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RELIGION COMING OF AGE

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RELIGION COMING OF AGE

BY

ROY WOOD SELLARS, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN,
AUTHOR OF "EVOLUTIONARY NATURALISM,"
"THE NEXT STEP IN RELIGION," ETC.



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PREFACE

AMERICA is beginning to reach the stage of self-consciousness. The era of the pioneer is largely past. And, as we should expect, Americans in increasing numbers are beginning to ask themselves questions. Traditional views are no longer accepted at their face value.

This means that America is ready for philosophy; for philosophy is essentially only a reflective view of things, resting on the best knowledge attainable. It is an effort, dominated by a sense of realities, to know what kind of a universe we are in and what the texture of human life is.

It goes without saying that philosophy has had no easy task. Partisans have always been impatient with it. Some have wanted it to declare itself in favor of a *reductive materialism* which would interpret the universe in terms of matter and motion as these were conceived in classic physics. Others have urged it to decide in favor of an airy and disembodied idealism or, at least, of a dualism between mind and the physical world. But philosophy kept steadily on analyzing and brooding. Sooner or later, it felt, a new and more adequate perspective would open up.

There is good reason to believe that this long-desired perspective is actually before us. The *tempo* of philosophy has of late been quickening. In theory of knowledge by the growth of realism, in cosmology by the rise of an emergent, or evolutionary, naturalism, in theory of values by the deepening of humanism, remarkable advances have been made;

and, what is more, these advances have dovetailed in a striking manner.

The present book is an attempt to show the import of this recent development for religion. Its keynote is the union of humanism and naturalism. The spiritual must be naturalized and humanized; but it is equally true that the scientific view of the world requires deepening and illumination. It must be realized that a quantitative and relatively external knowledge of things must not be supposed to exhaust them, that what is often called the *qualitative* must be acknowledged. Moreover, human and social evolution must be taken seriously and fitted into the scheme of things. It is this result that the new naturalism is making possible. Something of this wider and more humanistic perspective I have tried to put into this book. A religion founded on realities is a religion coming of age.

Traditional religion is obviously weakening. Half consciously and half unconsciously, the Churches are shifting their emphases. Human values are coming to occupy the forefront, while the old theological background is fading. But obscurantism and traditionalism will slow down this process and cause the Churches to lose their opportunity unless they have the courage to face the new world which science and philosophy are opening up. I, as their well-wisher, hope they may have this courage. Who will be the leaders of this New Reformation which must at the same time be a New Renaissance? I do not wish to speak as one having authority, for that is alien to the spirit of philosophy, but I do wish to convey my definite conviction that the old religious outlook is doomed, and irretrievably. I do not expect to be thanked for this candor of statement, but I hope

that my critics will refrain from committing the fallacy of *Argumentum ad Populum.*

I wish to thank my wife for her suggestions and for her help in the preparation of this book.

ROY WOOD SELLARS.

Ann Arbor.

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RELIGION COMING OF AGE

RELIGION COMING OF AGE

CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHER LOOKS AT RELIGION

ARE we still in that spiritual situation which two generations ago Matthew Arnold so graphically described and so tragically bemoaned:

> "Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born"?

There are many who think so, who hold that no conclusive light has been thrown on the riddle of existence by the earnest work of science and philosophy. There are others—and I think that they are an increasing number—who believe that a new cosmic and human perspective is arising to take the place of the old, that the other world of which Arnold speaks is being born.

Surely we have here a question capable of awakening the interest of reflective men and women. All desire some interpretation of their lives and of the universe at large. Many who do not find satisfaction in the traditional, religious outlook of the West are going to some cult which pretends to rede the riddle. There are many "seekers," as the old Arabs used to call them. What has philosophy to say upon these vital points which interest every one? Here is an

ancient and honorable study which for centuries has devoted itself to ultimate questions: why is it not more consulted?

If it is the philosopher's fault he should have the courage to admit it and correct his error. And I do think that he has been partly to blame for his isolation and unpopularity. But, surely, the fault has not been his alone. People have taken it for granted that philosophy is both very difficult and inconclusive. They have quoted with approval the famous line, "High philosophy less friend than foe." But was this fair? Was it not to judge unheard? I admit that there is no royal road to technical philosophy any more than there is to any technical science. But it seems to me entirely feasible to present the general results of philosophy in everyday language much as the conclusions of the various sciences are presented. What has philosophy to say of religion?

It has long been my persuasion that philosophy has been gaining a new and very significant insight into the nature of things and shows promise of being able to answer perennial problems. Of course, this advance has been arm in arm with science; the two are to-day inseparable. And I am glad to say that philosophy has found a natural place in the world for the spiritual. The spiritual is the realm of human endeavour. No doubt this involves a redefinition of the spiritual, a relinquishment of its more ghostly and supernatural meaning. But it is yet a victory for human life when we contrast it with the mechanical materialism of a few decades ago. We shall see that none of the old terms quite fit the new outlook which is growing up. While the old world with its dualism and supernaturalism is —if not dead—at least dying, a new world is being born.

What is this new world? It is a world of frank natural-

ism and creative human living. The spiritual is being recognized for what it is, human, social activity, for that which flourishes within our actual living. The inorganic world of which science has had so much to say is but its context and setting. Philosophy and science are realizing the absurdity of any attempt to *reduce* the higher to the lower, however continuous and coexistent they may be. The naturalism which is arising is a *new* naturalism.

Some ten years ago I published a book which proclaimed this perspective. "Religion," I said, "is loyalty to the values of life. . . . The idea of the spiritual must be broadened and humanized to include all those purposes, experiences and activities which express man's nature. The spiritual must be seen to be the fine flower of living which requires no other sanctions than its own inherent worth and appeal." It is to the more detailed development of this thesis that the present book is dedicated. In the pursuance of this purpose we shall travel through history and into the relevant part of present-day philosophy.

There are two levels of conflict between science and religion which are not sufficiently distinguished: (1) that between the cosmology of science and the traditional myths of religion, and (2) that between mechanical materialism and the reality and significance of human life. With regard to the first level of conflict philosophy agrees, and has always agreed, with science. The book of Genesis must be taken for what it is, the view of the world or cosmology of a pre-scientific age. But if the heart of religion has been concern for the things of the spirit, it has no reason to complain about the course which science and philosophy have taken of late.

The spiritual life of the Western world was adjusted to

a framework of a supernatural sort. It was theo-centric, otherworldly, salvational. But this old framework which goes back to ancient times is breaking down while a new one is forming. We may speak of this new framework as homo-centric, this-worldly and creative. It would seem that the centre of gravity of the spiritual life is changing. The stream of human energies has taken a new bed.

To many the old framework is still real and dear. That is as we should expect. They may yet be interested in knowing how the philosopher is coming to look at religion. And they may find that they can coöperate with him in many spiritual matters even if they cherish hopes that he has relinquished.

Transcendentalism may be called the half-way house to the new humanism which is arising to-day within a frank naturalism. In Emerson there is too much mysticism and symbolism quite to harmonize with the modern view, but the spirit of the man is authentic. He knew what the spiritual in man is. Nowhere has the attitude of philosophy been better expressed than in these lines: "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." And again, "People wish to be settled: only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them."

What Do People Believe?

While the fact can decide no issue, it is of interest to discover what people actually believe. And that there is great uncertainty as to what to believe is soon apparent. The chaos which reigns comes out distinctly in religious questionnaires which seem to be the fashion in both England and America and are clearly signs of the times.

In a recent one conducted in England, fourteen searching

questions were placed before the readers of two classes of papers, the *Nation and Athenaeum,* a liberal political and literary weekly, and the *Daily News,* a big, popular newspaper. Since it is my purpose to discuss just such questions as were asked in this questionnaire, in the light of recent movements in science and philosophy, I shall state the questions and, for a few of the more significant ones, the answers given:

Do you believe in a personal God? *Nation:* Yes, 537; no, 736; doubtful, 65. *Daily News:* Yes, 9,991; no, 3,686; unanswered, 366.

Do you believe in an impersonal, purposive and creative power of which living things are the vehicle, corresponding to life force, the *élan vital,* the evolutionary appetite, etc.? *Nation:* Yes, 503; no, 668; doubtful, 167. *Daily News:* Yes, 4,714; no, 6,467; unanswered, 2,656.

Do you believe in personal immortality? *Nation:* Yes, 578; no, 646; doubtful, 114. *Daily News:* Yes, 10,167; no, 3,178; unanswered, 704.

Do you believe that nature is indifferent to our ideals? *Nation:* Yes, 79; no, 315; doubtful, 230. *Daily News:* Yes, 5,713; no, 4,987; unanswered, 3,343.

There were other questions bearing more directly upon special Christian tenets such as:

Do you believe in any form of Christianity?

Do you believe in the formulated tenets of any church?

Do you accept the first chapter of Genesis as historical?

Do you regard the Bible as inspired in a sense in which the literature of your own country could not be said to be inspired?

Now what comes out of this questionnaire is the wide divergence of opinion. As we should expect, the readers

of the *Daily News* are less sceptical of traditional beliefs than the readers of the *Nation.* And yet even here the amount of what once was called free-thinking is very striking. Clearly doubt of the old world-perspective is on the increase. And it is well to bear in mind the sociological principle that what the educated people of one generation think the mass of the people believe the next generation. To judge from the above data we are entering a new religious era.

But questionnaires of this sort are too intellectualistic; they take creeds too seriously. It is just as important to know what attitudes and interests dominate. How seriously, for instance, is another world taken from day to day? What do people devote themselves to? In the next chapter we shall try to gain an insight into the texture of human living as it is at present.

It would be well to note what literature is being read. In America the success of such books as Wells's *Outline of History,* Browne's *This Believing World,* Van Loon's *Story of Mankind,* and Robinson's *The Mind in the Making*—to mention only a few of recent best sellers—is significant. New ideas are seeping in.

But it remains for philosophy to make the full correlation and interpretation of these ideas. Popular science and history go only so far; something of synthesis and horizon is left out. To supply this is the task of philosophy. It must connect up facts and ideas, systematically and on a large scale.

It would seem, then, that religion is in a critical period. A new world is forming in man's spirit and threatening the old accredited one. But the old outlook is supported by institutions which have grown up around it and are identi-

fied with it. Such changes as they accept are those which are unavoidable, so matter-of-fact have they become to the modern world. Willingly many institutions would choose isolation; they would withdraw from contact with modern thought and its errors. But such a policy of isolation seems to me ultimately hopeless in a bustling, migrant society such as ours. Sooner or later, religion must confront reality as we know it and make its peace with it. Otherwise, the feeling that it is an illusion will increase. And that would be a pity, for religion as a term for man's spiritual life is too valuable to lose. I quote with pleasure a protest against isolation penned by Professor Brightman of Boston University. "The attitude of extreme isolation," he writes, "refutes itself. It is in principle broken down by the advance of thought. It still maintains its hold on institutions and individuals; but if there be true values in religion, those values cannot be conserved by the policy of the isolationist who hid his talent in the earth, but, rather, by that of the co-operators who went and traded. Religion, if it be true, will thrive in commerce with the other values of experience. If it have profound faith in itself, it will not shrink from that commerce, but will welcome it." [1]

Science and the Modern World

It is not only in outward, practical things that our world is rapidly changing. The radio and the aeroplane are products of a technique and a system of thought which are alike covered by the magic name, science. And in these days science has taken to itself wings. We speak of the new physics, the new biology, the new psychology. Progress is so rapid that education has not been able to keep up with it.

[1] Brightman, *Religious Values*, p. 19.

It is in this kind of an atmosphere that religion, or the spiritual life of man, must maintain itself. How can we help thinking of a new religion as well?

Science has had a history whose importance is sometimes overlooked. It has passed from one dominant set of ideas to another. First of all, mechanical models fascinated the scientist's mind. And there can be no doubt that these helped man part way in his attempt to get insight into nature's mode of working. The result was classic physics. But the new physics of this generation has broken with much of the past. The far-reaching character of the change is indicated in the following quotations from masters in the field.

"The progress of science," writes Professor Whitehead, "has now reached a turning point. The stable foundations of physics have broken up: also for the first time physiology is asserting itself as an effective body of knowledge, as distinct from a scrap-heap. The old foundations of scientific thought are becoming unintelligible. Time, space, matter, material, ether, electricity, organism, configuration, structure, pattern, function, all require reinterpretation. What is the sense of talking about a mechanical explanation when you do not know what you mean by mechanics?" [1]

And the following quotation from Professor Eddington is significant: "Until recently physicists took it for granted that they had knowledge of the entities dealt with, which was of a more intimate character; and the difficulty which many find even now in accepting the theory of relativity arises from an unwillingness to give up these intuitions or traditions as to the intrinsic nature of space, time, matter and force, and substitute for them a knowledge expressible

[1] Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 24.

in terms of the readings of measuring instruments. In considering the relations of science and religion it is a very relevant fact that physics is now in course of abandoning all claim to a type of knowledge which it formerly asserted without hesitation. Moreover, these considerations indicate the limits to the sphere of exact science." [2]

Very naturally, these conclusions of modern science have not surprised philosophers nearly as much as they have the scientists themselves, since a part of the task of philosophy has always been the exploration of the nature and conditions of human knowledge. It is clearly the duty of philosophy to declare the significance of this clearer vision of the nature of the knowledge gained by the exact sciences for human life.

