special problem could never satisfy his craving for reality, for it merely opened the door to another. Even Geometry could not grasp the absolute Truth of his desire; for the proof of every proposition depended on unproven axioms and deductions, and one day the argument might be carried a step further back to show that they were an imperfect statement of reality.

The understanding of the inadequacy of Science brought him in 1646 to the first turning-point of his life, called by some of his biographers his first conversion. One winter day at Rouen, his father slipped on an icy road and put out his thigh. He was treated by two pious Normans of good family, who had earned a reputation for manipulative surgery and taken a leading part in a local Jansenist revival movement. They expounded to Blaise the principles of Jansenius as expressed in the recently published *Augustinus*, and he found in them a logical consistency that appealed to his scientific mind. Here was an explanation of

Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic

the Universe, which started from absolute Truth guaranteed by the word of God.

The Jesuits, as has been said, based their tactics for the defence of the Church on a simulated retreat, making religion easy and comfortable for those who were being tempted to unbelief by the revival of learning and independent speculation. They upheld the precious tradition that the abasement of Transcendence must be corrected by the inspiration of Immanence and that Christianity was a happy not a gloomy religion. So they deprecated all discussion of those ancient stumbling-blocks, Free-Will and Predestination, or rather they camouflaged the contradiction inherent in the doctrines of Divine Grace and human freedom under a screen of equivocal definitions. The faithful were left free—if indeed they possessed any freedom—to take their choice between Saint Thomas Aquinas who conciliated the opposites with the accent on Divine Grace, and the Jesuit Molina who threw the emphasis on Free-Will.

Jansenism adopted a policy diametrically opposed to that of the Jesuits. For grim Jansenius, compromise in any form, the camouflage of contradictions, the softening of austerities, was the abomination of desolation. He was for aggravating everything that made religion harsh and unfriendly and difficult, and preaching Sin and Damnation as the great realities; if a little place was offered for the Redeemer's love, it was so narrow and so obscured by the clouds of Wrath and the fires of Hell that scarcely one believer out of many legions might hope to catch a glimpse of it from afar, and then only by some unaccountable manifestation of God's mercy. The Pelagians, who presumed to grant free-will to man and preach justification by works, were overwhelmed by the thunders of Saint Augustine, who apart from his personal experience of sin was mainly influenced by the consideration that such a justification detracted from the *necessity* of Christ's sacrifice. Even so Jansenius called on the remnant of the faithful to lay low the latter-day heresy which had revived such false doctrines, armed with the levin brand of the Saint's authority. The enemy was Philosophy, particularly Greek philosophy, which had insinuated its specious pagan heresies into the Divine integrity of the Old and New Testaments, the Pythagorean, Stoic and Aristotelian Philosophy, the mother of errors and the mother of heresies. Not in vain had Tertullian described the philosophers as the Patriarchs of the heretics. The doctrines of the Church must be

Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic

purified from the vanities of pagan metaphysics and restored to a stern primitive simplicity, guaranteed by the authority of Saint Augustine, the orthodox interpreter of Holy Writ—Augustinus, almost deified as *Pater Patrum, Doctor Doctorum, primus post Scriptores Canonicos; inter omnes vere solidus, subtilis, irrefragibilis, Angelicus, Seraphicus, excellentissimus et ineffabiliter mirabilis*.

Jansenius passes over the Neo-Platonist side of Augustine and finds his weapons in the Saint's controversies with the Pelagians. The only approach to orthodoxy lies through the God of the Old Testament and Original Sin. The great mass of humanity was inexorably damned by Adam's trespass to eternal tortures, but a handful would be saved for eternal beatitude by the Grace of God and only God would know why. Sin had reduced man to such depths of degradation that he must not even discuss the Divine fiats which damn or bless. It is a mercy beyond human understanding that, through Christ's mediation, anyone at all should be saved.

There was nothing in this creed, except its grim sincerity, to recommend it to the mystic, who does not usually identify the God within him with the tribal god of the Old Testament, and it is only brought under the heading of Mysticism by Pascal's Vision and the Enlightenment of the *Pensees*. 'The greatness of Jansenism', says Lanson, 'consists entirely in its morality,' and he marvels at the way in which 'this hard and grievous doctrine, which denied free will and consigned the vast majority of mankind to eternal damnation without reprieve and without hope', showed itself a dynamic principle, stimulating energy and the practice of virtue, and steeling souls to sublime efforts.

Jansenism provided Pascal with the axioms and definitions of a religious geometry. In the elements of mathematics, there was no ultimate finality; God and Saint Augustine guaranteed the elements of Jansenism as absolute truth and it was sacrilege to question verities unchangeable by a jot or a tittle world without end. Arguing from this secure basis, Reason could construct propositions with far more than the certitude of Euclid, provided that it bowed humbly down before the Divine fundamentals, however unreasonable they might seem, neither doubting nor criticizing the Divine order of their being, any more than a mathematician of Pascal's day doubted or criticized the definitions of Euclidean geometry. Jansenius stripped the conception of God of all the attributes that Greek speculation had bestowed upon

Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic

Him, and returned to the savage, primitive Jehovah of the Old Testament, the tribal God of Wrath, War and Jealousy. How deeply these doctrines had sunk into Pascal's mind and how imperiously they had ordered his experience is revealed by the phrases that sprang to his pen in the moment of Illumination.

Later he was to say that but for his father's accident and its consequences, he would have been a lost soul, but for the time being his conversion made little apparent change in his outward life and in no way hindered his researches and experiments. He laid down for himself as a rule of conduct the following maxim: 'We must give courage to those timid folk, who dare not make innovations in physical science, and confound the insolence of the presumptuous, who introduce novelties into theology.' He continued to overwork and his ill-health, aggravated by the medical treatment prescribed for him, went from bad to worse. His married sister Gilberte tells us that he could swallow nothing that was not hot and then only a drop at a time, and that he suffered from terrible headaches, but she says nothing of that legendary symptom, which passed into common parlance, *Vabfrne de Pascal*, applied to problems which the mind shrinks from contemplating. 'Pascal avait son gouffre,' wrote Baudelaire. The legend relates that he was obsessed by the hallucination of an unfathomable gulf always gaping on his left hand, and that the giddiness, which arose from this delusion of standing on the brink of a precipice, called forth the cries of agonized horror wrung from him by the thought of infinite space and eternity. It is more probable that his famous discourses on the awfulness of infinity gave birth to the legend. Montaigne shared his horror of heights, but, made of tougher material, experimented with his giddiness in the mountains, noting how his legs trembled, even when the distance between him and the edge exceeded his own height, and how a tree or a jutting rock, breaking the sheerness of the precipice, steadied his head.

Pascal's pains and illnesses could not check his industry, but in spite of honour and renown, the call of a religion, which ultimately could only mean an end of Science and all worldly things, became at times imperiously insistent. Suffering wrung from him a confession of Jansenist faith in his *Priere pour le bon usage des maladies*, and in the preface to a scientific treatise, though he declared his confidence in the progress of Science in the physical field with an assurance remarkable for the

Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic

period, he makes the categorical statement that absolute Truth can never be attained except through the Divine revelation of Theology. His doctors, when in spite of their drastic remedies his health showed a momentary improvement, ordered him to give up work entirely and seek distraction for his mind in the ordinary relaxations of society. He would in all likelihood have ignored their advice, if it had not been reinforced by other considerations, which profoundly affected his life. After his father's death, his favourite, and younger sister, Jacqueline, had left him to take the veil in the Jansenist Convent of Port-Royal, and he had struck up a close friendship with a brilliant, unbelieving, man of the world, the Chevalier de Mere.

Jacqueline's loss was a terrible blow to him and his sense of injury boiled up in something very like rebellion against the creed which was robbing him of a beloved sister. It was probably in 1652, the year she took the veil, that he made the acquaintance of Mere, whose influence must have encouraged him to follow his doctors' advice and look for happiness in the distractions of society. He was already no stranger to the fashionable world. His scientific relations and his father's friends had brought him into contact with many well-known people, but now he was embarking on a very different life in gayer and less serious circles. He went so far in his attempt to live a normal worldly life that he thought of marrying and purchasing, as the custom was, some official appointment. There is good reason to attribute to him a *Discours sur les Passions de VAmour*, an epigrammatic discourse on Love rather after the manner of La Rochefoucauld, and if he wrote it, his faith in Jansnius must have been in grave danger. How could a Jansenist, for whom the problem of his soul's salvation should have been all-absorbing, utter such a sentiment as this? How happy is a life that begins with love and ends with ambition! That is the life I would choose, if I had the choice!'

This outburst of worldliness, this revelling in what he was to call *delicious and criminal* intercourse, did not last long. He was ill in body and soul, and his attempt to stifle the cravings of his sick soul was overwhelmed by a *great abandonment on the part of God*, that sense of dereliction and darkness, which is so often the harbinger of the Vision. If the following story is true, Fate took a hand in the game which was being played with Pascal's soul. One holiday, he was driving in style in his carriage and four across the Pont de Neuilly, when the leaders took the bits in their teeth and bolted at a point where there was no parapet to

Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic

the bridge. They both crashed into the river, but happily the harness broke and the wheelers brought the carriage to a standstill on the very edge of the Seine.

Pascal had found himself within a hair's-breadth of the eternal judgment pronounced by Jansenius on the graceless soul, but the coming of Grace, the advent of the Vision, was near. On 23rd November 1654 the Mystic Union was revealed to him in flames of fire and, in the height of his ecstasy, he dashed down on a slip of paper the incoherent words and phrases which expressed his immediate reactions. Later he copied the notes he had made in the moment of ravishment on a piece of parchment, presumably for greater security, and sewed into the lining of his coat both paper and parchment with the engaging, childlike hope that the feeling of what is now known as his *Memorial* under the cloth would preserve ever fresh within his memory those two hours of intimate communion with God. After Pascal's death, his servant noticed a lump in one of the seams of his master's coat and, unpicking the stitches, saved for posterity the precious document, which is quoted and discussed in the next chapter.

VIII

THE ILLUMINATION OF BLAISE PASCAL

If you would truly know how these things come to pass, ask it of grace, not of doctrine; of desire, not of intellect; of the ardours of prayer, not of the teachings of the schools; of the Bridegroom, not of the Master; of God, not of man; of the darkness, not of the day; not of illumination, but of that Fire which enflames all and wraps us in God with great sweetness and most ardent love. The which Fire most truly is God, and the hearth thereof is in Jerusalem.—
BONAVENTURA. *De Itinerario Mentis in Deo*. cap. vii.

MEMORIAL DE PASCAL

1

L'an de grace 1654

lundi 23 novembrc jour de St. Clement, pape et

martir at autres au martirologe

vcille de St. Chrysogone martir et autres.

Depuis environ dix heures et demy du soir jusques environ
minuit et demy

feu

Dieu d'Abraham, dieu d'Isaac, dieu de Jacob

non des philosophes et des scavants.

Certitude. Certitude. Sentiment, Joye. Paix.

Dieu de Jesus Christ

Deum meum et deum vestrum.

Ton dieu sera mon dieu

Oubly du monde et de tout hormys dieu.

Il ne se trouve que par les voyes enseignees dans Tevangile

Grandeur de Tame humaine

Pere juste, le monde ne t'a point connu—mais je t'ay connu

Joye Joye Joye pleurs de Joye

Je m'en suis separe

Deliquerunt me fontem aquae vivae

Mon dieu me quitterez vous

Que je n'en sois pas separe eternellement

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

Cette est la vie eternelle, qu'ils te connoissent seul vrai Dieu
et Celuy que tu as envoye J.C.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ

Je m'en suis separe je l'ay fuy renonce crucific

Que je n'en sois jamais separe

11 ne se conserve que par les voyes enseignees dans Tevangile.

Renonciation totale et douce

Soumission totale a Jesus Christ et a mon directeur
eternellement en joye pour un jour d'exercice sur la terre
non obliviscar sermons tuos. amen.

The above text was copied from a facsimile of the original and checked by
Z. Tournieur's *Edition paleographique* of the *Pensees*, representing the closest
critical study of the original.

PASCAL'S MEMORIAL

The year of grace 1654

Monday, November 23rd, the day of St. Clement, pope and martyr
and others in the martyrology,

Eve of St. Chrysogonus martyr and others.

From about half past ten in the evening until about half an hour after
midnight.

fire

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob

not of the philosophers and learned

Certainty. Certainty. *Sentiment*. Joy. Peace.

God of Jesus Christ

Deum meum et deum vestrum

Thy god shall be my god.

Forgetfulness of the world and everything except God.

He is found only by the ways taught in the gospel

Greatness of the human soul

Righteous Father, the world has not known Thee, but I have known Thee.

Joy Joy Joy tears of Joy

I separated myself from Him

Deliquerunt me fontem aquae vivae

My God, will you leave me?

May I not be eternally separated from Him

This is eternal life, that they know Thee as the only true God
and Him whom Thou hast sent, J.C.

Jesus Christ

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

Jesus Christ

I separated myself from Him, fled, renounced, crucified Him

May I never be separated from Him

He can only be kept by the ways taught in the Gospel

Renunciation total and sweet

The rough notes that Pascal dashed down on a slip of paper end here, but a copy made after his death, taken without doubt from the parchment which has since been lost, adds three last lines with the comment that they were deciphered with difficulty, as the ink had been worn away. Presumably, they were added by Pascal, when he made a fair copy on the parchment of his rough notes, so that they represent a later stage of his Illumination. They run as follows:

Total submission to Jesus Christ and my confessor

Eternally in joy for one day's devotion on earth.

Non obliviscar sermones tuos. Amen.

The first casual glance at this record of Illumination shows that for Pascal the Vision merely confirmed an existing creed which was already dominant in his mind. It introduced no novelties into the theology of Jansenius, which was indelibly written in his heart despite all his efforts to pass a worldly sponge over its unworldly dictates, and corroborated with final authority the doctrines, which looked forward with trembling expectancy to the remote possibility of just such a visitation of the Divine Grace. It was not for nothing that Pascal headed his 'Memorial' *the year of grace*, *grace* being understood in the Jansenist sense as the condition of salvation.

He had no need to travel far afield in search of the interpretation of the Vision. Even the first turmoil of his emotions bears witness that the revelation had slipped smoothly into the place prepared for it in his experience by that ordered and forbidding religious system, which fascinated him by its scientific thoroughness and its uncompromising austerity. His first ecstatic ejaculations are stamped with the hallmark of Jansenism. Christianity, as Jansenius understood it, prescribed Divine Grace as the necessary condition of salvation, and Pascal's two hours' communion with God had been the annunciation of that **Grace** and Salvation for his sinful soul. It was the reprieve on the scaffold.

Feu: when Louis Perier, Blaise Pascal's nephew, made a copy of the

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

Memorial he wrote FEU in capitals, but the small letters in which Pascal originally wrote the symbol of his ecstasy are more deeply impressive in their admission of inadequacy to express the indescribable. Saint Bonaventura in the passage quoted at the head of this chapter speaks of *the fire which wraps us in God with great sweetness and most ardent love*. Saint Catherine of Genoa too had a Vision of Fire come upon upon her and she knew it as *the insupportable fire of infinite love*. Love is a word that does not occur in Pascal's *Memorial*. His fire blazed about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Transcendent God who had no truck with Philosophy, that mother of heresies; this god is the very shibboleth of Jansenism. For Janscnius, the Jewish God of Wrath and Battle, a very jealous God, sat enthroned in Heaven. There was nothing mild or gentle about this creed, nor for that matter in the fiery soul of Pascal, and so the peace of Union with God found its first expression in his heart under the guise of consuming fire and not as the benign and creative light, which shone in the darkness of so many mystics.

'Not the God of the philosophers and the learned,' cries Pascal with all the triumph of Jansenius, stamping on Aristotle, Origen, and all philosophy. With what I think is a strange misconception, Miss Underbill would have us see in this cry of assurance confirmed the astonished exclamation of a great philosopher, scientist and scholar, dumbfounded by the revelation that the God of his Vision was not the God of philosophers, scientists and scholars, the God of his lifelong worship, but the God of the Bible, the God of the Christian religion. On the contrary, Pascal was proclaiming the theophany of the God whom he had always worshipped; for he had never bowed down to the God of Science and mathematical principles, the God of the philosopher Descartes, nor was he himself a great philosopher and scholar, but a very remarkable, though far from learned, scientific and literary genius, and his cry was the cry of a Jansenist acknowledging the message of the Vision as confirmation of a belief long held. Jansenius had cast out of the Godhead the Absolute of Plato and Plotinus and there could be nothing in common between the God of Mathematics and the primitive Jehovah.

Pascal had no qualms in jettisoning what Jansenius regarded as the meretricious accretions of Philosophy; for he was not very intimately acquainted with what he was sacrificing. His resistance to the call of Jansenism might have been more stubborn, if he had been more widely read. His mathematics came to him naturally, he knew Latin and Greek

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

and possessed a marvellous memory, but the rest of his education, superintended by his father, had been so far desultory that Lanson can call him *an ignoramus of genius*. He had not had Racine's advantage of being educated at the admirable schools of Port-Royal. It is true that he and his friends read and quoted conscientiously all the authorities required for his polemics with the Jesuits in the *Lettres Provinciales* and that he made a close study of that formidable monument of learning and bigotry, the *Augustinus* and the authors quoted in it, but he lacked the wide and cultivated outlook and the breadth of view that spring from a comprehensive knowledge of what is best in the history of human thought. Jansenism was indeed a narrow creed for a man of his capacity, but, as the event proved, its narrowness accorded with the limitations of his character and intelligence.

A correction in the original copy of the *Memorial* bears accidental evidence to the obsessive dominance with which the Jansenist God, the image of Transcendence, haunted Pascal's mind. In the first moment of Illumination, the light of Immanence cannot be utterly quenched by the dark abasement of Transcendence, and Pascal's first instinct made him write 'God of Jesus Christ' immediately after 'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of the philosophers and learned', thus tempering Transcendence with Immanence by an appeal to the God whose Kingdom is within. These words, however, he crossed out and wrote in above and around them, 'Certainty, Certainty, *Sentiment*, Joy, Peace', giving these expressions of his rapture precedence over 'God of Jesus Christ', which he wrote in again after them. It was, not to the God of Love, but to the Jewish God who visited the sins of the fathers on the children that he primarily owed the certainty and beatitude of the Vision, which were a sign that the Divine Grace had descended upon him.

For him certainty rang with particular consolation; for all his life had been a passion for truth and certainty. *Sentiment*, *feeling*, has a special significance in Pascal's statement of the Jansenist creed; it stands for intuition or inspiration, the highest faculty of knowledge, to which reason must submit. The reasons of the heart which reason does not know belong to the order of *sentiment*. In the *Pensees* (Brunschiwig 252), reason and *sentiment* are contrasted.

Reason acts slowly, and with so many points of view, and on so many principles that must always be present, that it continually falls drowsy or goes

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

astray for want of having its principles always to hand. *Sentiment* does not behave in tins way; it acts instantaneously and is always ready to act. We must therefore put our faith in *sentiment*; otherwise it will always be vacillating.

Oubli du tnonde et de tout hormis dieu: this absorption in the eternal, which the East regards as the goal of human life, marks the mystic death of the objective self in time and space. In a later day, the memory of even this death, so sweet to mystics of a less gloomy creed, became for Pascal entangled with the terrors and forebodings of his religion.

True conversion consists in annihilating oneself before this Universal Being, whom one has so often vexed and who has every right to destroy one at any moment; to recognize that one is powerless without Him and that one deserves nothing from Him except disfavour. It consists in realizing that there is an invincible opposition between God and us and that without a mediator there can be no communion. (*Brunschvicg* 470.)

Il tie se trouve que par les voyes enseignees dans Tevangile: at such a moment even a shade of negative limitation seems to mar the reflection of eternity, and in this context the verse that comes after, *Righteous Fathery the world has not known Thee, hut I have known Thee*, loses something of the sublimity of its original beauty. The Jansenist is for ever harping on the infinitesimal fraction of humanity which will be lucky enough to be saved, so few being chosen to glorify his beatitude.

Grandeur de Vdme humaine: with these words Pascal does obeisance to the revelation of God Immanent that the Vision brings even to those most convinced of human worthlessness. It can only be squared with the misanthropism of Jansenism through the original perfection of Adam's nature, but the Seer of the Vision cannot deny the presence of God in the secret inmost room of the castle of the Soul, even though that soul has fallen from its high estate. All that is best in Pascal's Enlightenment draws its inspiration from the discovery that the human soul is in very truth the residence of God.

Joie, Joie, Joie, pleurs de joie: with this cry of rapture, the first stage of Illumination comes to an end. It is more than probable that the foregoing notes were scribbled down at intervals during the two hours of Fire; now Pascal's mind is beginning to think about the experience and is putting something more of its stored-up memories into its expression of emotion, lending it an even deeper colour of Jansenism. The relief, the pride, the triumph are replaced by an anxiety that might perhaps be called a shadow of the Dark Night of the Soul. There descends upon

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

Pascal the fear of separation, the terror that God may change his mind, He the Changeless, and Mystic Union be broken—the Grace of God revoked. Writing to his sister, he said at another time: * We can only preserve the earlier Grace by acquisition of a new Grace; otherwise we shall lose what we believe we are preserving like those who, trying to shut in light, enclose nothing but darkness.'

All that has gone before and the happy sigh of surrender, *Renonciation totale et douce*, were written on the same slip of paper with a few hasty dashes of the pen to suggest breaks and intervals. The final sentences, found only in the copy and evidently reproduced from the parchment, express Pascal's summary of the immediate practical significance which he attaches to the message of the Vision.

Soumission totale a Jesus Christ et d mon directeur: Pascal had already withdrawn from the worldly life, which had a real charm for him, and some regrets were still mingled with the sweetness of renunciation and the surrender to religion was not yet quite complete. He recognized his own susceptibility to *the delicious and criminal delights* of human intercourse and knew himself as a man more apt to be overcome by gentleness than violence. 'All created things', he writes, 'either afflict man or tempt him and dominate over him: either they subjugate him by force, or charm him by their sweetness—and that is a more terrible and imperious domination.' Till that day of Saint Clement, Pascal was still rebelling against the inevitable and, among the symptoms of his resistance, was an extreme unwillingness to take M. Singlin, the Confessor of Port-Royal, the most humble of men and the most uncompromising of priests, as spiritual director. While he was still uncertain as to his vocation, he knew only too well that M. Singlin would make short work of his doubts and fears. 'It was', writes Jacqueline, now Soeur Sainte Euphemie, who was joyfully awaiting her brother's complete conversion, 'a remnant of independence hidden in the depths of his heart, which took advantage of anything to avoid a surrender which, in his actual state of mind, was bound to be absolute.'

As things were, there could have been no happiness for Pascal outside the Jansenist fold, but he would have been false to himself, if he had not shrunk from taking the final step. He was not a man to do things by halves and the depths to which that absolute surrender anticipated by Jacqueline was to go are manifested by the amazing words in which he, once the champion of Truth, dethrones his idol. 'One can make an

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

idol even of Truth; for truth without charity is not God; it is His image and an idol that one must not love or worship; still less must we love or worship its opposite, falsehood.' How truth without charity could be an image of God only the distracted Pascal can know, but that is not all. 'I can love', he goes on, 'complete darkness, but, if God involves me in a state of semi-darkness, this half-darkness displeases me, and, because I cannot see in it the merits of complete darkness, it does not please me. That is a fault and a proof that I am making an idol of darkness apart from the order established by God. I must only worship His order.' (*Brunschvicg* 582.) Even the utter renunciation of intellectual Truth is not enough. It is easier to accept total ignorance than to bow to the will of God whose order it is that our darkness should be shot with occasional gleams of Truth.

Eternellement enjoie pour unjour d'exercice sur la terre, eternally in bliss for one day's devotion on earth: it is strange how even in the moment of Illumination, or just after it, the Jansenist motive of profit and loss, the jarring note of a good bargain, breaks in, anticipating the famous *Pari*, the *Bet*, of the *Pensees*, of which more will be said in the next chapter. As a mathematician, Pascal presumably set down the word *eternellement* with a full appreciation of its meaning and should have been in no doubt that the assurance of eternity ruled out any possibility of interruption in that Divine Presence which had set on his soul the seal of eternity. 'L'Etre cternel est toujours, s'il est une fois.' 'Si'il parait une fois, il est toujours.' (*Brunschvicg* 559 and 559 bis.) The Seer of the Vision must not forget that the Eternity he has glimpsed *is* for evermore, as it were, behind, around, above, within, before, covering, penetrating and interfused *in* the course of Time, Immanent and Transcendent. For Pascal, eternity and immortality were fast bound by the doctrinal chains of Jansenism to promises of Heaven and threats of Hell—the prospect that should absorb the Christian's quest for salvation in fear and trembling. He could not understand how the sceptics of his day could shut their eyes to such a problem and think only of the minute's pleasure, as if they could annihilate Eternity by not thinking about it. Yet this Eternity exists, and death, which must open it and which menaces them at every moment, must infallibly plunge them into the terrible predicament of being either eternally annihilated or eternally wretched without their knowing which of these eternities is prepared for them.' (*Brunschvicg* 195.)

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

Meditations on eternity naturally passed to the consideration of infinity in space and number, and their incomprehensibility filled Pascal's mind with a sense of shuddering misgiving. His conviction that Science could never give him the truth for which his life was one perpetual cry was accentuated by the intrusion of what seemed to be infinity into the physical universe, and the Vision brought awestruck bewilderment, filling his heart with a taste of eternity within and an infinity of space without. *Le silence kernel de ces espaces infinis meffraie*: the very words shiver with a trembling sense of the vertiginous immensities through which a man might fall. In the most famous of all the *Pensees*, he appeals to the infinitely great and the infinitely small to set man in his proper insignificant place in the scheme of things and to humble hum'an pride. His agonies in the face of the eternal and the infinite might have been relieved by Kant's denial of the reality of space and time except as forms of thought. Though the Transcendental Philosophy of the future was necessarily hidden from him, earlier philosophers and earlier mystics had exposed the fundamental lack of meaning in the adoration or abhorrence of spatial and temporal dimensions merely as such. There is no true relation between the awe of God Transcendent and the size or duration of the Universe. The weakness of Jansenism and the failure to which it was doomed even in Pascal's hands are startlingly revealed by a glance at the *Revelations of Divine Love*, the work of that simple-minded mystic of three centuries before, the anchoress Lady Julian of whom we have already spoken. For Jansenius, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob towered enormous as an Infinite Lord of Wrath and Jealousy; little wonder that Pascal shrank with the giddiness of horror from His dwelling place in the eternal silence of infinite astronomical space. Julian, at heart in this matter a better mathematician, since she had no doubts as to the negligible relativity of size, knew God as *everything that is good and comfortable to us*. So courteous and homely was the Lord of Love that the whole universe was revealed to her in an affectionate diminutive like those little words which Beatrice smiled, *Per le sorrise parolette brevi*, in one of the loveliest lines in all poetry. This was the *ghostly sight of His homely loving* which the Lord showed to the Lady Julian.

Also in this He shewed me a little thing, the quantity of an hazel nut, in the palm of my hand; and it was as round as a ball. I looked thereupon with the eye of my understanding, and thought: *What may this be?* And it was answered

The Illumination of Blaise Pascal

generally thus: *It is all that is made*, I marvelled how *it* might last, for methought it might suddenly have fallen to naught for littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: *It lasteth, and ever shall, for that God loveth it*. And so All-Thing hath the Being by the love of God. In this Litte Thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loveth it, the third, that God keepeth it. But what is to me verily the Maker, the Keeper and the Lover—I cannot tell; for till I am substantially oned with Him, I may never have full rest nor very bliss: that is to say, till I be so fastened to Him, that there is right nought that is made betwixt my God and me.

So for the Lady Julian there was no room for fear in the dear little Universe, which is *the quantity of an hazel-nut*.

For Pascal all was fear; if God was so pleased, all piety and devotion, all doing good for good's sake, might end in everlasting damnation, but if conformity with religion and the practice of virtue augmented the sinner's slender chance of avoiding Hell, then they were a profitable speculation, a good bet. Jansenius with his oceans of punishments and drops of rewards saw life as a bargain rather than as the occasion of spontaneous disinterestedness. Neither he nor Pascal was capable of understanding Jeremy Taylor's parable concerning the burning down of Heaven and the quenching of the fires of Hell so that men might do good only for the love of God.

Necessarily in Illumination, the boundlessness of Mystic Union must be determined within the limits of space and time, so that of its reality only symbols remain, but Jansenism provides a peculiarly cramping framework within which to enshrine the reflection of its glory. One feels about Pascal, as he felt about Montaigne, no less fascinated and enthralled by his uncanny insight into human nature and by the genius of his pen than chilled and repelled by the spirit which informs, and the philosophy which embodies, the conclusions he drew from his knowledge of the human soul and expressed in the perfect medium of his golden prose.

IX

THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF BLAISE PASCAL

Pascal, the Death- Worshipper Pascal does not want men to make the best of their human life; he wants them to make the worst of it, to throw it away . . . death-worship has been made obligatory by the God of Death in person, has been decreed in a revelation which Pascal undertakes to prove indubitably historical.

ALDOUS HUXLEY. *Pascal* (in *Rotunda*).

The Vision imposes upon certain mystics the imperious duty of interpreting its message, and the mission it allotted to Pascal was not the recording of his memories of mystic communion nor the elaboration of some new philosophy, but the defence of the creed which, he believed, the sign of Fire had guaranteed as Truth, and the conversion of every human being his voice could reach to its one and only orthodoxy. He did not divulge to the world the spiritual experience, which he had confided to the *Memorial* as a precious secret, and we find in his work no allusion to any of the visions and voices, which played so large a part in the Enlightenment of many Christian mystics, with one possible exception. That strange unearthly fragment of the *Pensees*, which he headed *Le Mystere de Jesus*, bears every sign of kinship with those conversations with Christ which enraptured Santa Teresa, and so beautiful an interpretation of the Vision, whether it records the night of Fire remembered in Enlightenment or a later revelation, cannot be entirely omitted from any discussion of Pascal's faith. Its tenderness tells of a moment, when the memory of God Immanent rather than the awfulness of the Jansenist Jehovah was uppermost in his mind.

Probably this duologue between Pascal and his Saviour should be taken as a gloss on the *cri de coeur* of the *Memorial*, *Jesus-Christ, je me suis separe, je l'ai renonce, crucifie*, and though one may smile with Lanson at the *naivete* of the egoism which demands from the Redeemer—

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

and receives—the assurance that certain particular drops of His blood were shed specially for Blaise Pascal, for his own personal redemption, no one could deny the beauty of the vision.

A sincere Jansenist might well hope for the Vision of Fire as a proof that he had been visited by the Grace of God and numbered among the Elect. For Pascal, it meant an end to the inward conflict between the pride of reason and the glory of life on the one hand, and the call of renunciation and death to worldly things on the other. Thenceforward his course was easy. He brought to the cause of Jansenism all the resources of his genius and, so far as personal ambition was concerned, abandoned everything to concentrate all his powers on the mortification of his pride and the salvation of his soul.

Within a year, he startled France with the *Lettres Provinciales*. The Jansenist leaders first regarded rather dubiously the support offered to them by a man of science, who had been a worldling, and who had never been trained in the handling of those weapons of theology which they were accustomed to use. Pascal came to them as a layman proposing a new form of warfare, based not on knowledge of the Fathers and scholastic erudition, but defending Jansenius's interpretation of Augustine by common sense and the average man's idea of right and wrong. He proposed, as it were, to ignore the rules of the game, which required that theological differences should be obscured in clouds of words with all the subtle hair-splitting permitted by reference to authority, and to treat the hostility of the Jesuits and their casuistry very much as he would have dealt with a scientific controversy. Events have shown that Port-Royal was far-sighted in its hesitation to adopt Pascal's method; for while he was set on defending what he believed to be orthodoxy, all unawares he was opening the door to a far more formidable assault on the Church, exposing its doctrines to the onslaughts of reason and the unlearned multitude, just as the Reformed Religions set all religion in jeopardy by opening the Scriptures to the eyes of all.

The *Provincial Letters* are no more to our purpose than the rules and histories of the reformed Convents which Santa Teresa founded in her Enlightenment. A masterpiece of eloquence as faultless as a speech of Demosthenes, they abide as a perfect expression of the genius of the French language. As clear as crystal their polished simplicity is beyond compare. Their subject has happily ceased to interest, but the Society of Jesus never fully recovered from Pascal's merciless blows—most un-

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

fairly, since the cause for which the Jesuits were fighting was life, and Pascal, as Mr. Huxley points out, was the champion of death.

In the course of this battle, he confidently expected further Divine support. The Vision of Fire had confirmed his personal vocation; now God owed a miracle to complete the discomfiture of the enemies of Jansenism. Nor did Pascal's faith go unrewarded. Some days before the date appointed for the miracle, he and *a man without religion* whom we may confidently identify with Mere were talking together, and the unbeliever raised the following problem:

If God intervenes in our lives, if He is particularly concerned with Religion, if the Church is the Kingdom of Truth, how can it happen that only those theologians, who defend Truth in its entirety, are persecuted, excommunicated and helpless, abandoned alike by man and by God who maintains a profound silence? To the unbeliever's remarks, M. Pascal replied without hesitation that he believed that miracles were necessary and had no doubt that God would work one very shortly.

On 24th March 1656, at Port-Royal-des-Champs, Pascal's niece, Marguerite Perier, was miraculously cured of an ulcer in the eye by the touch of a reliquary containing a reputed fragment of the Crown of Thorns. The miracle was attested by the doctors who had treated the child and after the usual procedure was *verified* by the ecclesiastical authorities. Who can wonder that Pascal accepted his niece's cure as a manifestation of God's approval of Jansenism? Once again God had spoken and confirmed his every word and act and thought.

It was not perhaps surprising that, in the elation of the moment, one who set the incomprehensible God so high and man so low that the Divine Justice might be human injustice and that there must be no reasoning about the unreason of Original Sin, should have laid down with confidence the precise rules of the duty of this God Transcendent towards man.

There is he writes] a reciprocal duty between God and man in doing and giving. . . . It is the duty of men to accept from God the religion He sends them and it is the duty of God not to lead men into error. . . . God's duty makes it impossible that a man, hiding false doctrine under a profession of true religion and claiming to be at one with God and the Church, should work miracles to instil secretly into the heart a lying and subtle doctrine; that is impossible. Still less is it possible that God who knows the hearts of men should work miracles in favour of such a man. . . . Here we have a sacred relic, a thorn from the Saviour's Crown, in which the Prince of this world has no power, which

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

works miracles by the inherent virtue of the Blood shed for all. God Himself chooses Port-Royal to show forth its power. This is no case of men working miracles by some unknown and doubtful power, making it hard for us to decide whether they may be true or false. It is God Himself; it is the instrument of the Passion of His Only Son, which has chosen this place out of many and gathered together people from all parts to enjoy miraculous comfort in their sufferings.

Pascal could exclaim with Saint Augustine: 'Without the miracles, I should not be a Christian.' Mortifying with self-contrived instruments of torture a body racked with the sufferings of mortal disease, dead to the pleasures of the world and the noble ambitions of the intellect which had meant so much to him, Blaise Pascal counted himself among the happiest of men, since the miracle of the Holy Thorn had been sent to prove him right. 'On *the miracle*,' he wrote, 'as God has made no family more happy, so may He find none more grateful.'

The miracle of the Holy Thorn happened while the *Provinciats* were thrilling public opinion and it contributed to the temporary triumph of Port-Royal, but what was far more important it confirmed Pascal in his intention of writing an *Apology for the Christian Religion*. He had appealed to the decency and common sense of many Frenchmen who had no particular interest in religion and they had plunged into theological controversy on the Jansenist side with astonished eagerness. Ordinary folk, who knew nothing about the problems of Free-Will and Divine Grace and gladly left their solution to the Doctors of the Church, were shocked at the laxity of the principles, attributed to the Jesuit casuists, and their connivance at the easy-going morality of their penitents. They rallied to the support of Jansenist puritanism, but from Pascal's point of view they were little better than frank pagans, and in the hope of preparing them for a true conversion, he planned the outlines of a great *Apology*, which, since death forbade its completion, has come down to us unfinished in the shape of the famous *Thoughts*. The exact design which he had in mind to embody these *Thoughts* in a general defence of Jansenism and statement of its creed remains largely a matter of guesswork, but his Editors have divined sufficient of his scheme for our purpose.

The *Apology* was to be a lively statement of the Jansenist version of Christianity, introducing character sketches with dialogue and letters to illustrate various points of view.

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

Men [he writes] despise religion; they hate it; and fear that it may be true. To remedy this attitude, we must begin by showing that religion is not contrary to reason, that it is worthy of respect and reverence; we must make good people love it and anxious that it should be true; finally we must prove that it is true: worthy of reverence for its knowledge of human nature, worthy of love, because it promises the true good. (*Brunschvicg* 187.)

The first step, then, in Pascal's argument was to show that religion is not contrary to reason, and it was to be expected that in this task he would be more concerned with restricting the validity of reason than with demonstrating the reasonableness of religion. None the less, his friends of Port-Royal were inclined to suspect that the whilom man of science was in danger of setting too much store by reason. Yet, like Raimond Sebond whose arguments affected Montaigne so curiously, he upholds the authority of the Word of God against reason and inquiry; belief must depend either on authority or reason and the authority of God transcends all arguments, though Pascal attempts their reconciliation.

If we submit everything to reason, our religion will have nothing mysterious or supernatural about it; if we shock the principles of reason, our religion will be ridiculous and absurd. [*Brunschvicg* 187].

There are three roads to belief, reason, habit, inspiration. The Christian religion which alone has reason on its side will not count among its true children those who believe without inspiration. It does not exclude reason and habit; on the contrary, the believer must open his mind to the proofs of his belief and confirm himself in the Faith by the habit of devotion, but besides he must surrender himself through humility to inspiration which alone can work salvation: *ne evacuetur crux Christi*. (*Brunschvicg* 245).

Reason must not be entirely disinherited, for it was the main principle of human nature before the Fall. Then it led man to God without fear of error, but now it has been perverted by sin and may lead man astray. Still, great is the power of reason; for it 'commands us more imperiously than a master his slave; if the slave disobeys his master, he is merely unhappy, but if we disobey reason, we are fools'. (*Brunschvicg* 345.)

Yet reason must submit to its own dictate. Even in the physical world, the final effort of reason is the recognition that there is an infinity of things which surpass its powers; reason must be very feeble, if it cannot grasp this limitation. If natural things are too much for it, how much

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

more so the supernatural'. (*Brunschvicg* 267.) 'It is as dangerous to admit only reason as it is to exclude it altogether.' (*Brunschvicg* 253.)

How right Port-Royal was in its initial misgivings about the role Pascal had prepared for reason! He admitted it far enough to make sure that it would go farther and bring to revealed religion the danger of inquiry through the profane glasses of common men. His desire to put reason in its place leads to a clear statement of the situation, as defined by tradition and authority, which neither tradition nor authority was anxious to discuss.

An unit added to infinity increases it not a jot, nor a foot added to an infinite length. The finite is annihilated in the presence of the infinite and becomes zero—even so our intellect in the presence of God, our justice in the face of Divine Justice. There is less disproportion between our justice and the justice of God than between unity and infinity. The justice of God must be as vast as His mercy, but His justice towards the reprobate is less vast and should shock us less than his mercy towards the Elect. (*Brunschvicg* 233.)

It is the stumbling-block of revealed religion, Original Sin, and Pascal does not shrink from stating his doctrine in all its crudity; indeed he insists on its unreasonableness.

Original Sin is folly in the eyes of man, but it is given as such; so you must not reproach me with the lack of reason in this doctrine, for I give it you as being without reason. But this folly is wiser than all the wisdom of men, *sapientius hominibus*. For, without it, what could one say about man? His whole state depends on this one imperceptible point; and how could he have perceived it by his reason, since it is a thing against reason, and reason so far from inventing it shrinks from it, when confronted with it? (*Brunschvicg* 447.)

The justice of eternal damnation has at least a cause, however shocking to human reason and justice that cause may be—the sin of the First Man and the judgment of God, who, as Bossuet says, regards all mankind as a single man. On the other hand, the mercy of God, which, to quote Pascal, 'of two men equally guilty saves one and not the other without consideration of their works', is the mystery of mysteries, because it has no cause either natural or rational.

There is nothing [says Pascal in another fragment] more shocking to our reason than to say that the sin of the first man has brought guilt on those who seem so far distant from its origin that it is impossible for them to have any share in it. This transference of sin seems to us not only impossible, but also very unjust. For what could be more contrary to the rules of our wretched human

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

justice than to damn eternally a child, still irresponsible, for a sin in which he shares so little that it was committed six thousand years before he was born? (*Brunschvicg* 434.)

'The Intellect and Will', says Spinoza in a magnificent simile, 'which constitute the essence of God are as different from our, Intellect and Will as heaven from earth, nor have they anything in common except the names. There is no more likeness between them than between the stars that form the Constellation of the Dog and that barking animal we call by the same name.' This is God Transcendent with a vengeance, and the trouble arises at what point, if any, does the likeness between God and man begin. If Divine justice is no more like human justice than the dog in the kennel is like a constellation, there is nothing to prevent Divine goodness being human wickedness and God being the Devil.

In pursuing his first objective, to show that religion is not contrary to reason, Pascal has recourse to a curious argument, which has caused no little controversy among his admirers, the famous *Pari* or *Bet* of the *Pensees* (*Brunschvicg* 233). It must no doubt be regarded as an *argutnenum ad hominem*, a matter-of-fact pica in favour of religion that would have a special appeal for his friend Merc, a confirmed gambler, who raised the question of the theory of probabilities. There could be no better means of converting him than the demonstration that religion was a better bet than unbelief. As we have said the profit argument accorded perfectly with the spirit of Jansenism. For all the caprices of Divine grace, rewards and punishments were the rock of its foundation.

In the days of his worldliness, Pascal must have played games of chance with Mere and felt sure of his attention, if he proposed a gamble of a novel kind. Life was a gamble anyhow and everyone had to put up their stakes in it, whether they wanted or not, and the odds in favour of orthodox belief as against Mere's agnosticism were so overwhelming that no unbeliever, with any understanding of the mathematics of chance, could have the slightest hesitation in abandoning scepticism and putting all his money on religion. Pascal tacitly assumes that there is no alternative to the nihilism of complete scepticism other than the creed of Jansenius, and has no difficulty in showing that the chances of the Jansenist stand to the chances of the sceptic in the relation of infinity to nil and that Mere, by backing religion, stands to win an eternity of

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

infinite beatitude against a loss of a finite period (equalling zero in relation to eternity) of problematic pleasure and amusement.

Conform, says Pascal, take holy water, have masses said, and perhaps by degrees you will come to believe—*cela vous abitira, that will stupefy you, that will numb your intellect*, this very strong, untranslatable phrase, borrowed from Montaigne—*il nous faut abestir, pour nous assagir*—scandalized many of Pascal's admirers, and Port-Royal omitted it in the first edition of the *Pensees*, but it merely states with admirable force a fundamental doctrine of his philosophy. He had learnt to his cost that the wisest must come down to the level of the animal in the submission of reason and be initiated into the wisdom of stupidity, before they could hope to be touched by the saving Grace and admitted to the exiguous Jansenist Paradise.

Pascal took his parable of the *Bet* as seriously as he took his affection for Mere who must have been very dear to him on the rare occasions when he allowed himself any natural affection. There can be no mistaking the affectionate note in the touching eloquence with which Pascal brings his reasoning to an end. 'If these words of mine please you and their argument seems strong, you must know that they have been written by one who, both before and after, knelt to pray that Being, Infinite and Indivisible, to whom he surrenders everything that is his, to submit also to Himself everything that is yours for your good and His glory.'

At the gate of Purgatory, Cato, who with all earthly love obliterated had been robbed by the Divine Law of compassion for his once beloved Marcia, and had been forbidden to pity her sadness in the Place of Sighs, declared himself content. One wonders what Dante would have said of Divine Justice, if he had had to leave Beatrice in Hell when he was raised to Paradise.

The second object of Pascal's *Apology* was to demonstrate that his religion deserved respect and veneration for its knowledge of the human heart. He claimed that his creed alone could account for the dual nature of man, his misery and his greatness; the misery that bears witness to the depth of his fall from Grace, and the greatness that betokens his primitive fellowship with God. Never has the wretchedness and insignificance of man been celebrated with a greater wealth of imagination and a more persuasive mastery of language. If there is to be a change of heart, humanity must face the truth, which the cult of the common

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

man tries in vain to conceal, and recognize its weakness as well as its strength. In the last century, the unthinking multitudes have been puffed up by the material advances and arrogance of Science, even though of late their self-confidence has been rudely shaken by human inability to make a proper use of scientific discovery. More than ever, we all need Pascal's command, *Abaisssez la superbe* {*Brunschvicg* 581), and his fiery denunciation of human nature to bring us back to reality.

Yet if Pascal's religion enlarges on the miseries of man and the instability of his life, it cannot be quite blind to his greatness and the traces of his former glory, and this greatness and dimmed splendour are inseparable from that consciousness, which we insist is the monopoly of divinity.

Man is but a reed, the feeblest thing in Nature; but he is a thinking reed. There is no need for the whole universe to rise in arms to crush him; a vapour, a drop of water, suffices to kill him. But though the universe should crush him, man would still be more noble than that which slew him, because he knows that he is dying and that he cannot fight against the universe. The universe knows nothing at all. All our honour consists in thought. The dignity of man is based on thought, not on time and space in which our allotment is so small. Let us strive, then, to think well, for that is the principle of morality. {*Brunschvicg* 347.)

The third point in Pascal's programme calls for the presentation of Jansenism as agreeable and attractive, as a religion which even the infidel would wish to be true. Such a design would seem to lie beyond the bounds of possibility. Could men really welcome such an explanation of the universe as the following? 'The world exists for the exercise of mercy and judgment, not as if the men in it had come fresh from the hands of God, but as enemies of God, to whom He gives by Grace enough light to bring them back to Him, if they care to seek and follow Him, and enough light to punish them, if they refuse to seek and follow Him.' {*Brunschvicg* 584.) M. Brunschvicg describes this passage as the fundamental dogma of Jansenism. 'Man is not in a state of nature, neither good nor bad. He is naturally guilty. Grace is a miracle of the Divine Mercy and salvation is an exception to the ordinary course of things.'

Pascal might hope to persuade those who felt that they had been touched by Grace and were looking forward to an eternity of beatitude that nothing could be more desirable than this religion, though even

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

their complacency might be impaired by the thought of the multitudes doomed to perpetual wretchedness. Surely, however, it is too much to ask of the legions of the damned to accept with delight a creed which damns them wholesale. To expect a creature to love God and God's will so devotedly that he welcomes the prospect of Hell for himself and his loved ones plunges us into the depths of the paradox of disinterested love; such a demand calls for a love passing the love of Saints and Martyrs by the Pascalian proportion of infinity to nil and a disinterestedness as incomprehensible as Jansenius's Divine Justice.

Pascal's fourth and final undertaking, the reasonable proof within the limits of inspiration that his creed actually was true, carried in itself the germ of its own condemnation. Far in advance of his time, he proposed to submit the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures to the inquisition which came to be known as the Higher Criticism, that is their consideration as written historical documents in the light of all available knowledge, historical, philological and anthropological. Having asserted the divine inviolability of his axioms, the Fall and Original Sin, he was prepared to apply the laws of reason to the propositions derived from them as though they were propositions of Euclid. As M. Lanson remarks, he made this original attempt with rare temerity, with complete ignorance of history and philology and a fixed determination to produce from his texts the truth that suited him. One is amazed at the misplaced ingenuity with which he carries out his purpose.

It seems almost inconceivable that Pascal can have dreamed of making his creed lovable. No doubt the worship of Darkness, Fear and Pain, the cult of Death, as Mr. Huxley says, the denial of beauty and the morbid shrinking from natural affection for fear of God's unnatural jealousy, were largely conditioned by the ill health that persecuted him and the intense egoism, which in his earlier life gave him no peace. The doctrines of Transcendence often supplement the inward agonies of the soul with the self-imposed infliction of bodily suffering. Pascal in his retreat wore *next* his skin an iron belt studded with jagged points and, if ever in conversation with any of the many persons who flocked to consult him, he felt the slightest pleasure in any remark he made, he would punish himself for his pride by jabbing the points into his waist with his elbow. It might have seemed that the chronic sufferings of his malady, augmented by his doctors' experiments, would have sufficed for the mortification of the old Adam, but he spared no pains to make

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

the last years of his life as materially uncomfortable and miserable as possible, and two years before his death, he sold his carriage and horses, his furniture, plate and nearly all his books, giving the proceeds to the poor and living in a state of voluntary squalor.

It is perhaps not surprising that a man who shuddered at the sight of *les effroyables espaces de Vunivers* had no sense of beauty, indeed was guilty of the blasphemy of regarding beauty as a sin. Hatred of the body went hand in hand with repugnance for the beautiful. The schools of Port-Royal inspired their pupil Racine with a passionate love of art and Hellenism, and yet the leaders of Jansenism fought hard to make him renounce the career which his genius marked out for him. Did not one of them declare that a dramatic poet was a poisoner of souls? Pascal could say that while all distractions were dangerous for the Christian life, none was so much to be dreaded as the stage. Plays were particularly pernicious, when they portrayed a chaste and honourable love. 'One leaves the theatre with one's heart so full of the beauty and delight of love, and soul and mind so persuaded of its innocence, that one is quite prepared to receive its first impressions, or rather to seek for an opportunity of giving them birth in another heart, to enjoy the same pleasures and the same sacrifices as one has seen so well depicted in the play.' (*Brunschvicg II.*) 'He has no feeling for poetry,' says Dr. H. F. Stewart, the most devoted of his English admirers, 'he is contemptuous of art. "How vain a thing is painting, which strives to win admiration by resemblances of which we do not admire the originals!" He is violently opposed to the stage.. .. Yet he had a great dramatic gift and was himself a real poet.'

His biographers tell us that he found happiness in this grim puritanism, in the mortification of his desires and the maltreatment of his body, and this happiness adds to the tragedy of the perversion which led him to stifle his domestic affections. There were drawbacks to marrying into the family of Blaise Pascal. So far back as 1648, when he was very busy with his scientific experiments, we find him joining Jacqueline to write to their married sister Gilberte, urging her to dissuade her husband from building himself a house, for fear he should devote more pains and attention to an earthly dwelling than to the construction of that Mystic Tower, mentioned by Augustine in his letters, which he was pledged to build.

He was not unaffected by a Manichaeian shrinking from natural love,

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

which has its logical culmination in race suicide, and imposed on his sister a rigidity of decorum indistinguishable from prudery.

He had [Gilberte tells us] such a reverence for chastity that he was continually on his guard to protect it from suffering the smallest injury either in himself or in others. It is incredible how particular he was on this point. I was even embarrassed by it to begin with; for he found fault with almost anything one might say in society, however innocent it might seem. For instance, if I happened to say that I had seen a pretty woman, he would take me up short and tell me that I should never say such a thing before the servants or young people, as I could not tell what ideas it might excite in them. He could not bear my children caressing me; he declared that that could only do them harm and that there were a thousand other ways of showing affection.

It is a pity that his sister could not have read to him a few words from Eckhart: 'To the pure heart, all creatures are pure to enjoy; for it enjoyeth all creatures in God, and God in all creatures.' Gilberte insists that her brother could be extremely affectionate, but that he was always careful to keep his affection under control and within the rules of his religion as dictated by faith and reason. There was nothing spontaneous or emotional about these affections of his, which were never allowed to go to the length of an attachment nor was there any pleasure or fun (*amusement*) in them at all.

The Blessed Angela of Foligno saw God and Love.' The eyes of my soul were opened, and I beheld the plenitude of God, wherein I did comprehend the whole world, both here and beyond the sea, and the abyss and the ocean and all things.' Yet the hollowness of this revelation is exposed by a confession which she sets down without excuse or penitence. 'In that time and by God's will there died my mother, who was a great hindrance to me *in* following the way of God; my husband died likewise, and in a short time there also died all my children. And because I had commenced to follow the aforesaid Way, and had prayed God that He would rid me of them, I had great consolation of their deaths, albeit I did also feel some grief.'

It seems a tragic perversion of the message of the Vision that its purpose should be as it were blacked out and human love extinguished by the blinding brilliance of Transcendence. The idea that the love of God can be diminished by the love of man is a blasphemy against the name of Love. Pascal was, no doubt, overbearing and impatient, and as irritable as a sick man cannot help being, but he was of an affectionate nature and

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

lovable character, if only he had not subjected his emotions to the rigid Jansenist rule: God alone might be the object of his love.

Until his death, Blaise's coldness and unresponsive manner hurt and puzzled his sister, and she tells us pathetically enough that the following note, found in his pocket after his death and reproduced in the editions of the *Pensees*, explained to her why she had often thought him lacking in affection towards her and why on many occasions he rebuffed her advances. His family had seen him again and again with this slip of paper in his hand, reading it attentively, no doubt to impress upon his mind a rule of conduct which his loving nature found it hard to follow.

It is wrong for people to attach themselves to me, even though they do so with pleasure and of their own free will. I should be deceiving those *in* whom I should awake such a desire; for I am the aim and end of no one and have nothing with which to satisfy them. Am I not near to death? And so the object of their attachment will die. Just as I should be guilty of making someone believe a He, none the less because I persuaded him of it gently and he believed it with pleasure and thereby gave me pleasure, in exactly the same way I should be guilty, if I encouraged people to love me. And if I attract people so that they attach themselves to me, I must warn those who are inclined to accept this falsehood of attachment that they must not be taken in by it—no matter what advantage might accrue to me therefrom—and that therefore they must not attach themselves to me; for all their life and pains should be devoted to pleasing God—or else to seeking Him. (*Brunschvicg* 471.)

Pascal forced himself to mete out his love by a grudging Jansenist rule of thumb and sought to confine his affections within the limits of what he called *reasonable tenderness*, in no way stinting, or rather lavishing, material aid and pecuniary assistance, but with a stern suppression of feeling and emotion. The pursuit of salvation, the all-absorbing passion of existence, was incompatible with deep love or true friendship, which trespassed on the prerogatives of God. The universal human yearning for invulnerability, which appears in Jansenism under the disguise of the quest of salvation, always involves a degree of insensibility and suppression of sympathy in its best and literal sense. Plotinus is not exempt from it; for the Neo-Platonist philosopher's happiness must rise superior to all misfortunes, even to the brazen bull of Phalaris, whether it is the philosopher himself or his friends who are being roasted. It is a terrible thing when a man like Pascal is persuaded to steel himself against his domestic affections for fear of offending a jealous God. Such a hardening of the soul against the finer emotions can find no place in

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

our interpretation of the Vision, however keenly we may recognize the Divine Transcendence; for it is a barrier to the gathering of experience and to the spreading abroad of Love in the universe of the Many, for which and for which alone we believe God became incarnate.

If we find in the system of Jansenius even as expressed by Pascal an oppressive darkness from which no light can be shed on our present troubles, there are moments in his life in which his genius, illuminated by the memory of the Vision, pierces splendidly through the enveloping veil. Even while he is hating himself, he is forced to admit the doctrine of God Immanent, that God is indeed to be found within his sinful Self. 'The one and only true virtue is to hate oneself—for our sins make us hateful—and to look for a Being really worthy of love, to love Him. But as we cannot love a Being outside ourselves, we must love one who is within us without being us, and that is generally true of every man. The Universal Being is alone such a One. The kingdom of God is within us, is ourselves and yet is not us.' (*Brunschvicg* 485.) So there crops up once again, even in the most unlikely version of the meaning of the Vision, that almost instinctive dividing of the Self into something Divine and something mortal, which is the foundation-stone of all our argument, the discrimination between spirit and soul, Ego and Emauton, conscious subject and non-conscious object.

It has often been remarked that the hardest religions, which offer the slenderest prospect of happiness in this world or the next, possess a peculiar fascination for certain types of mind and though they seem to provide no stimulus for virtue or righteousness have a way of forming characters of sterling integrity and unswerving morals. M. Lanson, a severe critic of the tenets of Jansenism, writes: 'By the authority of their doctrines and by the great examples which upheld them, the Jansenists exercised in the seventeenth century an influence out of all proportion to their numbers in contrast to the persecution they suffered. . . . Heroes of iron will through the unbroken perseverance of their conduct, masters of reason through the tireless disputations of their pens—under these two heads they dominated their century.'

Without the seal of humility and the awe of God Transcendent there can be no tempering of the metal of the soul. In the work of life and the shaping of souls, innumerable systems, an infinity of trials and disciplines, must contribute towards that subtle elaboration of experience, which accompanies and far outstrips in marvels of design the delicate

The Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal

adjustments of the body and the imponderable mechanics of the brain. The whole Universe must work together to forge the instrument of the Greater Love. The Divine purpose is not really hard to see. It measures psychical progress by its own standard, the measure of Love, and each life, wherever it may be in space or time, marks a change and in the long run of time everlasting a further approach to the likeness of the Divine Thought—for God is not mocked—informing the elements and composition of the world of values, created for the sake of Love. Creeds which appear forbidding and even contrary to the laws of love may serve their purpose in refining and tempering the instruments through which the One fulfils its Will and its nature in the Manifold.

X

THE SYNTHESIS OF LOVE AND THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

Et quaesivi, quid ~~esset~~ iniquitas, et non inveni substantiam.
I sought as to what Evil might be and found no substance.

AUGUSTINE. *Confessions*, vii, 22

. . . There is no soul
But it is unlike all others in the world
Nor one but lifts a strangeness to God's love,
Till that's grown infinite, and therefore none
Whose loss were less than irremediable,
Although it were the wickedest in the world.

W. B. YEATS. *The Countess Kathleen*

Nothing can be less susceptible of analysis than the reality which is represented by the words Mystic Union; yet, in our search for a verbal image to express its essence, or, as Dionysius and Erigena would say, its super-essence, we have been forced to consider from four different standpoints the immediate impression left by its impact on the Visionary's mind. Now, reversing the process and turning back to the source of the Vision, we must try to resume the elements of Illumination, arbitrarily treated as separate manifestations, in the synthesis of a single word of power, bringing under that one name, as if it were the name of a Gnostic Archon, the four aspects of a single Truth, discussed as certainty, eternity, divinity and humility.

That super-essential title is not far to seek. Only one name can transcend, include, and unify, the four seals of the Vision, Love, the perfect synthesis. Love alone is certain in the self-comprehension of consciousness, eternal in changelessness, divine in immanence and humble in transcendent perfection. Love alone corresponds to that incommensurable superiority of Being and essence, which is **darkly limned in the**

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

obscurities of the False Areopagite and those who followed in his footsteps, to that refusal to comply with the laws of temporal reasoning, in which the heart follows the reasons that the reason does not know, and to that exuberant outpouring of inexhaustible charity from the solitude of the Absolute to the communion of the Many. It floods the darkness of Emauton with the light of truth or rather perhaps, it is love that prepares and burnishes experience to mirror its own resplendence. This is that Mystic Union of love and likeness, in which the soul of Juan de la Cruz was dissolved into God, John the Scot's ineffable condescension of the Nothing that is beyond all Being into the universe of Being. *God is Love*, and the glosses of Plotinus and Dante on this text sum up the significance of Love's identity with God and the Absolute.

God is both the Beloved, Love itself and Self-Love; for
all loveliness is from and in Himself.

PLOTINUS. *Enneadvi*, 8, 15

O luce eterna, che sola in te sidi,
sola t'intendi, e da te intelletta
ed intendente, te ami ed arridi.

O Light eternal, who abidest in Thyself alone and alone knowest
Thyself, and, self-knowing and self-known, dost love, and smile
upon, Thyself

DANTE. *Paradiso*, xxxiii, 124

Very glorious and lovely is the Self-Illuminating Light of Eternity, as the philosopher's mind imagines it, in the loneliness and immutability of its Self-Comprehension and Omnipotence, knowing beyond knowledge with its all-comprehending consciousness, willing beyond will in the changelessness of complete accomplishment, feeling beyond feeling in the beatitude of perfection. Plato and Plotinus shrank from attributing Love in the sense of the Greater Love to this utterly Self-Sufficient Absolute; for they caught in this idea of love a glimpse of deficiency, sacrifice and suffering, stains of mortality which they held ill-fitting and derogatory to the Majesty of the Supreme. Love as the yearning of the lower for the higher, of the moth for the star, they could understand, but the human mind was not yet open—at least in the West—to the conception of Divine Love as ineffable condescension.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man laydown his life for his friends. (In the Greek text, there is no emphasis on the word *man*, as if it

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

were contrasted with God.) The key in the lock of the paradox! The Self-Love of God, smiling upon His own perfection in Eternity, falls short of the highest that we needs must predicate of the Divine. We cannot confine within the boundless infinity of this lonely and Transcendent Complacency the Supreme and All-Embracing Beneficence of the Absolute. The Greater Love must not be removed by its birthright of death from the reach of the Invulnerable, the Omnipotent and Eternal. The Creator, severed from the Greater Love by immortality, cannot yield pride of place to the creature whose life is compact of suffering and death and an infinite possibility of love, the love that is sacrifice, creation and adventure. Somehow God must be able to lay down His life for His friends.

Regnum coelorum violenza pate
da caldo amore, e da viva speranza,
che vince la divina volontate;
Non a guisa che l'uomo all'uom sovranza,
ma vince lei perche vuol esser vinta,
e, vinta, vince con sua beninanza.

The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence from burning love and lively hope, which conquers the Divine Will; not as one man overcomes another, but love conquers it, because it wills to be conquered and, being conquered, conquers by its own bounty.

Paradiso, xx, 94

So Browning's David in his love for Saul challenges the Love of God.

Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt His own love can compete with it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator—the end, what Began? . . .

Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst Thou—so wilt Thou!
So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown.
And Thy Love fill infinitude wholly.. ..
He who did love most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand for the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for_____

It is at first sight surprising that in the rebuttal of Pantheism Love should appear as the correlative, the obverse of Evil. The Pantheist holds that God is everything and everything is God and by this absolute identification annihilates both Love as the Greater Love is defined and Evil. The charge of Pantheism was brought by one critic against the inter-

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

pretation of the Vision outlined in *The Timeless Moment*, and in *Christian Mysticism* Dr. Inge observes that it 'has been flung rather indiscriminately at nearly all speculative Mystics, from Plotinus to Emerson'. The justice of such an accusation must turn on the definition of this word which is *loosely and thoughtlessly used*, and that definition is stated by the same authority in the following terms:

True Pantheism must mean the identification of God with the totality of existence, the doctrine that the universe is the only and complete expression of the nature and life of God, who on this theory is only immanent and not transcendent. On this view, everything in the world belongs to the Being of God, who is manifested equally in every thing. Whatever is real is perfect; reality and perfection are the same thing... It is inconsistent with any belief in *purpose*, either in the whole or in the parts. Evil, therefore, cannot exist for the sake of a higher good: it must itself be good. It is easy to see how this view of the world may pass into pessimism or nihilism; for if everything is equally good and equally Divine, it makes no difference, except to our tempers, whether we call it everything or nothing, good or bad.

Al-Arabi, a Spanish Moslem philosopher of the thirteenth century, provides an enlightening illustration of Pantheism in his version of the story of the Molten Calf. He assures his readers that Moses rebuked Aaron for repudiating the worship of its image; for nothing but God could ever be worshipped, since He was everything and the idol of the Calf, molten from the golden ear-rings of the people, was just as much God as anything else.

Dr. Inge concludes that Pantheism is 'a pitfall for Mysticism to avoid, not an error involved in its first principles', and in the course of this chapter it behoves the writer to make sure that the charge cannot be reasonably sustained against his interpretation of the Vision. It is now clear that in this matter there is a connection between the problem of the Greater Love and that of Evil, since the existence of the one and the other involves the admission of Being—possibly tenuous, possibly illusory—that is not God, and the order of our argument requires that we should at this point deal with the positive manifestation of Love in the creation of the universe, leaving for the moment the negative mystery of the origin of Evil in that creation.

Since the Divine Perfection is necessarily eternal and since by the paradox of Love perfection is only made perfect by imperfection, perfection, and imperfection must have existed eternally side by side and always will. Since Love needs sacrifice and the right to challenge death,

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

death and the possibility of sacrifice, that is time and the manifold, did not come into existence either before or after Love, which is the One and Eternity: they are, the One and the Many, Eternity and Time, for ever more. God and Eternity are better than Creation and Time, but God and Creation, Eternity and Time, together, are best of all. Augustine gave utterance to this mystery in his *Confessions* (VII, 13). *Things above are better than things below, but all things together are better than things above alone; meliora quidem superiora quam inferior a, sed meliora omnia quam sola superiora.*

The question arises, How can God know self-sacrifice and death? The answer is given by the differentiation of the One; everything proceeds from God, but in the temporal manifold is found the multiplicity and mortality that the Greater Love demands. And we arrive at yet another paradox; it is not in the One and the Eternal that Love reaches its fullest measure, but as a denizen of two worlds, incarnate in Time and the Many. If we return to our myth of the Creation, in the beginning of things that never was, God dreams the motionless but multiform world of space, and though there is multiplicity in the objects it presents to His awareness, there is no room for Love where there is neither time nor change, nor yet for Evil. It is only with the coming of Time and the differentiation of consciousness through the variety of experience and the organisms which gather it, that Love finds its way into the universe.