Roughly speaking, the chief scientific changes can be brought under four headings: (1) The new view of matter; (2) the decline of the strict mechanical view of all physical processes; (3) the tendency to take organization and evolution more seriously; and (4) a clearer recognition of the kind of knowledge gained by the exact sciences. I shall disregard particular theories in physics such as the quantum theory and the relativity theory because they do not bear so directly upon our purpose.

Old-fashioned materialism was founded in large measure upon what Eddington refers to as the kind of knowledge of physical entities which physicists once supposed they had. It was assumed that there was a sort of direct vision of the very stuff of the physical world. Vaguely combined with this belief was the notion that matter was an inert stuff existing in atomic bits and knocked around by impact. This traditional view has been variously called the "brick-bat" and

[2] From *Science, Religion and Belief,* a book edited by I. Needham.

the "pushiness" theory of matter. Science did not bother its head very much about the mind and about the nature and conditions of knowing. Nevertheless, it tended to look upon matter as the most real thing in the universe This unconscious subordination of mind to an inert, mechanical matter was the bias of past materialism. And that is why philosophy could never be satisfied with it; it left too much out of the picture.

But there has been a drastic revolution in the concept of matter during the last three decades. The atom is now viewed as an electrical system consisting of a nucleus and electrons. There is active organization rather than an inert gob of stuff. Ideas of tension, relation and equilibrium are now relevant. In short, matter is a patterned system capable of union with other systems in an evolutionary series. And in all this knowledge there is no intuition of the physical stuff; all is inference and measurement and concerns quantity and pattern.

Along with the new view of matter has gone a relinquishment of the traditional, mechanical picture of physical change. Thus the whole idea of impact has altered. Images taken from perception, such as the striking of billiard balls, are no longer regarded as significant. Scientists now agree with philosophers that human perception gives only a rough-and-ready translation of what is happening in nature. By means of spectrum-analysis, they have been enabled to pass far below even the microscopic and to gain an idea of what actually happens in nature when we see two bodies collide. And in this region mechanical models constructed under the influence of perception are seen to be inapplicable. If there is mechanics, it is of a new kind. The readings must suggest their own interpretation.

The older mechanical view of nature was atomistic in that it looked upon bodies as collections of self-sufficient units. But recent science takes integration or relations in nature more seriously. A chemical substance is no longer conceived of as a collection but as a patterned system. And may not complex systems have new properties which simpler systems do not possess? If so, novelty is real and the way is open for the existence of living things. Nature is no longer a dead-level system. What is in it becomes an empirical matter for discovery.

The result of all this advance has been a keener feeling of the need of a philosophy of nature. It should not surprise us, however, to find this sudden change inducing a mood of mysticism in the minds of some of the abler scientists, like Eddington. Having discovered philosophy, they may want to take it by storm. Let us remember that scientific knowledge is knowledge even if it is of a different kind than was once supposed.

The Recent Advance of Philosophy

It may well be imagined that all this development within science has been stimulating to philosophy. It has helped to give the philosopher courage to reanalyze his problems. Thus two currents of thought have met and reinforced each other. Out of this is arising what I may call a new perspective. We can best indicate it by a brief discussion of the following four headings: (1) The decline of mechanical materialism and, at the same time, the weakening of its opposite, transcendental idealism; (2) the growth of a critical form of realism in theory of knowledge; (3) the solution of the mind-body problem; and (4) a clearer conception of the difference between scientific knowledge and

valuation. We can only hope to indicate some of the general features of this new perspective in philosophy.

From what we have already said in our discussion of the new outlook in physics it is clear why philosophy has given up traditional, mechanical materialism. Perhaps it is incorrect to say "given up," for philosophy was always sceptical of its adequacy. But we must get the actual situation clearly in mind or else the reader may draw inferences which are unwarranted. Old-fashioned, mechanical materialism has been pretty well discredited but it looks probable that a new type may take its place, a more critical and flexible type. What I have in mind is this: Science can never get along without spatio-temporal patterns. Thus when physiology seeks the mechanisms underlying human behaviour, it is looking for spatio-temporal patterns in the brain. But this does not mean that it is looking for impacts of the old type. Rather is it looking for systems. It is putting something organic and integrated in place of the atomistic aggregations which it once favoured. It is stressing organization. Professor Whitehead speaks of the organic view of nature. Others say that we must read the outlook of biology downward to the inorganic. This means that the idea of the physical is undergoing profound alteration.

It is so easy for popular thought to jump from one extreme to another. Materialism and idealism are thought of as contradictory terms. Hence, to deny one means the affirmation of the other. But what is happening is a profound alteration of the one; it may be of both. Perhaps a new materialism is arising which is not so far from a new idealism. Our outlook upon the world is more delicate and flexible than ever before.

As I have hinted above, transcendental idealism is on the

way to becoming as antiquated as mechanical materialism, of which it was the romantic denial. Transcendental idealism had many roots in the past. Platonism was one of its sources; so was the theory of knowledge of Berkeley, Kant and Hegel. I do not think that it is far wrong to say that philosophical idealism rested on a denial of physical realism and on the affirmation that the highest in human experience must be taken as typical of reality. Now, such idealism had a decided value in the days when science tended to reduce reality to abstract matter and tended to deny creative activity on the part of human beings. It was a significant protest against an abstract point of view. But is it so justified to-day? I cannot feel that it is. As a matter of fact, idealism in theory of knowledge, that is, the view that experience is the ultimate term for thought, is giving way to realism; and evolution is bringing to the front the principle of the co-reality of all levels in nature. Man is no more real than a dog; he is simply different and able to do things that a dog cannot do.

The quick development and spread of realism in theory of knowledge is one of the surprising features of the last thirty years. There is strong reason to believe that this new realism is taking a form in line with the reflective discovery by science of the actual nature of its knowledge of the world. Critical realism, for instance, is the position that external things can be known in terms of their patterns and quantities but that they cannot be directly intuited. It is the structure and behaviour of things that we decipher. It is a realism which has made explicit the conditions and nature of such human knowledge. It holds that by perception and by scientific technique we can grasp the intrinsic characteristics of things and yet never get a glimpse of their stuff. We have

knowledge but of a very definite kind. It is this kind of knowledge that all the exact sciences are acquiring.

The solution of the mind-body problem is a resultant of this new theory of the nature of our external knowledge of physical systems and the rejection of the old, dead-level view of nature. If we take evolution seriously, it means the rise of new wholes with new properties. Clearly the human organism is such a new whole with properties correlated with its patterned organization, which is a product of millions of years of organic evolution. From the outside, science informs us of the structure and behaviour of the human organism, but from the inside we are aware in our consciousness of events on the inside of the organism. Here, and here alone, are we on the inside of nature. In outline, at least, this is the solution that is gaining strength to-day. The traditional dualisms are vanishing, and a view between traditional materialism and transcendental idealism is emerging.

Of the nature and significance of the difference between scientific knowing and human valuation we shall have much to say in later chapters. Scientific knowledge is, as we have seen, fundamentally metrical. It represents an attempt to explore by measurement the quantitative characteristics of physical systems. Hence, value is not a concept which appears in the content of science. What, then, is it? Briefly, it is an aspect of human feeling and doing as guided by practical knowing. In value, we are on the inside of a living activity, trying to determine the meaning of objects and acts for our lives. We are agents and not mere spectators as we are in scientific knowledge. If we ask ourselves how an object connects up with our desires and purposes, we are seeking to determine its value for us. Value is therefore egocentric and sociocentric. The value of an

object is never intrinsic to that object in an immediate way but is relative to a valuer.

Value is a beautiful word and one to conjure with. Science —so that phrase runs in many a book—has nothing to say about value; *that* is the domain of religion. And in a very real sense this distinction is true. But art and morality and politics also are concerned with value. We must decide the nature and status of value in human life. Can it not be naturalized, once we see it in relation to human life? Recent philosophy and sociology entertain no doubt but that it can.

This survey of recent advances in science and philosophy was necessary for orientation. Philosophy is more than logic and theory of knowledge and metaphysics. But it requires some measure of general apprehension of the drift of these studies before it can rise above them and fulfil them. *Lebensweisheit* or the wisdom of life is not easily attained; it is a mellowness which comes after much thinking. It is the crown of philosophy and not its beginning.

Why History Cannot Be Neglected

It has seemed to me impossible to reach insight into religion apart from some knowledge of its history and antecedents. Hence, I have devoted the first part of this book to a study of religious origins and developments, passing from primitive religion to the religions of personal salvation, of which Christianity is fairly typical. I am convinced that too few people realize what Christianity was at the beginning of its career. The consequence of this ignorance is that they suppose that certain dogmas had a sudden and mysterious origin, whereas they were growths, expressive of a certain direction of tradition and perspective, and clearly relative to the culture of the past. The whole evolution

of Christianity was a human and social affair which we can in some measure reconstruct.

I am quite aware that the origin of a set of beliefs does not determine their truth or falsity. That is a further question which must be answered in the light of our present knowledge; and, in the second part of the book, I shall concern myself with it. Is the Christian view of the world tenable? I shall ask. Nevertheless, it is well to know precisely what these beliefs were and how they arose, and it is, in my opinion, impossible to know this apart from an historical sense of the cosmic outlook they expressed. Why did miracles seem very natural to early Christians? Surely because they did not see the world as we do now. The world was not a causal system, in their eyes, but a domain of personal agencies. Demons ran wild in it and anything might happen. It is science which has gradually taught men better, though Greek philosophy began the job. Why, again, did resurrection of the body seem so plausible to ancient peoples? Again because they knew very little about living things and were unable to imagine the difficulties connected with such a feat. While, then, the origin of a belief is logically distinct from its validity, it usually casts light upon it. We can honour the orthodox of the past, for they were the children of their time and culture. But it is not so certain that we can do this for the orthodox of to-day.

I believe that one of the tragic defects of our culture is the absence of a well-thought-out and also deeply-felt-out philosophy of life. Human nature abhors a spiritual vacuum. It will naturally cling to the old until something positive and worth while is put in its place. But such a substitution of something constructive has been no easy task. Man had to master the universe intellectually, as regards its broad outlines and general characteristics, and then had to see the

import of it all for his own life. But the import is, I believe, at last becoming clear. Man must stand on his own feet and accept both the responsibility and opportunity that life offers. He must set up objectives of welfare and achievement here and now. Courage, loyalty, and intelligence: these must be our watchwords.

The roots of religion have lain in the tragic aspects of life more, perhaps, than in its achievements. It has often been a way of support to the weary and discouraged. This in itself is a commentary on past human life. Is it not also a challenge to the social spirit of our age? But who can escape, or wishes wholly to escape, the serious sense of life? Culture implies meditation and communing with the great spirits of the past. Man is an animal that has become self-conscious and imaginative, able to look before and after. Therein lies both his triumph and his tragedy. He can imagine so much more than he can be. Whence the thrilling texture of life to the artist and to the truly religious man. If the educated man of to-day cannot be religious in the old pattern, that does not preclude being religious in the new.

If human life had not contained so much tragedy, there would be less impulse to project hopes into another world and to fashion a superhuman guardian and guarantor of all values. And are we not slowly entering a new era? Religion to-day must be social and creative; it must envisage far-flung goals of fellowship and achievement that will fire the imagination. A humanist religion cannot be a passive thing; it must cry out the command for the co-operative creation of the good life upon this earth. I firmly believe that Jesus and Amos and Hosea, had they lived in our day, would have proclaimed the gospel of this life mastered to great ends.

CHAPTER II

OUR CHANGING WORLD

A Brief Retrospect

IT is always best to get one's bearings in tangled subjects like religion, and this can best be accomplished by means of a survey. Let us, therefore, examine the fortunes of Christianity during the last few centuries. What new forces has it had to contend with? Has it met them successfully? We shall for a time think in terms of centuries rather than in terms of decades. It may be that the drift of things will become clearer to us as we do so. It is assuredly one of the merits of philosophy that it lifts us above heated controversies between "big-enders" and "little-enders" or between "low-heels" and "high-heels." While I do not think that philosophy can quite see things *sub specie aeternitatis* in fields in which time counts so much as it does in religion, it can at least elevate itself above the particular quarrels of the moment.

The Middle Ages inherited its religion from a decadent Roman Empire. It was neither in a position to examine this inheritance nor had it any desire to do so. To be very frank about it, our ancestors of a few centuries ago were barbarians with much of the child about them. And it cannot be denied that Christianity was very much of an advance upon their traditional religions. Centuries had to pass before Europe began to settle down into its present outline

and its present modes of life. What was usable in the old culture had to be assimilated and new institutions and methods worked out. And all this took time.