Love is itself unmoving
Only the cause and end of movement.
T. S. ELIOT. *Burnt Norton*

Love, the only cause of all movement, sets on its course the field of awareness of every living thing, the universal *now*, and as it sweeps through the silent manifold of immutable space, each spirit or Ego, always one with the Universal Spirit and Absolute in Its consciousness, gathers round him the unique body or sheath of experience, which distinguishes him from every other Ego and enables him and innumerable other spirits to love one another with the Greater Love. There is a beginning for each spirit but no end; perpetual is the weaving and re-weaving of experience in each stage of everlasting life, until the glory of the spirit's garments, like the earthquake and the *Gloria in Excelsis* which herald the translation of the pardoned soul from Dante's Purgatory to

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

Paradise, announces the readiness of his Emauton to be promoted to a higher degree, measured by the criterion of Love's accomplishment.

Those who despair of human nature for its sinfulness forget its slow but sure advance from pre-history and shut their eyes to the unwearingly repeated experiments of evolution, the aeons of faith, hope and brave endurance, the patience of God Incarnate, needed to carry the most imperfect of souls in all its infirmity to the lowest level of humanity through the progress of trial and error imposed by Love on Almighty Wisdom. We shake our heads with reason over ourselves and the shortcomings of our fellows, whose lives we fear have widened, instead of narrowing, the gulf that is set between the temporal self and the ideal of Love. Let us look for comfort to the innumerable generations of our ancestry, each contributing its tiny quota, as the coral insect brings its infinitesimal accretion to the building up of the atoll from the depths of the ocean, to this Emauton of ours, which is already so much bigger than we can grasp.

There is danger of Pantheism, when those on whom the light of the Vision has shone read it as a message to recoil back to the peace of the *One* from the turmoil of the *Many* as if that turmoil did not exist, and drown the love of all their neighbourly creatures in utter absorption in the Divine Self-Love of consciousness. Experience of every kind is needed in God's Love Adventure and there is a place for the contemplative to whom the call may come, but the main purpose of life cannot be the denial of life; the message of the Vision must be life more abundant. Most of those who are born into time must seek the significance of their vocation in the building of character and personality from the bricks of daily life with the plumb-line of Love, fearlessly accepting the trials, duties and pleasures which come to them bringing experience. Their appointed pilgrimage follows what Peacock calls the quiet path of everyday life, Horace's *secretum iter et fallentis semita vitae*; for even in Mysticism the conspicuous are not the frequent.

Admittedly the first emotional response to the revelation of Love in the Vision cannot but be Peter's stammering appeal to the Transfigured Lord to perpetuate in time the timeless moment, the overwhelming passion, if it be possible, to prolong in unbroken radiance, if not, to reiterate in the repeated glimmerings of summer lightning, that gleam of the Divine and Eternal which has found its way into our darkness. Those who have seen this loveliness would fain gaze upon it for ever

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

more and let the world go hang, confident that the beatitude of Mystic Union is theirs eternally and that its perpetual fruition is the Will of God. Such is the Alpha and Omega of the Perennial Philosophy, which Mr. Huxley has outlined in his Anthology of quotations from the Mystic Scriptures. 'In all the historic formulations of the Perennial Philosophy,' he writes, 'it is axiomatic that the end of human life is contemplation, or the direct and intuitive awareness of God; that action is the means to that end, that a society is good to the extent that it renders contemplation possible for its members; and that the existence of at least a minority of contemplatives is necessary for the well-being of any society.' This intuitive comprehension of God calls for the final dissolution of the objective self, the death of awareness in consciousness. Mystics, Mr. Huxley tells us, 'aspire to be delivered out of separate selfhood in time and into eternity as realized in the unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground'.

Blessedness depends on non-attachment and selflessness, therefore can be enjoyed without satiety and without revulsion; is a participation in eternity, and therefore remains itself without diminution or fluctuation.

Man's obsessive consciousness of, and insistence on, being a separate self is the final and most formidable obstacle to the unitive knowledge of God. To be a self... is the original sin, and to die to self, in feeling, will and intellect, is the final and all-inclusive virtue.

Is it really easy to believe that the soul, the mind, the personality, the *selfness*, whatever one may call Emauton, can be so lightly flung aside as nothing worth after the oceans of years, the endless pains and trials and errors that have gone to its making? The vast process, which Erigena traced from beatitude through the torment of unrest back to beatitude, remains unexplained, as though the Universe had been designed to be God's Folly.

By the purification of the motive
In the ground of our beseeching,

Love purges the temporal self of unworthy selfishness, making it positive in charity. In Love we find the purpose of purposes, moving the sun and the stars and all things, for ever pushing forward into closer consonance with the Divine those infinitely complicated and delicate instruments, forming the *selfness* of each individual, from one point of view, rightly called in 'The Cloud of Unknowing' *a foul stinking lump*,

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

from another, God's masterpiece of sensibility and eager desire towards the Good. The brave words of Plato *καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἄθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μέγ' ἔστι*, for noble is the contest and the hope is great, ring truer than the denial of Ahriman, the spirit who denies, that there is any contest or hope or life at all, but only a way of escape from time and experience.

If Love with its divine and affirmative answer to the challenge of Pantheism gives purpose and meaning to the universal process of time and space, which the eventual restoration of all things to primal beatitude leaves as it were unexplained in mid-air, we must look farther afield for the negative factor, the equation of Evil, the crucial problem of every religion and philosophy and of life itself. It is manifest that the key to human perplexity must lie in the solution of this problem. It would be relatively easy to call a truce in the war of the Two Truths, the secular conflict between Religion and Science, if Faith could solve the puzzle in terms acceptable to Reason and reconcile the incompatibility of the imperfect world we know with the reign of Omnipotent Perfection. In the dawn of thought, religion and philosophy spring from the discrepancy between what is and what we think ought to be, as is related in the fable of the Garden of Eden. So long as all was for the best in the best of all possible gardens, the question of the knowledge of good and evil did not arise; it needed the coming of the serpent to awaken curiosity. As soon, however, as the criticism that all is not for the best in the best of all possible worlds has been launched against the scheme of tilings, the demand for an explanation becomes irresistible, since man is fundamentally incapable of believing in a haphazard world or a God of limited might and goodness. The rules of logic cannot profess to account for sin and injustice; so imagination is called to the rescue and with it our innate faith in a secret justice and purpose operating behind the things of sense to be revealed in some terrific Theodicy or Cosmodicy vindicating the Providence and Justice of God.

It is peculiarly incumbent on the mystic to supply a solution of the problem of Evil, since the Vision leaves behind it a conviction of the serenest optimism, which is liable to expose him to charges of Pantheism, unless he holds fast by the humility of Transcendence. With eyes dazzled by the splendour of the inward light, he may be inclined to overlook the prevalent darkness of sin and wickedness in the world around him, but his fellows all the world over have recognized the necessity of answering a question which is dinned into their ears from

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

every side by the inrush of temporal experience. They are often accused of attenuating the positive nature of Evil to a dangerous degree, but, as Dr. Inge points out in *Christian Mysticism*, the main objection 'amounts to little more than that Mysticism has not succeeded in solving the problem of Evil, which no philosophy has attacked with even apparent success. . . . If we sift the charges often brought by religious writers against Mysticism, we shall generally find that there lies at the bottom of their disapproval a residuum of medieval dualism, which wishes to see in Christ the conquering invader of a hostile kingdom.' The doctrines of Mani die hard and there are still many people who see in the universe a doubtful contest between the Lord of Light and the Lord of Darkness with powers more or less evenly balanced, the optimist or healthy soul arguing final victory for God, the pessimist for the Devil.

We are bound to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before us in the Mystic Way, undeterred by their failure, seeking the solution of a problem, which, even if it proves insoluble, cannot be ignored. If philosophy as well as religion has failed to formulate a solution and has had to contend itself with such vague and inconsistent explanations as faith and hope provide, Science in our days has gravely shaken belief in theories that may be accused of face-saving or wishful thinking, itself failing to fathom—indeed confessing that it never can fathom—the mystery of life. Yet human nature continues to demand as imperiously as ever the reconciliation of Evil, Sin, Injustice and all the Devilish elements in existence with its aspirations and with its instinctive belief in a Good and Omnipotent Deity. Unless that reconciliation can be effected to the satisfaction of the doubts and fears which torment the spirit of the time, it loses trust in any reality beyond the sensible and, since materialism answers no questions at all, such a crisis as we have to-day arises. If our interpretation of the Vision is to make its modest contribution to the change of heart which is the mystic's goal, we must endeavour to discern in the pattern of our experience evidence of a Divine purpose, embracing in a supreme design both good and evil alike, and to express that purpose in terms that will not be abhorrent to the sceptical spirit of the age.

If we look deep down within our own minds in the lowest layers of all but forgotten experience for the origin of our idea of Evil and the first home of those avenging Furies, Remorse and Guilt, we are, I suspect, liable to stumble upon relics of pre-human terrors, nightmares

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

of inscrutable vetos and inexplicable taboos such as schoolboys observe unwittingly offended, sudden pangs of superstition, unaccountable phobias, intolerable anxieties and devilish misgivings. Is there anyone who has not at some time or another acted or suffered under the whip of an irrational premonition, even if it be only a shiver down the backbone from reading a ghost story or strange qualms from the menace of an unlucky number? Fear, for all the noisiness with which our statesmen may trumpet its abolition, remains, as it always has been and always will be, an indispensable warning and deterrent for the errant Emauton, to chase it back to the appointed paths of life, and an infinity of cold sweats is gathered in the backward glance a man may throw over his shoulder on a dark and lonely night at the sound of an unknown footstep.

The backward look behind the assurance
Of recorded history, the backward half-look
Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror.

T. S. ELIOT. *The Dry Salvages*

In the Church, the influence of Augustine was paramount in establishing the status of Sin and Evil and, in his controversies with Pelagius and other heretics, he necessarily stated such problems as Original Sin and the relations of Divine Grace and Free-Will in extreme controversial forms, which continue to this day to exercise immense influence on the Western attitude towards them. 'Though desperately combating the Dualism of Mani,' writes Bousset, 'he yet introduced into Western thought a number of Dualist ideas only distinguished from Manichaeism by a very keen eye and then with great difficulty.' 'All medieval development', says Dr. Bussell, 'comes from one or other side of Saint Augustine: he is at once the founder of the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages and of its rival, mystical and Protestant individualism.' Since orthodoxy is unhappily not my doxy, it will I think be instructive to examine the struggles of the Saint's divided mind in dealing with the contradictions he could not reconcile with occasional reference to that broad-minded Roman Catholic, Baron von Hiigel. It will be remembered that Augustine had been a Manichaean Auditor during nine impressionable years and had then turned from the dualist solution of evil to the Neo-Platonist doctrine that it was a mere negation next door to non-existent. When, taught by Plotinus and his school, he had seen within himself with the transcendent eyes of the soul the transcendent

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

immutable Light, his belief in the negative character of Evil was confirmed and he sets out in die *Confessions*, written about A. D. 400, his interpretation of the Vision in this matter: that evil was no more than privation of good verging on non-existence, *malum non esse nisi privationem boni usque ad quod omnino non est*.

It was Evil in practice rather than Evil in theory that drove Augustine to insist on the ineluctable curse of Original Sin and the universal doom of damnation only to be lifted by Divine Grace. An African of sultry passions, in an age when asceticism was perversely regarded as an end in itself, he learnt from experience the uncontrollable violence of sin and could not but give it a rank of diabolical importance, almost equal to that of the Manichaean Satan in his early philosophy. In the *Confessions*, we find him bewailing the perversity of the babe at its mother's breast: *nemo mundus coram te, 'nee infans cujus est unius diei vita super terram; no one is pure in thy sight, not even the baby who has lived but a day on the earth*. Then he cudgels his conscience over his naughtiness in robbing a pear tree, when he did not want the fruit, making no allowance for a youth's pardonable unruliness and zest of adventure. When he tears himself away from his besetting vice, there grows up, alongside the idea of evil and sin as negations and shadows in the picture, a terrible realization of their destructive energy and the corrupt inclinations of the human heart, the persuasion that only the direct intervention of God can avail to snatch the brand from the burning, and the two opposite notions co-exist in the soul as *it* were separated one from the other by a water-tight compartment.

Von Hiigel strikes at the root of the matter when he insists that, whatever form the doctrine of Original Sin may take, it must not run counter to *the chief axiom of all morality*—"The concurrence of the personality, in a freely willed assent, is necessarily involved in the idea of sin and guilt." Neither Calvin nor Jansenius can stand the test. Moreover, profiting by the thinking and researches of recent centuries, von Hiigel presents an idea familiar to the modern mind.' Anthropology and Ethnology are abolishing all evidential grounds for holding a primitive high level of human knowledge and innocence and a single sudden plunge into a fallen state.' Everything, on the contrary, points to a gradual rise from lowly beginnings. 'Sin is a survival or misuse of habit and tendencies that were incidental to an earlier stage of development... their sinfulness would thus lie in their anachronism, in their resistance to **the**

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

... Divine force that makes for moral development and righteousness.' The Church could boast among its spiritual directors the earliest and greatest of psycho-analysts, and von Hiigel confirms the investigations of modern scientists who, in their pursuit of the causes of psychical disease, have explored within the human soul the hideous dens of remorse and guilt.

He exemplifies in his own position the influence of Augustine's divided mind on the Church and sums up frankly and impartially the upshot of the Saint's conflicting counsels. 'It is well known how it was Saint Augustine, that mighty and daring, yet at times ponderous, intellect, who (so long a captive of the Manichees and then so profoundly influenced by Plotinus) was impelled, by the experiences of his own disorderly earlier life and by his ardent African nature, to formulate by far the most explicit and influential of the doctrines upon these difficult matters [Evil and its origin].' The result was shown in 'the largely impassable maze of opposite extremes, contradictions and difficulties of every kind, in which that adventurous mind involved itself. He winds up with a reflection that Jansenius and Pascal would have bitterly resented: 'It is highly satisfactory for a Catholic to remember that the acute form given to the doctrine of Original Sin by Augustine has never been finally accepted by the Catholic Roman Church, so that it can be said that in this respect, the Roman theology is more philosophical than that of the Symbols of Protestant Christendom.'

Von Hiigel shares Augustine's hesitations and changes of mind. At times, he is oppressed by that sense of a positive malignancy in Evil, which we all inherit as our legacy of superstitious dread, and insists on *a certain obstructive and destructive efficacy in the bad will, and of a mysterious direct perversity and formal, intentional malignity in that will at its worst*. That peculiarly Teutonic word *Schadenfreude* has grown up to express this idea of positive evil, the joy of destruction for destruction's sake, the lust for the shaming of the good. Von Hiigel praises Kant's *virile poignant sense of the dread realities of human life* and drives home the point with a quotation from Professor Eucken:

In great things and in small, there exists an evil disposition beyond all simple selfishness; hatred and envy, even where the hater's self-interest is not touched; an antipathy to things great and divine; a pleasure found in the disfigurement or destruction of the Good... Indeed the mysterious fact of Evil, as a positive opposition to Good, has never ceased to occupy the deepest minds. . . . The concept of moral guilt cannot be got rid of, try as we may,

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

A similar humane halting between two opinions may be suspected by those who read between the lines in von Hugel's comments on Rewards and Punishments, also expressed in his study of Saint Catherine of Genoa. In the name of *the specifically Christian earnestness*, he holds to the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, though he is not blind to the attraction of *the idea of the Apocatastasis, the Final Restitution of All Things and Souls as taught by Clement and Origen*, Fathers whose names were to Jansenius as a red rag to a bull. He is of opinion that *the Doctrine of Abiding Consequences* answers to *the deepest postulates and aspirations of the most complete and delicate ethical and spiritual sense*. Yet like many other tender-hearted believers, he can scarcely bring himself to accept a Hell with *no* attenuations. Some relief to its everlasting misery may be afforded by a theory of Conditional Immortality. Souls that have failed to acquire a spiritual personality remain with an animal individuality which may cease to exist, and, if indeed the complete annihilation of the soul is impossible, they may have a generally lowered faculty of awareness, so that their power to feel pain would be diminished, while the heightened faculties of the Saved would enable them to appreciate a thousandfold the rapture of beatitude.

The most conservative believer even among the Puritans is in these days rarely at his ease in the advocacy of Hell. He feels with Montaigne that there is a *disproportion inique* in basing eternal punishments or eternal rewards on so short a life. There is a tendency to grasp at any shadow of mitigation, however illogical, and a desire to silence the jarring protests and reproaches of reason and humanity by any fiction which will make the infinity and eternity of Hell less infinite and less eternal. Much of the dispute between Augustine and the Pelagians was concerned with the possibility of interposing between Heaven and Hell a halfway Limbo for unbaptized babies and the Saint was adamant in his refusal to admit that there was any evidence for such an after-death mitigation. The orthodox, however, may have Augustine and other Fathers of the Church on their side in believing that the sufferings of the damned, though there can be no end to them owing to some unfortunate texts in the Gospels, may be somewhat eased during certain periods of time, and a breathing space, *respiratio*, of lost souls, to the irreverent perhaps vaguely suggestive of ticket of leave, is authoritatively pronounced not to be contrary to the Catholic Faith. Saint Catherine of Genoa in one of her visions almost accomplished that part

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

of the purpose of Jeremy Taylor's *grave and stately matron*, which was concerned with the quenching of the fires of Hell, when it was revealed to her that *the ray of God's mercy shines even in Hell*, and she learnt the height, the breadth and the depth of the Divine Love. 'I cannot find words appropriate to so great a Love. But this I can say with truth, that if of what my heart feels but one drop were to fall into Hell, Hell itself would altogether turn into Eternal Life.' Where the ray of God's mercy shines, a drop of His Love must surely find its way.

This trust in the Divine mercy rings in harmony with the hopes of the early Christian mystics who shared the Neo-Platonist feeling that Evil has no real substance. 'There is nothing', says Gregory of Nyssa, 'which falls outside the Divine nature, except moral evil alone. And this, we may say paradoxically, has its being in not-being. For the genesis of moral evil is simply the privation of being. That which properly speaking exists is the nature of the Good.' Saint Thomas Aquinas weaves this thought into the complex and ordered structure of the *Summa*: *The stain of sin is not something positive existent in the soul. ... It is like a shadow which is the privation of light.*

We have spoken of the sweet Mystic anchoress, the Lady Julian of Norwich, who on the 8th of May 1373 was shown the Revelation of Love, and considerable prominence is given to her writings, edited by Grace Warrack, both in Dr. Inge's *Christian Mysticism* and Miss Underbill's *Mysticism*. A rather fuller consideration of her bold and beautiful speculations on Sin and Evil may be justified, as there can be no better link between the hesitations of Augustine, reflected in the mind of von Hugel, and the tentative solutions of these vexed and ever-recurring problems, which we venture to bring forward in this Interpretation of the Vision. We are encouraged in our design by the discovery that the Lady Julian, whom von Hugel calls *the entirely orthodox optimist*, begins her pilgrimage from the same starting-point as ourselves with the divinity of the spirit, which in spite of all appearances abides immune and aloof from all sin and evil.

'In every soul that shall be saved is a Godly Will that never assented to sin, nor ever shall. Right as there is a beastly will in the lower part that may will no good, right so there is a Godly Will in the higher part which Will is so good that it may never will evil but ever good.'

Julian pays obeisance to orthodoxy by limiting the Godly Will to *every soul that shall be saved*, but she has no real intention of dividing

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

mankind into two classes, die one blessed by die presence of the Divine Spark, the other accursed for its absence. The meaning of this limitation in which her respect for dogma enshrouds all-embracing Love is expressed earlier in her *Revelations*:

Por in mankind that shall be saved is comprehended all: that is to say, all that is made and the Maker of all. For in man is God, and God is in all. . . . I speak of them that shall be saved, for in this time God shewed me none other. But in all things I believe as Holy Church believeth, preacheth and teacheth.

And I saw no difference between God and our substance: but as it were all God.

There is dangerous immorality in the belief, too widely spread in our days, that sin is sweet and virtue sour, and that it is only with an eye to future profit that the raptures and roses of Vice are to be eschewed. 'Sin', says Lady Julian, 'is the sharpest scourge that any chosen soul may be smitten with.' 'Sin is so vile and so greatly to be hated that it may be likened to no pain which is not sin.' She was indeed terribly occupied with its presence on earth, but she had no mind to exaggerate its ubiquity.

And thus, in my folly, afore this time often I wondered why, by the great foreseeing wisdom of God, the beginning of sin was not letted; for then, methought, all should have been well. . . . But Jesus, who in this Vision informed me of all that is needful to me, answered by this word and said, *Sin is behovable* [unavoidable], *but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well*. In this naked word *sin*, our Lord brought to my mind generally *all that is not good*.... But I saw not sin: for I believe it hath no manner of substance nor no part of being, nor could it be known but by the pain it is cause of. And thus pain, it is something, as to my sight, for a time; for it purgeth—*It is sooth that sin is cause of all this pain; but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well*. These words were said full tenderly, shewing no manner of blame to me nor to any that shall be saved. Then were it a great unkindness to blame or wonder on God for my sin, since He blameth me not for sin. And in the words I saw a marvellous high mystery hid in God, which mystery He shall openly make known to us in Heaven: in which knowing we shall verily see the cause why He suffered sin to come.

She has a wonderful gift of significant repetition in her assurance that all shall be well, and we surely can put a name to her undreamed-of miracle which is to bring about the naughting of Sin as if it had never been, the name of love.

But in this I stood beholding things general, troublously and mourning, saying thus to our Lord in my meaning, with full great dread: *Ah ! good Lord, how*

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

might all be well, for the great hurt that is come by sin to the creatures . . . And thus our good Lord answered to all the questions and doubts that I might make, saying full comfortably: *I may make all thing well, lean make all thing well, I will make all thing well, and I shall make all thing well, and thou shalt see thyself that all manner of thing shall be well . . .* Another understanding is this, that there be deeds evil done in our sight, and so great harms taken, that it seemeth to us that it were impossible that ever it should come to good end. And upon this we look, sorrowing and mourning therefor, so that we cannot resign us unto the blissful beholding of God as we should do. . . . And thus in these same five words aforesaid: *I" may make all thing well*, etc., I understand a mighty comfort of all the works of our Lord God that are yet to come. There is a Deed the which the blessed Trinity shall do in the Last Day, as to my sight, and when the Deed shall be, and how it shall be done, is unknown of all creatures that are beneath Christ, and shall be till when it is done.

'In this manner,' writes von Htigel of Julian's final miracle which is to cut the Gordian knot of Evil, 'without any weakening of traditional teaching, the whole dread secret as to the future of evildoers is left in the hands of God, and a beautifully boundless truth and hope glows throughout those contemplations.' 'I had no other answer', she writes, 'in Shewing of our Lord but this: *That which is impossible to thee is not impossible to Me, I shall save my word in all things and I shall make all things well* Thus I was taught by the Grace of God, that I should steadfastly hold me in the Faith as I had aforehand understood, therewith that I should firmly believe that all things shall be well, as our Lord shewed in the same time. For this is the Great Deed that our Lord shall do, in which Deed He shall save His word and He shall make all well that is not well.'

Plotinus argued that Evil cannot be all bad, since it is so often turned to good, and Julian goes a step farther, when she boldly declares that *in sin shall be no shame to man, but worship*. The wounds of sin are made medicines on earth and turned to worships in Heaven. God brought merrily to her mind saints famous for their sins, among them David, Peter and John of Beverley, *a hende [gentle] neighbour and of our knowing, a comfort to us for homeliness*. 'They are known in the Church in earth with their sins, and it is to them no shame, but all is turned to them for worship.' The reader will remember how Cunizza, sister of that tyrant Ezzelin for whom, Shelley tells us, Death and Sin played at dice, among the Blessed in the Paradise of Venus, pardons herself the naughtiness of her amours and no longer feels any sting of repentance, and **again** how Foulques of Marseille does not repent him of his loves, but

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

rejoices laughingly in the Divine wisdom which provided for them in the scheme of things.

Lady Julian, however, though sin is behovable, adds a warning against the misunderstanding of her meaning. 'But now if any man or women because of all this spiritual comfort that is aforesaid, be stirred by folly to say or to think: *If this be true, then were it good to sin to have the more meed*—or else to charge the less to sin—beware of this stirring. . . . For sin is so vile and so greatly to be hated that it may be likened to no pain which is not sin. And to me was shewn no harder hell than sin. For a kind [natural] soul hath no hell but sin.'

In her exploration of the Invisible, she finds no trace of Pascal's God of Wrath and Righteous Indignation. For all her prayers to have *full sight of Hell and Purgatory*, unlike Santa Teresa with her feverish Spanish imagination, she was shown nothing of them. On the contrary,

I saw soothfastly that our Lord was never wroth, nor ever shall be. For He is God: Good, Life, Truth, Love, Peace; His Charity and His Unity suffereth Him not to be wroth. For I saw truly that it is against the property of His might to be wroth, and against the property of His Wisdom, and against the property of His Goodness. God is the Goodness that may not be wroth, for He is nought but Goodness: our soul is oned to Him, unchangeable Goodness, and between God and our soul is neither wrath nor forgiveness in His sight. For our soul is so fully oned to God of His own Goodness that between God and our soul may be right nought. . . . For I saw no manner of wrath in God, neither for short time nor for long; for in sooth, as to my sight, if God might be wroth for a touch, we should never have life nor place nor being.

For Lady Julian as for us, everything falls into place, when the locks of mystery are opened by the secret key of Love; Love the Prime Mover is the message of the Vision. When she asked, she was answered in ghostly understanding: 'Wouldst thou *witten* thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well: Love was His meaning. Who shewed it thee? Love. What shewed He thee? Love. Wherefore shewed it He? For Love. Hold thee therein and thou shalt learn and know more in the same. But thou shalt never know nor learn therein other thing without end.'

Julian's miracle fails to satisfy the confidence of her optimism, *if it* merely takes the form of a Divine Amnesty, a blotting-out of guilt as though sin had never existed, without any accounting for *the great hurt that is come by sin to the creature*. All is not well, unless the ways of God **are** fully justified to man. Granted that Love provides in some sense the answer to the riddle, the question remains, why did Love allow Evil

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

to slip into its design? Dr. Inge lays down the following criterion of validity as applicable to all theories dealing with this crucial point. 'Whatever view of reality deepens our sense of the tremendous issues of life in the world wherein we move, *is for us* nearer the truth than any view which diminishes that sense. The truth is revealed to us that we may have life, and have it more abundantly.' Yet it is impossible to ignore the contention put forward by Bertrand Russell in *Mysticism and Logic*: 'Ethical considerations can only legitimately appear when the truth has been ascertained: they can and should appear as determining our feeling towards the truth, and our manner of ordering our lives in view of the truth, but *not* as themselves dictating what the truth is to be.'

There is a danger that, if our championship of morality gives us a one-sided view of the truth of things, we may defeat our own intention by belying the love and justice of God, which are there for us to see, if we could only loosen from our eyes the bandages of convention and routine, and in consequence degrading to a mockery the design of the Universe. The Omnipotent cannot fail in His purpose, even though he wills to make perfect His strength by weakness; there can be no wastage in His scheme of things.

Presumably if we took Dr. Inge's criterion literally, we should favour that view of reality which most heightens the hideousness of evil and presents the most deterrent retribution as the wages of sin. Yet a diabolical perversity may lurk in excessive brooding over the monstrous ubiquity of the Curse of the Fall. The personification of the Powers of Darkness and their promotion to semi-divine status may be better calculated to enhance the fascination of Evil and arouse to active wickedness from their slumber in the fastness of lost experience the forgotten memories of primeval terror and superstition, than to scare men into piety and frighten them from vice. Man is so constituted that the glorification of Sin as a Superhuman Archon, even the glorification of its ugliness, is more likely to tempt him to emulate a Devil whose blackness is lurid with the flames of Hell than to seek safety in the tame-ness of respectability and good behaviour.

The Christian religion has insisted that there is only one testing time for the soul, that all eternity turns on the span of years allotted in this present life, and many forms of it, in a laudable anxiety to load the dice against temptation, dwell with complacent emphasis on the wages of

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

sin and the torments of the damned, To the primitive mind, the most vindictive penalty seems likely to be the most effective deterrent. It was once supposed that the threat of death was the surest guardian of property. Peter, if we are to believe the Acts, inflicted the death penalty on Ananias and Sapphira for a deception that seems venial in modern eyes, and one wonders whether the great fear that came upon all the church in consequence encouraged new converts. We have come to understand that the severity of punishment is only indirectly associated with its efficacy as a deterrent. The menace of eternal torment for temporal sin has become almost as obsolete as the capital penalty for sheep-stealing. Eternal consequences promote sin from the shadowy existence of a Neo-Platonist negation, or the degree of an obsolescent anachronism conferred upon it by scientific psychology, to a terrific personality in the Hierarchy of Darkness, an evil potentate calling for the sacrifice of purposeless suffering. If a finite action can bring about infinite punishment, that action must be vested with infinite authority; the Titans of Evil have stormed the Olympus of the Absolute and Time has conquered Eternity. Psychologists tell of elements of hate and fear, coiled in the depths of the Subliminary Mind and lying at the root of much of our attitude to Evil and of the cult of punishment for punishment's sake; their influence throws over Sin a dark glamour which serves morality ill.

Many centuries have passed since Plato avowed his belief that in the worst of souls there was an inextinguishable possibility of reformation. He knew of no punishment worthy of the name that was not either remedial or exemplary, and could find no place injustice for punishment for punishment's sake, Medusa-like Vengeance camouflaged as righteous indignation, the infliction of suffering for suffering's sake and a retribution for sin without intention of betterment. How could a good man wish to do anything but to make people and things better? It was inconceivable that he should wish to make his fellow, even though he was his worst enemy and the worst of men, any worse than he was; and punishment for punishment's sake has no meaning, if it does not imply making its victim worse.

Hell as a penalty for earthly misdoing consecrates the fallacy that the best protection of the law is the imposition of the maximum punishment for the minimum offence. It is contemporaneous with those notions of justice which scattered gallows over the countryside. The

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

hide of human nature is so tough that terrific denunciations of crime and sensational vindications of the majesty of the law fail to penetrate to those softer feelings which open the way to the repentance which is reformation. Cautionary tales fail of their purpose, if they hyperdramatize, as Dionysius might have said, the essence of Evil and present its cowardice and despicable meanness as grandiose and awe-inspiring, however edifying and unpleasant the villains' ends may be. In truth, morality is less fatally jeopardized, if they allow the warning figures which point their moral to flourish like the green bay tree as a concrete example that honesty is not the best policy, provided that villainy and villainous prosperity is painted in its native ugliness and drab unlovely colours. In the depths of the human heart, Argus-like there watches for the Epiphany of the Evil One a Manichee, ready to bow down before the Powers of Darkness, if they are suitably arrayed with Gorgons* heads and the panoply of Hell, lest perchance they may at long last overthrow the Lord of Light as in the beginning of things they overthrew Primal Gayomart.

If then we refuse alike to deify or deny Evil, where is Evil to be found? By hypothesis, there can be no evil in the perfect Absolute. Nor can we discern Evil in the physical universe, the world of space, which we fancy the Absolute to have dreamed as the first limitation of its infinity; for it is the immediate, immutable presentation of the Thoughts of God and God saw that it was good. Only one home is left for Evil, the temporal order of experience, the souls of all living things, those 'children of earth and starry heaven', as the Orphists call them, born from the contact of the One and the spatial Many through awareness in time. Outside Emauton, the self of experience, Evil has no existence, and there it necessarily arises through the design of Love, the paradox by which perfection is made more perfect by imperfection. As the Many arises from the differentiation of the One, so Evil is born from the differentiation of the Good. John the Scot was right when he declared that to enter the time-process must be to contract a certain admixture of unreality and evil. In the timeless duration of a universe at rest, differentiated only in space, there can be no evil; for in changelessness there is neither cause nor effect or purpose, and evil is evil as cause, effect and purpose. With the change and motion of time, the pattern of cause and effect asserts itself in the formation of experience due to the inward contact between the mutually incompatible orders

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

of the One and the Many as heat may be produced by the friction of two incongruous bodies, and Evil is as it were a by-product of the Strife between multiplicity and unity.

In the Absolute, where accomplishment is complete, there can be no surprises, no exceptions; in the complexity of the Many, every rule is riddled with exceptions for the subsumption of diverse individual cases. In the Absolute, there is one all-inclusive, unswerving principle; in the Many, countless generalizations, only partially inclusive and clashing with one another. From this conflict, there originates doubt and choice with a standard of values and a knowledge of good and evil to sway the balance of judgment. The preservation of life already contained in the limitations of space and time, and its reproduction and continuance in these conditions, are the necessary laws of the Divine incarnation and the adventure of life is for ever oscillating between their rival influences. Good and its opposite evil are struck like sparks from the clash of these opposing instincts and of those other decrees that hedge round the security of incarnation. So does God answer Chesterton's questions in *The Man who was Thursday*, 'Why does a fly, why does a dandelion have to fight the whole universe?'

When the One enters flesh and experience by Ego's self-identification with a manifold Emauton and is differentiated into innumerable independent lives, there is set up at once in all those souls systems of stresses and tensions, of pressure and resistance, of clashes and affinities. In the perfection of the One, the law of the Perfect reigns unchallenged, changeless and supreme; in the manifold, there is strife unceasing between the multiform differentiations of the One, and a warfare of competing values. Self-sacrifice is set up against self-preservation and the scale of values begins to be marked out by the measuring-rod of Love. Good and Evil are there, and even if God created for a special occasion a Divine Emauton, however cunning the texture of its experience, it would come face to face with problems incapable of perfect solution. So we may suppose Jesus at the age of twelve knew the weight of conflicting duties, when he went about His Father's business and left His earthly parents to seek Him sorrowing for three days, until at last they found Him in the Temple among the Doctors.

Erigena denied to God all cognizance of sin and evil, since knowledge and being are for him one. In *De Divisione Naturae*, the Disciple is mightily troubled in his mind as to what happens to the burning fiery

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

furnaces of eternal flames to which the reprobate are consigned by the justice of God, when all things return to their beginning to be resumed within their Creator,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

How can there be eternal punishment for the wicked, if no part of creation, not the Devil himself, is left outside the beatitude of the One to serve its eternal sentence? The Magister replies that the Divine mind knows neither Evil nor Sin, for if it did know them, they would have substantial existence and would not be without cause. As it is, they have no cause and consequently are not substantially to be counted among created natures and for that reason are altogether removed from the field of Divine observation. So God is ignorant of wicked angels and wicked men and all other transgressors of the Divine law. For Him they do not exist. This strange blindness of the All-Seeing, this shutting of the Divine eyes to evil, serves as a text to Baron Erik Palmstierna's *God's Innocence*, a most interesting treatise in which he comes forward as champion of God's guiltlessness in the troubles of our time and recalls Augustine's cry of agony at the time of the Sack of Rome: *Either God cannot abolish Evil, or He will not. If He cannot, He is not omnipotent; if He will not, He is not good.* It is the object of our interpretation of the Vision to show that there is a way out between the horns of this dilemma. It does not need universal war or the downfall of the capital of civilization to demonstrate the necessity of some such third path and to impress on man the mysterious ways in which God's justice moves; for the ways of a Good and Omnipotent God call for justification equally, whether but a trace of evil appear to mar the perfection of the scheme of things or cataclysmic evil tear our whole world asunder. After all, our earth is only a drop in the ocean of Creation.

Since God is Love, the One and its differentiations are unthinkable apart. That differentiation, a necessary condition of the Divine nature, demands limitations, that of space for simultaneous multiplicity, that of time for change and motion, and in accepting these limitations God lays aside the Power and the Glory and the Eternal Wisdom for the sake of Love, though they must ever remain the attributes of His Transcendent Being. Incarnate in all life, He abandons the beatitude of perfection, submitting to the restriction of omnipotence in the changes

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

and chances of this mortal world. That all-inclusive foreknowledge, which still holds within itself the happy issue of all things *in the* fulfilment of the Greater Love, condescends to draw darkness over the future of experience, at least in part. The Divine Omnipotence and the Divine Prescience set all life on its course over the seas of space and time, and if it were not for the adventure of Love, the fleet of living argosies innumerable might sail over untroubled seas in halcyon weather to reach port without adventure, but if it were not for Love, there would be no call for any voyage. Just as omnipotence is made subject to the trials and errors of Evolution, the steersman and pilot, so the gathering of the cargoes of experience and the lading of the ships is left to imperfect knowledge within the reasons of the great design and the making of souls goes on amid the clash of unpredestined forces, unpredestined, because Love can never pass by the straight and easy way which complete foreknowledge would enjoin. Many a ship is driven off her course, and there are collisions in the fog, hurricanes and tidal waves; there can be no love without hazard, adventure and death, but over all there broods in the aloofness of the Absolute the Eternal Wisdom, holding within itself the appointed end, steadying whenever occasion arises the universal *now* in the general direction that it must pursue despite the independence of souls beyond number.

No man, whatever his philosophy, can be really persuaded at the moment of deliberate action that he is not a free agent, that he does not enjoy a free will in the sense that the power of choice is open to him. He is doing one thing, but he might have been doing another, if he had so chosen. If the matter is considered more closely, free will as motiveless choice appears to be a meaningless conception, though it is often regarded and spoken of as if liberty of choice implied a possible absence of motive—habit and instincts being held as motives, even when Ego is unaware of them—an uncaused cause, isolated from all previous experience. In the fourth Canto of the *Paradiso*, Dante states the problem in the naked form in which *it* also appears in Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Intra due cibi, distanti e moventi
d'un modo, prima si morria di fame,
che liber'uomo Tun recasse ai denti.

Between two meats, equally tempting and equally near, a man's free will would let him die of hunger, before he decided to get his teeth into one or the other.

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

Saint Thomas cuts the Gordian knot by concluding that eventually one dainty would in practice prove more tempting than the other. Andre Gide in *Les Caves du Vatican* makes Lafcadio murder Fleurissoire by pushing him out of a railway carriage and describes his action as an unmotivated crime—*un crime immotive, quel embarras pour la police!*—but, despite the extravagance inseparable from a *Sotie*, a great deal of the interest of the book depends on the emergence from Lafcadio's character of the motives for his motiveless crime. A choice without a motive would be an utterly detached anomaly like Mahomet's coffin hanging between heaven and earth with nothing to prop it or hold it up.

In sin, Christianity emphasizes the evil will. Since we hold that spirit or Ego, *the Godly Will that never assented to sin nor ever shall*, supplies the only motive power in the Self, the vital energy of will and the motive power of choice, we cannot look to will for the lodging of evil. The spirit is always willing, always yearning for righteousness and love, but its purpose is deceived and betrayed by the delusions of experience and the defects of Emauton. Ego rules as a constitutional monarch whose heart is always set on the welfare of his kingdom, but whose policy and actions are directed and controlled by his very fallible ministers. Emauton, the temporal self which is always divided against itself, does its work of gathering and storing experience as an erratic and imperfect machine, a tentative and experimental model which is not always improved by the vicissitudes of any given life. It may be that Ego can on occasion consult the compass needle of Love trembling in the binnacle, but he must rely on Emauton for his bearings by the stars and the dead reckoning to keep him on his course. The soul like all other mortal things is subject to the law of progressive amelioration or deterioration. Each false step makes easier the descent to Avernus and more arduous the task, the toil, of reascending to the heights. In the pattern of the universe, there are many unheralded happenings to restore the individual soul to the balance it has lost, but there are cases when we must admit with Augustine that nothing can bring the sinner back to righteousness except Divine Grace. The works of Emauton may be so clogged and foul that only a direct intervention of the Divine, the light of consciousness penetrating into experience and the soul as in the Vision, can set them working again, and Ego has to shake the paralysed machine of soul and mind as if it were a stopped watch needing a jerk to start it on again.

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

Emauton, then, must be loaded with the responsibility of the motives which hamper and defeat Ego's Godly Will, and since it is the soul, it should be liable to the punishment ordained to remedy its defects and sins and to discourage others from the pursuit of unrighteousness. At first sight all such punishment would seem a mockery. Emauton consists solely of experience, which in itself is neither conscious nor aware, and it is only through the awareness of Ego that the torments of the torturer can rack the guilty soul, which in isolation from the conscious subject is drowned in the blackness of Oblivion. With Erigena, we can dismiss as fiction the eternal surge of infernal flames, *aestus ille flammarum ignis aeterni*, for neither God nor Love can be condemned to Hell everlasting even in the body of experience, though suffering in time is the condition of love, nor is there any revocation of the law that as a man sows so shall he reap.

The hidden God, Pascal's *Deus absconditus*, who is half-revealed and half-concealed in incarnation, moves upon the face of the universe with the spirit of adventure. If the universe were all ablaze with the Divine Intention, there would be neither doubt nor danger, and death would have lost its salutary terror. Without doubt, danger and death, the Greater Love cannot be and Love is God's eternal purpose, the creation of the Many in the changeless One. Yet the certainty of Mystic Union abides for ever. As Pascal says with a characteristic appeal to logic, 'If there never had been any revelation of God, the eternal privation of His presence would be equivocal and might as well be due to the non-existence of any deity as to man's unworthiness to know Him. But since He appears sometimes and not always, there can be no doubt. If He appears once, He is always.'

The building of Emauton is a labour of love. Though there is no room for Hell in John the Scot's Nature, comprising all things that are and all things that are not, every shortcoming and fault in the fabric of experience must be corrected with tears and lamentation. In life and in death, Ego, still for the sake of love *bedizened in the golden fetters* of experience, must strive to put in order his disordered soul and Purgatory is the image of that toil. Of the nature of Purgatory, we can learn something from those imaginings of Saint Catherine of Genoa, which supplied the *text* for von Hugel's *Mystical Element in Religion*. She was unable to appreciate any substantial difference between this life and the next; for while still alive she claimed to have known the purgatory of

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

God's burning love, a love which burned up all dross and prepared her for His presence, teaching her how the souls of the faithful abide after death in the place of Purgatory.

Through the confused mists of unearthly joy and more than earthly agony; the pain that is all but a pleasure and the pleasure that is almost a pain, one catches a glimpse of the refining fire of *Adrasteia*, the implacable law of retribution. All earthly joys and sufferings are felt by God and by God alone in His manifold incarnation, since consciousness is divine and without consciousness there is no feeling, and the Divine justification calls for no compensatory system of rewards and punishments to redress the unfairness of life. God wreaks no injustice upon Himself. Yet bodies of experience, capable of Love in the highest, can only be elaborated through suffering and the setting *in* order of that medley of good and evil which springs from the changes and chances of time. On earth, the business of reshaping character and associating memories, so that memory of penitence and compensatory pain may coalesce with memory of the sin which bore them in itself and purge the stain of guilt, is hindered by the unceasing inward surge of fresh experience. In old age, when the stillness of even should be closing in upon us, and a man should be preparing his soul for death in tranquillity, interruptions to the task of unravelling the tangled skein pour in in battalions and one is left to say with Tennyson's Arthur,

I have lived my life and that which I have done
May God within himself make pure.

There can be no end to the contest, for the soul can raise itself perpetually to higher flights of love and what but love can limit the power of the Almighty to create new worlds and more exalted heavens and to devise new categories of differentiation transcending time and space? Every weakness in the structure of the soul weakens its potency as an instrument of sacrifice and love. The Divine Will that is with us always can only work, except by that rare chance of its own making that Plato called *divine*, through the agency of the unfinished and ever provisional Emauton, which may counter all Ego's infinite cravings and wreck his gallant enterprise. The Greeks, when they linked sin with ignorance, knew that the failure belonged to Emauton, for this ignorance belongs to the evil working of experience.

Sin, we may hope, will lose something of its dark glamour and

The Synthesis of Love and the Origin of Evil

morbid fascination, if it is shorn of supernatural dignity and its sorcery denied the dramatic mystery of eternal fires, reason wrenching from its grasp the wand of black magic with which its spells bind despondency and hopelessness on remorse and guilt. All wrong-doing is inexorably redressed, now or hereafter, for it carries within itself its penalty and remedy. If it were not for time, sin and its wages would be simultaneous and each would cancel the other out. Every shortcoming of the personality must be made good, every weakness in the texture of experience reinforced and mended and every ugliness expunged, before the soul in the multiplicity of its experience is ready to advance another stage on its everlasting pilgrimage and, equipped with new powers and radiant with fresh beauty, make a place for itself in an order of being *in* closer proximity to the Thoughts of God. As for the failures in time—no progress can be unbroken, unless Divine intervention were to defeat its own purpose—they are not to be found writhing in the unprofitable torments of the *Inferno*; for without Divine spirit, they have neither consciousness, awareness, nor life, and God cannot damn Himself to eternal punishment. Rather in the interval between death and life, in that interspace of preparation, which the Tibetan Buddhist calls the Bardo, we may look for them in Browning's Purgatory, in some

sad obscure sequestered state
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
He else made first in vain, which must not be.

Experience and God's toil cannot be wasted; otherwise we might suppose that such a soul as *Guido Franceschini nobleman* of *The Ring and the Book* might be dissolved into its elements and scattered like the ashes of a corpse to the winds; for there is no immortality inherent in the experience that is gathered and combined in time, but only the everlasting permanence bestowed on it by the Divine Will, which neither slumbers nor sleeps nor ever changes. 'God', says Julian, 'hath taken in man's soul His resting-place and His worshipful city; out of which worshipful See He shall never rise nor remove without end.'

XI

THE LAUGHTER AT THE HEART OF THINGS

It is the heart that is not yet sure of its God that is afraid to laugh
in His presence.

GEORGE MACDONALD. *Sir Gibbie*

... a ce dernier rdle de la mort et de nous, il n'y a plus que feindre,
il fault parler francois, il fault montrer ce qu'il y a de bon et de net
dans le fond du pot.

MONTAIGNE. *Essais*, i, 18

I *aughter at the heart of things*, let the phrase be credited to its inventor, my friend G. A. Lyward, whose genius has straightened and saved for this life so many young souls, warped or, as Sir LThomas Browne might have said, incurvated by the inclemency of their early upbringing. In *The Timeless Moment*, I ventured to call Dr. Inge to witness that the conception of a God with a sense of humour need not be branded as blasphemous or even heretical and, though one or two of my critics seemed shocked at the association of God and laughter, it forms an integral part of this interpretation of the Vision and consequently demands fuller consideration in the expression of Enlightenment. If God is good and omnipotent, the word of power that lays bare the mystery of the universe must surely disclose a miracle of happiness, the knowledge that all is really well with the world—and rare are the mystics who have returned from the rapture of the Vision without that certainty—and unexpected happiness after tribulation calls for laughter and thanksgiving. So we are rid of that ancient blasphemy, which Herodotus fathers on Solon, the wisest of the Greeks, and which Jansenius so earnestly revived in his God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, 'God is altogether a jealous and troublesome thing'. The blasphemy of that jealousy and trouble may be accounted for by the

The Daughter at the Heart of Things

denial to God of a sense of humour, if we accept John Morley's estimate of this quality in his judgment on Burke. 'As is usual with a man who has not true humour, Burke is also without true pathos. The thought of wrong or misery moved him less to pity for the victim than to anger against the cause.' Injustice masquerading as righteous indignation often characterizes the absence of a sense of humour and closely resembles the charges brought against the Almighty by the doctrine of Original Sin.

This is not that 'acidity of derision and self-derision' 'miscalled a sense of humour', which Charles Morgan in his Preface to *The Flashing Stream* so rightly castigates as the enemy of singleness of mind. One hopes that that spirit of sneering belittlement with its nasty itch to defile beauty and defame honour, proceeding from the cowardice and mean jealousy of the *debunking* mind, has died the death it deserved during recent years of trial. Its pinchbeck counterfeit degradation of golden laughter recalls the hideous story of the negro who killed humming-birds for fun. The sense of humour of which we are speaking and its manifestation in the laughter at the heart of things come as the supreme achievement and reward of singleness of mind; for singleness of mind with its absolutism and concentration is the Pilgrim's Way of Mysticism, the true *ascesis* of the Vision, the purity of heart which makes God visible—*Dei simplicitas*.

It is certainly grievous to remark in the Old Testament how regularly laughter and scorn are coupled together, as though it was not possible to laugh without sneering. The God of Israel countenanced no indecorous indulgence in the inextinguishable laughter, which shook the less dignified sides of the Homeric gods. Saint John tells us that Jesus wept, but never that the Son of Man laughed or even smiled. We may guess that the Evangelist regarded the tears of the Son of God as a marvel transcending belief and never thought of mentioning the smile and laugh that must continually have played on the lips of one who loved little children. We must turn to the Beatitudes of Saint Luke's Gospel to find the Christian sanctification of laughter: *Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh*.

Laughter may betoken reverence no less truly than tears, and those who have died in a cheerful spirit, with a merry jest on their laughing lips, were no less respectful to death's grim majesty than those who departed in sorrow and foreboding; for they were paying homage to

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

Death's Over-Lord in whose love and mercy they had faith. At the last moment before he drank the cup, Socrates laughed gently and his humour gilds the pathos of that memorable scene.

Little wonder that a sense of humour is generally well thought of as a valuable accessory in the human make-up, and few accusations are more bitterly resented than the charge of its absence, the more so that those iingifted with it are, like the colour-blind, necessarily unaware of their deficiency without outside information. We might compare it to Moses's rod which smote the rock so that the waters flowed abundantly; for it strikes out of the inspissation of dull pomposity the gushing jet of refreshing laughter, following the surprise of the inopinate discovery that—we are not at all what we thought we were. Actually philosophy should rank a sense of humour as a sublime, a divine, faculty; for it signifies seeing things, ourselves included, as a whole and as they are, and giving to each manifestation of the Many its appropriate value: it is Matthew Arnold's supreme poetic gift *of seeing life steadily and whole*. The humourless man sees his Emauton as co-terminous with the entire universe, his wits unwhetted by the grace of laughter, his solemnity untempered by a sense of his own absurdity. Though perhaps we must not say that the Absolute laughs: for laughter springs from astonishment and astonishment spells sudden change; yet it is assuredly the sense of humour *in excelsis*; the perfect sense of humour observes itself and the universe in their just proportion as only the One can do.

The greatest mystics have read this secret in the Vision. They were filled with childlike glee and high spirits like Catherine of Siena, who in illness and health alike was *always jocund and of a happy spirit, and full of laughter in the Lord, exultant and rejoicing*. 'The Soul', says Bohme, 'skippeth in its Body for great Joy,' when it is visited by the Virgin Sophia. Thomas a Kempis, remembering that love is the watchword of the Vision, writes merrily, *amans volat, currit et laetatur: liber est et non tenetur, loving the soul flies, runs and rejoices: it is free and unrestrained*. The literature of Mysticism, even though the Dark Night of the Soul throws an occasional heavy shadow across its pages, shines bright with laughter and making merry. Coventry Patmore in *The Rod, the Root and the Floiver*, proclaims his foretaste of the laughter at the heart of things and the gaiety of divine humility. 'If we may credit certain hints contained in the lives of the Saints, love raises the spirit above the sphere

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

of reverence and worship into one of laughter and dalliance; a sphere in which the Soul sings:

Shall I, the gnat, which dances in Thy ray
Dare to be reverent?

If love and laughter are the hidden secrets, the final approach to them must surely be through the gate of death and we shall do well to live on good and friendly terms with *our sister bodily death from whom no man living can escape, sora nostra corporale de la quale nullu homo vivente po skappare*. Marcus Aurelius looked at death as *a natural thing like roses in spring or harvest in autumn* and Montaigne styles it *une partie de nostre estre non moins essentielle que le vivre*. 'C'est pareille folie de pleurer de ce que d'ici a cent ans nous ne vivrons pas, que de pleurer de ce que nous ne vivions pas il y a cent ans.'

There may well be less difference between the manner of our being after death and the dream existence, which is intermittently ours in this life, than we are wont to suppose. In sleep, our attention is withdrawn from new experience and the mind, still ticking over as it were with its own momentum, grinds out chance combinations of old experience, uncontrolled by the rule of order imposed by Ego's waking attention. So in death, when we have left the universal *now* and the inlet to new experience is tightly closed, the mind may combine and elaborate the experience of which it is composed into new shapes and patterns, not uncontrolled by Ego as in sleep and untrammelled by the exigencies of the organism, but directed towards the copying of the Ideal, so far as Ego's power, self-limited in time and space, may prevail and the nature of the raw material allow. It may then perhaps be permissible in humble imitation of Plato once again to break the continuity of our reasoning with a myth in the guise of a vision in a dream. 'No man in his senses,' says Socrates in the *Phaedo* after the forlorn hope of comforting his mourning friends with the myth of the life after death, 'no man in his senses would affirm that the truth is exactly as the story tells; that, however, this is the truth, or something like it, about our souls and their future mansions, since the soul certainly appears to be immortal, seems to me to be likely and such a guess as one who believes in its immortality might reasonably venture; for fair and noble is such a venture.'

I was reading in Saint Augustine's *Confessions* how he prayed God to send His Angel for the unfledged nestling, fallen out of the nest, to

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

put it safely back into its home, that it might live until it had wings to fly: *mitte angelum tuum, qui implumem pullum reponat in nido, ut vivat, donec volet*. So I was not surprised, when, looking up from my book, I saw the Stranger tenderly taking up the baby goldfinch and with infinite precautions setting it back in the fork of the pear tree, where generation after generation of goldfinches had nested. The high furze hedge that hid the village was ablaze with gold and the pear tree snow-white with blossom.

'No doubt,' I said as if in a dream, 'kissing is in season, but surely it is early in the year for the gorse to be flowering so profusely.'

'Memories laugh at seasons,' he replied.

'Are you too only a memory?' I asked, for his face was too bright for me to see.

'We have met before and we shall *meet* again,' he answered, 'and now I have come to show you death.'

Then he began to talk of death and as he spoke, the meaning of his words pervaded all my mind and senses, so that I saw and felt and thought all that he described, not as though I were hearing *it* by report, but as though it were happening to me in very truth.

When Ego and consciousness returns to Emauton, left alone and inert in the moment of separation from time and the body, he finds an awareness of something unusual and disquieting. The customary refreshment follows the emergence from oblivion and the usual reluctance to be torn from repose to activity, from timelessness to time—for time is the inevitable expectation—but in the background there is a vague uneasiness as of something missing. The dim elusive memory of a familiar dream flutters wraithlike in the deceptive atmosphere, which shimmers over the Marches of Sleep, and who can distinguish between a dream and its first waking memory? One might liken that mirage to a vast and varied landscape, surveyed from the peak of a mountain, stretching motionless in the sunlight with never a shadow moving, it might be for a thousand years—so murmurs a drowsy thought—or a watch in the night. The soul was as stilled and hushed as the silence of that changeless universe. Time was yet to come to a world in which the first second had not ticked and there was neither change nor movement. The universe lulled in perfect quietude was awaiting the inrush of time and life. So God might have dreamed the world in the beginning of things that never was.

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

At last on the horizon came a stirring, the gathering of a little cloud like a man's hand, and with its stirring my frozen mind stirred with the first tremor of awakening, the flicker of a candle held to the lips of a dying man. Yet the pulses of my body, the coursing of blood and the flow of breath, the vague awareness of the pressure of clothes and the coolness of the air, were held in abeyance as never before. It was their absence which gave to this awakening its dull ground-note of uneasy novelty. I was for blotting out the stirring of the little cloud and the flickering of my mind with its anxiety for the feel of my body.

I would gladly have returned to the repose of oblivion, but the Stranger's voice and the stirring of the distant cloud had spread and gathered force. The smiling landscape was being devoured with swirling vapours, pillars of dust and smoke-like mist, which swept into the inmost recesses of my Private Universe. I had awoken from one sleep into another, from profoundest slumber and a dream of supreme tranquillity to a Maelstrom of commotion. Like shadows in the fog, thoughts good and evil, images fair and foul, memories of aching pains and doubtful pleasures, of actions honourable and shameful, of remorse and smug self-satisfaction, shaped themselves into living menacing forms, succeeding one another in a mad whirl of feverish hallucination.

They had escaped, it seemed, from the prison of my Private Universe into the public world of space, pouring in upon me from every side, an army of phantoms driven by a cyclonic tempest, and always there predominated in the mob figures which reminded me of the memories I most wished to forget, of everything I had not dared to admit to myself. Unsubstantial, yet loathsome as lepers, they thronged about me with angry gestures, shaming me with the nakedness of guilt. I had come to the place of the Reprobate and my soul, naked of its body, was ashamed. All the spectres that haunt delirium were collected to torment me with a sense of unspeakable wrong and impropriety, as if I were the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, in a place forbidden by all the laws of God and man. At last the storm died down and oblivion returned, but again I had to wake and again the scene was enacted with unending reiteration. The deployment of all my past experience marshalled fearsome memories from the abyss. The darkness of the deepest cave in the blackest night, unnamed terrors and abortions of remorse and guilt alternated with the resurrection of happenings,

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

more vivid than in the actual living, which self-respect had thrust from itself in shame and disgust.

After lifetimes of agony, when it seemed that for evermore I was doomed to watch the meaningless repetition of events I hated to remember, there came a little change in the chaos that weltered round me. I have spoken of repetition, but repetition suggests order and likeness, and there had been nothing but a succession of the dissimilar and unrelated without apparent connection or obvious significance. At last, however, my mind seemed to pause occasionally in its work of self-destruction and to try to join up again some of the scattered fragments. What was more, I found that I need be no longer an utterly passive spectator. If I fixed my attention on a thought or feeling, as it were in isolation, making it the centre of my awareness, I might be able to hold it more or less stationary amid the whirlpool of unsorted experience. Among those hideous Furies, I might espy a friendly, or at least a neutral, idea, a memory of which I need not be ashamed; then I would cling to it with the despair of the drowning. So I learned that I could momentarily check that devil's tarantelle, if I could only hold one constant thought in the hollow of what Augustine called so expressively the hand of his heart. A supreme effort was required. The image of salvation might slip away, calling up an incongruous simile, as the soaped single-stick, arming a mounted policeman, slides through the fingers of the rioter who tries to wrest it from his grasp, and something hostile would take its place, if concentration relaxed ever so little. It was difficult to find anything to lay hold of; for while the repulsive stood out in clear-cut outline, the neutral and friendly at close quarters too often merged into one another muzzily without hard and fast boundaries. Word-symbols and the ideas they stood for were telescoped into one another. Notion faded off into notion and jelly-like was held in association with countless other indefinite thoughts that needed an operation of logic to separate them.

Once I had a glimpse of my thoughts about death and clutched wildly at them. In response to the effort of my attention, death as I had thought of it with memories of my thinking and word-symbols of my reasoning, not without form and definition, rose to meet me, and other vaguer experience faded into obscurity about the circle of awareness. A little thought floated in from I know not where, which made me smile a Smile that was no smile—for the dead can feel no tension of the

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

muscles round the lips—and I wondered if men find after death just what they had anticipated when alive, seeing that they are imprisoned in the world of their remembered experience. Perhaps it was well for me that the eternal flames of Hell had found no place in my cosmogony.

But there was no cause for complacency or self-satisfaction. For at the intrusion of my ghostly smile, the happy thought that everything was happening to me as I had foreseen and set down in a book drifted away from the centre of attention into the outer darkness of the forgotten. Its place was taken by memories, more sharply defined than hitherto, which, one after the other, struck jarring blows at my reviving conceit. I knew them for dreams, though they were externalized, and took part in them as I had in the past, making all the old mistakes, for all that my eyes were open to consequences that I now knew to be inevitable. Things half-remembered, things long forgotten, nasty nameless things that had lost decent shape surged up in accusation. An enemy had fathomed the inmost secrets of my heart and named me with the one revealing name which could not be denied. The truth was blindingly apparent. That cowardice, that he, that cruelty, each was there in its particularity, each sin present in its ugliness as though time had been powerless to efface it. For such sins against the Holy Ghost diere could be no forgiveness.

The Stranger's words seemed to mingle with something that I had read long ago of Robert Browning. 'Very few people in this world would care to listen to the real defence of their own characters. The real defence, the defence which belongs to the Day of Judgment, would make such damaging admissions, would clear away so many artificial virtues, would tell such tragedies of weakness and failure, that a man would sooner be misunderstood and censured by the world than exposed to that awful and merciless eulogy.'

Vainly I tried to shrink away from the pitiless hail of accusations, the pleas of my defence, as it were to guard my face from blows raining upon it or hide the burning blush of shame, but there was no arm to be raised, no face to be guarded, no body to shrink, nothing but *pain, pain ever, for ever*. Arm, face, body, had been left behind me in the solid world I had lost. All the more poignant were the wounds that stabbed me; for there was no shield against them, no protection for that naked, wincing, sensitive, immaterial thing, which once I had called my heart as if it were made of flesh and blood. As I had thought it out in that other

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

life, I had been sure that thereafter beyond the grave the law of retribution would hold good. There would be a heavy price to pay for every weakness, losing battles against the fearful odds of past sin, and the setting in order of my soul, so far as its defects would permit, with contrition and agony. Yet I had never dreamed that the hope would be so desperate and forlorn, or the assaults of the evil within so torturing—excruciating as the fires of Hell.

Fatigue does not belong to the body alone. The machine of mind, non-conscious experience though it is, rebels against the continuous analysis of its contents and presents to Ego good reasons for withdrawal from the turmoil. Weariness at last overtakes the surging storms of disembodied experience and Ego again is free to turn inward in the blissful consciousness of the Absolute. Then again to wake to the curse of evil, more intolerable than in the doing of it, because it appears stark without the decency of palliation or excuse and no fresh experience comes in from the outside world to distract attention and dim its naked ugliness.

There had been such a wholesale unravelling of the knots and tangles of my personality that Ego, it would seem, might have been at a loss to recognize his own soul. One might have thought that soul and mind with all their complicated works taken to pieces could never have been put together again, or if they could, the reconstruction would have nothing in common with the original, but in truth Emauton remained uniquely the same in its substance; for since death nothing had been added to or taken from its basic material. Something told me that the occasion was approaching for the rewinding of the strands of its experience and the re weaving of its texture in a new and better pattern. The black memories that tormented me were the material of the immediate task. They must be amalgamated with their consequences and cancelled out or neutralized by the balance of sin and punishment, forgotten as all guilt was forgotten by the Saints in Dante's Paradise. First, however, some armour must be contrived to defend my too tender sensibility against the hammer-blows of remorse, and there could be no rebuilding of Emauton, until some permanent foundation had been laid.

With this intent, I would lay hold of some neutral image, untinged with guilt, and round it there would accumulate an inextricably tangled, mass of flotsam and jetsam to form a barrier against the foe. There I would cling as a shipwrecked man might cling to a jagged rock

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

which wounds his body and hands and in the end, slippery with seaweed, evades his clutching fingers, leaving the wretch to be swept out to sea. For time untold I struggled, built up such flimsy defences as I could, and when they failed me or collapsed, set to work again.

At last my mind began to work less disjointedly and I secured some measure of control over those protective memories on which I could look without shame, perhaps even with a semblance of content. Seizing on all associated thoughts and remembered scenes, gripping them fast in the hand of my heart and packing them tightly as though I was mixing concrete for the walls of my house, I succeeded at long last in giving to their conglomerate shape a certain stability and permanence. At first I surrounded myself with little more than the unnoticed background of life on earth. An inexhaustible store of memories was embedded in strata of experience of which Ego living his previous life had never been fully aware. Indeed it seemed that everything was registered, nothing forgotten. The first constant groundwork of existence, which came as a glimmer of hope, reproduced that indefinite feeling of awareness, which in life permeates our limbs and bodies with a sense of tactile sensitivity, the sentience faintly adumbrated of flesh and nerves, the pressure of hand on table or body on chair or mattress, the weight of bedclothes, the fleeting sensations of coverings which touch the naked flesh, the muscle sense fed by the sensory impulses within the trunk and its members.