Christianity came to the Northern invaders as a going concern. It was impressive, well-organized, and many-sided. In all this it bore the stamp of the Roman Empire, whose political genius it possessed. It claimed the keys of Heaven and Hell, regions to which, it taught, the soul would go after death. It had ritualistic charm, drawn from many sources in the Ancient World, from the old national religions, from the mystery cults, and from the Jewish priesthood. It had many elements of moral nobility, well adapted to moderate the savage temper of its new converts. It had magical sacraments which awed and exalted them. At this time, science did not exist, even its beginnings having died out. And such philosophy as continued to exist was the possession of the clergy and belonged to the tradition of Plato and Pythagoras rather than that of Democritus and Epicurus. The mass of the people were ignorant, superstitious, and credulous. Only in a complex society in which there is a leisure class of a secular type is free enquiry capable of maintaining itself. The Dark Ages, at least, had no such class, for it was a period of turmoil and warfare.

The Middle Ages is often spoken of by its romantic admirers as the "Age of Faith." But that it was an age of faith is not surprising. In this respect it only repeated the past history of mankind at large. It is the "Age of Reflection" that is the exception. As we shall see when we come to study the history of religion, mankind has always been awed by a penumbra of the sacred, the mysterious and the supernatural. In like fashion, our forefathers accepted the Christian epic and submitted to the scheme of things taught

by Mother Church. Life was begun and ended with appropriate sacraments; and this life was looked upon as the portal to a life beyond the grave. The popular mind, at least, had no doubts. At most, a few of the more daring among the educated permitted themselves a measure of scepticism. In this connection we think of Abelard, of Pope Boniface VIII and of Emperor Frederick II. These men were the exceptions who proved the rule.

"It is hard for us," writes Anatole France, "to think ourselves into the state of mind of a man of another age who firmly believed that the earth was the centre of the universe and that all the stars turned around it. Beneath his feet, he felt the damned writhing in torment, and perhaps he had seen with his eyes and smelt with his nostrils the sulphurous breath of Hell escaping through some fissure in the rocks. Raising his head, he contemplated the twelve spheres, that of the elements which encloses air and fire, then the spheres of the Moon, Mercury and Venus which Dante visited on Good Friday in the year 1300. Then those of the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Then the incorruptible firmament from which the stars were suspended like lamps. His thought prolonging that contemplation, he discovered beyond, with the eyes of the spirit, the ninth Heaven to which the saints were caught up, the *primum mobile* or crystalline and finally the Empyrean, the abiding place of the Blessed toward which, after death, white-robed angels (he had the firm belief of this) would carry, as though it were a little child, his soul, washed by Baptism and perfumed by the oil of the last sacred sacraments. In those days God had no other children but men, and his whole creation was managed in a fashion at once puerile and poetic like an immense cathedral. Thus conceived, the universe

was so simple that it was represented in its entirety, with its true figure and its movement, in certain great clocks, painted and provided with machinery." [1]

The Middle Ages has a certain romantic charm due to its naïveté and simplicity, its lack of industrial tension, its variegated social life with its hierarchical order. We are prone to forget its famines, its plagues, its superstition and the tragic life of the peasantry. But as society knitted together into nation-states, and commerce developed between cities, a new culture arose, at first chiefly in Italy.

With the Renaissance, a new outlook and spirit was born which was a mixture of secularism, scepticism and humanism. By secularism I mean an increase of interest in human life as such, of what the religious thinker has usually called worldliness; by scepticism I mean a more or less critical attitude towards the fervent traditions of the past; and by humanism, an absorption in the artistic and literary culture of classic Greece and Augustan Rome. Curiosity, leisure and knowledge increased together and led to an interest in human life for its own sake. The Christian epic retreated into the background; even the popes were touched by scepticism. There was a growth of self-confidence, of joy in life, of creative activity. And this Revival of Learning hastened the revival of science.

But social evolution is never as we could wish it. Instead of a quiet growth we find disruption and degeneration in one place and a spread of activity to other places. The brilliant Renaissance degenerated in Italy—where it had for a while promised to surpass the miraculous Greek development—and Italy, itself, was overwhelmed by foreign

[1] Anatole France, *Le Jardin d'Epicure*, p. 1.

invasion of a brutal sort. But the mind of man was alive again, and nothing has since stopped its advance.

The Protestant Reformation

It is very hard to do justice—no more and no less—to the Protestant Reformation. It was a complex occurrence in which good and bad were inextricably mingled. Reform was needed in the Church, and we must conclude that revolution was inevitable. Yet the Reformation was so intense and so uncritical in its outlook that the scholar regrets the Renaissance. A religious revolt cannot be expected to have moderation when emotion is needed. When war is declared, people stiffen and take sides; points of difference are exaggerated, and tolerance disappears.

Abuses had arisen in the Church which needed correction, and many of the pretensions of the Church were unjustified. But Protestantism was itself fairly naïve in its own assumptions. Thus Luther was convinced that the pope was the Antichrist. On the whole, we must regard Protestantism as a sign of the break-up in the religious field of mediævalism. At the very least, it was a step in that direction. Nationalism, individualism and rationalism quickly made their appearance in it.

On the good side of the Protestant Reformation we can place an increase in moral earnestness, a good which had at times for its obverse side a certain stiffness and unimaginativeness, even an introspective morbidness. To its credit we can also place an increase of individualism, a breaking-loose from authority, a tendency for the individual to think things out for himself—too often, alas! with no adequate training and knowledge to guide him. On the bad side of the ledger we must put the worship of the Scriptures

and an increased emphasis on theological creeds which no one really understood. Let us remember that the Reformation expressed in part a political struggle due to the rise of nationalism. It was all a part of the break-up of the Middle Ages.

This ecclesiastical and religious struggle brought, in its wake, wars of the cruelest sort. And there was an increase of bigotry and intolerance. Points of difference were exalted and, as a consequence, sectarianism flourished. Having accepted the Bible as the seat of authority, people tried to work out a religious system for themselves, and they naturally differed in their interpretations. Unfortunately, Christianity had inherited a tradition of dogmatism and exclusiveness from Judaism and had added to it. Hence the strange conviction that incomprehensible dogmas, which were often mere forms of words, were a matter of salvation and damnation. It is clear to us that God had not yet been ethicized, that he was largely thought of as an autocrat with mysterious ways. Biblical myths were taken seriously, and men believed in the effects of Adam's sin. Clearly, religious thought moved within the boundaries of a tradition which was regarded as revealed. Christianity was a religion of a book. The majority were unable to raise themselves above this inheritance and think freely and empirically.

It is senseless to condemn the past. What happened was the resultant of human nature, the will-to-power of institutions, and the social trends of the time. Only a few of the highly educated and naturally tolerant felt the pity of it all; the rest were partisans. I know that it is the popular tradition to admire popular leaders such as Calvin and Loyola and to despise the Erasmuses and the Montaignes. There is psychological affinity at work in this admiration;

it is only too often the case of the blind leading the blind with much flourish of cudgels and much excitement. In such turmoil, intelligence and tolerance are not at a premium. The philosopher is apt to mutter with Mercutio: "A plague on both your houses." The struggles of a period are expressions of the cultural outlook of that period, and Europe was still full of barbarism. I am not implying that Europe and America have not still much of it left. The Great War dampened any undue optimism on that score.

In itself, Protestantism did not mark any distinct intellectual advance. There was little questioning of the main assumptions of the Christian tradition. The Anglican Church, so long as it was touched with the spirit of the Revival of Learning, showed a certain breadth of outlook. But Protestantism as a whole did not push to any radical reconstruction of thought. Its divergence was psychological and institutional rather than intellectual. The chief advance assignable was of an indirect nature. Uniformity was broken down and authority challenged, thus causing reflection on ultimate matters. The cake of custom was broken. The chief positive causes for the progress which ensued after the wars of religion were the forces let loose by printing, commerce, education, and personal leisure. The Churches began slowly to drop from leadership and settled down as conservative institutions chiefly concerned with the next world.

The Age of Enlightenment

It was not until the eighteenth century that the Western World began seriously to question the truth of historical Christianity. And then it was the element of mystery and

irrationality in Christian doctrines that awakened doubt. Reason was in the ascendant again. We feel ourselves in the presence of men akin to the Greek thinkers of old, men able to look out upon the world unaffrighted and ask questions.

It is true, as has so often been pointed out, that the eighteenth century did not have much of an historical sense. It tended to explain institutions and ideas in terms of priestcraft and kingcraft. But it did have a critical sense. It is remarkable how quickly the whole idea of revelation came under suspicion. Take the following passage from Shaftesbury's *Letters:* "Now if there be really something previous to revelation, some antecedent demonstration of reason to assure us that God is, and withal that he is so good as not to deceive us; the same reason, if we trust to it, will demonstrate to us that God is so good as to exceed the very best of us in goodness. And after this manner we can have no dread or suspicion to render us uneasy; for it is malice only, and not goodness, which can make us afraid. . . . *For nobody trembles to think there should be no God; but rather that there should be one.* This, however, would be otherwise if Deity were thought as kindly of as Humanity."

It is clear that the human mind is beginning to reject the doctrine of a revengeful God or of a God who has given a revelation to a small number of his children in a partial manner. Reason is the enemy of mysteries and particularisms, and reason is awake again. Swift's essay entitled, *"Argument against Abolishing Christianity,"* reveals very well the attitude of the gentlemen of the day. The Dean of St. Patrick's defends a formal Christianity interwoven with morality and political institutions and not the older passionate type. We can conclude with Shafer

in his *Christianity and Naturalism* that "eighteenth-century theology was Christian only in name."

We associate the mental climate of this period with the names of Pope, Diderot, Voltaire, Lessing, Gibbon and Hume. The upper classes were becoming urbane, critical and suave. It was felt that religion should be simplified and freed from its barbarism and uncouthness. The ironic chapters of Gibbon's famous history express very well the opinions of the upper classes. He regards the early success of Christianity as due to its fanaticism, its appeal to the ignorant masses, its promise of immortality, its teaching of miraculous cures, and the strong organization of the Church. It is easily seen that he has far more sympathy with the cultured pagan than with the Christian zealot. We have moved far from the Middle Ages. Already Christianity is being thrown on the defensive.

The deism of this period with its simple, and apparently demonstrable, creed has often been held up to scorn. Certainly, it does not measure up to the expectations and demands of traditional Christianity. Worship, communion and mystery have disappeared. Miracles and providential interventions are no longer believed in. Morality must secure a human basis and find its own sanctions in human happiness and welfare. I can quite understand how unsatisfying such an outlook is to one who carries in his soul the expectation of something like a social communion with a personal God. Deism is, in fact, more a criticism of past religion than a religion in itself. Man is beginning to stand on his own feet, though feebly.

But, in estimating the Enlightenment, we must be historically minded. It did contribute to tolerance and to the elimination of all manner of superstitions. Unhappily, its

influence was limited to the fortunate classes, for there was as yet no popular education. It was just the beginning of a new outlook on the world dominated by science and philosophy.

The Reaction: Romanticism and Evangelism

Perhaps the eighteenth century was too formal and too disposed to identify any enthusiasm with fanaticism. In this it represented a reaction from the turbulence of the preceding period. Yet it must be admitted that towards its close it, itself, began to become constructive in its social interests. We must not forget that modern humanitarianism and democracy began in the eighteenth century. The philosophic radicals of France and England, Godwin, Bentham, Diderot, Paine and even Rousseau, were children of the Enlightenment. And to these men our own culture owes more than it is usually willing to acknowledge.

Seen as a critical interlude, then, we can do justice to the eighteenth century while admitting its defects. Wright seems to me to bring out the social logic of its spirit very well in the following quotation: "It was probably inevitable that the Enlightenment should have lacked religious fervour. The religious wars on the Continent and the Puritan disorders in England during the seventeenth century led the men of the early eighteenth century to regard all religious emotionalism with stern disfavor. Deep religious feelings appeared inevitably to result in bigotry and fanaticism, and attempts to impose one's religion forcibly upon others. So even divines in the churches vigorously denounced the wickedness and folly of 'enthusiasm.' Tolerance could only come with clear thinking, and men cannot think clearly when their emotions are unduly aroused. A period of

religious apathy was probably necessary until the spirit of toleration might become established; but it can only be defended as a temporary necessity in a time of transition." [1]

Curiously enough, the nineteenth century was, itself, in many ways a reaction against the eighteenth. Many factors determined the new intellectual and emotional outlook. In the first place, the Revolutions in which the eighteenth century culminated frightened the well-to-do. Edmund Burke is, in England, the eloquent defender of the past. Tradition is exalted and criticism condemned as shallow. We who have experienced the Great War and its social sequels can understand all this exceedingly well. We have had our lesser Burkes. In France there arose such a thinker as De Maistre to express the outlook of the conservative. The Churches were quite naturally conservative bodies, and they threw their weight into the scales on the side of reaction. Rationalism began to become bad form. Besides, is it not the next world that really matters?

Another factor in favour of a religious reaction from the rationalism of the eighteenth century was the gradual disruption of the aristocratic state and the growth of the middle classes. The middle classes brought with them certain traditions and valuations. They were not inclined to be speculative in anything but business. And, as we in America know to our cost, culture is a plant of slow growth. Thus, the middle classes had their shortcomings as well as their virtues. So much energy was required for economic success in a competitive period that little was left over for reflection. The social climate changed radically. We can notice this in art and literature as well as in religion.

As for the masses, they were overwhelmed by the indus-

[1] Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion*, p. 189.

trial revolution. All was turmoil and change. There was little education among the people—hardly even that literacy which some identify with education—and, at first, life itself was for them little more than a losing fight with poverty. Under these conditions religious supernaturalism gave an emotional vent to lives otherwise drab and unimaginative.

The evangelical movement, which produced what has been called a second birth of Protestantism, began in England with the work of Wesley and Whitefield. This movement spread to America, and American Protestantism soon became dominantly evangelical.

This new form of Protestantism was essentially a popular movement. Its leaders worked among the people and stressed the need of conversion. In order to affect large groups, revivals were conducted, and these often took very emotional forms. For instance, revivals swept like contagions over the Middle West in the United States, and conversion became a standardized affair following certain laws. Not many years ago, there was a great revival in Wales which attracted world-wide attention, and, in America, the Reverend William Sunday devoted his picturesque gifts to the cause.

At its best, evangelical Christianity united emotional fervour with moral earnestness. It touched the lives of many who had been out of contact with religious institutions and impressed upon them a definite set of standards and ideals. The movement was democratic in spirit and sincere, ready to go on crusades for what was thought to be right. But its usefulness was bound up with the conditions of the tir and with the class of people to whom it administered sp itual values. Let us remember that the majority of people most affected by it were uneducated people wit

cultural traditions, however much inclined to moral earnestness. And, unfortunately, this movement was intellectually conservative. It stressed the inerrancy of the Scriptures and encouraged people to adopt a very simple view of life. In morals, a rather conventional puritanism was emphasized, and there was a tendency to look down upon culture as savouring of this world. Often the education of its ministers left much to be desired. The result was formal goodness without much light.

It is becoming clear to many to-day that evangelical Christianity, of this older type at least, was an expression of certain social and cultural conditions. As these are being outgrown through the creative work of science, art and industry, the social and intellectual medium is no longer favourable. Communication and popular education is producing a different kind of populace from that with which Wesley and Whitefield laboured. The Great Society—to use Graham Wallas's term—is upon us. We shall see that fundamentalism is, in large measure, the awakening of orthodox evangelicalism to the danger of the new situation.

It is interesting to note the swing, in America, from the rationalism of the eighteenth century to the religious conservatism and emotionalism of the nineteenth. Jefferson and Franklin were rationalists and deists just like their compeers in France, England and Germany. The brilliant controversialist and energetic reformer, Tom Paine, who deserved so much from America and got so little gratitude, must be added to this list. It is less generally known that Ethan Allen was a free-thinker of decided speculative capacity. Even in New England, cultured men like John Adams had outgrown the Calvinistic theology of the Reformation. And it is well known that all through the South,

among the planter aristocracy—that South which is now the home of fundamentalism—free thought on religious matters was rife.

And then came the reaction, the growth of Jacksonian democracy, the settling of the wide West. A rather aristocratic society gave way to new forces; the masses became insurgent. But, inevitably, for the time being, all the energies of this democracy were taken up by economic affairs. They had small time and less opportunity for art, science and philosophy. They were cut loose from old-world culture and had to establish institutions whose task it was to transplant it among them, and all this took time.

Given the above-described setting, which all Americans can readily understand, it is not difficult to appreciate the past texture of American Protestantism. Let us remember, too, that emigration played its part all through this period. Each nationality had its dominant religious tradition, and this was used as a bond of union. Too often, the particular Church used racial and language differences to encourage an isolation welcome to it as a human institution with the will-to-power. In fact, the more conservative Churches adopted isolationism and, in the older days, with a fair measure of success.

Mecklin and Rowe have analyzed the history of Protestantism in America along these lines with what seems to me telling effect. "The dominance of religion in the higher life of Americans," writes Mecklin, "is intimately associated with the nation's struggle of a hundred years and more with the forces of nature as it pushed the pioneer line slowly westward and carved out the material form of a great civilization. This period of unrestricted competition in exploiting natural resources, with its isolated, independent, and

ignorant pioneer democracy, shaped American character as nothing else had done. The frontier has registered itself in the American mind in 'its restlessness, its preoccupation with the practical, its lack of interest in the æsthetical and the philosophical, its desire for ends and neglect of means, its preference of cleverness to training, its self-confidence, its individualism and its extreme provinciality.' " [1] Mecklin points out that the pioneer's lack of intellectual contacts made him singularly conservative and timorous in religion. In a similar vein Rowe notes that "Where people have grown up under frontier conditions, they have fixed opinions in theology, opinions that have been received traditionally and retained unchanged from frontier days. . . . The farther West one goes, where frontier influence still more strongly abides, the more decidedly conservative church people appear to be in their theology and the more responsive to primitive and provincial ideas." [2]

The truth of the matter is that the settlers of America were cut off from the stream of culture which went back to Græco-Roman days and that they were not yet affected by the new scientific ideas which were beginning to appear. And we must remember that many came from humble homes which had never known what culture and free enquiry were. When we realize all this, we will not be surprised at the primitive type of religion which dominated much of America for many decades. Revivalism, sectarianism and hostility to rational enquiry were natural expressions of this condition of affairs. No blame is to be attached to any one. It was all a matter of social conditions and traditions.

In the East, America's Golden Day—as Lewis Mumford

[1] Mecklin, *The Survival Value of Christianity*, p. 21. This includes a quotation from J. T. Adams, *The Founding of New England*.
[2] Rowe, *History of Religion in the United States*, p. 88.

calls it—awakened early. In the West, it is but now dawning. One has only to contrast the life of Emerson with the life of Lincoln, as reconstructed by Carl Sandburg, to realize why this is so. How hopeful can we be?

Something of the social setting of religion must always be held in mind if a particular phase of religion is to be understood. If evangelical Protestantism is now entering a new phase of its existence it is because the culture of which it is a part is altering profoundly. Just how far down this new culture will percolate there is no sure means of telling. Are there pioneers of the city lost in its brick wilderness? In some measure there are, as our slums and criminal courts bear witness; and yet the old isolation has vanished. A new type of society is forming around us. It is ministered to by school and college, by radio and newspaper and magazine. What type of religion will express it?

The historian has been dividing the history of America into cultural epochs. He speaks of Jacksonian Democracy, the Gilded Age, Industrial America. Each epoch had its peculiar cultural soul and its characteristic temper in religious matters. To-day America faces the future. I ask myself what kind of a cultural soul it will create, what spiritual forces it will release. To the philosopher, this is the religion that counts. Religion is the spirit and quality of human living. Whatever framework it takes, this is the heart of the matter.

It is the belief of many competent observers that America is spiritually sick. Perhaps no more so than other parts of the world, dominated as it all is by industrialism. "It is not that our instrumental activities are mean: far from it: but that life is mean when it is entirely absorbed in instrumental activities. Beneath the organized vivacity of our

American communities who is not aware of a blankness, a sterility, a boredom, a despair? Their activity, their very lust, is the galvanic response to an external stimulus, given by an organism that is dead." So writes Mr. Mumford.

What is the remedy? He suggests that philosophy must rectify the abstract framework of ideas which we have used, in lieu of a full culture, these last few centuries, that we must conceive a new world. I think that he is right. We must think human life through and try to understand it. Then, perhaps, we can set up a new table of values.

Traditional religion has had its chance. It has done much good and ennobled many lives; but is it not clear that it needs the fertilization brought by new ideas? A new world has arisen beneath man's feet as a result of science. Religion must go in to take possession. But traditional religion cannot do so because it is too encumbered with the impedimenta of the past. Religion, itself, must be born again.

CHAPTER III

RELIGION MEETS SCIENCE AND SECULARISM

Dissolvents of Tradition

THE brief survey made in the preceding chapter has, I hope, prepared the reader to sense the fact that the modern world is in many respects really very new. Not only is it on a larger scale, but it is dominated by social forces and enterprises which scarcely existed in other days. In recognition of this fact, sociologists have begun to speak of it as "the great society." Swift communication, basic interdependence, common methods of thought, large units of production, all these give a pattern to modern society whose significance must be recognized. The individual is caught up in a whir of activities and enterprises.

Tradition thrives best while man is backward-looking, and he is backward-looking when what he admires most comes from the past. In ancient times this was the case. Customs were an inheritance, and so were the laws and arts of life. It was for this reason that man pictured the beginning of life as a golden age and believed that the gods then walked with men and taught them what it was good to know. The age of tradition is an age of admiration for what has been.

But the great society looks forward and not backward. The cry of the present is for advance and improvement. In industry and science what is ten years old is already out-

grown and valueless. It is true that these are the domains of most rapid change; yet we can see something of the same spirit in other fields. What is old is under suspicion unless it happens to fit in with vested interests of one sort or another, political, economic or religious. And even then change cannot be kept out, for dissolvents are at work which are beyond voluntary control.

In the present chapter I want to study the effect of three of these dissolvents of traditional points of view, namely, *secularism, science and historical knowledge.* I shall try to show how they have impinged upon traditional religion and set problems for reflection. After studying the impact of these social forces, the reader may be more certain than he was before that modernism is not the result of the wickedness of particular thinkers but is, instead, something which expresses the life and trends of the times; and therefore, something to be reckoned with in a larger way, something as inevitable and remorseless as the great society itself.

The Growth of Secularism

By secularism I mean interest in purely human activities and affairs, in what traditional Christianity called the things of this world. Those individuals are not secular who are dominated by the thought of the supernatural and whose lives are directed by its demands. The hermit was the mediæval symbol of the complete rejection of the secular. And it is undeniable that the early Christians were not secular-minded since they looked for the early destruction of this world and the coming of the Lord Jesus in his glory.

We have already pointed out that the Renaissance was a period of re-birth of interest in this life. From that day to this, interest in human life as such has been increasing.

Is it necessary to point out that there are different secular interests, that art and science and social reform are as secular in their way as money-making? Secularism is not identical with a materialistic view of life, a phrase much used but seldom defined.

It is undeniable, I take it, that secularism is a feature of the great society which is being born these days. Sports, business, politics, education, literature, occupy people's lives and thoughts to the exclusion of what traditional religion called sacred matters. I do not imply that this is altogether a good thing. There are aspects of it which, frankly, I do not admire. Thus when the arrival of a bishop from Canada, in France, on his way to be created a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church is given less space by far in the daily papers than the arrival of a pugilist, it does seem that the journalistic perspective is poor; and yet does it not indicate the state of affairs which I have been describing? It is scarcely debatable that traditional religious activities have not the dominance they once had.

Secularism leads to secularization. Thus modern times have witnessed the separation of church and state. We have been fairly fortunate in this regard because we began in the right way, due to the large number of competing sects. But it was not long ago that France engaged in a struggle of this nature; and to-day the press teems with stories of what is going on in Mexico; while the Bolsheviki fought an analogous battle with the Russian Orthodox Church. Again, education has been largely secularized. In former days, the religious orders largely maintained and controlled schools and universities. To-day, it is the public which supports and controls these educational institutions. The few which remain in the hands of the churches hardly count when

balanced against the great number maintained in a secularized way.

John Haynes Holmes has put the actual situation very well. "So the process of 'secularization' has gone on, and is going on! More and more the churches are being thrust aside. More and more society is finding it possible to live outside the domain of religion, if it so desires. And more and more is it so desiring! Every day our world is less a sacred world, and more a secular world. The 'invisible' is becoming truly invisible; the visible is all we seem to want to see!" [1]

That, as a result of various social trends, indifference to traditional types of religion is increasing is fairly obvious. A recent writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* went so far as to prophesy the break-up of Protestantism. As a basis for this prophesy he pointed out the decrease of attendance at services and the large number of people connected with no church. He gave many reasons for this situation, such as the ineffectiveness of much of the preaching, the inability of the churches to compete with the counter-attractions of the secular world, the weakening of the sense of obligation to attend services. It is to be noted that European surveys show that the same conditions hold of the Catholic countries, though, perhaps, not to the same degree. Free-thought is widespread on the Continent and a powerful social movement, socialism, has been hostile to traditional religious institutions, regarding them as a mainstay of existing economic institutions.

Since we have touched upon the question of the attitude of socialism to religion, it may be well to make a few comments. There are many kinds of socialism and many differ-

[1] *Humanist Sermons*, p. 7.

ent movements. There has been Christian socialism as well as Marxian socialism. In both England and America there have been strong movements within the churches for the amelioration of social and economic conditions in favour of the working-classes. And it is clear that no contradiction is involved in such a direction of religious zeal. Rauschenbusch in America and Kingsley in England are examples of such ethical endeavour. Even primitive Christianity had more than a vein of communism in its make-up. But it is undeniable that the main socialist movement, which arose from Marx and Engels and attained international significance, was naturalistic, and even atheistic, in its philosophy. It appealed to the principle of social causation and sought to show that society moved inexorably from stage to stage. It put no hope in divine intervention and was persuaded that religious institutions were conservative and hostile. We are not concerned at present with the rightness or wrongness of this attitude, but, rather, with the fact that it has been very influential abroad, where religious conditions are different from here.