This achievement I first attained in a darkness which shut out for a time the ghosts that sought to haunt me. With imaginary eyes tight shut, I tried to evoke experience that was not visual to supplement the tactile sensations which I had mastered, and music came nobly to my aid. The rhythm and harmony of sound entered the chaos of my experience with the magic of ideal order. It was often broken by interruptions of unmeaning noise just as the darkness was torn by sudden intermittent lights showing up scenes of confusion, but by degrees I built up for myself a copy of the greatest music that I had heard in life. By its enchantment the fabric of Emauton was rebuilt as the topless towers of Ilion rose mistlike to Apollo's song. At last I dared to open my eyes and recall the visual memories of what the body I had lost had seemed to me and little by little the composite body of my imagination was clothed in such flesh and such garments as it had seemed to wear in life. So imagination shaped experience and formed as it were a

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

shell to cover the throbbing sore of my temporal self from the stabs and blows and friction of bad dreams. Aeons of universal time must have passed, while Nature was hardening for the tortoise and oyster their protective covering. Aeons of my private time elapsed, before the armour to guard me had been forged and, under its shield, the impulse of Ego could undisturbed pursue its task of renewing my soul, combining sin with its wages and merging evil in its reward, until my rebellion against the order of the Perfect had been reduced to concord and obedience within the limits of the possible.

At first, what I built so slowly and painfully was regularly obliterated. The house that Tibetan Milarepa built over and over again for his Guru Marpa did not cost him a tithe of the pains. Somehow a guilty thought would be linked with the material of my armour and squeeze in with a host of malignant companions through a gap in my defences that soon became a gaping breach. It was a triumph when at last I awoke from oblivion, almost as I had been wont to awake in life from deep sleep, to an awareness of my body and the clothes pressing round it, with memories still keeping the shape in which imagination had moulded them before I had sunk to rest.

With practice, I acquired fuller mastery over the material in which I was forced to work and, going one step farther, round my body and clothes built me a house of memories. Neither my body, nor my clothes, nor my house, was an exact reproduction of its original; for alien elements of other memories had worked their way in and I was content to let them stay. Indeed who could wish to exile from his home

magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn,

which were given seeming reality in the windows of my study through the spell of Keats and a recollection of Du Maurier's *Peter Ibbetson*. In my constructive enterprise, I was learning how far my Ego, with powers extended by death, who kept the machine of Emauton in motion, who was aware of its contents—without his awareness they would have been unobserved—and who at intervals in its private time withdrew from it utterly, just exactly as he had done in the universal time of life, could now control its operations and select the material in which it worked. At length it was rare that any breach was opened in the encircling defences of experience without my consent, and *if it did*

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

occur, the damage done was more speedily repaired. In the beginning, it would often happen that some section of my house walls would suddenly dissolve and offer wide entrance to an intruding mob of disorderly memories, which could only be quelled by dealing with each one individually. In the end, they could only gain admittance through the door with the status of visitors, when I opened it to them with the explicit purpose of settling their disputes.

That study with the magic casements was furnished with a goodly array of books, a better library than I had ever been able to collect on earth; for I had only to look for any book I had ever read and there it was in the shelves; never a borrowed book was lost and never a gap in the serried ranks. Stored in my experience was every word that my physical eyes had flitted over as though each page had been photographed, and sentences and paragraphs which originally made no appreciable impression were duly reproduced. Where my reading had been desultory, there might be blank pages which had never been turned, and there were *lacunae* in many books, especially dictionaries and encyclopaedias, but all that I had loved in literature was ready there to hand word-perfect. Eventually when the failures and follies of the past no longer demanded all my attention to solve their conflicts, I could find patience and consolation—for happiness was still far to seek—in thoughts that had brought comfort in another world and could congratulate myself that, having reached the age when concern for life naturally gives place to thoughts of death and believing that wherever I went my experience would accompany me, I had set myself to read widely in all the languages I could master, stocking my mind as richly as I could with the wisdom of humanity.

The idea occurred to fit my study with a clock and at once there appeared on the mantelshelf an ancient timepiece, the duplicate of that which had ticked in my last entry into universal time and ticked out my departure from it. It was a perfect timekeeper; for it made the time it measured and in my Private Universe there was no other clock to check the movement of its hands. Night and sleep came arbitrarily when I was weary, when Emauton's movements slowed down and creaked as though they wanted oiling, and ended yet more arbitrarily, when Ego was pleased to return from eternity; I only dreamed when I was awake. The clock and I made our own time, for time was no more than the successive changes in experience ground out by the machine

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

of mind under the impulse of Ego and among these changes was the apparently uniform movement of the hands of my clock. When I fell asleep, my time stopped dead as though I had been drugged with evipan, and when I awoke, the clock-hands were still pointing to the same minute and the same hour. As I could see no reason why the hours of my slumber should be invariably counted in exact multiples of twelve, I could only conclude that time was arrested along with my memories in a duration in which time had no meaning. At the first stirring of experience my clock began to tick. Hours and minutes had a meaning for me in their relation to oblivion and temporary escape from my trials, and for a while I kept a calendar for the counting of days. But months and seasons had lost significance, for I learnt so to summon my memories that outside my house there would always be the season I chose.

I reached this stage on my purgatorial pilgrimage after what seemed interminable time. So often there were relapses and new efforts needed to fit into a pattern the warped and misshapen material of experience. The work of correction grew more delicate and subtle. Actions and their memories which had seemed praiseworthy turned out to be mean and culpable; others, crimes perhaps against conventional respectability, proved venial or even commendable, because they could claim the excuse of love. The hardest problem was set by chaplets of ancient faults, one leading to the other, and all indissolubly entangled and knotted together like a handful of burrs. They had crystallized to form a channel of least resistance to conduct Ego's vital energy to the performance of mere routine and the scamping of activity, which the mind at an earlier stage had presented as duty and obligation. Only by the pain of penitence could the grooves of habit and instinct be broken down and, in Taoist metaphor, the Light set free to circulate as it should. There was an echo of words, of George Macdonald. 'Let patience have her perfect work. Statue under the chisel of the sculptor, stand steady to the blows of the mallet. Clay on the wheel, let the fingers of the Divine potter model you at their will.'

Only wearisome, minute toil could avail. Ceaselessly sifting and analysing the ground of experience, one traced the trail of selfishness with its slug-like phosphorescence winding its way through the soul. Evil habits had been formed, because the mind, obedient to a fundamental law of its being, to ensue life and eschew pain, had divided as it

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

were by the knife of time the sweets of evil from its fruit and separated the sin from its repentance as though they were not two aspects of a single whole. By bringing them together, one created a revolution in Emauton. The process was painful and full of fear; for the breaking of the surface of experience opened rifts in deeper layers and split with earthquakes of remorse its profoundest depths. Titanic figures might rise from the primeval slime of the under-mind, grinding to dust the feet of clay on which the idols of convention and respectability had been based, and bringing to light, from the terrors of cave and jungle, from the unspoken fears of superstition and the human mind groping in blind ignorance, hideous shapes moving in ghastly obscurity to destroy and damn.

As Emauton was repaired and refurbished, the spasms of clashing experience were broken by intervals of quiet, often no less to be dreaded than the thunderous threats of prehistoric phobias and primitive passions. For with the quiet came loneliness, loneliness such as no recluse in cell, in desert or in the silence of the mountain snows has ever suffered. Out of my memories there emerged the recollection of a fantastic yellow-back, read in early boyhood, the story of an adventurer, who was borne to Mars by a flying machine in the form of a transparent box which reversed the laws of gravity. His solitude in the empty and infinite interspaces between star and star and the freezing terror of the lights of heaven shining in upon his tiny form left on my imagination an indelible impression not unlike Pascal's shivering shudder at the thought of the eternal silence of infinite space. The fancy of being lost among the light-years of astronomy might make the blood run cold, but in very truth I was more hopelessly alone in my Private Universe, cut off from all converse with any living thing, imprisoned in the closed and isolated system of my thoughts and feelings, and since death had barred the gate to all external communication, it seemed that solitary in my utter solitude I must remain for evermore. In the building up of that world, the memory of what I had thought about death when I was living had long ago been overlaid by other experience.

True, I had built out of my experience the likeness of just such a world of multiplicity and time as that in which I had once lived and shared my experience with my fellows in sociable communion, but what substance of companionship could the shadow of a shadow bestow? The world of my making belonged to that order of dreams in which

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

the dreamer is never fully deceived and recognizes the nightmares that terrify him as creatures of dreamland, though they frighten him none the less for that. My body and its clothes, outside them a house, outside the house a garden with trees and flowers—I knew them all as mere illusion, pure *Maya*, created in approximation to my desire by exercise of thought and dependent on me for their existence just as the Time which my clock ticked was a make-believe dimension of fantasy. There were, too, things that seemed to live, birds in the garden and dogs to lie on my hearthrug or go for walks with me, a pug, a bull terrier, a bulldog, a cross-bred Irish terrier, and a bloodhound, but I could not turn to them for sympathy. For if they had been dogs in their own right, the first four would have been at one another's throats, while the bloodhound, Trailer the Well-Beloved, a noble soul so gentle that he suffered a little friend to carry off his bones without a protest, would have been trying to scare them into amity with his deep-throated bay.

It was the same with people, with acquaintances and those whom I had loved. I had my visitors. Their apparitions came continuously into my loneliness, and they would talk and keep me company with all the realism of a vivid dream, but never could I forget that they were only compounded of old memories, freshly prompted no doubt by imagination to play new parts, but with no new strand of life to give them reality, with no power of sympathy or thinking for themselves, mere puppets whose strings I kept pulling unawares. If they could only share the dreams that I was dreaming, the icy spell of solitude would be broken and the burden of loneliness lifted, even though I were ashamed that they should see my inmost secrets. These dream phantoms often sought to persuade me that they had a life of their own apart from my imagination, that when they talked they were uttering their own thoughts, not mine, and that they sympathized with me in my ordeal. They would grow angry at my incredulity, gesticulate and threaten to deprive me of their company. I came to humour their whim of independent existence, secretly convinced that they were no more than the manifestations of my hidden desire, my yearning for company, just wishful thinking as the cant phrase goes. Nor could I see how, if by some miracle they ever became real, I should be able to test their right to say I A M ; for I had lost all external standards of reference.

One of my most frequent visitors was a friend of my College days, who had given his life for a friend in the first of the Great Wars, and

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

my Emauton in craving for companionship tried hard to prove to me that he was really what he seemed to be and was present in very truth and person. Again and again, after we had carried on a long and impassioned duologue that I knew to be really a monologue, he would protest against my scepticism and affirm his own existence. Then I would bid him begone as a lying dream and a vain deceit.

Scatter the vision for ever! And now
As of old I am I, thou art thou.

'Thou are not thou,' I would cry, 'that is the trouble; you are nothing but a thought more flimsy than a bubble, no more real than the sort of thing Alice was in the Red King's dream.'

Yet in the end I was persuaded that I had ceased to be alone in a solipsist universe of imagination. It was as if I had been born out of darkness into a world of light. My friend had been particularly earnest in repeating his assurance that he was every whit as much alive as I was, if life could in any sense be predicted of the dead.

'How often have I told you', he asked, * that I have only just begun to believe that you are really you? I am certain of it now and what is more I will prove myself to you just as you have been proved to me. When you first appeared to me after death, I knew that you could only be my imagination as you were, but lately both you and your surroundings have become more substantial and often independent of anything I can remember. Admitted that the mind is supremely ingenious in cheating itself—and I need you badly—yet I could never have fitted out this library from my own experience: remember you were on earth twice as long as I was. Many of the books in these shelves never came my way on earth; how could they, if I was dead before they were written? If what you call Emauton—that is a word I should never have invented—is playing games with me, it might have produced bindings and titles out of imagination, but surely it would only have bound up blank pages. There is Augustine's *Confessions*. I certainly never read it in the original, when I was in the flesh, and here is page after page of printed Latin that I can read and translate. You are not going to tell me that I have indulged unawares in such an orgy of Latin prose composition. It seems that I can read the books you have made out of your memories, so perhaps you can read one that I have made from mine. I remember that you used to say that you had never read or seen Foxe's *Book of*

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

Martyrs. I hope you did not come across it afterwards, as if you did not, my copy here ought to convince you.'

He handed me a large volume that he had been carrying under his arm. I turned the pages. They were closely printed and interspersed with engravings which revelled in the depiction of nauseating tortures. I had never set eyes upon the disgusting thing before, but my friend, a son of the manse, had confessed to piously gloating over its torments with mingled glee and repulsion, when in his boyhood it was the only secular reading permitted on Sunday. The improbability of such a work being concocted by my mind and imagination either in life or death struck me as overwhelming.

Yet I had been so sure that I was alone that my astonishment was no less than that of Robinson Crusoe, when he was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore of his desert island, which was very plain to be seen on the sand, and my relief and joy far surpassed in intensity the fear and misgiving which the inexplicable footprint aroused in the castaway's breast. The laws of mathematics do not apply to the sums of inner thought. If one and one make two in the physical world, when soul is added to soul, the sum belongs to the order of the infinite. Life after death had lost the worst of its terrors, if they were to be faced in companionship. Moreover convinced that one friend was a being of like passions and essence with myself, I began to see that not all my other visitors were illusions, creatures of a yearning for fellowship, and to learn that in all our lives souls once associated for good or ill are held for evermore in close relation. Though spatial dimensions must not be assigned to the Absolute, it is as though one Ego adjoined another, each the centre of a Private Universe in the Centre of all Centres, and from their proximity it follows that one corresponding Emauton must always neighbour the other on the circumference of time and space. Individual lives are wound together like the strands of an endless cable.

When in this manner the chilling dreads of my loneliness had been dispersed, there came a change over my fashion of understanding the discourse of the Angelic Stranger. I had forgotten that he was speaking; for his words had summoned directly to my awareness the thoughts and feelings for which they stood, as if they had not been sound-symbols but the, ideas themselves, and I had lived the bodiless life of which they told. But now that the curse of solipsism was redeemed and the cleans-

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

ing of purgation nearing its end, the significance of his language was altered, as if its letters had been changed to notes of music, its words to chords, and its sentences to sustained harmonies. So long as they evoked the refining fires of penitence and suffering, the sound of the voice was lost in the precision and vivid reality of the images it called up; now in the relation of promised bliss, available experience and all its symbols fell short of the higher strain of thought and emotion, the flight that outsoared the boundaries of time and space. The transcendental truth of the laughter at the heart of things can only find expression in vague suggestions and golden presentiments seen through a glimmering haze.

Prosaic finishing touches like Beethoven's jests remained, before the final adjustment for the greater revelation was complete. The mirror of the soul had been mended and resilvered, but there were still scratches and blemishes that needed a deal of scouring and polishing, before it was all smoothness and brightness for the reflection of the Light—what Santa Teresa might have called the sweeping and garnishing of the inmost Mansion of the Castle of the Soul for the coming of its Lord.

For the first time in all this taking apart and putting together of the material of the soul, there returned the remembrance of the Vision as it had been vouchsafed on earth, and brought with it scraps of sentences from Saint Bernard's musings on loving God. 'Happy and blessed I call him, who once or twice—or even once only—in this mortal life for the space of a moment has lost himself in God. . . . The soul can never be fully gathered up in God, so long as it needs must minister to this unhappy and perishable body, but it is my hope that it will attain to this highest degree of love in a spiritual and immortal body, a body at peace with itself and in all things subject to the spirit.' What was that Emauton which, with so much pain and groaning, I had been seeking to carve out of experience but Saint Bernard's spiritual body?

On earth the Vision, though it reveals eternity, is measured in time. Only for an incalculable instant can the full light of Mystic Union be mirrored in the soul and the glory that remains behind is no more than the pale memory of a reflection. For that instant the field of awareness has been swept clear of all experience and left blank and empty with nothing to break or blur the image that flashes into Emauton. In the timeless moment of pure consciousness, Ego knows himself as he is in eternity at the cost of losing his soul for that moment, shedding that body or garment of experience which is the work of time. He is what

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

he would have been, had there been no creation, overflowing with an exuberance of burning love, but with no tiling to love except himself, since the manifold has been blotted out. Beyond the grave, though even there the One cannot enter the multiplicity of experience in the plenitude of its singleness, its reflection can be held in time, as though a mirror reflected a flash of lightning with the permanence of a sunbeam, and its light, falling no longer on a bare and empty surface, shines bright in the variety of experience and sets it afire with love. The eye of eternity and the eye of time both have power of sight and neither impedes the other.

Straining towards a truth beyond my grasp, my converse with the Stranger turned back to echoes of the music of the Vision in the world below. Saint Thomas Aquinas foretold the place of revelation, when he declared that the intellectual soul was created on the confines of eternity and time, or as Meister Eckhart put it with a closer approach to Plotinus: *The Soul is created in a place between Time and Eternity, with its highest powers it touches Eternity, with its lower Time.* The worlds of Being and Becoming, says Miss Underbill, are *two stages of reality* which meet in the spirit of man. Emauton, when it has served its novitiate, sets out on its ascent and comes to a point, as an Alpine climber may surmount a ridge where two views meet, midway between Eternity and Time, a halfway house, where the Union comprehended in Eternity can be temporally apprehended, not indeed perfectly, but with a plenitude passing all earthly Illumination. There Ego can appreciate at once the glory of his divine nature and the purpose that underlies all the changes and chances of mortality, seeing himself and life as they really are, the supreme manifestation of the Divine Sense of Humour. There emerges from the seeming chaos of experience a pattern of adventure and love such as the masterpieces of human art seek to imitate, and those who are called to this High Feastjoy *according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice, when they divide the spoil*, not stinting the laughter.

Actual words seemed wafted to my awareness in a pause of the music. *In the World Yonder, the promise that that which is without shall be as that which is within shall first be fulfilled.* I supposed that this hard saying must mean that in this Apocalypse of Triumph and Laughter all secrecy and deceit was banished, since nothing can be hidden where all is love. It was the dream of Plotinus: 'Yonder is true ease of life and truth is mother and nurse, being and sustenance, of those who dwell there.

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

They see all things not as changing, but as they really are, and themselves in all; for everything is transparent and nothing dark or refractory to light, but each being is lucid one to the other within and without, as light transpiercing light. . . and infinite is the splendour.' One soul has direct knowledge of another without channel of mediation. From men, they had become gods, as the Orphic Mysteries had promised—the deification of the Christian Fathers. Betwixt the One and the Many, the Infinite and the Finite, they knew themselves for the gods they eternally are, in consciousness one with the Supreme, in awareness a multitude of *persons*, held apart by bodies of experience, created at such a cost to be both their prisons and their palaces in the Manifold; immortals clad in robes of mortality, gods who had outsoared their godhead by loving and striving, suffering, failing and dying, having put off their omnipotence. No longer was the curtain of Oblivion drawn between the eternal beatitude of self-contemplation in the Absolute and the trials and sufferings, joys and triumphs, of earthly life.

Even on earth the Vision leaves behind the memory of(a happy homecoming long deferred and eagerly awaited.

Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
The hunter home from the hill.

Stevenson's dying sigh of relief is echoed in the life beyond the grave, where souls who have learnt to love, freed from their bodies, gather to rejoice in the happy issue from all their afflictions, fighting maybe their battles over again and equally jubilant in tales of victory and defeat. Here, as Dante says, men do not repent them of their sins, but laugh, not at the guilt which is forgotten, but in joy at the overruling providence of God. Peradventure, says Matilda in the *Purgatorio*, the pagan poets were dreaming of the Earthly Paradise, when they imagined Parnassus, and perhaps the chroniclers of Arthur's Round Table had a glimpse of insight into such a colloquy of the knights of humanity, telling deeds of derring-do in the cause of Love. They could look back over histories of actions good and evil, of faith and disappointment, of hope and despair, as an old man may cast back over the springs, summers, autumns and winters of his life, finding at the end the seasons were good after their kind, though so many in the particular were false to their repute and expectation.

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

At last on its everlasting pilgrimage, the spirit finds food for mirth and gentle laughter in the soul's mistakes and blindness. If God cannot afford to laugh at Himself, who can? So many trials, tribulations and follies *were* the fruit of an ignorance that seems, when eyes are opened, so absurd as to make even the positive pain it caused, seen in retrospect, laughable. In death we learn that the answer to the universe is not tears but laughter, and in life what altruist would sacrifice himself with even the most trivial discomfort for the sake of obliterating the incalculable sufferings of past generations, supposing that it were possible to change the past? There is laughter at the heart of things, when the cleansing fire of tragedy, which assigns to death the remedy of irremediable suffering, *the only healer of ills past healing*, is extinguished in healing laughter. Ego cries to the high heavens against the blind injustice of the Divinity that shapes his fate, and behold it is against the justice and the divinity of his own spirit that he clamoured and inveighed. Bitterly has he bewailed his lot and the hardness he has had to endure; his lamentations were wasted on conditions that issued from the free choice of his divine nature, the hardness of his trial being the measure of his privilege and honour. The assurance that life and death are not a sorry failure of Divine Omnipotence, but the bravest jest to move the laughter of God; the light of the Beatific Vision, which can only shine with dimmed radiance through the mists of Time; the intuitive understanding that God is Love and that Love alone must be the purpose of the Universe—these truths under divers semblances the dead behold, when they are well advanced upon their journey, face to face, no longer through a glass darkly, coming to the laughter at the heart of things.

The seals of certainty, eternity, divinity and humility are all gathered up under the inclusive name of Love and I seemed to hear Beatrice's voice rising like a fountain as she hymned the Divine Intention in her lover's immortal verse:

Non per avere a se di bene acquisto
ch'esser non pud, ma perche suo splendore
potesse, risplendendo, dir *Subsisto*,
in sua eternita di tempo fore,
fuor d'ogni altro comprender, come i piacque,
s'aperse in nuovi amori reterno amore.

Not for His own greater good—to the Good can no good be added—but that His Splendour, in its reflected resplendence,

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

might have power to say I A M, within His own Eternity, beyond all time and understanding, after His own pleasure, in new loves did He, Eternal Love, unfold Himself.

Paradiso, xxix, 13-19

One Love, manifested in many loves, each able by virtue of Ego, the conscious spirit, to say I A M, One Light reflected in all the mirrors of life, each conscious reflection unclouded and revealing in proportion to the perfection of its finish and elaboration, so the Absolute in its differentiation laughs with the many-twinkling laughter of the boundless sea. Yet above and beyond, mystery is piled on mystery in the Empyrean glory of cloud palaces billowing over inaccessible mountain peaks. The soul will not always be content with dalliance and laughter, with isles of the blest, quiet seats of the just or basking in a summer sky, but will clamour to be gone on its adventure brave and new, seeking fresh worlds to conquer. Love can never attain ultimate fulfilment—fulfilment would be death—and each consummation seeks consummation higher than itself, finding its joy in eagerness to excel. Souls afire with love like those holy lights, which flocked to greet Dante in Paradise with the burning desire to intensify their love by manifesting it to him, await the call to be swept away to new levels of manifold life, it may be with limitations less hampering than those of time and space.

The music of the Stranger's words grew more mysterious and oracular as they told of souls which through aeons of experience had been drawn to one another by such sympathy that in their earthly love they yearned to coalesce and be one instead of two. Shrinking from the unintelligibly sublime, I bethought me of the uncouth fable that Aristophanes, cured of his hiccoughs by a sneeze, tells, in Plato's *Symposium*, of primal human beings, round in shape with two faces, four hands and four feet, whom Zeus chopped in two as one might cut an apple, when like Lucifer they made war against Heaven, turning one half into a man and the other into a woman. Naturally in their divided state Love makes each half seek its corresponding moiety and long to be reunited with it. The souls of lovers yearn for they know not what, something of which they have only a dark and doubtful presentiment. If Hephaestus came to them with the tools of his trade, while they were clasping one another in fond embrace, and asked them what they wanted of one another, they would have no answer to give. Then if he were to say, 'Do you desire to be one in the true sense of the word, always in

The Laughter at the Heart of Things

one another's company both by day and night? If you do, I will melt you both down and weld you together into one, so that you will be one instead of two as long as you live, and when you die, you shall be one departed soul beyond the grave instead of two.' Would not your lovers, Aristoplianes asks the company, acknowledge that this was the burden of their desire, to be merged into one single being?

Under the shadow of an impenetrable mystery, after the Vision of the Laughter at the Heart of Things, souls which had learnt to love one another through the vicissitudes of countless lifetimes, each perpetually seeking the other and neither content apart, might become one in very truth and by their union raised to a higher level of beneficence, the unity of Ego, eternally one in the Absolute, remaining intact, and Emauton dovetailing into Emauton to form a single self of experience, each supplying the other's shortcomings. What has been fabled about the hierarchy of Angels may be true of them. They are not altogether free of time, nor are they perfect, but they are lifted by their union in singleness into a higher order of Being, and so they live such lives as the Greeks allowed to their demi-gods, knowing their divine nature, yet still concerned with adventure and the values of Love.

The dream of heavenly laughter faded, leaving behind only a memory of mysterious words hard of interpretation, a saying of Christ in the Gospel according to the Egyptians, and whether I remembered it from reading it in the Roman and Alexandrine Clement or whether it came into my experience from some unknown source I cannot tell. 'When Salome asked the Lord when these things would be known and when His kingdom would come, He said, "When ye trample under foot the garment of shame, and when two shall be one, and when that which is without becomes that which is within, and when the male with the female shall be neither male nor female." ' '

XII

THE HAPPY ISSUE OUT OF ALL OUR AFFLICTIONS

All is best, though we oft doubt
What the unsearchable dispose
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
MILTON. *Samson Agonistes*.

The reader whose patience has upheld him through the foregoing pages—if any such there be—will have watched the endeavour of an involuntary convert to Mysticism to test, correct, and explain, conclusions which the Vision imposed upon the idiosyncrasies of his mind by the experience of far wiser and more enlightened adventurers in this field, and—what is perhaps less obvious—to make his way back from the metaphysical regions of the Transcendental, where the language of miracle and inscrutable revelation is spoken, to the matter-of-fact and more congenial world where the last word belongs to Reason. As has been said, the writer read in the message of his Vision an obligation to interpret its meaning as best he could in terms of his own experience, borrowing as little as possible from the speculations of others, however gifted and inspired, and only consulting the records of their experience as a check and control of his own ideas when they had taken shape.

Consequently, after making an audacious attempt to arrive at a first-hand opinion on things that seemed to him to matter, he has tried to corroborate and revise his conclusions by comparison and contrast with a few of the countless documents dealing with the mystical experience; and this search for a warrant of belief, for grounds to justify the findings of intuition, revelation, insight, *gnosis*—call it what you will—has ended in the surprising discovery that there is nothing which Reason, *the authentic sight of Reason*, cannot explain. A timid effort has been

The Happy Issue

made to show the Mystic Vision in some fragments of its historical setting as a manifestation of powers and truths which are the foundation of all Being, impulses that are deeply imbedded in human nature and all life, their influence being paramount not only in the timeless moment of inward contemplation, but in every operation of the Universe. Throughout we are faced with a persistent dualism, the opposition of two aspects of a single reality, not in the Manichaeian sense, but two sides of a single Divine purpose. We have hazarded the guess that the Great Craftsman, whom we represent as in time blindfolded by Love, launches life into the manifold with two great instinctive laws of direction, the preservation of life and its reproduction, and these two principles under the Divine plan, the will to live and the acceptance of self-sacrifice for the sake of the species, account for the development of Emauton, soul and mind, to gather and store experience, and for the formation of an organism to embody it and act as its instrument under the impulse of the conscious Spirit. Eventually that development reaches a degree, following the weary track of trial and error, when Spirit is faced in soul, Ego is faced in Emauton, by the imperious question *Why?* the doubt so laudably aroused in Eve's mind by the serpent. The problem for the first time arises how can the nature of Spirit be transmitted to the experience of soul, so that the conscious subject may be aware of his own essence as an object, Ego see himself in Emauton as a man sees himself in a glass.

As history unfolded itself, the question was answered in a variety of ways and after the Great Awakening of the Human Intelligence some twenty-five centuries ago it is possible to trace a twofold current in the stream of explanations put forward as solutions of the riddle of the Universe. A new Dualism makes its appearance, on the one hand the conception of God Immanent as exemplified in the doctrine of the Orphic Mysteries, on the other the worship of God Transcendent, which we may connect with the religions of Zoroaster and Mani and the Star cult of Babylon. We have tried to show how these two principles of belief, the kingdom of Heaven within and the ineffable Goodness of the Transcendent Deity, have persisted in all the replies that man contrives to his *obstinate questionings of sense and outward things* and have suggested that harmony between life and thought, the acid test of Truth, depends on the maintenance of the just balance between these two manifestations of the Absolute as reflected in time. Insistence on

The Happy Issue

God within to the exclusion of Omnipotence without leads to the meaningless uniformity of Pantheism or the paralysis of Quietism. Those who are blind to the Divine within, the Synteresis of the Fathers, and lie prostrate beneath the awfulness of the Transcendent are swept to Manichæan despair, the worship of darkness and night and the denial of the will to live. In the one case, evil is denied as mere illusion, in the other, it is enthroned as high as the Godhead of the Good, and ultimately there is little difference between the negation of all activity in time and the worship of death and extinction.

The confusion that arises from excessive emphasis on one or other of these aspects of the Truth is complicated by another dichotomy to which only a passing allusion has been made. Exaggerations in the conception either of Immanence or Transcendence gave birth to heresies and antinomian absurdities, but they were not in themselves destructive of faith in the reality of the unseen, though doubtless the schisms of the Church and the curses of *odium theologicum* were powerful agents in undermining religious belief. Another dualism, the doctrine of the Two Truths, which consecrated the cleavage between Mysticism and Logic, Faith and Reason, was destined to lead to the denial of the unseen and the godlessness of materialism which lies at the root of our troubles. Long ago Anaxagoras had declared that reality could not be 'split asunder with an axe', *the learned knife* of a later age, and in the ninth century Erigena was the last to assert the fundamental unity of Truth, identifying philosophy and religion and giving reason precedence over authority with all the assurance of modern science. The Scholastic Age which followed is divided by Victor Cousin into three periods marked (1) by the subordination of philosophy to theology; (2) by the alliance of philosophy with theology; (3) by the estrangement and avowed opposition of the two branches of learning.

The Church of Augustine and Gregory had absorbed much of the Platonic and Plotinian metaphysics, but a new demand was made on its powers of assimilation. A far more comprehensive view of the Aristotelian philosophy than any known before found its way into the West through the Moorish philosophers in general and Averroes in particular. The brilliance of the Greek intellect cried out for reconciliation with the mysteries of Christianity. The doctrine of the Double Truth was devised to maintain both Mahomet and Aristotle and avert a clash between the Moslem theology and philosophy. There is a truth

The Happy Issue

for the wise man and philosopher based on reason and a truth for the common herd based on what it has been told to believe. Such a compromise, virtually subordinating faith to reason, challenged the Doctors of the Church to find a more satisfactory solution. Saint Thomas Aquinas took up the gauntlet and built up a gigantic fortress to protect for all time authority, faith, and revelation, from the assaults of reason, free thought and philosophy, the forerunners of the scientific method. 'Thomism', says Vossler in *Medieval Culture and Dante*, 'appeals against criticism to belief, and against unbelief to criticism; it overthrows erroneous opinions with the aid of philosophy, but escapes from philosophic criticism behind the mysticism of ecclesiastical dogma. Thomas moves within this circle with a nimbleness and agility unheard of before.'

Pascal did not approve highly of Saint Thbmas and compared him very unfavourably with Augustine. Had not Jansenius described the *Summa* as a mere compendium, Augustine cut down and with his hands tied to natural principles, as was *no* doubt suitable for the instruction of beginners? Yet one may perhaps note a similarity at least in intention between the *Summa* and that *Apology for the Christian Religion*, planned to build from the materials of Jansenism a palace of truth in which Faith was to reign with Reason as its willing handmaid. This last project of restoring the unity of Truth with its excessive emphasis on Transcendence was doomed to failure, even if it had not been crushed both by Church and State; as it was, Reason not Faith seized the throne and in our time Science has almost succeeded in ejecting Religion and Authority from the palace of truth. We believe that the future of mankind depends on the restoration of trust in that Truth beyond the senses, with which Science can have no dealings, since it is not subject to experiment, and look for its resurrection through *meditations passionate from deep recesses in mans heart*, though we are convinced that the message of the Vision has been rightly interpreted, only if it is confirmed by the *grand and simple Reason*, which reigns supreme alike in Time and Eternity.