It is a quite defensible thesis that the socialist movement has been in its own fashion a religious movement. Marx's *Capital* has often been referred to as the Bible of the socialists, and the idealistic and self-forgetting zeal of many socialist leaders has been akin to the spirit of religion at its best, as St. James defined it, though it has had none of the supernaturalistic setting to which we are accustomed. But, even so, it must be regarded as a secularistic religion.

There are many shadings of religious indifferentism. Some people do not go to church because they no longer believe in the creeds and the service leaves them cold and hostile. The church seems to these people to have no constructive

message. Of course, this raises the question of the place of creed in the modern church. Those who regard it as not very important condemn such people for disregarding the social and moral purpose and function of the churches. And I do think that there is some truth in this reply. In their very objection to creed they stress the importance of creed. But here, again, we are at present concerned with the situation. Another class of absentees may be described as those who have gradually drifted away from any vital connection with a church. It is an affair of weakening relations. It is not that they are overtly sceptical of doctrines for they have not given the matter much thought. It is rather that their lives are controlled by the influences which surround and press in upon them. Thus the young are free from economic pressure on Sunday alone; it is their day of amusement and companionship; its hours offer them a short period of joyous freedom. And the older people respond in much the same fashion, though less energetically. They sleep later, do things around the house, visit, go to a movie. These people are worldly on a homely rather than on the grand scale. They are immersed in their everyday life with its needs, aims, activities, customs, pastimes. Religious beliefs are forgotten until some crisis casts its shadow over their lives. And then it may well be that the beliefs dormant in them will awaken—only to die down again as the sorrow deadens with the passage of time.

Society is increasingly secular in a more positive sense. Institutions of all sorts have been removed from religious control and have been put on a laic basis. What we may call *social pluralism* is here at work. At one time society was divided between Church and State; now it is a network of associations and activities. The artist has small concern

for economic, political and religious institutions; he lives for his art. In large measure the same is true of the scientist. Each individual is the centre of values and activities which reach from the personal to the impersonal and general. The more of these, the richer his life. The great terms of the present are democracy, humanitarianism, knowledge, art, sport, finance, business, love, friendship. Associations, institutions and personal relations turn around these experiences. Thus the church is just one more institution among many others competing for the attention and interest of the individual. Its political power over their lives is largely gone. It can discipline and control only those who are willing to be so disciplined and controlled.

America, as we said, was fortunate in beginning with a large measure of separation of Church and State due to the number of the sects into which Christianity was divided. Its adoption of public education followed as a consequence. In European countries with a tradition of religious control, whether Roman Catholic, Lutheran or Anglican, this development had to be fought for. In some countries it is not yet complete. And even in America the various churches cast longing glances at the possibility of religious instruction in the schools. America, we have said, was fortunate largely by accident. It was not that there was much free-thought in this country. On the contrary, we have analyzed the growth of the West and shown that religion was the chief tradition which was carried westward because it was so simple and elemental. And we must admit that, until recently, there was little permission in America to be critical of traditional beliefs. People have been convinced that morality is dependent upon religion and have even been afraid that God, like an Oriental despot, would pun-

ish the whole community for the permitted presence of an unbeliever.

Now, while I have been pointing out the growth of secularism, I have by no means committed myself to an approval of the direction it has taken in the modern world. Too often it has meant just the hurry and bustle of commercialism. And if it signifies nothing more than this, it stands for a mechanical type of civilization without much depth. But, of course, it would be false to identify secularism with the weaknesses of an age dominated by the economic and commercial. Perhaps it was the otherworldliness of religion that permitted this growth. The churches were unable to direct the growth of secularism along healthy lines because they did not understand human nature and human life. What I am concerned with at present is the growth of secularism rather than with a critique of its present texture. Of that we shall speak in the more constructive part of this book.

But, here again, a knowledge of history may rob us of our fears. Secularism is by no means a completely new thing. It existed in large measure in Greece. The liberation of the human reason was there favoured by the gentleness, æsthetic character and untheological temper of the Greek religion. "It has long been remarked," writes Bouglé, "that the Greek conception of religion lent itself better than all others to this liberation. Its æsthetic anthropomorphism ennobled instead of depreciating human nature. The gods of Hellas are only deified men, not formless and redoubtable monsters. Face to face with this Pantheon, wherein it recognizes itself, the Greek mind remains free and serene." [1]

When we come to consider the genius of Christianity we

[1] Bouglé, *Evolution of Values*, p. 193.

shall see that it inherited from Judaism certain undesirable features. We have already mentioned the spirit of tribal intolerance which, in it, was extended to a creed. This must be put in the balance against much of the nobility of the higher ethical thought of Judaism. It also inherited a sacred book with definite ideas concerning the creation of the world and the destiny of man. Science and art go back to Greece and not to Judæa. The God of the Hebrews was a somewhat jealous, moralistic god. He could hardly be called a civilized and cultured god. Let me quote in this connection from the Rev. Lewis Farnell's book, *The Attributes of God,* which is a study in comparative religion: "As has been well said, the Hellene was the first man who endeavoured to make himself at home in the world; and for that purpose he was incited to study it as it was. And in this he was actually assisted or at least not hindered—as for long centuries Christendom was hindered—by religion. And what have been considered drawbacks and limitations in his religion, the absence of Sacred Books whose pronouncements on the physical universe or the solar system might have to be accepted as authoritative against the discoveries of true science, the absence in fact of any religious dogma concerning creation and the nature of things or the origin and destiny of man which faith was constrained to accept, these were positive advantages for the freedom of thought and speculation. Of course, Greek religion did not originate science or philosophy, but it was powerless to hinder their growth and it became wise enough to encourage it." [1]

Greek secularism was exceptional, and that is why we owe so much to Greece. What will our modern secularism flower into? And what will be its fruit? These are the

[1] Farnell, *The Attributes of God,* p. 218.

queries which are arising in the reflective minds of the present.

The Spread of Science

Science and its associate, invention, have been two of the great transforming agencies of the modern world. They have helped to make democracy possible through the quickening of life which they have brought about.

But I am less concerned at present with the brute power science has put into man's hands and which he has as often misused as wisely employed. Rather do I wish to call attention to its mental effect, to the changed view of the world and of human life which it has produced. Its *general* effect has been an increase in man's self-confidence, a disappearance of the mysterious and the irrational from his world, a growth of definite and detailed knowledge, and a strengthening of the belief in law and order throughout nature. Its more *specific* effect on Christianity has been a challenging of the miraculous element in its sacred literature.

Reason and science have together weakened the power of superstitious fear. Many ancient writers believed that religion was rooted in fear and even some of our popular writers make this their thesis. The careful scholar knows that this is a simplification, that fear has always been only one of the emotional factors of religion. We shall try to make this fact clearer in the next chapter where we shall study the evolution of religion. But there can be little doubt that fear of the unknown has played its part in traditional religion. As evangelists have always known, hell has made as many converts in the past as has heaven.

It was against the element of fear in religion that Lucre-

tius, the great Roman poet, directed his polemic. It was philosophy that liberated him from this fear. And it is philosophy and science together that are to-day liberating even the popular mind.

At work in the modern world scarcely three centuries, science has gradually examined and explored this world of ours by telescope, microscope and balance. It has found law and order everywhere. The stars wheel through their immense cycles under the control of gravitational forces intrinsic to their nature and the regions they traverse. And, on this little planet, science has found system in the minutest detail. The realm of law has found no rebel. Hence, to the modern mind, magic and the supernatural have begun to seem like childish tales.

The effect of science on the educated mind is apparent and undeniable. But can there be any doubt that this way of looking at things is spreading downward into the popular consciousness? Prayers for rain, for example, are far less common than they used to be. Disease is met by medicine and hygiene rather than by prayer. The old tradition still hovers in the background and appears at times of emotional crisis in those who have not thought themselves through. But the effective set of ideas are the scientific. It may be that machinery has helped the mass of the people to envisage the relation of cause and effect, to see how things fit together and interact.

How big a change in man's interpretation of the world this marks, only the historian can realize. For thousands of years nature was not a region of orderly relations and structures but a domain of caprice and arbitrary power. Even the wind blew where it listed. Demons caused disease and death. The only sensible methods open to man, in his

opinion, were magical control or humble supplications. The power which knowledge gives was scarcely dreamed of.

But science has affected not only the old magical attitude towards nature but also definite theological dogmas. The conflict between science and traditional belief has been continuous; and, on the whole, science has proven itself the stronger.

Three Stages of Conflict

The spread of science has meant a shift of attitude towards nature. Things and their changing relations have taken the place of invisible personal agency. Events are seen to have their natural conditions and consequences in an almost routine fashion. Man now looks *within* nature instead of *outside* for effective causes. What used to be called secondary causes are now regarded as primary. In short, nature is thought of as running itself.

As a "religion of a book," Christianity inherited all sorts of beliefs about the origin and nature of things. These beliefs constituted what we must call its mythology, its stories about reality. Inevitably, these stories came into conflict with the conclusions which investigation of a systematic sort began to establish. How could it have been otherwise? Myths explain in terms of superpersonal agency; God did so and so. But how is this known? The fathers said so; it was told to them; it was revealed. In a word, mythology is tradition.

This conflict between science and religious mythology is usually denominated the warfare between science and religion. And there can be little doubt that, in such a warfare, science will win out. The practical value of science gives it power in the modern world. But I am by no means

sure that we should speak of the warfare between science and religion. The conflict is so conceived by many, no doubt, who identify religion with the old, supernaturalistic framework and perspective. But we shall see good reason to hold that religion is something more persistent and deeper that concerns itself with human life and its values. A religion which has come of age will have no quarrel with science. It will no longer hug illusions but will face reality. Like philosophy, to which it is akin, it will press heroically forward to the meaning and possibilities of human life.

But let us pass quickly in review the three stages of conflict between traditional beliefs and science. We may call these the astronomical, the biological, and the psychological. The first clash is associated with the names of Copernicus and Galileo; the second with those of Darwin and Lamarck; and the third is in full swing to-day. Even to speak of three stages is to oversimplify. It is a clash all along the line to-day. Psychology, anthropology and history, the sciences of man, are completing this reinterpretation of first and last things in terms of detailed knowledge. The struggle has moved from the stars to man himself. What is man? Is he a creature native to this planet? Science is deciphering his story. All the human sciences are busily at work telling us what we veritably are.

The rise of astronomy involved the destruction of the neat and circumscribed little universe of Ptolemaic thought. In its place has arisen a tremendous stellar system measured in light-years, the distance light travels in a year. The earth is no longer conceived as the centre of things, as man's imagination—based on perception and on a naïve sense of his own importance—so long painted it. We smile at

sectarians who, like Voliva of Zion City, believe that this earth is flat and go on a journey ostensibly to look over its edge. Who that knows anything about astronomy can take the Book of Genesis for anything but what it clearly is, the myth and theory of early times? All this is felt by many who a few decades ago would have stood aghast at the very suggestion as blasphemy.

Darwinism, as the biological theory of evolution is popularly called, challenged the so-called Mosaic account of man's appearance upon this earth. What was the religious significance of this challenge? It rested on the fact that, for many, the creation of man in the Garden of Eden was a proof of God's existence. Unreflective people had never tried to make the story explicit. Could God be thought of as a being who literally moulded man out of the dust of the earth and walked in the cool of the evening and rested from his labour on the seventh day? For centuries, trained theologians had taken the tale as symbolic, had treated it as an allegory. But, if so, what did it symbolize? Surely the supernatural origin of man. It connected man with God. The tale disappears in a claim. It is for philosophy to analyze this claim.

From biology, thought has passed to psychology. What is the nature of man's mind? Must the old dualism between organism and mind be relinquished? Behaviourism is beginning to loom on the horizon of popular thought with its suggestion that mind is but another term for the activity of the living organism as a whole. If science adopts such a view as the most plausible, what becomes of the soul of traditional religious thought? And to behaviourism science has added abnormal psychology with Freudian psychoanalysis and its tale of repressions and complexes. It would seem

that science is pressing onward to the very citadel of the soul and attempting to give it a naturalistic explanation. What does all this imply for traditional Christianity?

The Deepening of Historical Knowledge

The Greek historians had more than a suspicion that man began very humbly. The idea of evolution haunted their thinking as it did that of the philosophers. But the religion of a book shut out this natural vista from the mind of modern man until well nigh the nineteenth century. When we are told that the father of the literary critic, Edmund Gosse, accounted for the presence of fossils in the earth by the theory that God created the world that way to try men's faith, we realize what casuistry the human mind can resort to in defence of traditional views.

The first sense of actual historical process appears in the writings of the Italian, Vico, and the Frenchman, Montesquieu. They saw that the beginnings of culture must have been slow and that climate and geographical conditions played their part. But it is in our own times that anthropology has supplemented history and we can picture the social texture of early life.

All sides of human life have been explored. Political evolution has been studied, and so has the development of art, trade and religion. It is really a fascinating picture, this of man's social and intellectual growth. But we are naturally concerned here with the history of religion. What do anthropology and history tell us about the origin and development of the various religions? What was the origin of sacrifice, worship, prayer, the belief in gods, the hope of salvation, the faith in the efficacy of sacraments? Unceasing research has laid much of this bare so that he who runs may

read the story of religion. And it is certainly a thrilling story of desire, fear, need and imagination.