As we see it, any answer to the riddle of the Universe, which can hope to command acceptance in a sceptical age, must on the one hand account for the elemental dualism of human nature, which finds expression in the conceptions of God Immanent and God Transcendent, and on which all our ideas of the Divine are based, and on the other recon-

The Happy Issue

cile the Goodness and Omnipotence of God with the existence of sin, evil and injustice, life as we know it with all its disappointments, without denying the supremacy of Reason. The living presence of God in sinful man and the inexplicable mystery and awe of his overpowering Majesty must be shown as aspects of a single indivisible Truth and all our afflictions transmuted and transcended in the perfection of the Divine plan. The writer can only speak for himself: he finds that the theory of the Vision and consciousness, put forward in this book, does answer his questions and doubts concerning Immanence and Transcendence and that the words, *God is Love*, afford full and sufficient explanation of evil, sin and death. For him, all the kinks and tangles of the Universe fall into place, when he regards all life as Spirit both conscious and Divine, the soul and its experience so painfully woven as the love garment of incarnate Spirit, and the existence of evil, that stumbling-block of stumbling-blocks, as the condition of the Greater Love, of Perfection made perfect by imperfection. For him the world makes sense.

Since in all Creation no two minds or souls can conceivably be identical, it is likely enough that the conclusion which meets his heart's desire may satisfy no other than himself. Of the experience from which it started he is convinced beyond persuasion, but he can set no limit to the possible errors of his interpretation; for them reason is the final arbiter. There he can only plead that he has followed such light of reason as he possesses—and for him its guidance must take precedence over the counsels of all other minds—and that putting his faith to the test of practice it seems to him to fall in no way behind the prescriptions of more orthodox beliefs. The reader may perhaps agree that he has cleared it of any charge of Pantheism and that it can face with equanimity any accusation of Manichaeism or perversity. It would gauge all works by the measuring-rod of love and combine the peace of contemplation and the beatitude of Mystic Union with the adventure of virtue and holiness and the brave activity of self-sacrifice, courting the experience that brings the soul nearer to the Divine intent and stayed against every hazard by the enfoldment of the everlasting arms.

A friendly critic of *The Timeless Moment* urged that the Vision must be much more than an ivory tower, a blissful retreat, to which the mystic can retreat for repose, when he is wearied out with the tyranny of time, and that if it has any meaning, its influence must make itself

The Happy Issue

felt persistently throughout the ups and downs of fortune and all the humdrum course of existence. It would not be difficult to write more fully of its significance in daily life and to demonstrate its power over all the departments of conduct, but Saints and great mystics have told at length the story of Enlightenment and, though doubtless temporal activities are variously affected by the revelation as its message is variously understood by different individuals, who is the writer to compete with them in describing the outward and visible signs of the Mystic Way? It would ill become one who climbs so slowly and with so much backsliding towards the distant peak, where the soul is re-made in the likeness of the Divine Spirit and humanity is transhumanized, that summit whence Dante gazed upon the God within him, to profess the qualification of guide to the Mystic Mountain or put forward his own failures as an example of what the Enlightenment of the Vision should mean in the daily task of collecting and arranging experience to constitute such a soul as Love would sanction and enjoin. It needs *no* saying that the first apprehension of an indwelling Spirit, the sense of an intimate and secret inward presence, Augustine's God *more inward than his inmost, interior intimo meo*, the appearance in awareness of the Light of this living Revelation, cannot but change a man's point of view and alter his outlook on the world and life, if only for the minor reason that it makes self-pity a palpable absurdity. As the correspondent quoted earlier wrote, 'A man fortunate enough to have had such an experience could never go down to his grave with bitterness, for he has tasted and, what is more important, knows that he has tasted the height and the depth and the fullness of life.' Henceforth, as instinctively as a child flinches from pain, a man's wonder embraces everything that is or may be as, in Erigena's fine phrase, a theophany or manifestation of God.

'Trasumanar significar *per verba* non si poria': it is almost equally impossible to find verbal expression for that shifting of the standpoint, that revolution of the outlook, which marks the entry on the Mystic Way of Enlightenment. The difficulty of the task is magnified by the forgetfulness that closes in on past blunders and hesitations in the life before the dawn; since in the *Vita Nuova*, when, to adapt Robert Bridges, *such things are reveal'd that all we have thought or done seemeth to us of small worth*, one still stumbles and hesitates in heart-breaking fashion, and since the soul has reflected so imperfectly the light of the Spirit, the progress* made leaves no more than a vague impression that the slippery

The Happy Issue

places are less treacherous, obstacles fewer and more surmountable and the feet more secure. Some playful words of Henry More were quoted above concerning the mystic's craving for *a pair of spectacles made of the crystalline heaven or the coelum empyreum*. Such glasses, we must suppose, if only they were on sale at the optician's, would transmute appearance into glorious reality, reveal the laughter at the heart of things, and turn upside down all our topsy-turvy delusions concerning the solidity of things sensible and the flimsy unreality of things spiritual.

Perhaps we may compare the memory of the Vision to these mythical spectacles, or we may turn again to Bridges for his account of how in his old age his eyes were changed as Dante's were after they had been bathed in the river of divine light.

A glow of childlike wonder enthrall'd me, as if my sense
had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt
re-awakening to a fresh initiative of life;
with like surprise of joy as any man may know
who rambling wide hath turn'd, resting on some hill-top
to view the plain he has left, and see'th it now out-spread
mapp'd at his *feet*; a landscape so by beauty estranged
he scarce wil ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,
maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought.

But *the fresh initiative of life* is even more than the view from the hill-top of the plain we have left. We must accompany the poet higher,

'mid the high mountain silences, where Poesy
lieth in dream and with *the secret strength of things*
that governs thought inhabiteth, where man wandereth
into God's presence.

From the loftiest peak new vistas are disclosed of strange country, lovely and unexplored and the inaccessible marvels of the God who is Love, massed one upon the other like cloud castles on the dawn horizon. There is a life of sleep and a life of waking, and only for a moment as we pass from sleeping to waking experience can we realize the vast gulf that is fixed between them as between two orders of Being; so is the passage from the meaningless grey mist of life unenlightened to the pattern and clear-cut definition of a wind-swept Universe, instinct with God and Love, and so is the memory of the gap and the leap across it obscured by the shining of a brighter light.

The Happy Issue

When on his flight to Paradise Dante was caught up by the experience of deification which led him to coin the word *trasumanar*, he apostrophized the Love that governs Heaven saying, 'Whether I was no more of myself than that which thou didst newly create, thou alone dost know.'

S' i' era sol di me quel che creasti
novellamente, amor che 'l ciel governi,
tu 'l sai, che col tuo lume mi levasti.

The commentators explain the *new creation* as the rational soul embreathed by God into the animal frame as soon as the brain has been fully developed within the mother's body in accordance with *Purgatorio*, xxv, 67, and say that the poet is thinking of Saint Paul: *Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth*. There is assuredly an echo of II Corinthians, xii, 2-3, but I think that those acquainted with the mystical experience will find in Dante's words an indirect allusion to the mystical death and re-birth, through which he has just passed and which prepares the way for the change of heart.

No poet was ever more deeply absorbed in the temporal troubles of his age and country, and those, who may have been led to an interpretation of the Vision similar to our own, will have lost not a jot of their interest in the conflicts, storms and cataclysms of their time nor will they shirk participation in the common lot; rather they will be more intent and resolute in playing the parts allotted to them. It is in the furnace of adventures great and small that they must forge the armour of experience to equip the Spirit for its knight-errantry in the cause of the Greater Love. They will be less concerned with the success or failure of their derring-do, but far more deeply solicitous that they shall quit themselves as befits the willing Spirit and Godly Will despite the weakness of the soul, ready

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent.

Those to whom the word has been spoken are still in the mountain thunderstorm of which Jung speaks, exposed to all its violence and

The Happy Issue

exulting in the struggle with the elements, and at the same time as it were above it, looking down from the peak on a storm in the valley, not because they have shut themselves up secure and undisturbed in towers of ivory and indifference, but because, certain of the final issue and *the triumph of the good*, they can joy in the battle with the delight of Wordsworth's warrior *happy as a lover*, recking little of immediate victory or defeat.

In a *Thought*, which sets out all that was best in Pascal's nature and might be called his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, he enumerates the blessings which he owes to the power of his Redeemer's Grace, the Grace manifested, we may believe, in the Vision of Fire.

I love poverty, because He loved it. I love possessions, because they provide the means of helping the unfortunate. I keep faith with everyone and do not return evil to those who work me evil, but I wish for them such a condition as my own, in which one receives from men neither good nor evil. I try to be just, true, sincere and loyal to everyone; and I have a tenderness of heart for those to whom God has most closely united me, and, whether I am alone or in the sight of men, in all my actions, I keep my eyes fixed on God, who will judge them and to whom I have consecrated them all. Such are my feelings and all the days of my life I bless my Redeemer who has given them to me and who, from a man full of weaknesses, miseries, selfishness, pride and ambition, has made a man exempt from all these evils by the power of His Grace, to which all glory is due; for my share is only misery and error. (*Brmschvicg* 550.)

In the endurance of hardness and self-denial and in the pursuit of salvation in fear and trembling, Pascal ended his days as a saint of extreme holiness, but in the Jansenist interpretation of the Vision, as we have said, the light and love of God Immanent is cruelly hidden under the bushel of His Transcendence. Tenderness of heart is but a lukewarm substitute for Saint Paul's blazing Charity and the Greater Love is something more than a negative not returning evil for evil. As for that state of indifferent detachment, in which a man receives neither good nor evil from his fellows—surely it is this receiving good and evil, joy and sorrow, this sympathy and sensitive attachment, which is the very substance of Love. Coleridge, for whom his most fervent admirer would not claim sainthood, has a lesson to teach to the ascetic Jansenist in the loving of the creatures:

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small.

The Happy Issue

As usual it is to Dante that we must go for the full revelation of Mystic Love. Love and Light are the moving principles of his Cosmos and the inmost meaning of God Immanent flashes out from that wonderful oft-quoted line,

E la sua volontade e nostra pace.

God's will and our peace are one and the same, and Piccarda had just told Dante that it is God's ordinance that all His Saints should share His Love. The souls in God's Presence, rapt as they are in the glory of His Love, are none the less eager to swell the illimitable ocean of Love by loving one another, and if one requires some sign of the seal of Transcendence and humility, what image could be more touching than the poet's likening of himself to the baby stork gazing up at its mother circling round the nest after feeding her young? The last three lines of the *Paradiso* sum up with incomparable exactitude the benediction that the Vision brings to those happy enough to be able to live its Enlightenment, the smooth and noiseless tenor of their way through the troublesome changes and chances of this mortal life with the sure and even motion of the well-balanced wheel.

A l'alta fantasia qui manco possa;
ma già volgeva il mio disio e il velle,
si come rota ch'igualmente e mossa,
l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

Here to my soaring phantasy power failed, but already my will
and wish were moving with the smooth motion of a balanced
wheel under Love's impulse, the Love that moves the sun and all
the stars.

In a letter to Can Grande, his friend and protector, Dante says that he wrote the sacred poem,

Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra
si che m'ha fatto per più anni macro,

not for the sake of speculation but with a practical purpose; * to remove those who are living this life from the state of wretchedness and show them the way to the state of felicity'. It may seem something of an anti-climax to descend from Love the universal Principle, which not only makes the world go round in literal truth, but controls all things both in heaven and earth, to those petty temporal events on which its in-

The Happy Issue

fluence is shed and which, as Dante knew full well, bear the greatest responsibility for the formation of character and the building of Emauton. There is a charming epigram in the Greek Anthology concerning Tycho, the little god of small things, a god of humble folk and dispenser of humble blessings, and if the functions of Deity in relation to man were to be partitioned and compared, the bestowal of these minor graces might well prove to count for more than the distribution of rarer and more conspicuous privileges. Goodwill in our age of unbelief has been sorely handicapped by the loss of all criteria of action through the breakdown of religious and conventional morality. In a conflict of duties or desires, the dice are loaded in favour of the basest nature of the soul, if only material consequences are weighed *in* the balance. Love provides a practical standard of conduct which reason cannot disavow, and a man may be safely guided by the answer to the question, *Will it make for Love?* in the minor as well as the major problems of life, the domain of love being taken to extend over all things living and all things beautiful.

The eternal Spirit, which, in the Vision, has seen its own true light reflected *in* time and experience, has impressed on the soul that soul's responsibility to all things living as the co-adjutor of God in the crusade of Love and stamps first and foremost among the purposes figured there the duty of setting its own house in order. The hard and modest task of self-discipline must take precedence over the more garish attractions of altruistic philanthropy, and busyness about the souls of others play second fiddle to busyness about the busybody's own soul; for good action is a function of being good and goodness cannot but act well—at least, as well as time and space permit. The reformer who would reform the world must start by reforming himself; for how else can he judge whether his actions are good or not? As Molinos so wisely said: 'It is odds but that is self-love which thou takest to be pure zeal. . . . It is never good to love thy neighbour to the detriment of thine own spiritual good.' There will be ample room in the works directed to the improvement of Emauton for the exercise of benevolence and for the fulfilment of the commandment to love one's neighbour.

It would be tedious and pointless to recite a catalogue of those departments of life, in which the change of heart, the alteration of the point of view, that follows the Vision, automatically makes itself felt, though perhaps a few instances may be given at random. It is the

The Happy Issue

author's hope that there is nothing in the interpretation of the Vision set out in this book to make its application less effective in the stress of life and less conducive to the pursuit of the highest ideals than in the interpretations put forward by truly great Mystics who shaped them within the framework of their religions. Surely it is time to protest against those catch-phrases, which are taken for granted in our unthinking age as though they were axiomatic truths that it would be impious to question. Among the most glaringly false of these reiterated parrot cries, we may reckon the *cliches* that assure us that we must go with the times, as though it was not the duty of humanity nine times out of ten to fight against the spirit of the age. Just as life reverses the law of entropy, so mankind's history has been spent in rowing against the current, and the madder the world grows in such crazes as speed in travel, mass production and the cult of vulgarity, to say nothing of atom bombs, the more incumbent it is upon those who can keep their heads to oppose the tendencies of the day, and in that opposition most of us will find abundant opportunities for the exercise of self-discipline. There is a general agreement that exclusive concentration on natural science, which disclaims responsibility for the use to which its discoveries may be applied, is one of the main causes of the collapse of our civilization and with a magnificent contempt for common sense the cry goes up: 'Our only hope is in having more science, more science in our schools, more science everywhere.' If a majority of mankind has used the eye which sees things that can be weighed and measured to the exclusion and atrophying of the eye which sees beauty and the immaterial, there is no reason why the still two-eyed minority should be reduced to the sad condition of the majority by putting out the other eye, though such a policy would appear to conform with the latest definition of a sense of fairness.

There is virtue and incidentally happiness in the overcoming of obstacles and our modern reformers spend endless pains in their levelling. It is easy to make things too easy especially in the field of education; for it is only by overcoming difficulties that a child learns how to learn and no teacher can teach it more than that, unless perhaps by example the desire to learn. Somehow science and the machine must be offset by art and beauty, if we are to retain any hold on the truth invisible, and those who hold it should ever be on their guard to help if only by a word the cause of the angels.

The Happy Issue

In our day there is almost as much ado about the nation's leisure as about that standard of living in which the indispensable and the useful are so strangely confused with the useless and regrettable. The ingenuity with which the human mind invents devices for its own degradation is as amazing as it is lamentable and the idea that a man might use some of his leisure for thinking just sounds ridiculous. Still as in Pascal's time people would rather do anything than think; then he thought it was because they were deliberately blinding themselves to the ruthless approach of eternal agony, but now it seems that they are too lazy and disillusioned to use their minds for anything but the immediate material necessity, and machines are making that spasmodic effort less and less strenuous. It is much easier to listen to other people thinking or pretending to think than to think oneself. Yet there is no approach to the Vision except through the hard thinking which the mystics call meditation and which a man must do for himself. Discursive reason carries them along the path of the dialectic, giving order and meaning to their experience, and reaches its culmination and extinction in that contemplative abstraction which reveals the secret. To-day many folk, whose education and upbringing give them no excuse, use games not as a recreation but as an escape from thought; and those who have ignorance as excuse and to whose flat level of intelligence the higher levels of instruction are being levelled naturally seek for distraction in meaningless noise and brainless, fleshly vulgarity.

Yet the mystic who is one in the Absolute with the spirits of all living things shares with them all the shortcomings of their experience and claims no right to scornful censoriousness; for he will surely have to pronounce on himself the harsh judgments he passes on others. By the benediction of the Vision, his eyes have been opened to see a universe thronged with deity incarnate, suffering, struggling, dying, for the sake of the Greater Love, and the humble cry called forth by the sight of the criminal led to execution: 'There but for the grace of God go I,' is changed to the yet humbler confession: 'There by the grace of God in very truth I go.' The light of Mystic Union still shines, though dark clouds are gathering, and our greed and selfishness make ridiculous the World Paradises, which are the highest hopes that the prophets and priests of a scientific age can hold out to their worshippers.

The ground-root folly of this pitous philanthropy
is thinking to distribute indivisibles,

The Happy Issue

and make equality in things incommensurable:
forged under such delusions, all Utopias
are castles in the air or counsels of despair.

It is to no such Utopias that our hopes are turned; yet in the distance there is a shivering and stirring in the forest as if to foretell the approach of a rushing, cleansing wind; to the eye of faith a faint blush of colour in the bare tracery of the winter trees promises the burgeoning of spring. We make light of miracles, so far as they are considered as *ad hoc* interventions and particular breaches of Divine Law for special purposes, but there is space and to spare in our picture of the Universe, itself a miracle of Love, for another universal miracle, that steadying of the helm of the universal *now*, when it has been so far swept off its course as to imperil the Grand Design, such a miracle as that in which Julian of Norwich put her trust to make all manner of thing well. Even in these dark days of blindness, there are some to whom the Vision is revealed, far more than I had ever dared to hope, as their letters show. On all sides there are questionings as to the truth of things, an awakening curiosity as to secrets which a past generation was content to ignore, and a growing realization that Science and materialism are powerless to supply the ultimate answer. It is true that the authority of traditions and institutions has been shaken to its foundations and that any explanation of life to be acceptable must stand on its own bottom, consistent with itself, on good terms with Reason and consonant with man's highest aspirations. Seekers after truth may be relatively few and those who find it but a speck in the infinitude of Being; yet we know—and have seen—that the kingdom of heaven is that little leaven which leaveneth the whole lump.

If the writer has achieved his purpose, following the Ariadne's thread of such reason as he could command through a labyrinth of possibilities, his argument has now swung full circle. Starting from the mystical experience called the Vision as the Alpha of our inquiry, it has carried us back to the same revelation, translated from the language of Mysticism into the terms of what Bertrand Russell has called Logic. 'And the end of all our exploring has been to arrive where we started/ That which was held beyond Reason, if not contrary to it, has been brought within the province of Reason in the highest sense, Wisdom Absolute, and under the governance of its dictates. Our pursuit of

The Happy Issue

Mysticism has in a way ended in its renunciation. No scruples, lest the Vision might be made of none effect, need lead us to shrink from the proof that all that we have learnt from its advent and interpretation might have been deduced from the axiom, *God is Love*. Reason and insight share the throne with equal power and identical intention and there are no judgments, in which Reason need abdicate its right of pronouncement; for Mysticism and Logic confirm one another and at long last they come to the same destination. It is

. . . not the grand
and simple Reason, but that humbler power
which carries on its no inglorious work
by logic and minute analysis,

that falls short in the pursuit of final truth and bows its head to the fiat of revelation with the humility that Pascal imposes upon it. The grand and simple Reason, which is the Wisdom of the One and the Love of God, embraces not only all the reasons that the heart knows, but the whole Universe of the Many, the physical creation and the whole order of experience with all its good and all its evil, in one supreme design. In the eternal systole and diastole of that Divine activity and glory which Saint Paul called *ἀγάπη* and the translators of the "New Testament *Charity*, virtue flows from the heart of the Universe to the uttermost circumference, the One finding its consummation in the Manifold, the Perfect in the Imperfect, and returns thither whence it came with love renewed and magnified.

In our everyday life, when some formula has been shown to solve all the problems of the particular nature for which it was devised, we cease to question its validity, and we have tried to show that the formula, *God is Love*, whether framed by mystical revelation or by the logical necessity of ascribing to the Highest the highest that we know, transcends all doubt and scepticism by virtue of its universal application. We claim that it makes sense of the world. Sceptics may be found who refuse to accept this formula as an axiom, regarding it as an axiom no more tenable than the dogma of the Fall or Original Sin, which we dismissed in our discussion of Jansenism as flying in the face of reason. Yet if, in trying to decipher a coded document, we light upon a key which converts its uriintelligibility into letters and words that we can understand, it is unlikely that we shall go farther afield in search of a second

The Happy Issue

code. There might conceivably be two or more codes to fit the puzzle and we may have hit upon the wrong one, but the betting is against it with Pascaline odds. Others may perhaps persist in their belief that our document is mere gibberish and that we are deluding ourselves with wishful thinking when we imagine that we have found the key to its meaning. Ciphers are dangerous things to play with, as the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy shows. The discovery of a formula that seems to explain everything is apt to scatter common sense to the winds by the fascination of its persuasive simplicity, but this rule does not hold good for the simplicity of God, the *Dei simplicitas* which for Boethius as translated by Chaucer reconciled the 'discordable cause' which 'hath to-rent and unjoined the bindinge, or the alliaunce of things, that is to seyn, the conjunccion of god and man', the great battle 'betwixen the purviaunce of God and free will'. So the writer would excuse the alarming simplicity of the two propositions on which this book is based: the identity of God and Love and the divinity of consciousness.

If in these last pages there is still one reader left who sees eye to eye with him, he would recall to that solitary companion the conditions laid down by Pascal for commending a religion to belief and would suggest that, so far as they two are concerned, they have been fulfilled. In the first place, this book has been mainly occupied with proving that our interpretation of the Vision is not only not contrary to reason, but so concordant with it that all our speculations can be logically deduced from a single axiomatic principle. Secondly, we have argued that it is worthy of all respect, since it both meets and explains the requirements of human nature. Thirdly, we have tried to show that it is such a solution as men would wish to be true, since it satisfies their highest aspirations. Fourthly, we have sought to demonstrate its truth, by its capacity to dispose of the greatest religious difficulty, the problem of Evil, which it presents as the inevitable obverse of the Greater Love, and by the ease with which it answers all the questions concerning the blindness of Providence, which protesting humanity piles up in its attempt to storm the fastness of Divine Justice as the Giants piled Ossa upon Pelion in their assault on Heaven.

'We conclude, then,' said John the Scot called Erigena, 'that true philosophy is true religion and vice versa'; *conficitur inde ver am esse philosophiam veram religionem conversimque*. The unity of Truth which he set in the forefront of his philosophy stands vindicated by *Goddess Love*,

The Happy Issue

an Idea spacious as the starry firmament's
inescapable infinity of radiant gaze,
that fadeth only as it outpasseth mortal sight;
and this direct contact is 't with eternities,
this springtide miracle of the soul's nativity
that oft hath set philosophers adrift in dream.

ROBERT BRIDGES. *Testament of Beauty*, iv, 1316.

FINIS

INDEX

- AARON, 199
 ABEL, 131
 ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB,
 God of, 18, 140, 167, 168, 171,
 172, 174, 175, 223
 ABSOLUTE, THE (v. ONE, THE),
 agony of return to time, 118
 and eyes of soul, 46
 and T. H. Green, 55, 56
 and tyranny of space, 118
 aspect as Ego, 47, 58
 Bradley's, 54, 55
 consciousness, 87, 93
 differentiation (v. differentiation of
 The One)
 eternal light of, 87
 identity of subject and object, 45,
 46, 65
 Neo-Platonic, 94
 Olympus of, 214
 omniscient, 46, 57, 72
 perfection and potentiality, 65, 66
 sense of humour *in excelsis*, 225
 simplicity of, 83
 solitude of, 64, 65, 71, 197
 vesture of, 23
 Academie Mersenne, 164
 Acceptance, 94
 Accepting the Universe, 121
Acts of the Apostles, The, 135, 214
 ADAM, 131, 132, 167
Adrasteia, the law of retribution, 221
 Adventure, 24, 3, 8, 82, 216, 218, 220, 244
 AEON, Gnostic, 128, 130, 131, 132
 African, 206, 207
 African sun, 81
Agape, charity, 260
 AHRIMAN, 96, 124, 125, 128, 153, 203
 AL-ARABI, 199
 Albigenian heresy, 134, 161
 Alchemist, 132
*Alfred, Lord Tennyson, A Memoir by
 His Son*, 28
 Alice through the Looking-Glass, 238
 Allegory, 65, 66, 67, 70
 Amoeba, 57
 ANANIAS, 214
 ANAXAGORAS, 71, 248
Ancient Sage, The, Tennyson's, 24, 28
 Angel and the nestling, 226, 227
 ANGELA of Foligno, 192
 ANGELS, 130, 131, 132, 134, 245
 Animals, 53, 54, 58, 94
 Animals and consciousness, 53
 Animals and sleep, 94
 Animals and smell, 79
 Annihilation, 86, 112, 113, 125, 129,
 143, 161
 ANTRIM, 156
 Apex of soul, 101, 102, 103
 Apocalypse, 132
 Apocalypse of Triumph and Laugh-
 ter, 241
Apocatastasis, 135, 160, 202, 208, 217
 APOLLO, 232
Apologie de la Religion Chretienne,
 Pascal's projected work, 164, 184,
 188, 249
Appearance and Reality, by F. H.
 Bradley, 39, 47
 Apprehension, 41, 43, 44, 70
 Arabic, 156
 ARATUS, 135
 Archetypal Man, 128
 ARCHONS, planetary, 126, 127, 196
 AREOPAGUS, Court of the, 135
 ARIADNE'S thread, 8, 259
 ARIES, 71

Index

- ARISTOPHANES, 244, MS
 ARISTOTLE. 96,103, 155, 156,160,
 174, 248
 ARJUNA, 14
 ARNOLD, Matthew, 225
 ARTHUR, King, 221, 242
 Asceticism, 133, 139
 ASIA, 30
 Astrology, 124
Ataraxia, 19, 201
 ATHANASIUS, 99
 ATHENS, 135,136
 ATLAS, 132
 ATMAN, 20, 22, 95, 101
Atoll, 82,201
 Atom, 13
 Attention, 75, 78
 Attraction, 81, 94
 AUDITORS (Mani's), 133, 205
 AUGUSTINE questions God's good-
 ness or omnipotence, 217
 AUGUSTINE, Saint, 17, 74, 80, 133,
 156, 165, 166, 167, 182, 191, 205,
 208, 209, 219, 226, 238, 248, 249
 AUGUSTINE, Saint (quoted), title
 page, 29, 60, 62, 77, 91, 101,
 107, 112, 121, 139, 151, 184,196,
 200, 206, 217, 227, 229, 251
 AUGUSTINE and the immutable
 Light, 206
 AUGUSTINE'S conscience, 206
 AUGUSTINE'S contradictions as to
 Evil, 207
 AUGUSTINE'S divided mind, 207
Augustinus, of jansenius, 162,163,165,
 175
 Austerity, extravagance in, 107
 Authority and Pascal, 185
 Authority subject to Reason (Eri-
 gena), 160
 Automaton, Pascal's, 83
 Autumn season of the soul, 146
 Avalanche, 81
 AVATAR, 13
 AVENARES, 46
 AVERNUS, 219
 AVERROES, 248
 AVICENNA, 21
 Awakening of the Human Intellect,
 The (550-500 B.C.), 95, 247
 AWARENESS, 40, 45, 45, 47, 54,
 57, 58, 59, 67, 75
 birth of, 66
 consciousness turned outwards, 66
 definition of, 44, 45, 54, 59
 engenders experience and evil, 215
 field of, 41, 68, 72, 74, 76, 77, 82,
 83, 89, 94
 light of, 54, 69, 70, 75, 83, 94
 object of, experience, 41, 48, 50
 of consciousness, 45, 52, 54, 58
 radii of, 56, 68, 81
 zero of, 144, 145
Ay in, nothing, 137
 Baal, 87
 Babies, unbaptized, and Hell, 208
 BABYLON, 124, 126, 127, 129
 Baby, perversity of (St. Augustine), 206
 BACON, Francis, Lord Verulam, 261
 Balance between selfishness and self-
 sacrifice, 123
Bardo, the, Tibetan interspace between
 death and new life, 222
 BASILIDES, 128
 BAUDELAIRE, 168
 Beatitudes, 224
 BEATRICE, Dante's,'63, 72, 91, 92,
 111, 116, 141, 150, 179, 243
 Beauty, 191, 257
 BEETHOVEN, 26, 240
 Being that is not God, 199
 BERGSON, Henri, 72, 78, 79
 BERNARD de Clairvaux, Saint, 28,
 149, 240
 Between sleep and waking, 252

Index

- Bhavagad-Gita**, 14, 95
Birds dear to the gods, 94
Births before manhood, 82
BLAKE, William, 63, 91, 119
Blasphemy, 21, 22, 26, 92, 191, 223
Blessed Damosel, The, Rossetti's, 85
Blinkers of time, 72
Body, 33, 42, 47
BOEHME, Jakob, 225
BOETHIUS, 99, 261
BONAVENTURA, Saint, 102, 171, 174
Book of Common Prayer, The, title page
Book of Enoch, The, 102
Book of Martyrs, The, by J. Foxe, 238, 239
Book of the Dead, The Tibetan, 125
Books after death, 234
BOSSUET, 186
BOUSSET, 205
BRADLEY, F. H., 33, 39, 44, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 63, 81
BRAHMAN, 20, 22, 95, 101
Brahmanism, 95, 134
BREASTED, Professor J. H., 96
Breathing space for lost souls, 208
BRIDGES, Robert, 17, 251, 252, 258, 259, 262
BRONTE, Emily, 118
BROWNE, Sir Thos., 118, 223
BROWNING, Robert, 21, 93, 198, 222, 230, 238
BUDDHA, 95
Buddhism, 133.
BUNYAN, 26
BURKE, Edmund, 224
Burnt Norton, by T. S. Eliot, 200
BUSSELL, Dr. F. W., 95, 123, 125, 129, 133, 134, 135, 205
BYRON, Lord, 63
Cabbala, 137
CAIN, 131
Calculating machine, 83, 164
CALVIN, 18, 157, 206
Calvinism, 163
Cambridge, 148
CAN GRANDE, 255
Canon, The, 135
CARLYLE, Thomas, 121
CARROLL, Lewis, 128, 238
Catch-phrases, protest against, 257
CATHARS, 134, 161
Catharsis, 68
CATHERINE of Genoa, Saint, 19, 174, 208, 220
CATHERINE of Siena, Saint, 225
Catholicism, 134
CATO of Utica, 188
Causation, 16, 72, 88, 215
Cause of the angels, 257
Cautionary tales, 215
Caves du Vatican, Les, by Andre Gide, 219
Celestial Hierarchy, The, of Dionysius the False Areopagite, 136
Celestial Peerage, 136
CELSUS, 94
Centre of Centres, 102, 239
CERTAINTY, 97, 243
 Bertrand Russell on, 29
 intuitive, 32
 mystic's truth, 91
 nature of, 36, 37
 of the uncertain, 40
 Pascal's, 165, 167, 171, 172, 175
 perfect knowledge, 37
Certainty, The Seal of, 36-59
CHALDAEA, 124, 126, 157
Change, 67, 72, 88
Chaos, 132, 135, 229
Character, 27, 88
Charity begins at home, 98, 108, 256
Charity, St. Paul's, 140, 178, 254, 260
CHARLEMAGNE, 157
CHARLES the Bald, 157