When we come to study the rise of Christianity, we shall note the new light which has been shed upon its origin and development by all this patient research whose full significance is hardly guessed at by the popular mind. An old world rises before our eyes with its magic and cults and beliefs, a world which is rapidly disappearing and which has scarcely anything in common with the great society which dominates our own lives.

And science has studied methodically "the book" of the Christian tradition. The amount of effort, knowledge and intelligence which has gone to this last bit of work is seldom realized. Scholars have spent their lives on this task, generation after generation, until now the story of the Bible is becoming clear. The various parts of this collection of narratives, codes, prophecies, essays, poems, gospels, letters and apocalypses have been analyzed and related to their epochs. It is now realized that the bibliolatry of Protestantism has no justification. We are merely introduced to the hopes, fears, beliefs, and traditions of generations of people. Ethically noble as much of this literature is, it can settle none of our own questions. That we must do for ourselves to the best of our ability.

Let us now turn to an intensive study of religion. It may be that by means of a broad survey of the stages through which it has passed we shall be given a clue to its future development. We shall at least gain objectivity and independence. Religion coming of age may be man coming of age.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION BEFORE THE GODS

Religion Has Many Stages

IT is so easy to identify religion with certain beliefs and the cult and attitudes built up around them. But what lies back of even this religion with its tremendous framework of creed and worship? Surely man's needs and hopes. It is out of man that religion arises, out of man's passionate struggle with life. Here is the heart of our problem. Religion is beyond all things an *expression* of human life; and, as man's spirit deepens and his imagination quickens, and his knowledge broadens, the form which religion takes is bound to alter.

We must not expect religion to be the same for all. Each man has the religion of which he is capable. It is a basic mistake in all spiritual matters to demand uniformity. Morality, for instance, becomes a matter of external custom as soon as this is done. But true morality is an affair of insight into life, of the adjustment of values; and in these regards people differ enormously. Some stand on their own feet; others listen to the word of command.

It will help us enormously to understand the history of religion if we think of it, not in terms of some temporary manifestation of it, but more deeply and dynamically as the *strategy of human life in the face of destiny.* As culture changes, man's strategy will change. And this we shall see in some detail.

Primitive religion began as a strategy in the face of mysterious surrounding powers. Man did not understand his world, but he had to make his adjustment to it nevertheless. The impulse to self-preservation was strong within him. Writes George Foot Moore: "The impulse of self-preservation in itself has nothing religious about it; it is in its lower ranges purely biological. And if man were placed in a world where he was exposed to no strange perils and was unfailingly able to satisfy all his needs and desires, he would find no occasion for religion. The actual world in which the savage lives is, however, very different; he is not secure and he is not self-sufficient. He is beset by perils which menace his well-being and his very existence, and his efforts to satisfy his urgent needs are often frustrated." [1]

I would not go as far as Moore and say that man would have developed no religion had he lived in an earthly paradise. Perhaps he would have developed no civilization either. The most we can say is that religion would not have had the development it actually had. But let us leave the realm of the hypothetical.

Primitive religion was a religion without gods. Man lived in a world of perception and feeling. Something happens; something does something to him. Just what *it* was, he had no idea for he had as yet few ideas. So we have a religion of powers, things to be propitiated and controlled. Later man personified these powers and created the gods, sometimes in his own image. Then religion becomes an attitude and experience dominated by the gods. The invisible world swarms with them. A heaven is created for them. They are the rulers of the world. But is there any reason why religion should stop here in the world of concrete imag-

[1] Moore, *The Birth and Growth of Religion*, p. 7.

ination? Surely not. And in point of fact the gods have begun to vanish, in Hindu thought, into the impersonal source of all being. Religion began without the gods and it may end without them. The birth of the gods may be followed by the twilight of the gods. Is this what is happening to-day?

What is the Nature of Primitive Religion?

It is to the anthropologist that the philosopher must turn for his knowledge of primitive, or rudimentary, religion. And the best the anthropologist can do is to sojourn among peoples of rude culture and try to find out how they look at things. But, of course, we don't have in this culture something really primitive; it is the nearest we can get to it. The people of the Old Stone Age have gone for ever.

It took anthropology much time and effort to discern the precise nature of primitive religion. It was misled by the stress laid upon belief which is so characteristic of advanced religions. It wanted to find out what savages *believed.* After preliminary investigation, it was decided that savages believed in spirits.

But deeper investigation, which paid more attention to the psychology of the savage, cast doubt upon the primitiveness of this interpretation. Was there not an attitude still more rudimentary when men lived in perception and feeling, as it were, and had not yet developed the idea of a spirit? Might not religion be at first "something not so much thought out as danced out"?

Following this new insight, anthropologists sought to appreciate the texture of savage life. The conclusion reached was that religion turned about the distinction between the usual and the unusual. Primitive man was aroused to feel-

ing, vague thought and action by the extraordinary, the awful, the weird. He felt that, in these events, mysterious power of some sort was at work. And he must somehow propitiate it, adjust himself to it, render it harmless.

Another point we must bear in mind is that early man moved and acted in groups. Savage society is mobbish; its members huddle together. Religion is largely a social affair. The individual has not reached any measure of independence and self-consciousness. Beliefs, habits, customs are homogeneous. Outside the group the world is dim.

A quotation or two may help to make all this clearer. The following from Marett brings out the primitive idea of the supernatural: "We must, I think, in any case admit the fact that in response to, or at any rate in connection with, the emotions of awe, wonder, and the like, wherein feeling would seem for the time being to have outstripped the power of 'natural,' that is, reasonable explanation, there arises in the region of human thought a powerful impulse to objectify and even personify the mysterious or 'supernatural' something felt, and in the region of the will a corresponding impulse to render it innocuous, or better still, propitious by the force of constraint, communion and conciliation."

Do we not have here a strategy of life in the face of the mysterious? Man is seeking to protect himself in the face of the dangerous and weird. This strategy takes the form of a ritual. It would seem that we would not be far wrong in taking religion at this primitive level as an expression of the hopes and fears of man in the face of the weird and extraordinary, this expression tending to take form in a common ritual. At this stage, the individual does not survey his own life in a self-conscious way as he will later come to do. He is outward-looking, emotional, immersed in the crowd.

In a similar vein Lowie writes: "In every society, no matter how simple it may be, there is a spontaneous division of the sphere of experience into the ordinary and the extraordinary. . . . When a Hopi Indian in Arizona raises corn where a white tiller fails, when a Papuan boatwright constructs elaborate buildings without nails or metal implements, when a Polynesian carves the most esthetic patterns with a shark's tooth, he is solving his everyday problems not only competently but with elegance. . . . But everywhere there is, in addition to such practical rationalism, a sense of the Extraordinary, Mysterious, or Supernatural." [1]

Other writers in this field stress a distinction between the sacred, or holy, and the profane. The profane is the everyday world of action, of personal relations, and of practical technique. The sacred world is a world set apart as a domain of forces by which man feels his life dominated and surrounded. It would seem that this distinction points to much the same sort of thing that Marett and Lowie have in mind.

Can we not partially put ourselves in the position of early man? Only very partially, of course, because we would have to forget our knowledge and sink back into something approaching childhood without the influence of the civilization which so quickly influences a child. And we would need to sense the vague emotional life of savages and the dimness of their world. Let us remember that it was not a kindly world which surrounded early man. Death threatened him on every side, and death is mysterious and terrifying. Nothing was quite as humdrum and fixed as it is for us. Anything could have a magical side. Curiously shaped

[1] Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, p. xv.

stones, dark groves, beasts, serpents, all easily became emotionally significant.

There has been much discussion of late as to the psychology of primitive man. A French school has arisen which holds that his mental processes were not ruled by the logical law of non-contradiction and that an object might be several things at once. There is some evidence for such a view among the savages of to-day. But is it not more likely that early man did not have clear concepts and that his ideas and his interpretations of things were fluid and vague? However this may be, it is certain that the world for early man was quite a different world from what it is for us. It was full of mysterious forces which operated on his life. Is it any wonder that the tribe faced the world with apprehension and projected into it its fears and hopes? Imagination and emotion played over the world like a searchlight.

Taken in this setting, the supernatural is not something which violates an orderly nature ruled by causal laws—such a conception of nature was far beyond man's reach—but something awe-inspiring and socially important. It is essential that this use of the term by modern anthropologists be grasped. Those who feel that the term is misleading might well employ other terms which are regarded as synonyms such as holy, sacred, weird, numinous. Religion concerns itself at this stage with the dangerous and important, and the ritual and myth of the tribe grow up around this domain. Myth tells what it is; ritual, how to act towards it. In both, immemorial tradition usually speaks.

All this seems natural and inevitable. One of the virtues of this way of approach lies in this naturalness. Religion ceases to be inexplicable and becomes an expression of a certain stage of culture, an expression which is bound to go

on developing with culture and to find *new expressions* as time passes. Not so long ago, while religion was not understood in this fashion but was taken as something which was unique and mysterious, theologians used to postulate a specific religious instinct or else a primitive revelation of the gods to man. Religion was something disconnected from the natural movement of life. It had to be implanted from outside. And what could be a better way of stating this than by use of that magical word, instinct? Man was religious by instinct. Let us pause to consider this term for a moment.

In scientific psychology, instinct as a blanket-term has seen its best days. A mere enumeration of distinct instincts no longer satisfies. They must be connected with the structure of the human organism and with its responses to the environment. And here the principle of simplicity is in operation. Let us assume no more instincts than necessary. Sex is clearly an instinct and has a definite physiological basis; so has the food-getting instinct. Around these and the activities they involve other instincts have undoubtedly been built into the nervous pattern of man and the other animals. Some tendency to gregariousness there is in the social animals, a dislike of isolation, a sense of unrest when alone. There is also in many what is called curiosity, a tendency to approach anything exciting to see what it is. Psychologists differ in their lists, but in every list only something fairly simple and specific which can be connected with the structure and behaviour of the organism is included. It is obvious that this method excludes a religious instinct. Religion must, instead, be held to rest on the whole nature of man. In it we find fear, curiosity, hope, gregariousness, intelligence. It is not a specific instinct but a complex ex-

pressive, at first, of man's reaction to his surroundings and his sense of the mysterious forces of the world. To account for it there is need neither of revelation nor of an implanted instinct. In fact, these other and older theories clearly reflect creationalistic and theological assumptions which both science and philosophy have long outgrown.

While the growth of psychology has thus gradually led to the rejection of a religious instinct, the historical study of religion, such as we have been indicating, has worked in the same direction by showing what primitive religion actually was like.

Religion Without Personal Gods

We have argued that recent work in anthropology has brought to the front the emotion of awe as the originally distinctive religious emotion. It has long been known that the religion of the Romans did not possess the clear-cut anthropomorphic deities of Greece. Its deities were, instead, impersonal powers, Numina. These Numina were shadowy and vague, realities to placate and propitiate rather than to conceive. The attitude taken towards them was that of respect and awe. It would seem that, in this outlook, the Romans represented an ancient tradition.

A German investigator, Otto, has made much of this more emotional and less intellectualistic interpretation of religion. I quote from a striking passage of his book called, *The Idea of the Holy*: "Before going on to consider the elements which unfold as the 'tremendum' develops, let us give a little further consideration to the first crude, primitive forms in which this 'numinous dread' or *awe* shows itself. It is the mark which really characterizes the so-called 'Religion of Primitive Man,' and there it appears as 'dæmonic dread.'

This crudely naïve and primordial emotional disturbance, and the fantastic images to which it gives rise, are later overborne and ousted by more highly developed forms of the numinous emotion, with all its mysteriously impelling power. But even when this has long attained its higher and purer mode of expression it is possible for the primitive types of excitation that were formerly a part of it to break out in the soul in all their original naïveté and so to be experienced afresh. That this is so is shown by the potent attraction again and again exercised by the element of horror and 'shudder' in ghost stories, even among persons of high all-round education. It is a remarkable fact that the physical reaction to which this unique 'dread' of the uncanny gives rise is also unique, and is not found in the case of any 'natural' fear or terror." [1]

What kind of emotion do we experience when a good ghost story is told? It seems to me that we have a sense of something to which we cannot adjust ourselves in the ordinary way, something like, and yet unlike, ourselves. Let us remember that man has imagination and that he is using it even if no definite picture is produced. Thus the fear of the supernatural is bound up with the kind of an object or force which fascinates our minds. Awe is in its fashion a very natural human emotion. It involves fear, respect, a sense of the unusual, a sense of something surrounding us before which we are largely helpless. Those who in the past defined religion as a feeling of dependence undoubtedly had this emotion in mind.

Confirmation of this psychological analysis is found in the reports of anthropologists. Certain terms have been discovered which express the idea of the supernatural. From

[1] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 16.