Index

- CHARYBDIS, 120
 CHAUCER, 26, 261
 CHERUBIM, 85
 CHESTERTON, G. K., 31, 216
 CHIANA (Dante), 97
 CHINA, 95, 135
 CHINESE, 63, 141
 Choice, 218
 CHRIST, 167, 204
 and the poor, 23
 as Gnostic Aeon, 128
 His mysticism, 154
 in the body, 104
 Johannine, 147
 Pascal and, 171, 172, 175, 181
 Passion perpetually repeated, 101, 116
 positive of Love, 64
 Saying of, 245
 the Temptation, 97
 Christian assimilation of Aristotle, 248
 Christianity, 15, 123, 129, 133, 134,
 173, 185, 219
Christian Mysticism, by Dr. W. R.
 Inge, 8, 96, 144, 148, 199, 204, 209
 CHRISTIANS, 11, 12, 13, 22, 24,
 101, 134, 146, 147, 149, 162, 191,
 208, 209, 213
 Christ's sacrifice, necessity of, 166
 Church, 97, 100, 133, 134, 136, 137,
 152, 161, 162, 166, 182, 184, 205,
 207, 211, 214, 248, 249
 Cinematograph, 66, 67, 68, 69, 74, 89
 Ciphers, 261
 CITY OF DIS, 156
 Classification, mystic's besetting sin, 33
 Clear Light of the Void, 150
 CLEMENT, Saint, of Alexandria,
 241, 245
 CLEMENT, Saint, of Rome, 100,
 208, 241, 245
 Clock and cinema, 71
 Clock of Private Time, 234
 Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, 12
 Cloud of Unknowing, The, 202
 Cocoon of experience, 56
 Coenesthesia, 49, 81
 Cogito ergo sum, 40
 Cognitive state, definition of, 44, 45
 Coinage of Mysticism, 30
 COLERIDGE, S. T., 76, 78, 254
 Collective Unconscious: Jung's, 81, 89
 Collect or Prayer for all Conditions of
 Men: title page
 Comparative Religion, study of, 123
 Complacency, 97, 98, 105
 Complacency, Transcendent, 198
 Complexes, psychological, 84, 121, 214
 COMPREHENSION,
 definition of, 37
 distinguished from apprehension,
 43, 55, 58, 59
 identity of subject and object, 37
 limits of, 47
 not cognitive state, 44
 CONDE, Prince of, 164
 Conditional immortality, 208
Confessions, The, of St. Augustine,
 title page, 29, 60, 62, 91, 196, 200,
 206, 226, 238
 CONFUCIUS, 95
 Congeries, Bradley's, 49, 52, 53
 Conscience, 102
 CONSCIOUSNESS, 25, 36-59, 67
 absolute, 85, 93
 and Ego, 42, 101
 as eternal sun, 87
 awareness of, 45, 52, 54, 58
 contemplation of eternity, 46
 definition of, 41, 43, 44, 59
 distinguished from awareness, 43,
 44, 54, 57
 divine monopoly of, 26, 34, 86, 93,
 103, 221
 equivocal use of word, 47, 48
 essence of all life, 85, 93
 eternal, 86

Index

CONSCIOUSNESS

Green's eternally complete, 55, 56
 identity of subject and object, 33, 43, 57
 indispensable to awareness, 45, 58
 light of, 70, 103, 150, 219
 mainspring of life, 54, 58
 plenitude of, 144
 pure, 21, 33, 34, 76, 113, 117, 142
 reality of, 81
 reflection in experience, 117
states of, 47, 48
 timeless moment of pure, 240
 unity of, 69

Conscious subject, *a metaphysical chimer*a, 55

Conscious subject (v. Ego), 33, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48, 58, 59, 77, 101

Contemplation, end of human life, 202

Contemplation (interior way), 105, 109, 114, 129, 142, 153

Contemplative, dark, 150

Coral insect, 81, 82, 201

Corinthians: Second Epistle to the, 253

Cosmos, 62, 66

Counter-Reformation, 152, 163

Countess Kathleen, The, by W. B. Yeats, 196

COUSIN, Victor, 248

Creation, 64, 66, 67, 71, 84

Creation, myth of the, 33, 65-82, 200

Crime, a motiveless, 219

Cross of Christ, 185

Crucifixion, 101

Cruelty, a deadly sin, 16

CUNIZZA in Dante's Paradise, 211

Cycles of time, 64, 66

Daily round and common task, 35, 201

Damnation, 18, 19, 166, 167, 170, 186, 190, 206

DANTE ALIGHIERI, 14, 26, 30, 64,
 72, 80, 83, 89, 91, 136, 150, 156,
 231, 251, 256

and *accidia*, 141

and Cato of Utica, 188

and Chiana's sluggish stream, 97

and Cunizza's sins (*Paradiso*, ix 32),
 211

and Empyrean, 119, 126

and Purgatory, 200

and river of divine light, 232

and St. Dionysius, 134

and St. Thomas Aquinas, 107

and Trinity, 63, 65

apotheosis of Light, 145

baby stork and its mother, 255

blind in Paradise, 141

certainty, 36, 59

creative Love, 253

darkness of his forest, 143

deification, 92, 251, 253

differentiation of Love, 243, 244

dimensions of Light and Love, 119,
 255

dolcefrui (*Paradiso*, xix 2), 109

Earthly Paradise, 92, 130, 242

Free-Will and motives, 218

God in a point, 116

God is Love, 197

God's will our peace, 7, 255

his enlightenment, 255

in Paradise, m

instantaneousness of thought, 83

Leah and Rachel, 114

Love creates new loves, 243, 244

loveliest line in poetry (*Paradiso* I
 95), 179

Love prime-mover, 71, 255

Love's victory in defeat, 198

loving lights in Paradise, 244

predestination, 17, 18

separated from Beatrice, 119

test of moral advancement, 97

Dark Ages, 13

Dark Ages, The, by W. P. Ker,
 157

Index

- Darkness, 57, 75, 80, 127, 129, 131, 132, 140, 141, 178
- Darkness, A Shewing of, 142, 143
- Darkness: Divine*, Dionysius', 13 4,13 8, 139,140, 141, 142, 143, H5, 146, 155
- Darkness, Kingdom of, 123, 124, 130, 131,132
- Darkness, Powers of, 213
- Dark Night of the Soul*, 145,146,147,148,** 149, 150, 153, 165. 176, 225
- DAVID, 198, 211
- Day of Judgment, 230
- De Adhaerendo Deo*, 119**
- Deadly Sins, 16, 152
- De Anima*, Tertullian's, 102
- DEATH,
- and laughter, 224
 - and life, 60
 - and our dreams, 226
 - annihilation of, 86
 - cult of, 161, 190, 248
 - healer of ills past healing, 243
 - laughable impossibility*, 28, 61**
 - mystical, 253
 - of experience, soul, Emauton, 112, 113, 143, 145
 - of perfection in identity, 62
 - our sister (St. Francis), 226
- Death penalty (Ananias and Sapphira) 214
- Declaration of Duties, 17
- Declaration of Rights, 17
- De Diligendo Deo*, Bernard of Clairvaux, 28
- De Divisione Naturae*, by John Scotus** Erigena, 157, 158, 216
- Defence of Poetry*, The, by P. B.** Shelley, 118
- Deification, 28, 43, 92, 96, 99, 100, 101, 116, 159, 242
- Dei Simplicitas*, 224, 261**
- Democracy, 16
- DEMOSTHENES, 182
- Deplorable confusion (Bradley)*, 44, 50**
- Dereliction, 146, 148, 149, 151
- DESCARTES, Rene\ 40, 66,**164,165**
- De Servo Arbitrio*, Luther's, 18**
- Determinism, 88
- DEVIL, 97, 98, 125, 132, 139, 150, 152, 213, 217
- Differentiation of sentient experience** (Bradley), 52
- Differentiation of the One, 22, 56, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 81, 82, 121, 138, 160, 200, 242, 243
- Diminutive, the affectionate, 179, 180
- DIOGENES, 140
- DIONYSIUS, The False Areopagite, 146, 160, 196, 197, 215
- and Proclus, 138, 148
 - and Transcendence, 112, 137, 138, 139, 140
- Divine Darkness, 138, 140, 142, 143, 148, 159
- Erigena and, 158, 159
- Hierotheus' Vision, 136
- his Greek style, 137, 138, 145
- influence on Church, 137
- influence on Molinos, 112
- in the Acts, 135
- Miss Underhill and, 136,139,141,142
- Negative Way, 139
- on the Angels, 134
- DISCIPULUS, Erigena's, 157,15 8,216
- Discours sur les Passions de VAmour*,** Pascal, 169
- Disinterested love, 24, 154, 155, 190
- Disproportion inique*, Montaigne on** Hell, 208
- Divina Commedia*: Dante's, 18**
- Divine Amnesty, 212
- Divine caresses* (Inge), 147, 154
- Divine Grace (v. Grace, Divine)
- Divine Justice, 12, **18, 186, 190**, 217, 221

Index

- Divine Presence, 87, 91, 92, 93, 115, 116, 117, 120, 140, 146, 148, 149, 178
- Divine Presence and the Adventure of Love, 218
- Divine Purpose, 16, 19, 22, 24, 64, 74, 90, 101, 110, 122, 144, 195, 204, 220, 243
- Divine Spark, 33, 101, 102, 103, 128, 129, 130, 210
- Divine Thoughts (v. Thoughts of God)
- Divinity, 33, 36, 37, 59
- Divinity and eternity, 61, 99
- Divinity, The Seal of, 91-116, 243
- Doctrine of Abiding Consequences, 208
- Dogs, dreams, 237
- Dolce far niente*, philosophy of, no
- DONNE, J., 117
- Double Truth, the heresy of the, 7, 155, 156, 163, 203, 248, 249
- Dream of God, 65
- Dream phase of experience, 86
- Dreams, 80, 226
- Dreams that do not deceive, 236, 237
- Dream Universe, 66, 71
- DRYDEN, John, 78
- Dry Salvages, The*, by T. S. Eliot, 205
- Dualism, 122, 124, 125, 133, 205
- Dualism as two aspects of Divine Purpose, 122, 247
- Dualism, medieval, 204
- Dualism of Immanence and Transcendence, 247, 248
- Dualism of Two Truths, 248
- DU MAURIER, G., 233
- Duration, 62, 78
- Durie*, Bergson's, 78
- Eagle and the Dove, The*, by V. Sackville-West, 151
- Earthly Paradise, Dante's, 92, 130, 242
- Earthquake of Purgatory, 200
- East and West, 22
- ECKHART, Meister, 74, 102, 103, 115, 146, 192, 241
- EDEN, Garden of, 203
- EDESSA, 134, 155
- Education and obstacles, 257
- E GO, the Conscious Subject, 69, 73, 89
- aloof in embryo soul, 94
- and apprehension, 40, 41, 42, 57, 59
- and comprehension, 40, 41, 42, 57, 59
- and Evelyn Underhill, 38
- and experience, 41, 56
- and free-will, 88, 219
- and Synteresis, 102
- and the now, 72, 78
- and the senses, 79
- as individual, 70
- as self, 44, 45, 59
- awareness of, 47, 74, 87
- belief in, 33, 51
- Bradley's denial of, 33, 39, 47, 54, 55
- constant background as consciousness, 54
- constitutional monarch, 219
- contradiction in terms, 39, 43, 44
- darkest hour of, 88
- Descartes and, 40
- Eckhart's definition, 102, 103
- equals sinless Godly Will, 219
- faculty of consciousness, 84
- film of his observation, 89, 90
- his waking attention, 226
- Hume's scepticism about, 33, 39
- identity of subject and object, 37, 46, 55, 59
- impersonal, 103
- in Private Universe, 41, 75
- instruments of, organisms, 67
- isolated in organism, 82
- lost in Emauton, 85, 94
- one with Absolute, 47, 55, 57, 58, 100
- opposed to Emauton, 42, 57, 59, 99
- perfect, 100

Index

- EGO, permanence of, 40
 return to Emauton after death, 227
 self-lighting light, 37
 source of all motion, 122
 spirit, 33, 42, 58, 59
 with knowledge of self and not-self, 40
- Egoism 42
- EGYPT, 95, 102
- EGYPTIANS, Gospel according to the, 245
- Elan vital*, Bergson's, 72
- ELECT, The (Jansenius), 182
- ELECT, The (Mani), 153
- Electric Brain, 79
- Elements of Metaphysics*, by Professor A. E. Taylor, 44
- ELIJAH, 87
- ELIOT, T. S., 27, 31, 200, 202, 205, 259
- Emanations, Plotinian, 128
- EMAUTON, the object self, 73, 74, 79, 81, 82
 a creature in God, 103
 a Divine, 216
 and apprehension, 43
 and awareness, 44
 and intellect, 57, 103
 and punishment, 220
 and selfishness, 45, 104
 annihilation of, 84, 112, 143, 145
 awakening after death, 228
 body of experience, 70, 200
 cloak of experience, 47
 contents of, 75, 76, 77, 80
 created, but everlasting (*Timaeus*), 84
 darkness of, 141
 defeats Ego's Godly Will, 220
 defects of, 117, 219
 definition of, 42, 59
 depths of, 84, 121, 214
 errant, 205
 Huxley's *selfness*, 202
 mirror, 117, 247
 no Evil outside, 215
 non-conscious, 83
 opposed to Ego, 42, 56, 57, 61, 99
 order after chaos, 229
 Pascal's automaton, 83.
 promotion of, 201
 rebuilding of, 231
 rise to reflection of Mystic Union, 94
 shame of, 119
 sinful, 100, 104
 soul or psyche, 61
 spirit and, 81
 taken for Ego, 97, 98, 104
 tyranny of, 97
 unique unity, 82
- EMERSON, R. W., 199
- EMPEDOCLES, 81
- ENLIGHTENMENT, 7, 23, 35, 57, 80, 109, 120, 129, 146, 155, 251
 experience of, 61
 expression of, 223
 third phase of Vision, 29, 32
 Way of, 34
- Enlightenment of Blaise Pascal, The, 181-95
- Enneads* of Plotinus, 15
- EN SOF, the Boundless One, 137
- Entropy, 66
- Epicureans, 12
- EPICURUS, 94
- Epistle of Private Counsel*, An, 144
- Equation of Evil, 203
- Equation of experience, 77, 79, 80, 81, 159
- ERIGENA, John Scotus, 196
 all things a Theophany, 251, 261
apocatastasis, 160, 202
 compatriot of Pelagius, 156
 Evil and time, 160, 215, 216
 Hell, 216, 220
 his heresy, 157, 158
ineffable condescension of the One, 159, 197

Index

- ERIGENA, life of, 156-8
nothingness of God, 63, 137, 158, 159
 philosophy of, 158-61
 supremacy of Reason, 160
 unity of Truth, 155, 248, 261
Essays of Elia, by Charles Lamb, 117
 ESSENES, 102
 Eternal Judgment based on time, 208, 213
Eternal Life, by Baron von Hiigel, 61
 ETERNITY, 32, 36, 37, 55, 91
 and Boethius, 99
 and Ego, 58
 and *eye of the soul*, 46, 146
 and Plotinus, 61
 and Time, 60
 glory of, 88, 197
 meaning of, 60, 62, 99
 one-way, snipped off, 60, 84
 opposed to timelessness, 62
 Pascal and, 168, 178, 179, 191
 seal of, 33, 34, 36, 59, 243
 timeless moment of, 33, 38
 Eternity, The Seal of, 60-90
 EUCKEN, Professor, 207
 EUCLID, 167, 190
 Euclidean point, 77
 EUROPE, 162
 EVE, 131, 132
 Everlasting No, 117
 Everlasting Yea, 117
 Evipan, 235
 EVIL, 203-222
 absentmindedness of Ormazd, 125
 an anachronism, 206, 207, 214
 arises from conflict of One and Many, 215, 216
 born from differentiation of the Good, 215
 carelessness of Zervan, 125
 fascination of, 213, 222
 God blind to, 161, 217
 home in experience, 215
 in practice (Augustine), 206
 in theory (Augustine), 206
 negative character of, 206
 no real substance, 161, 206, 209
 obverse of Greater Love, 199, 215
 origin of, 65, 121, 196, 207, 220
 personification of, 213
 positive nature of, 204, 207
 St. Thomas Aquinas and, 209
 wages of sin, 214
 Evil and Good identical (Pantheism), 199
 Evil and Reality (Dr. Inge), 213
 Evil and Sin, problems of, 17, 34, 35, 133, 161, 199, 203, 204, 205, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214
 Evolution, 82, 94, 201, 218
 Exile, 70, 94
 EXPERIENCE, 27, 35, 57, 67
 and Time, 75, 234, 235
 armour of, 231
 as Emauton, mind, soul, psyche, 42, 61
 awareness of, 40, 58
 born from contact of One and Many, 74, 215
 conscious, 47, 48, 50, 53, 55, 83
 continuity of, 60
 definition of, 41, 59
 elaboration of, 79
 gathering of, 74
 golden fetters of 220
 in raw condition, 76, 77, 78
 no waste of, 82
 obliteration of (v. Emauton, annihilation of)
 of Enlightenment, 61
 order of the Many, 57
 past, memories, 41, 74
 plurality in time, 75
 sentient (Bradley's), 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 81
 spaceless, 65, 75, 77, 7⁸

Index

- EXPERIENCE**, stream of, 74, 75
 subliminary, 42, 81, 83, 84, 94, 230, 236
 temporal order of, 73
 universe of, between space and
 eternity, 88, 89
Experiment with fore-fingers, 76
Eyes of the Soul, 46
EZZELINO da Romano, tyrant of
 Padua, 211

Fairyland, 130
Faith, 16, 20, 24, 148, 162, 163, 164,
 203, 248
Fall of God, 128
Fall of man, 103, 185, 190, 206, 213, 260
Fall of man, Manichaeism, 131
Fatalism, Chaldaean, 124, 126, 157
Father Confessor, 41, 105
Fatherland, our, 20, 87
Fathers of Church, 99, 208, 242, 249
Fatigue after death, 231
Fear, 205
Feeling (Bradley), 54
Fiery end of world, 132
Film, cinema, unrolled, 68, 71
Fire, eternal, 217, 220
Fire, Vision of (v. under Pascal), 171,
 174, 182, 183
Flashing Stream, The, by Charles
 Morgan, 224
Flight from experience, 201
Fly in amber, 81
Folly wiser than human wisdom, 186,
 188
FOULQUES of Marseille (Paradiso,
 ix. 94), 211
FOX EJ., 238, 239
FRANCE, 156, 161, 162
FRANCIS of Assisi, Saint, 11, 140,
 154, 165, 226
FREDERICK the Great, 19
Free-Will, 17, 88, 89, 90, 156, 157,
 166, 184, 205, 218
 From miracle to reason, 246
FULLER, Margaret, 121
Furies, 84, 204
Fussiness, discouragement of, 108, 114

GALLOWAY, 156
GAYOMART, Primal Man, 128,
 129, 130, 131, 215
GENESIS, 64, 66
Genius, 21, 84, 127, 164
Geometry, 165
GERMANY, 19
GIDE, Andre, 219
GLAUCUS (Sea-God, Dante), 92
Gloria in excelsis in Purgatory, 200
Gluttony, spiritual, 152, 153
Gnat, Patmore's dancing, 226
Gnosis, the Vision, 126, 128, 246
GNOSTICS, 126, 127, 128, 129, 134,
 136
GOD,
 all joys and sufferings His alone, 221
 and laughter, 223
 as Creator of Evil, 123
 bitterness in, 153
 denial of, 162
 Dionysian indetermination, 136,
 137, 138, 139
 equals Erigena's nihilum, 63, 137, 159
 equals the spirit, 95
 habitation of, 109, 222
 His death and sacrifice, 200
 *his gracious, allurement*s, 154.
 His Sabbath rest, 160
 His sense of humour, 223, 224
 identity with, 42, 43, 99, 100
 ignorant of Evil, 161, 217
 Immanent, 22, 25, 32, 34, 36, 61, 93,
 97, 105, 117, 118, 119, 128, 130,
 133, 143, 176, 181, 194, 247
 impersonal, 101
 inaccessible, 147, 148
 in eternity without contradiction, 104

Index

- GOD,
lodged in human body (Seneca), 94
 loneliness of, 64, 65, 71, 197
 must be able to die, 198
 mystery of His mercy, 186
 names of, 15, 117
 nature of, 17
 never wroth (Lady Julian), 212
 of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, 140,
 167, 168, 171, 172, 174, 175, 223
 of Jansenius, 167
 snap of the fingers, 66
 substantial presence of, 145
 The Absolute, 45, 59
 The One, 45, 59
 Transcendent, 18, 25, 32, 34, 93,
 105, 115, 117, 118, 119, 128, 132,
 133, 137, 143, 161, 179, 187, 247
 GOD IMMANENT, Revelation of,
 91-116
God's Innocence, by Baron E. Palmsti-
 erna, 217
 GOD TRANSCENDENT, the Re-
 cognition of, 117-161
 Goldfinch, 227
 Good and Evil, Powers of, 123, 129
 Good over Evil, triumph of, 124, 125,
 204
 Gordian knot, 211, 219
 Gorse and kissing, 227
 Gospel according to the Egyptians, 245
 Gospels, 208
 Gospel, the first, 125
 GOTTSCHALK (gyrovagus), 157
 Grace, 17
 Grace, Divine, 17, 80, 85, 156, 162,
 166, 167, 170, 173, 175, 177, 182,
 184; 189, 205, 206, 219
 GREECE, 95, 96
 Greek Anthology, 256
 Greek, classical, 137, 156, 158, 174,
 221, 245
 GREEN, T. H., 55, 55, 57, 83
 GREGORY of Nyssa, 209
 GREGORY the Great, 133, 136, 248
 Ground of the Soul, 34, 87, 103, 109, 120
Guide to Philosophy, by C. E. M. Joad, 16
 Guido Franceschini's soul (*Ring and the
 Book*), 222
 GUYON, Madame, 146, 147
 Happy Issue out of all Our Afflictions,
 The, 246-62
 HARNACK, 99
 HASSAN of Basra, 165
 Hazel-nut, Lady Julian's universe,
 116, 179, 180
Healthy souls (W. James), 93, 120
 Heath Robinson, 19
 Heaven, 22, 154, 178, 208
 HEGEL, 54
 Hell, 22, 141, 154, 156, 178, 180, 208,
 209, 212, 213, 220, 230, 231
 Hell and capital punishment, 214
 Hell means conquest of eternity by
 time, 214
 HERACLITE, Voltaire's name for
 Pascal, 162
 Heresy, 22
 Hermits, 146
 HERODOTUS, 223
 Hierotheus, Stephen bar Sudaili, 135,
 136
 Higher Criticism, 190
 HINC MAR, Archbishop of Reims,
 157
 HINDUS, 82
 HIPPOLYTUS, 100
 History of animal organism, T. H.
 Green, 56
 HITLER, 19, 97, 98
 HOLLYWOOD, 68
 HOLY GHOST, 107
 HOLY GHOST, sin against, 13, 230
 Holy Grail, 143
 Homeliness of God, Lady Julian, 93, 179

Index

- Homeric gods, 224
 HORACE, 201
Hound of Heaven. The, by Francis Thompson, 14
Hubris, 13, 122
 HUGEL, Baron von, 61, no, 205, **206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 220**
 Human Nature, development of, 16
 Human trinity, body, psyche and spirit, 33, 42, 61
 HUME, D., 33, 38, 39, 40, 43, 47, 76, 77,86
 HUMILITY, 18, 115, 116
 before and after Mystic Union, 117
 fourth term of Illumination, 32, 36, 37,59
 implies contrast rather than unity, 117
 obverse of ecstasy, 34
 seal of, 32, 33, 103, 104
 Humility, The Seal of, 117-61, 243
 Humour, sense of, 223, 224, 225, 241
 HUXLEY, Aldous, 8,18,22,55,61,95, 137, 147, 152,181, 183, 190, 202
 HYLTON, W., 145
Hyper- compounds of Dionysius, 137, 138, 158
 Hypnagogic images, 76
 Hypnotism, 80

 J (v. Ego)
 divine something, 92
 I AM, 38, 53,244
 IDENTITY OF SUBJECT AND OBJECT (v. Consciousness), 57, **58, 69, 101**
 in consciousness, 33, 43
 in Ego, 39, 45, 55
 in God, 46
 in spirit, 59
 in The Absolute, 46, 55
 perfect knowledge, 37, 145
 Identity of *object* and *subject* (Bradley), 51, 52, 53, 54, 55

 ILION, 232
 ILLUMINATION, 33, 36, 92, 101, **140, 142**
 definition of, 29, 31
 of eternity, 62, 241 .
 swing back from, Evelyn Underhill, 146
 variety of, 31, 32
 Ulumination of Blaise Pascal, The, 171-80
 Illusion, *Maya*, 19
Images as things, Coleridge, 78
 Imagination, 76, 78, 79
 Imagination, laboratory of, 79, 80
 Imagination, Santa Teresa's, 212
 Imaginative Mind, Ruskin, 80
 Immanence, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 118, 119, 120, 133, 138, 139, 161, 166, 175, 247, 250
 Immobility, 70, 88
 Immortality, 60, 100, 178
 Inaction through action, 111, 142
 Incarnation, 56, 64, 67, 73, 74, 82, 86, 87, 94, 101, 116, 155, 159, 200, **201, 216, 217, 221**
 Incommunicability(Proclus), 138,148
 INDIA, 95
 Individuality, 100
Ineffable condescension,Erigncna, 159,197
Inferno, Dante's, 71, 141, 222
 Infinite, The, 139,179, 181
 INGE, Dr. W. R., 8, 15, 19, 30, 46, **96, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 106, 134, 136, 139, 144, 145, 147, 148, 154, 155, 199, 204, 209, 213, 223**
 INNOCENT, XI, Pope, 105
 Inquisition in Provence, 161
 Inquisition, Spanish, 137
 Inscrutability of God, 18
 Insensibility, 60
 Instincts, 83
 Intellect, 103
Intersection of the timeless moment, 27

Index

- Introspection, 38, 46, 54, 75, 78
 Intuition, 33, 37
 Invulnerability, 24, 193
 IRAN, 96
 IRENAEUS, 99
 Irish humour, 158
 ISLAM, 155
 Ivory tower, v. watch-tower, 250,254

 JAMES, Henry, 36, 78
 JAMES, William, 93, 120
 JANSENISM (v. under Pascal), 115,
 123,168,177,179,183,187,188,193
 and Counter-Reformation, 163
 elements of, 167
 Grace and, 173, 182
 human love and, 191, 192, 193
 insistence on Transcendence, 18,
 106, 121, 194, 254
 intransigence, 18, 166
 man as enemy of God, 189
 morality of, 167, 194
 narrow creed, 175
 odd guise for Mysticism, 163
 Pascal and, 18,106,121,169,174,175
 pessimism, 124, 134, 176
 profit and loss, 178, 187, 188
 puritanism, 166, 184
 salvation and, 169,193
 JANSENIUS, 169, 170, 190, 206, 207
 and St. Augustine, 156,166,167,182
 and St. Thomas Aquinas, 249
 attacks Pelagians, 156, 166
 Augustinus, 163,165, 175
 Clement and Origen, 208
 enemy of Jesuits, 163
 enemy of Philosophy, 162, 166,
 167; 174
 God of, 18, 175, 179, 181, 223
 Rewards and Punishments, 178,
 179,180, 187
 theology of, 173
 JEHOVAH, 168,174,181

 JEROME, Saint, 102, 156
 JERUSALEM, 145, 151, 156, 171
 Jerusalem, Blake's, 91, 119
 JESUITS, 18, 105, 163,166, 175, 182,
 183, 184
 JESUS, 131, 224
 and conflicting duties, 216
 laughter of, 224
 tears of, 224

 Jews and Mani, 132
 JOAD, Dr. C. E. M., 16
 John Inglesant, by J. H. Shorthouse,
 105, 106
 JOHN of Beverley, Saint, 211
 JOHN, Saint, the Divine, 15, 135,
 147, 224
 JOSEPHUS, 102
Joy in harvest, 241
 JUAN DE LA CRUZ, San, 114, 145,
 146,147, 148,150,151,152,153,
 154, 197
 Judgment-Hall of Memory, Augus-
 tine, 74
 JULIAN, Lady, anchoress of Nor-
 wich, 93, 103, 142, 179, 209, 212
 all shall be well, 210, 211
 and penitence, 108
 Godly Will sinless, 103, 209, 219
 God never wroth, 212
 God's abiding-place, 222
 God's ways justified to man, 212
 hazel-nut universe, 116, 179
 her miracle, 211, 212, 259
 homeliness of God, 93, 179
 on Evil and Sin, 209, 210, 211, 212
 permanence of Love, 85
 secret key of Love, 210, 212
 Sin becomes, not shame, but wor-
 ship, 211
 Sin *behovable*, 210, 212
 vileness of Sin, 212
 JULIAN the Apostate, 12
 JUNG, C. G., 81, 111,253

Index

- KA (Egyptian), 96, 102
 KANT, Immanuel, 40, 45, 47, 57,
 179, 207
 KEATS, J., 233
 KER, W. P., 17
 Kingdom of Heaven, 31, 34, 46, 109,
 194, 198, 245
 Knowledge, 37, 43
Koran, 156, 248
 KRISHNA, 13
 Ksatriya (warrior) class, 95
Kubla Khan, Coleridge's, 78
- LAMB, Charles, 117
 LANSON, Gustave, 167, 175, 181,
 190, 194
 Latin, 137, 158, 174, 238
 Laughter at the heart of things, 35, 88,
 223, 240, 241, 242, 243
 Laughter at the Heart of Things, The,
 223-45
 Laughter, Christian sanctification of,
 224
 LAW, W., 154
 LEAH, 114
 Leisure, 258
Lettres Provinciales, Les, Pascal's, 175,
 182
 LEWIS, Dr. C. S., 8
 Liberty, 16
Liebes-Tod, Wagner's, 161
 Lie in the soul, 98
 LIFE, 16, 70
 after death, 60, 226
 coming of, 71, 72, 74
 consciousness, mainspring of, 58
 divinity of, 93
 Ego, foundation of all, 33, 34
 more abundant, no, 213
 the *now* of, 72
 Light, 15, 32, 57, 66, 91, 123, 124,
 129, 131, 132, 134
 Light and Love, 197
 Light, darkness synonym of, 138, 140
 Light, earth of, 130
 Light, false, 104
 Light, Kingdom of, 123, 124, 129,
 130, 131, 132
 Light of Tao, 235
Light that lights itself, 37
 Light, unapproachable, 138
 Light, velocity of, 74
 Light years, 82
 Limbo, 208
Little Gidding, by T. S. Eliot, 27, 202
 Loneliness of God, 64, 65, 71, 197
 Loneliness of solipsism, 236, 237, 238,
 239
 Loneliness, the end of, 238
 Long odds on salvation (Pascal), 187,
 188
 Lord of Darkness, 123, 124, 129, 204
 Lord of Light, 123, 124, 128, 129, 204
Lotos-Eaters, The, Tennyson's, 99
 LOUIS the Pious or Debonair, 158
 LOVE, 81
 and death, 199
 and Hell, 209
 and sacrifice, 197, 199, 200
 and the Vision, 145, 146
 answer to Pantheism, 203
 Aristophanes' uncouth fable, 244
 as denizen of two worlds, 200
 as God (Plotinus), 197
 *bedizen*ed in golden fetters, 220
 calling of Aeons, 130
 cause and end of movement (T. S.
 Eliot), 200
 certain in self-comprehension, 196
 compass needle of, 219
 consummation of, 119
 disinterested, 24, 154, 155, 190
 divine in immanence, 196
 Divine Purpose, 22, 24
 eternal in changelessness, 196
 fruit of Vision (Lady Julian), 97

Index

- LOVE, God is, 197, 250, 252, 260
 humble in perfection, 196
 name of God, 15, 23
 new revelation of, 64
 obverse of Evil, 198
 paradox of, 35, 198
 penetration into time, 122
 prime mover, 71, 212
 purpose of purposes, 202
 rule of, in
 standard of conduct, 201, 256
 synthesis of, 34, 64, 91, 196, 243
 values of, 245
 Lovers' coalescence, 245
 Love, The Greater, 195, 197, 198, 199,
 200, 218, 220, 250, 253, 254
 Love, The Synthesis of, 196-203
 LUCIFER, 244
 LUKE, Saint, 224
 LUTHER, 18, 19
 LYWARD, G. A., 223

 MACDONALD, George, 8, 61, 64,
 142, 223, 235
 McDOUGALL, Professor W., 57, 83
 Machine of organized experience, 83
 Machine, Pascal's, 83
 Maelstrom of commotion after death,
 228
 Magic, 127, 128
 MAGI, Median, 124, 125
 MAGISTER, Erigena, 157, 158, 217
 MAHOMET, 248
 Mahomet's coffin, 219
Manalive, by G. K. Chesterton, 31
 Man as enemy of God, 189
 Man, creation of Mani's Devil, 31, 132
 MANI, 129, 247
 MANICHAISM, 250
 Albigensian heresy, 134, 161
 and Juan de la Cruz, 152, 154
 and Mysticism, 204
 and Pascal, 191
 and St. Augustine, 165, 205, 206, 207
 and Wagner, 161
 Dionysius and, 134, 136
 exaggeration of Transcendence, 129
 its dualist tenets, 129, 130, 131, 132,
 133
 masochism, 141
 of pagan origin, 129
 rival to Church, 133
 satisfies reason of average man, 133
 terror of sex, 131, 132
 MANICHEE within the heart, 18, 215
 Manifold, the, 69, 73, 75, 86, 89, 138
 MAN, invincible ignorance of, 162, 165
Man the measure of all things, 75
 MAN, *the thinking reed*, Pascal, 189
Manu cordis, St. Augustine, 77, 229
Manuductio Spiritualis, of Molinos, 106
Man who was Thursday., *The*, by G. K.
 Chesterton, 216
 MANY, THE, creation of, 64, 65
 definitions of, 58
 dream-universe, 65, 66
 incarnation in, 200
 order of, 45, 47, 57, 59, 70, 75, 100
 pattern of, 72, 88
 system of the All, 70
 MARCUS AURELIUS, 226
 MARPA, Guru of Milarepa, Tibetan
 Yogi, 233
 MARS, 236
 MARTHA, 114
 MARTIA, Cato's, 188
 MARY, 114
 Masochism, 141, 153
 Materialism, 16, 24, 114, 129, 152
 Mathematics, 165
 MATILDA, in Dante's *Purgatorio*, 242
 Matter, 65
 Matter, dream-stuff, 65
 MAYA, Illusion, 19, 237
 Mazdaism, 124
Me, Bradley's, 52

Index

- MECHTILD of Hackborn, 114
Mediaeval Culture and Dante, K. Vossler, 249
 Meditation (the exterior Way), 109, 142, 258
 MELCHIDIZEK, 47
Memorial of Pascal's Illumination, 18, 170, 171-3, 174, 175
 Memories, mustering of, after death, 228
 Memories, *spaceless*, 75, 76, 80
 Memory, 41, 59, 72, 73, 80, 90
 Mercy, ray of God's (Catherine of Genoa), 209
 MERE, Chevalierde, 169,183,187,188
 Messiahs, sick, 98, 108
 Meteor, 87
 METHODIUS, 100
 Microbe, 58
 Middle Ages, 205
 Middle Way, 22, 122, 133
 Midway between eternity and time, 241
 Might-have-been, 90
 MILAREPA, Tibetan Yogi, 233
 MILTON, J., 246
 Mind, 27, 58, 64, 76, 79
 Mind, emergence of, 83
 Mind, the *debunking*, 224
 Miracle of the Holy Thorn, 183, 184
 Mirror, the shattered, 71
 MITHRAS, 96
 Modernity, battle against, 257
 MOLINA, Jesuit, 166
 MOLINOS, Miguel de, Founder of Quietism, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 111 112,113,114, 256
 Molten Calf, the, 12, 199
 MONICA, mother of St. Augustine, 62
 MONTAIGNE, 168, 180, 185, 188, 208, 223, 226
 Moon, home of Mother of Life, 132
 Moorish philosophers, 248
 Morality and the Vision, 127
 Morality and Truth, 213
 Moral struggle of man, 57
 MORE, Henry, 148, 252
 MORGAN, Charles, 224
 MORGAN (Pelagius), 156
 MORLEY, John, 224
 Mortality, 59
 MOSES, 132, 199, 225
 MOSLEM, 21
 Motion, 67, 71, 72, 73, 74
 Motives and Free-Will, 218
Mot juste, 78
 Mountains, die high, 87
 Multiplicity, 65, 66, 69, 72
 Muscle sense, 49, 75, 228, 232
 Music after death, 232
 MYERS, F. W. H., 41
Mysthre de Jesus, Le (Pascal), 181
 Mystery unfathomable, 17
Mystical Element in Religion, by Baron von Hiigel, 220
 Mystical language, metaphors of, 64
Mystical Theology, of Dionysius, 136, 137
 MYSTICISM, 38, 133
 and eternity, 61
 and life more abundant, no, 213
 and logic, 15, 34, 248
 and problem of Evil, 204
 based on Illumination, 33
 Christian, 15
 definitions of, 15, 23
 Eastern, 19, 22, 101, 147
 eternal verity of, 15
 historic role of, 13, 14
 in guise of Jansenism, 163
 literature of, 8, 21, 27, 225
 of Jesus, 154
 Plotinus, source of, 15
 promises of, 24
 subject of, 137
 trumpet of, 14
 vocation for, 106

Index

- Mysticism and Logic*, by Bertrand Russell, 15, 29, 213
- Mysticism*, by Evelyn Underhill, 30, 38, 119
- Mystics, glee of, 225, 226
- MYSTIC UNION (or Union with God), 29
- absolute unity of, 118
 - absorption in God, 100
 - as eternal sun, 87
 - as *opus operatum*, 101
 - basic event of Vision, 29
 - bliss of, 77, 202
 - claim hard for sinful man, 92
 - consciousness, 57
 - defies analysis, 196
 - eternal, 99
 - four aspects of, 196
 - its interpretation, 32
 - misinterpretation of, 104
 - naked loveliness of, 150
 - of Love and likeness, 145, 146, 197
 - penetration of eternity into time, 38
 - reflection of, in experience, 61, 92, 113
 - revelation identical for all, 30, 98
 - San Juan de la Cruz on, 145
 - synthesis of Love, 91, 196
 - timeless nothingness*, 63
 - truth of, 115
- Mystic Way, 7, 30, 31
- Myth of a vision in a dream, 35
- Myth of Creation and Birth of Time, 33, 65-90
- Myth of Death, 226-45
- Names of God, The*, Dionysius, 136
- Names of the Archons, 128, 196
- Nature, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 88, 89, 90, 116, 158, 160, 220, 233
- Negative polysyllables of Dionysius, 137, 138
- Negative Way, 139, 143
- Nemesis, 13
- Neo-Platonism, 15, 100, 127, 128, 134, 135, 136, 154, 165, 167, 205, 209, 214
- Neo-Platonist serenity, 147
- NERVAL, Gerad de, 70
- Newman, Cardinal, 87
- New Testament, 260
- NICHOLAS I, Pope, 158
- NICHOLAS of Cusa, 63
- Nights, The three, of Juan de la Cruz, 146
- Nirvana*, 19, 22, 63, 113
- Noche Oscura del Alma*, Juan de la Cruz, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 154
- Nonconformists, 129
- Non-consciousness, 83, 86
- Non-Ego, 40, 41, 42
- Nonsense, mystical, 136, 137, 138
- NORMANDY, 165
- Nothing, Erigena's, *nihilum*, 63, 137, 159
- Notliing, Molinos after Dionysius, 112, 113
- Not-Self, Bradley's, 49, 52, 53
- NOUS, 71, 96, 128
- Now, the eternal, 61, 62
- Now, the single slice of reality, 72, 73, 78
- Now, universal, 71, 72, 74, 81, 82, 88, 89, 90, 200, 226
- NUMENIUS, 64
- Nunc Dimittis*, 109
- Oatmeal porridge and the Fathers, 156
- Object, Bradley's, 49, 52
- Objective Being, 70
- Oblivion, 60, 86, 87, 142, 144, 220, 242
- Obras Spirituales* of Juan de la Cruz, 152
- Ocular spectra, 76
- Odium theologicum*, 156, 248
- OGDOAD, 126
- Old Testament and laughter, 224

Index

- Old Testament, tribal god of, 167,
174,175
OLYMPUS, 214
Omniscience, 46, 82
One Act, heresy of, no, 111,146
ONE, THE (v. ABSOLUTE, THE),
67, 68, 73
absorption in, 160
and imagination, 76
as Ego, 82
as opposed to the Many, 64
awareness of, 72, 81
bliss of, 19
identity of subject and object, 45,
54, 55, 69
Kant's transcendental order, 47
logically, not temporally, prior to
Many, 64
omniscient, 46
order of, 75, 100
penetration into Many, 57
Plato and, 64
relationship to Ego, 46
solitude of, 64
spaceless and timeless, 65
sun blazing in centre of Many, 70
theologian's God, 45
the Perfect, 63, 216
ultimate reality, 46
One Word More, Browning's, 21
Opinion, Plato's 85
Optimism, 115, 120, 203, 223
Oracles, cryptic, of the Clements, 241,
245
Organism, 58, 67, 70, 72, 73, 74, 81,
85, 94, 122
ORIGEN, 94, 99, 100, 174, 208
Original Sin, 108, 157, 167, 183, 186,
190, 205, 206, 207, 224, 260
Origin of Evil, The, 203-222
ORMAZD, 96, 124, 125, 126
Orphic Mysteries, 14,96,215,242,247
Orthodoxy, 22, 93, 103, 133, 205, 209
OTTO, Rudolf, 29
Outline of Philosophy, An, by Pro-
fessor J. Watson, 46
Outline of Psychology, An, by Pro-
fessor McDougall, 57
PALMSTIERNA, Baron Erik, 217
PAN, Great, 11
Pan-Nihilism, 135
PANTHEISM, 120, 160, 198, 201,
248, 250
and *The Timeless Moment*, 199
annihilates both Evil and Love, 198
charge against Mysticism, 199
definition of, 199
Love's answer to, 203, 217
Papacy, 134
PAPHNUCE, 107
Paracelsus, Browning's, 93
Paradise, 63, 64, 126, 130, 131, 150,
163, 188, 201, 253
Paradiso, Dante's, 17, 36, 92, 98, 145,
197, 198, 218, 244, 255
Paradoxes, Bradley's, of the Self, 49,50
Paradox of Love, 35, 198, 199, 215
Pari, Le, the bet of Pascal's *Pensies*,
178,187,188
PARMENIDES, 61
PARNASSUS, 242
PASCAL, Blaise, Scientist, Jansenist
and Mystic, 25, 66, 83, 121, 161,
162-95, 207, 212, 254, 261
absorption in eternal, 176
abyss of, 168
accident on Pont de Neuilly, 169
against earthly house-building, 191
and art, 191
and beauty, 191
and Divine Justice, 186
and eternity, 179, 236
and gambling, 187
and human love, 192, 193
and infinity, 168,179, 186, 236

Index

PASCAL,

and Jansenius, 18, 106, 121, 163
 and Jesuits, 18, 105, 163, 166, 175,
 182, 183, 184
 and logic, 220
 and miracles, 183, 184
 and reason, 185, 186, 260
 and St. Thomas Aquinas, 249
 and thought, 189, 258
 and Truth, 178
Apologia pro Vita Sua, 254
 character of, 164, 165
 controversial tactics, 182
 criticism of Scriptures, 190
deus absconditus, 220
 discrimination between Ego and
 Emauton, 194
 doctrine of God Transcendent, 34,
 121, 161
 egoism, 165, 181
 Enlightenment of *Pensees*, 167
 genius of, 34, 163, 174, 194
 God of, 18, 168, 175, 212
 his dereliction, 169
 his *first conversion*, 165, 168
 his surrender, 177
 ill-health, 164, 168, 190, 192
 Illumination of, 168, 171-180
 interpretation of Vision, 163, 173, 181
 intransigence of, 18
le roseau pensant, 189
 man enemy of God, 189
Memorial, 18, 170, 171-3, 174, 175,
 181
 mortifies body, 190, 191
 not scholar, 174
 on God's duty to man, 183
 oh human wretchedness, 189
Pensies, Les, 161, 164, 178, 179, 181,
 184, 187, 188, 193
 prudery, 192
 pursuit of salvation, 193
 spell of worldliness, 169

the *Bet*, 178, 187, 188
 the death-worshipper, 181, 183
 the mathematician, 60
 the saint, 165, 254
 the scientist, 165
 thinks of marriage, 169
 Tourneur's edition of *Pensees*, 8, 172
 Vision of Fire, 31, 167, 170, 173,
 174, 182, 183
 youth of, 164, 165
Pascaline, Pascal's calculating machine,
 164
 PASCAL, Jacqueline (Soeur Ste.
 Euphemie), Blaise's sister, 169,
 177, 191
Passing of Arthur, The, Tennyson's, 221
Passion and Society, by Denis de
 Rougemont, 161
 Pathos and humour, 224
 PATMORE, Coventry, 101, 144,
 225, 226
 Pattern of the Many, 72, 88, 90, 215
 PAUL, Saint, 30, 135, 136, 137, 158, 253
Peace of the summits, 119
 PEACOCK, T. L., 201
 PELAGIANS, 17, 156, 162, 166, 167,
 208
 PELAGIUS, 156, 157, 205
 Penances, excessive, 107, 108
Pensks, Les, of Pascal, 8, 25, 121, 161,
 164, 178, 181, 184, 187, 188, 193
 Perception, Hume's, 39, 40, 47, 76, 77
Perennial Philosophy, The, by Aldous
 Huxley, 8, 18, 22, 55, 61, 137,
 147, 202
 Perfection made perfect by imperfec-
 tion, 199
 Perfect, The (Mani's), 133
 Perfect, The, 23, 34, 63, 98, 99, 100
 PERIER, Gilberte, Pascal's elder
 sister, 168, 191, 192
 PERIER, Louis, Blaise Pascal's
 nephew, 173

Index

- PERIER, Marguerite, Pascal's niece, 183
 PERSIA, 124, 129
 Personality, 22, 27, 83, 88, 100, 206, 231
 Personal symbolism, 20
 Personification of experience, 84
 Pessimism, 124,133
 PETERDAMIAN, Dante, 17
Peter Ibbetson, by G. Du Maurier, 233
 PETER, Saint, 154, 211, 214
 PETRIE, Flinders, 96
Phaedo, Plato's, 203, 226
Phaedrus, Plato's, 47
 PHALARIS, 193
 Phenomenal self, 45
 PHILOJUDAEUS, 25, 75
 Philosophy and humour, 225
 Philosophy and Religion, 15, 160, 248, 261
 Philosophy, enemy of Grace, 162, 166, 174
Philosophy of Plotinus, by Dr. W. R. Inge, 7, 23, 147
 Physical universe timeless, 65, 66
 PICCARDA, Dante's, 255
 Pilgrimage, The Everlasting, 221, 222, 243
 Pilgrim of Eternity, 63
 PLATO, 15, 44, 63, 64, 84, 85, 96, 99, 158, 197, 203, 214, 226, 244, 248
 Platonic Ideas, 63, 65
 PLEROMA, The, 126, 127, 128
 PLOTINUS, 15, 30, 37, 45, 61, 65, 70, 72, 87, 94, 100, 101, 102, 112, 114, 127, 128, 144, 147, 149, 197, 199, 205, 207, 211, 241, 248
 Plot of life, complex, 90
 Plurality in time, 75
 Politics, 16
 PONT DE NEUILLY (Paris), 169
 PORT-ROYAL, 165, 169, 175, 182, 185, 186, 188, 191
 Positive of negation (Charles Lamb), 117
 Possibility, dreamed by God, 65,66,88
 Potentiality, 62, 63, 90
 Poverty, negative abstraction, 140
 Practice, mystical, before theory, 106
Pralayas, world-catastrophes, 66
 Precedence of object over subject (Bradley's), 52
Precept upon precept, 83
 Predestination, 17,18, 88, 89, 157, 166
 Preservation of species, 121
 Presumption, 97, 122
 PRIMAL MAN, 128, 130, 131, 132
 Principle, selfish, 122, 216, 247
 Principles, fundamental (Dante's), 59
 Principle, unselfish, 122, 129, 216, 247
Prisoner, the, by Emily, Bronte, 11860,
 Private Universe, 41, 44, 73, 75, 76, 78, 84, 85, 89, 99, 119, 234, 236
 PROCLUS, 136, 138, 148
 Profit and loss, Jansenist motive, 178
 Progress, 11, 12
 Projection of Perceptions, 79
Prolegomena to Ethics, by T. H. Green, 55, 56
Prometheus Unbound, Shelley's, 230, 253
 PROTAGORAS, 75
 Protestant, 205
 Protoplasm, psychical, 51, 81
 PROVENCE, 161
 Psalmist, 140
 Psyche, 42
 Psychical Research, heresy of, 17
 Psycho-analysis, 80, 121
 Psychology, 13, 41, 83, 84, 121, 214
 Punishment, eternal, 208
 Punishment, remedial or exemplary, Plato, 214
Purgatorio, Dante's, 59, 200, 242, 253
 Purgatory, 188, 200,212,220,221,222
 PURITANS, 208

Index

- PYRRHO of Elis, the doubting philosopher, 162
 Pyrrhonism, 162
 PYTHAGORAS, 95, 166

 Quietism, 34, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, no, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 146, 248
 Quietude of death, 227
Quis rerum divinarum haeres sit, Philo
 Judaeus, 25

 RACHEL, 114
 RACINE, 175, 191
 Radii, metaphor for differentiation of the Absolute, 56, 68, 70
Raptures and roses of Vice, 210
 Reality, 54, 73, 81
 Reality is perfection (Pantheism), 199
 Reality, sentient experience (Bradley), 50, 51
 Reason, 37, 46, 147, 148, 162, 163, 164, 167, 175, 203, 246, 248, 249, 250, 259, 260
 Reason, discursive, 37, 258, 260
 Reason, higher creative, 96
 Reasons of the heart (Pascal), 143, 175, 197
 Reason, stifling of, 148
 Reason, supremacy of (Erigena), 155, 158, 159, 160
 Rebellion, innate, 121
 Reconciliation, the final (v. apocatastasis), *250
 Reformation, 162
 REIMS, 157
 Relativity, 66, 67
 Religion, 15, 16, 19, 33, 97, 121, 162, 163, 203, 249
Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages, by Dr. F. W. Bussell, 95, 123
 Remorse, 147, 204
 Repulsion, 81
Respiratio, 208
 Restraint of altruism, 108, 256
 Retina, 85
 Revelation, 16, 29, 33, 36, 37, 246
Revelations of Divine Love, by Lady Julian Anchoress of Norwich, edited by Grace Warrack, 179, 209, 210
 Rewards and punishments, 22, 178, 180, 187, 208, 213
Ring and the Book, The, by Robert Browning, 222
Ringling grooves of change (Tennyson), 88
Robert Browning, by G. K. Chesterton, 230
 Robinson Crusoe, 239
Rod, the Root and the Flower, The by Coventry Patmore, 225
 Roman Empire, 12, 134
 ROSSETTI, D. G., 85
Rotunda, by Aldous Huxley, 181
 ROUEN, 165
 Rougemont, Denis de, 161
 Round Table, 242
 RUSKIN, John, 80
 RUSSELL, Bertrand, 15, 29, 38, 213, 259
 Ruysbroeck, John of, Ecstatic Doctor, 102, 119, 146

 SABATIER, Paul, 11, 154
 Sack of Rome, A.D. 410, 217
 SACKVILLE-WEST, V., 151
 Sacred Humanity, 65
 Sage, Chinese, 141, 142
 SAHARA, 81
 SALOME, 245
Samson Agonistes, Milton's, 246
 SANKARA, 19
 Sanskrit, 19
 SAPPHIRA, 214

Index

- SATAN, 131, 132, 206
 SAUL, 198
Saul, Browning's, 198
 SAURAT, Professor Denis, 8
Scale of Perfection, The, W. Hylton's, 145
 Scape-goats of Counter-Reformation, 152
 Scepticism, 16
Schadenfreude, 207
 Scholastic Age, 248
 Science, 121, 162, 163, 165, 167, 168, 203, 204, 249, 257
 Science and Mysticism, 15
 Scientific method, 16, 37, 165
 Scientific spirit, 13
 Scientist, Jansenist and Mystic (Blaise Pascal), 162-70
Scintilla, Divine Spark, 101, 102, 115
 SCOTT, Sir Walter, 80
 SCYLLA, 120
 Seals, the four, 34
 SEBOND, Raimond, 185
 Second Coming, the, 11, 12
Secret of the Golden Flower, The, Wilhelm and Jung, 112, 141
 SEINE, 170
 SELF, THE, 35, 38, 42, 92
 analysis of, 42, 43, 44, 45
 as Private Universe, 37, 44
 as *sentient experience* (Bradley), 50, 54
 as series of *states of consciousness*, 47, 48
 as stream of *conscious experience*, 47, 48
 Bradley and unity of, 39
 Bradley's analysis of, 49, 50, 52, 54, 55
 continuity of, 40
 dissolution of objective self, 202
 dualism of, 95
 essential (Bradley), 49
 Hume and unity of, 38, 40, 43
 inmost, 91
 inmost mansion of, 34
 objective, 44, 45, 116
 origin of, 53
 paradoxes of, 39, 44, 49, 50
 reality of, 39
 subjective, 37, 44
 subliminary, 41, 42
 Vision and, 58
 Self-consciousness, 44, 45, 52
 Self-contradiction, 16, 40
 Self-discipline, 256
 Self-effacement of Chinese author, 135
 Selfhood, 45
 Selfishness, 45, 122, 129
 Self-Love of God, 197, 201
Selfness (Aldous Huxley), 22, 202
 Self-Pity, 11
 Self-Preservation, law of, 121
 SENECA, 94
Sense of the Past, The, by Henry James, 36
 Sense perception, 50
 Senses and Imagination, 79
 Sentience, 50, 51, 58
Sentiment, Pascal on, 175, 176
 SERAPH, Dante's, 18, 89
 SERAPHIM, 85
 Serial, newspaper, 90
 SETH, 131
 Seven Planets, the, 124, 126, 127
 Seventh Symphony, Beethoven's, 26
 Sex (oriental dread of), 131, 132 (Pascal), 191, 192
 SHAKESPEARE, 261
 SHAPLAND, H. P., 8, 28
 SHELLEY, P. B., 118, 211, 230, 253
 SHORTHOUSE, J. H., 105
 Silence, 91
 Silence of soul (Augustine), 112
 SIMEON, 109

Index

- Sin, 166,167
- Sin cancelled out by punishment, 231
- Singleness of mind, 224
- SINGLIN, Confessor of Port-Royal, 177
- Sin, survival of habit, 206
- Sirocco, 130
- Sleep, 39, 86
- Sleep and science, 86
- Sleep and the Changeless God, 87
- Sleep, graphs of intensity, 86
- Smiling of the dead, 229
- SOCRATES, 64, 225, 226
- SOLON, 223
- Song of Songs*, Biblical, 150
- SOPHIA, the Virgin, 225
- SOPHOCLES, 123
- Soul, 33,34, 42
- Soul and Body* from H. S. Verc-Hodge's *Half-way*, 60
- Soul, apex of, 101, 102
- Soul between eternity and time, 74,241
- Soul, the skipping, 225
- Soul without self (Bradley), 53
- SPACE, 33,36,68, 85
 - and experience, 75
 - and sight, 76
 - and the Absolute, 118, 119
 - and time as limitations, 56, 57, 65, 68, 180, 217
 - infinite, 66
 - timeless, 65
- Space-time minds, 45
- Space-time world, 55
- SPAIN, 152, 212
- Spectacles-of *coelum empyreum*, 149, 252
- Sphere of fire (Dante), 92
- SPINOZA, 155, 187
- SPIRIT, The Conscious Subject and Divine Spark, 69, 71, 83
 - aloofness of, 94
 - and Divine Spark (Tatian), 33, 102
 - and Synteresis, 102
- as consciousness, 33, 58, 59, 72
- clothed with Emauton, 56, 81
- conscious impulse of, 247
- disappears from religion, 42
- divinity of, 61
- equals sinless Godly Will, 219
- synonymous with Ego, 42, 43, 61
- trinity with soul and body, 33, 42, 61
- Spirit of God, 97
- Spiritual Guide, The*, by Molinos, 104, 106,108,111
- Spiritual language, 31, 92, 142
- Spiritual pride, 97
- Spiritual sight, 30, 31
- Standard of living, 12, 23, 258
- Stars, 87
- Star-worship of Babylon, 124, 126, 129, 247
- STEPHEN BAR SUDAILI, 136
- STEVENSON, R. L., 242
- STEWART, Dr. H. F 191
- Stills* of cinema film, 68, 72
- STOICS, 166
- Stranger, Angelic, 227, 228, 230, 239, 241, 244
- Strife, 81
- Strife of the Many, 215, 216
- Subconscious*, the, 41, 42
- Subject, Bradley's, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53
- Sublimation, 13, 15, 41
- Subliminal*, 41
- Subliminary*, 41, 42, 45, 81, 83, 84, 89, 204, 205
- Substratum, 65
- Sufist*, 30
- Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, 17, 145, 209, 249
- Sun, heaven of (Dante), 83
- Sun, home of Primal Man, 131, 132
- Superiority of things as they are, 200
- Superstition, 84, 205

Index

- Svetasvara Upanishad*, 42
 Symbols and Language, 14, 33
Symposium, Plato's, 244
 Synteresis or Divine Spark, 96, 101,
 102, 103, 115, 128, 248
 Synthesis of Love, The, 196-203
 Synthetic unity of apperception, 45,
 57, 58
 SYRIA, 134, 155

 Taboos, subliminary, 205
 Taoist, 30, 111, 235
 TATIAN, 102
 TAYLOR, Jeremy, 180, 209
 TAYLOR, Professor A. E., 44
 Telepathy, 81
 TEMPTER, 97
 TENNYSON, Alfred, Lord, 24, 28,
 60, 88, 92, 99, 217, 221, 232
 Tenth Legion, 24
 TERESA, Santa, 31, 92, 109, 125,
 142, 145, 150, 152, 181, 182, 212,
 240
 TERTULLIAN, 102, 166
Testament of Beauty, The, by Robert
 Bridges, 17, 251, 252, 258, 262
 Theatre, Jansenist hostility to, 191
 THEODOTUS, 126
Theologia Germanica, 46, 104, 155
 Theology, 168, 169
 Theophanies, 150
 THEOPHILUS, 99, 100
Theosis, deification, 159
 Thermo-Dynamics, 66
 The unknown quantity, 77, 79
 Third Heaven, St. Paul and, 136
 THOMAS A KEMPIS, 154, 225
 THOMAS AQUINAS, Saint, 17, 37,
 71, 107, 145, 166, 209, 218, 219,
 241, 249
 Thomism, 249
 THOMPSON, Francis, 14
 Thought and words, 78
 Thought, approach to Vision, 258
 Thought, instantaneousness of, 83
 Thoughts of God, 63, 65, 67, 70, 195,
 215, 222
Timaeus, Plato's, 64, 84
 TIME, 34, 36, 62, 64, 67, 73, 200
 and awareness 59
 and Love, 200
 as series of events, 73
 birth of, 33, 64, 67, 234
 busyness in, 46
 conquers eternity in eternal dam-
 nation, 214
 definitions of 58
 fighting against spirit of, 257
 independence of (T. H. Green), 56
 motion and, 90
 no creation in, 64
 penetration of eternity into, 33
 second limitation of the *One*, 67
 veil of, 88
 Timeless Moment, attempt to per-
 petuate, 201
 Timeless moment of eternity, 33, 38,
 61, 86, 91, 240
Timeless Moment, The, 7, 22, 26, 28,
 31, 32, 44, 47, 80, 91, 128, 199,
 223, 250
 Timelessness, 62, 66, 67
 Timeless universe, 71, 75
 Time-lines, 67, 88, 90
 TIMOTHY, 136
 TINTORETTO, 80
 TOURNEUR, Z., 8, 172
 Tradition, 16
 Tragedy, the cleansing fire of, 243
 Tranquillity, 75, 227
 TRANSCENDENCE, 93, 103, 140,
 143, 194, 247
 Albigensians and, 161
 and Juan de la Cruz, 147, 152
 and Manichaeism, 129, 132
 and sick soul, 120

Index

- TRANSCENDENCE, *before and after*
- in timeless moment, 117
 - blinding brilliance of, 192
 - bliss of extinction, 123, 129
 - conviction of sin, 120
 - defects of mirror apparent, 117
 - Dionysius and, 136, 137, 138
 - doctrines of, and mortification, 107, 190
 - Dr. Inge on, 139
 - Erigena and, 160
 - Evelyn Underhill and, 119, 141, 142
 - exaggerated emphasis on, 34, 106, 115, 120, 121, 122, 132, 139, 175
 - humility and, 32, 33, 34, 104, 115, 119, 203
 - Janscnius, Pascal, and, 34, 106, 121, 123, 175
 - Jesuits and, 166
 - man created by Devil, 132
 - pessimism, 124
 - Spinoza's simile, 187
 - suggests space in the spaceless, 118
 - reconciled with Immanence, 119, 123, 133, 161
- Transfiguration, 154, 201
- Transhumanization*, Dante, 92, 251, 253
- TRINITY, THE, 63, 65, 128, 137
- TRISTAN, Wagner's, 161
- Truth, 37, 91, 106, 165, 169, 178
- Truth, acid test of, 247
- Truth and ethics, Bertrand Russell, 213
- Truth, Browning, 93
- Truth, palace of, for Faith and Reason, 249 •
- TURNER, J. M. W., 80
- Two Truths, The, 7, 155, 156, 163, 203, 248, 249
- TYCHO, little god of little things, 256
- Unaware, 86
- Unconscious, *The*, 41, 42, 84
- Unconsciousness, 86, 160
- Underhill, Evelyn, 30, 38, no, 119, 136, 139, 141, 142, 144, 146, 149, 150, 174, 209, 241
- Under-Mind, subliminary, 78, 214
- Union of Egos in the Absolute, 71
- Union with God, v. Mystic Union
- Unitive life, no, in
- Unity, 65, 66, 72
- Universe, miracle of Love, 259
- Universe of space, 45, 179
- Universe, physical, relativity of spatial and temporal dimension, 179, 180
- Universe, riddle of, 165, 249
- Universe, vastness of, 65, 66, 90
- Unselfishness, 45, 153
- Upanishads*, 95
- Ups and downs of mood, 153
- UTOPIA, 12, 24, 258, 259
- Value, 127, 216
- Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James, 93, 120
- Vedic gods, 95
- Veil, Cardinal Newman's thick black, 87
- VENUS, heaven of (Dante), 83
- VERE-HODGE, H. S., 8, 60
- Vetstand*, Kant's, 57
- Vie de S. Françoise d'Assise*, by Paul Sabatier, 11
- Via Negativa*, 139, 143
- VIRGIL, 92
- Dante's, 64
- Virginity, cult of, 132
- VIRGIN MARY, 131
- Visio Dei*, 61, 63, 109
- Visio Eternitatis*, 61
- Visio intellectualis*, 160
- VISION, THE BEATIFIC, 14, 25-35, 80, 93, 94, 95, 118
- adventure within Self, 38

Index

- VISION, and eternity, 60, 61
 and human love, 192
 and self-restraint, 98
 and spiritual sight, 30
 approached by meditation, 109, 258
 asceticism of, 224
 as withdrawal from the world, 99
 basic event of, 29, 31
 Browning and, 21
 calls for no eccentricity, 98
 certainty of, 36, 40, 46, 57, 58, 59
 comes unaccountably, 21, 85, 152
 deificari est, 28
 direct impact of, 14
 diverse accounts of, 26, 27, 28, 29
 Erigena and, 160
 interpretation of, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26,
 27, 41, 101, 103, 124, 143, 150,
 155, 181, 199, 204, 206, 217, 223,
 250, 257, 261
 lightning flash of, 87
 light of, 23, 57, 201
 memory of home-coming, 242
 message of, 27, 35, 61, 104, 201,
 246
 moment of pure consciousness, 33
 mystery of Melchizedek, 47
 not Mystic Union, but its reflec-
 tion, no
 of Hierotheus, 136
 of Laughter at the Heart of Things,
 245
 of the One, highest prayer, Dr.
 Inge, 144
 on earth measured in time, 240
 Pascal and, 31, 34, 167, 170, 173,
 174, 182, 183
 Plotinus and, 30
 power for good or evil, 97, 98
 reflection of reality, 20
 revelation of mystery, 14, 75, 80,
 95
 secret of, 146
 seer of, 57, 63
 sequel to, 153
 three aspects, Mystic Union, Illu-
 mination, Enlightenment, 29, 31,
 trumpet call to action, 14, no
 truth inexpressible, 30
 watchword of, Love, 225
 wings of, 62
 Vital force, 72, 74, 96, 122, 219
 Vita Nuova, Dante's, 150, 251
 VOLTAIRE, 162
 VOSSLER, Karl, 249

 WALEY, Arthur, 135
 Walls of indifference (Dante), 72
 Watch-tower (Plato's), 99
 WATSON, Professor J., 46
 Way and Its Power, The, by A. Waley,
 135
 WELLS, H. G., 12
 Wisdom, Perfect, 57, 72, 79, 80, 88,
 112, 212, 218, 259, 260
 Wise Men of the East, 124, 125
 Wonderland, 90
 Words of power, 127
 WORDSWORTH, William, 14, 21,
 106, 246, 247, 249, 254, 260
 World created by Mani's angel, 131

 X the unknown quantity, 77, 78, 79,
 159

 YEATS, W. B., 196
 Young man with linen cloth, 77

Zend-Avesta, 124
 ZENO, Emperor, 155
 ZERVAN, Time, 125
 ZEUS, 244
 Zigzags of the *now*, 89
 Zodiac, dredging buckets, 132
 ZOROASTER, 124, 126, 129, 247