Oceania come the terms *mana* and *tabu;* from America, the term *wakan;* from Africa, the term *njomm.* All these words have much the same meaning. They refer to a mysterious power which dwells in persons and things. Bishop Codrington, one of the first workers in the field, defines mana as follows: "A force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil, and which it is of the greatest advantage to possess or control." Tabu is a sort of negative mana. It means that one must be on one's guard against the supernatural for it is dangerous. Things and persons that are tabu must not be lightly approached; they are sacred, holy, fearful.

This sense of mystery is wide-spread in savage life. Thus Ellis writes of the Malagasy: "Whatever is great, whatever exceeds the capacity of their understandings, they designate by the one convenient and comprehensive appellation, *andriamanitra.* Whatever is new and useful and extraordinary is called god." Marett maintains that wonder, interest, admiration, respect, even love, no less than fear help to constitute the emotional content of this experience. Greek scholars have long pointed out that the Greeks used the term *theios* in a very broad way. Things are full of gods, wrote some of the early Greek cosmologists. And do not we ourselves use the word *divine* in a vague and mystical sense?

To what extent was this sense of potency a projection of the consciousness of the life of the tribe? Let us remember that early man is mobbish and not self-conscious. It is in the tribe that he lives and moves and has his being. It is something which surrounds him and controls him. The individual is taught in all sorts of ways to subordinate him-

self to the welfare and continuance of the group. Its values are his, its life is his. Realizing this situation, French sociologists have argued that religion is at first an expression of the life of the group. The power of the group surrounds the individual and dominates him; and he projects this feeling of something vaguely great and powerful into anything connected with his life or the life of the tribe. Animals and trees and thunder are, as it were, fellow tribesmen or hostile tribesmen. "Where shall we find," writes Bouglé, "the model of those sacred forces of spiritual nature by which man feels himself surrounded and dominated, if not in those special forces which are freed by the communion of consciousnesses? Is not the power they engender in assembling together and organizing themselves, the type of those powers, at once restrictive and beneficent, imperious and helpful, before which people bow down with mixed feelings of terror and love?" [1]

We must not be too individualistic in our psychology. Man is affected by others; and those emotions which we can distinguish in ourselves to-day were undoubtedly caught up and modified by the life of the group. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that, right from the start, there was recognition of the usual and the unusual, the matter-of-fact and the strange. Even the tribe faced the external world. It faced it as a group, much as a herd of cattle faces an intruder.

Spirits Enter Religion

We can never get at absolute origins. The dim beginnings of things when man passed from the animal to the

[1] Bouglé, *Evolution of Values*, p. 127.

human are no longer discoverable. We know that it was hundreds of thousands of years ago and that history in the strict sense reaches back only a very few thousands of years. The savages of to-day are products of millenniums. The best that can be done, therefore, is to make a plausible guess as to man's emotional interpretation of his world. And we have seen that anthropology believes that man projected into mysterious things and events this sense of potency and developed a ritual around them. It was only later, though still in the dim beginnings of things, that man developed the idea of the *doubleness of things,* their possession of spirits or ghost-souls. The technical term for this further development is *animism.* Animism is the belief in spirits. These spirits are akin to ghosts and are thought of as active for weal or woe. When such spirits are regarded as superhumanly powerful, and in relation to the tribe, they become gods. Partly by personification, partly by the assignment of spirits, religion became possessed of gods. It moved to a higher level.

There can be little doubt that animism gave the human imagination wings with which to fly to other and invisible worlds. It could now people nature with spiritual chiefs who had dominion. Generation after generation medicine-men spun their tales and interpreted their ritual. But we must not forget that this animistic growth arose within the still more primitive outlook which we have been describing. Spirits were bound up with places and things and they, also, were weird, dangerous and awful. Man became afraid of the spirits of his dead and tried to propitiate them. And non-human spirits and powers might well be still more dangerous. The way was prepared for a tremendous expansion of the supernatural, that is, the extraordinary.

Why the Belief in Spirits?

Thus far we have seen no reason to postulate a religious instinct or any strange source of knowledge of the supernatural. How can we explain the belief in spirits in a natural way?

According to Tylor, one of the founders of modern anthropology, primitive man could not help noticing the difference between a living body and a corpse. What more natural than the conclusion that there must be something in the one that is not in the other! And another kind of experience would give the suggestion. In dreams he saw visions of those who were dead. They came to him and he went to the place in which they dwelt. We must remember that this world of dreams is a very real world for the savage for he had none of the theories by which we try to account for dreams as purely subjective events. Hence, when a savage sleeper awakened from a dream, he believed that he had really been away, somehow, or that other people had mysteriously come to visit him. But his companions told him that his body had been lying beside them all night. Must there not be a shadowy double which leaves the body and to which all this happens? This is the ghost-soul.

Tylor's "dream-theory" of spirits has been widely accepted though a trance-theory has been added. In this fashion the popular idea of spirits which still lingers with us can be accounted for. Ghosts are pale, soft, shadowy, intangible. They have few of the limitations of the body. This immateriality is, of course, only relative. It means that ghost-souls are less material than ordinary bodies are. Complete immateriality is too subtle an idea for primitive man. And we ourselves may be deceiving ourselves with words when we use the term. I have always had a good deal of respect

for that old theological warrior, Tertullian, who asserted that even God must be material.

In the literatures of all peoples are to be found records of the belief in the ghost-soul. In the Bible, Samuel is called out of Sheol to speak to Saul. It is his wraith that appears. And in Isaiah is to be found that famous passage representing the Assyrian king's ghost as appearing in the nether world. "Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming. . . . All they shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou become weak as we?" The visitation of Achilles by Patroclus in a dream is another striking example.

The literature on the subject of the primitive idea of the soul is very large. I quote the following from Frazer as typical: "As the savage commonly explains the processes of inanimate nature by supposing that they are produced by living beings working in or behind the phenomena, so he explains the phenomena of life itself. If an animal lives and moves, it can only be, he thinks, because there is a little animal inside which moves it: if a man lives and moves, it can only be because he has a little man or animal inside who moves him. The animal inside the animal, the man inside the man, is the soul. And as the activity of an animal or man is explained by the presence of the soul, so the repose of sleep or death is explained by its absence; sleep or trance being the temporary, death being the permanent absence of the soul." [1]

Usually the form of the soul is like that of the man himself. The agreement is sometimes carried into ludicrous detail. Thus just as there are fat bodies and thin bodies, there are fat souls and thin souls. "There is a picture in the

[1] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, one-volume edition, p. 179.

Roman Catacombs portraying the death of a Christian, in which the soul is represented as leaving the mouth of the dying in a cloud-like shape that takes his own form. What is practically a replica of this is found on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa; and in the east transept of Salisbury Cathedral on the sculptured monument over the tomb of Bishop Giles de Bridgport the soul appears as a naked figure carried by an angel." [1]

Religion and Magic

Religion and magic are always very closely associated, and it is very hard to tell where the one begins and the other leaves off. Frazer, the writer from whom we have quoted, makes a hard-and-fast distinction between them, identifying magic with a causal view of the world of a mistaken type and religion with the humble propitiation of superhuman beings. His view has been attacked by psychologists as too intellectualistic and as not seeing the part played by the emotions. There would seem, however, to be this much truth in Frazer's view, their savages swing between humility and command in their relations with the powers that surround them. Spell and prayer easily pass into one another. But it is more than doubtful that savages have a causal view of the world in the sense of an insight into the mechanics of change.

Magic consists essentially in the attempt to bring about desirable results by spells and charms. Beneath this attempt seems to lie an emotional direction of attention which grasps at any suggestion due to similarity or contiguity. There is a great desire to have something done, and the mind snatches at anything which at all resembles, or has had any

[1] Gilmore, *Animism*, p. 41.

contact with, the object desired. Magic thus rests on an emotional relation. It is a getting as near to a thing as can be done; it is doing anything like the event desired. The reader will readily recall elements in popular Christianity of this sort.

It would be very delightful to give many instances of magic and to analyze them, but my purpose, which is more philosophical, forbids. The reader can find this material in the works of Frazer, Conybeare, Thorndike, Westermarck and others.

Spring-time was a period of tremendous emotional excitement in the life of primitive man. We who live farther from nature cannot appreciate this to the full. To early man, spring meant life. Winter was a period of death and dearth. Would the spring come again with green vegetation? How direct, simple and emotional their relation with nature was! The ancient Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone will be recalled here. Demeter, the Earth-mother, loses her daughter Persephone (who represents, of course, vegetation), carried down into the underworld by the evil powers of Darkness and Winter. Carpenter points out that there was a yearly ceremonial in Greece and a magical ritual for the purpose of restoring the lost one and bringing her back to the world again.[1] Such rituals helped in the growth of myths.

At first, man was immersed in nature, though full of dread at her powers and mysteries. It is at this stage that we have what are called nature-religions with their worship of fecundity. Puritanism and the Victorian era of prudishness made sex and birth something to be hidden and to be ashamed of. Primitive man knew nothing of this attitude.

[1] Carpenter, *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 73.

His life depended upon nature's fruitfulness, and the survival of the tribe depended on its fecundity. Living was a grim struggle to be forgotten in the joy of spring-time. Then man tried to help nature in every way he could think of. "To cause rain or thunder you had to make rain-or-thunder-like noises; to encourage Vegetation and the crops to leap out of the ground, you had to leap and dance. . . . Native May-pole dances and Jacks-in-the-Green have hardly yet died out—even in this most civilized England. The bower of green boughs, the music of pipes, the leaping and the twirling, were all an encouragement to the arrival of Spring, and an expression of Sympathetic Magic." [2]

More sophisticated developments of magic in connection with religion will be referred to in other chapters. The fact to bear in mind is that primitive culture is complex and that various attitudes co-exist. If one method does not succeed, another may be tried. Man is doing his best to maintain himself in a not too friendly world.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 76.

CHAPTER V

THE BIRTH OF THE GODS

From Powers to Gods

VERY primitive religion was not, then, a religion of gods. How these came and by what paths we can only guess. We have, however, good reason to believe that they expressed a mental and social growth on the part of man. His imagination became awakened and took the natural and easy path of personification and projection. Thus man began to transform these powers into gigantic semblances of himself. In some such fashion the forces of nature were cast into a semi-human mould. There was something like himself—only more powerful and grander—back of the thunder and the lightning. Dead ancestors and tribal heroes were probably another source of gods. The mobbish imagination of hovering presences in semi-magical ritual was still another point of departure.

Bit by bit, then, the gods were born. It is clear that they were the projection of the feelings, needs and beliefs of the tribes who worshipped them. They took many forms and had various histories. Accident, conditions of climate, tribal mentality, history, all united in various ways to give variety and piquancy to the deities conceived by man. As tribes combined into nations, so were gods fused together. In this fashion, pantheons were formed with a chief god at the top.

These gods were believed in because they were formed from the awe of man before the mysterious and potent, and

reflected man's needs. Their influence and intervention were regarded as necessary for the welfare of the group which had adopted them and which they, also, had adopted. They made the rain to fall and the grass to grow; they protected suppliants from their enemies and warded off sickness and death. In them was to be found the ever-ready helper in time of trouble. In this fashion did man gain confidence and courage. Thus religion adopted the supernatural and brought it into relations with the social group.

It would seem that man, being unable to master his world, adopted powers able to do so. Very charming, is it not, that man in his dread should do this? Magic and his crude efforts at knowledge failed him, and so he fell back on social adoption and propitiation. He would be friends with the good powers. He would sacrifice to them, pray to them, worship them. As the imaginative energies of men took this path, the gods were born.

Rudimentary religion was an inevitable accompaniment of rudimentary culture. Even to-day we find these two things linked together in vast regions of the earth. In the jungles of Sumatra and the wilds of Central Africa medicine-man and magician still ply their trade as of old. The tom-tom beats; the masked dancers dance; witches are smelled out. Religion, mixed more or less with magic, concerns itself with the emotional crises of human life, with birth and death and initiation into the tribe, connecting these events with secrets and Powers which surround and penetrate the group. Myth and ritual are handed down from the immemorial past in their main outlines.

But in certain favoured regions a higher type of culture slowly formed. Population increased, communication quickened, division of labour arose, and cities grew up. In short,

on certain coasts and in fruitful river valleys, what we call civilization made its gradual appearance.

It is no part of our task to enumerate the forces which pushed the vigorous races of Southern Europe, Asia and Egypt to this higher level; and we shall not attempt to estimate the part played by racial capacity, historical accident and favourable location. Sufficient for us to note that complex cultures did slowly arise and that, in them, religion gradually took on new and striking aspects. It is in such religions that we meet the *noonday of the gods.* Fortunately, we are quickly within the realm of history and can trace the development which religion underwent. What we shall find will be of all the more interest to us because it was out of this evolution of religion that Christianity arose.

Do Religions Evolve in Parallel Ways?

It used to be supposed that the comparative study of religion could discover certain natural and inevitable stages of development through which religion passed. It was thought to be something which, as it unfolded itself, disclosed the same forms everywhere. Closer study has shown that the changes in the religion of the various groups of mankind are by no means parallel. Just as language and political structure vary from nation to nation, so does religion. All these are growths which express the life of the people, and there is room for infinite diversity.

But we need not go to the other extreme and deny similar strands of development within cultures of about the same intellectual level. Thus religion becomes increasingly moralized as culture progresses, though it is never identical with morality. Again, we often find tendencies to monotheism in advanced cultures, especially among the higher

classes of society, what we may call the thinking classes. But the religions of different peoples differ profoundly in spite of these common trends. Each has its texture and genius inseparable from the whole past life of the group of which it is an expression.

We can, again, find similarity in the human attitude towards the supernatural powers which each nation has projected into the region of the sacred and mysterious. After all, human needs, values and crises are the heart of religion. Spell, prayer, ritual, sacrifice and worship are the ingredients of religion which we can recognize in every clime and country in spite of differences in prescription and formula. Every religion has its roots in a fairly common human nature but, like a plant, it branches out in various ways according to time and circumstance.

In place of broad generalizations about religion as such, it is far better to examine certain of the great human groups and to note the development of religion within them as history has recorded it. This is the work that careful investigators have been engaged in for some time now and which is too little known even by the educated public. Thus light has been thrown upon Greek religion and we realize, as never before, how complex it was and how much Christianity owes to it. And what is true of Greek religion holds equally of Chinese, Hindu, Egyptian, Persian and Hebrew religion. We see popular superstition confronting priestly and philosophic speculation, dim powers side by side with anthropomorphic deities, magical incantations mingled with prayers and submissive worship. We see the old linger on into the new, perhaps suddenly to get new life under the power of a new interpretation.

The gods are born in many ways. Some can be traced

to the personification of aspects of nature, the sun, the thunder, mother earth, a personification expressive of the awe which these events and things awakened in the minds of men. Still others have arisen from fetiches with mysterious properties. Ancestor-worship played its part in the birth of some gods. And we can find still others connected with sacred animals or totems. It has been shown, again, that the ritual of worship of vague powers has given rise to gods with names and personalities, projections, as it were, of the emotional needs of the group. Upon the gods, thus born, history sets its mark. Conquest carries some to high fame and gives them temples and priests. Others are cast down and slowly vanish. Where now are Marduk and Asshur, Isis and Osiris? But they once had crowds of worshippers and had kings as their servants.

Stages of Greek Religious Development

In this chapter we shall study the religions which arose in the Mediterranean basin, for these have, beyond all others, influenced our own religious ideas. Let us begin with the Greeks and then pass eastward to Persia and Palestine. It was out of the mingling of cults and philosophies in the Roman Empire that Christianity was born. To see it in this setting alone enables us to understand it as it was.

We are fortunate in having at our command the investigations of Greek scholars such as Farnell, Murray, Preuss and Rhode. These men have traced Greek religion from a stage entirely like the rudimentary religion we have already studied up to a highly ethical and reflective level. It will be interesting to see what the people who created science and philosophy did with religion.

There are distinguishable *five* stages of development. First comes the "Age of Ignorance." After this follows the Olympian or classical stage; then the Hellenistic period; next comes the age of failure with its growth of salvation-religions; finally, we have the last struggle of pagan thought and feeling against Christianity. A glance at these stages is all that we can allow ourselves.

The age of ignorance, or primal stupidity, is like that with which anthropology has made us familiar. We find fertility-rites of all sorts and the search for *mana.* Even the medicine-man appears on the scene. Again, there is placation of ancestral ghosts and the powers of the underworld. At times religion is savage and ruthless, a thing of terror and awe. Men and women dance themselves into states of exaltation and madness. They tear living animals limb from limb to get their life; even human beings fall victims.

It is noteworthy what a part is played in this primal religion by creatures which show immense power, like the bull, or fertility, like the pig. In its wild state the bull is a tremendous animal, full of fire and vigour, obviously filled with that life or *mana* which meant so much to primitive man. In Crete, religion was permeated by the bull of Minos; and it is interesting to recall that Mithraism, the religion from Persia which rivalled Christianity, had the rite of baptism in the blood of the sacred bull.

And then there were vegetation-rites which might even involve human sacrifice as a propitiation of dark powers which might have been offended. The Greeks believed in a Year-Dæmon that lives, then dies and finally rises again from the dead, raising the whole dead world with him. In this phase he was called the "Saviour," a term which we

must bear in mind when we come to examine Christianity. Is it not the personification of vegetation which dies in winter and is reborn in the spring? Our Easter is a festival of the spring. Let us remember that human life was precarious in those days of ignorance. It was threatened by famine, floods, wild beasts, and pestilence. "If the Saviour were not reborn with the spring, they slowly and miserably died. And all the while they knew almost nothing of the real causes that made crops succeed or fail. They only felt sure it was somehow a matter of pollution, of unexpiated defilement." [1]

Clearly, religion is an expression of human life in the face of the world as it impinges on the group.

The utterly formless gods of this first era give way in part to the Olympians. Homer comes to Hellas. In Homer we have the religion of the Hellenic invaders from the North, purified and imaginatively developed. We may call it an aristocratic religion influenced by the rise of Ionian culture. In it we have anthropomorphic gods pictured as serene and beautiful. As akin to man, they are removed from the cruelty, darkness and uncleanness of the old nature-religion of the age of ignorance.

We cannot go into the evolution of the Olympians, into how Zeus, the old sky-god, becomes the god of justice; how Athena, the patroness of Athens, becomes a noble ideal of virgin purity and wisdom; how Apollo, the god of the oracle at Delphi, becomes the protagonist of a high morality and even of science and philosophy. It is clear that high feeling and thinking lay back of this evolution of the Olympians. They were felt to stand for intelligence as against the brute force of giants and centaurs. They were

[1] Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 51.

ideal persons who governed the world in ways which human beings could understand.

It has been pointed out that the Olympic religion was really a moralized and reformed religion symbolizing what civilized Greeks admired and yearned for. It displays that immense power of the imagination over the hearts and minds of people. From Homer to Aeschylus and Plato we can see the leaders of religious thought at work purging the old rites, bringing order into chaos and, as far as possible, rationalizing and moralizing the supernatural.

Many of these religious thinkers pressed onward towards monotheism. They surmounted the old departmentalism and glimpsed unity and law in the world. They refused to accept the old tales of injustice and lust told of the gods by the poets. Nor was stern moral fervour lacking. In Aeschylus we have a figure much like one of the Hebrew prophets. Take, for instance, this passage from the Agamemnon:

> "Zeus, the high God! whate'er be dim in doubt
> This can our thought track out—
> The blow that fells the sinner is of God,
> And as he wills, the rod
> Of vengeance smiteth sore."

But we must hurry on, fascinating as the subject is. Greece, as is well known, fell a prey to her political division. The great city-states in which men lived and moved and had their being were ruined by war and dissension. The bright hopes and courage of the classic period ended in a discouragement which we who have lived through the Great War of our own times can understand. The decline was slow but steady. But between the classic era and the

stage of loss of nerve we have the rise of cosmopolitanism, the Hellenistic age, an age beginning with Alexander the Great.

The Hellenistic age witnessed the spread of science and philosophy. Reflective men tried to analyze life and the world in a rational way and the supernatural retreated temporarily into the background. Thus morality became the subject of ethical thought. What is human good? Is it happiness? Is it self-realization? Is it living according to reason? Is it serenity of soul? As we should expect, there was no complete agreement among thinkers in regard to human life or the nature of the world. Naturalistic theories like those of Democritus, Epicurus and, in a fashion, Aristotle, were confronted by views more akin to religious tradition. He who is acquainted with religious thought to-day will find that it has much in common with the thought of this period. Plato still lives in the words of the Christian theologian, and Lucretius still expresses the attitude of many naturalistic thinkers. In the *Hymn to Zeus* of Cleanthes, the Stoic, who lived in the third century B. C., we have a typical religious hymn of the philosophic enlightenment. In it we find the religious outlook which we associate with men like Seneca, Cicero, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. It is universalistic in spirit and has far outgrown the bounds of nationalism.

"Most glorious of the Immortals, many named, Almighty
for ever,
Zeus, ruler of Nature, that governest all things with law."

But, while the few stood erect, the many began to waver and turn back to old ideas. Ancient thought did not have sufficient foundation in the systematic study of nature, and

so the old supernaturalism began to come to life again and on a larger scale and with a broader sweep. The conquest of the Mediterranean basin by Alexander and his generals made possible a mingling and flowing together of all the cults which had been developing from Persia to Egypt. And this fusion and interaction continued under Roman rule, for Rome was tolerant of religious beliefs so long as they did not challenge the state. Isis and her mysteries spread abroad. So did Mithraism, a variant of Zoroastrianism. The wail of the priests of Attis and Adonis was heard in new places. The old Greek mystery cults with their initiations and promise of immortality and salvation gained in prestige. Man began to look beyond this world to another in which he might find a mystic peace. Citizenship had been robbed of its glory, and the Greek found himself in the position of the Orientals whom he had so long despised.

It is clear that religion was becoming an expression of man's dissatisfaction with this world. The imagination projected its longings into other spheres beyond the known. And here it met the assistance of all sorts of esoteric cults. Each cult had its saviour and its ritual of initiation into things sacred and mysterious. Priests and prophets arose on every hand with their messages and promises, and the mass of the people began to follow them gladly. Ideas which stood in the way of these cults were not firmly established as scientific notions are to-day. The way was open for faith.

Mystery Cults and Personal Salvation

In the classic times of Greece, Rome and Palestine, men had set their hearts on life rather than on death. And, as

a consequence, religion was largely a public affair. It involved ceremonies and ritual with rich temples and priests. It was for Israel that Yahweh cared, not for the individual Israelite. Now all this was beginning to change. Was it an increase in individualism to which this was due? Was it an increasing restlessness and dissatisfaction with life? Was it that people were more cosmopolitan in the Roman Empire and less attached to a particular society? All these factors were undoubtedly at work. *And it is to be noted that the pressure of life fell most upon the common man.* Writes Case: "It was in his experience, which was that of the rank and file, that the business of living took on its true seriousness, and involved him and his companions in a perpetual struggle to come to terms with a none too friendly environment." [1]

The idea of a happy, personal immortality began now to attract attention, an immortality guaranteed by some divine saviour. Even the Jews began to believe in the resurrection of the saints and a coming of their Messiah.

In the Gentile world there were many cults of the divine saviour, a god who had died and come to life again. The idea was in the air from Greece to Persia. The thought, itself, probably goes back to the spring-festivals with their celebration of the rebirth of vegetation, though the movements of the sun also played its part. But the old ritual had taken new forms and had been given a deeper meaning. Man was now self-conscious and imaginative. The following passage from Cumont's *The Oriental Religions* brings out some of the chief features of these new cults: "This constant endeavour to secure an after-existence for one's self and relatives manifested itself in various ways, but

[1] Case, *The Social Origins of Christianity*, p. 86.

it finally assumed a concrete form in the worship of Osiris. The fate of Osiris, the god who died and returned to life, became the prototype of the fate of every human being that observed the funeral rites. 'As truly as Osiris lives,' says an Egyptian text, 'he also shall live; as truly as Osiris is not dead, shall he not die; as truly as Osiris is not annihilated, shall he not be annihilated.' . . . Through the initiation the mystic was born again, but to a superhuman life. . . . What the votaries of Orpheus had confusedly discovered through the veil of the legends, and taught to Magna Græcia, namely, that this earthly life was a trial, a preparation for a higher and purer life, that the happiness of an after-life could be secured by means of rites and observances revealed by the gods themselves, *all this was now preached with a firmness and precision hitherto unknown.*" [1]

It is evident that we now enter the period of religions of personal salvation. Christianity, as we shall see, was one of these, linked up with the Jewish religion. They contained a tremendous appeal to the miserable masses oppressed by the upper classes of the Roman Empire. We are in a very different social world from that of the Age of Ignorance or of the Periclean city-state. If our thesis is correct we would expect religion to alter its texture and emphases. The perspective of man's destiny had again changed.

And while all this was taking place, what was the attitude of philosophy? On the whole, it fought nobly against the infection of mystery. Stoicism, as we have seen, built up a rational religion which trusted "the larger hope." The followers of Aristotle continued to investigate nature in a systematic way. Platonism swung to scepticism and only in the end moved in the direction of a noble mysticism. It was the

[1] Cumont, *The Oriental Religions*, p. 100.

glory of the Epicurean school to have stood for humanism and sanity amid a world of growing superstition. But, as the Ancient World moved to its decline and fall, the voice of science and philosophy was less and less heard in the land. Social conditions did not favour reason and self-reliance. What else could be expected? The government was a bureaucracy; popular education did not exist; and economic conditions were getting worse and worse. In his helplessness man reached out his arms to the Great Powers that ruled the world.

We need hardly touch upon the last stage of the Olympian religion. Zeus and Apollo struggled in vain against the rising tide of salvationism. They were too secular and public and made too few promises. Religion had become a passion which only cults and associations could satisfy. Was this a morbid situation due in part to the unsatisfactoriness of life at this time? Surely in part; and yet there was a natural fascination about the new doctrines. A real, and yet mysterious, world had opened above the people's heads. Even to-day this fascination has not completely disappeared.

Let us now betake ourselves to a study of the Jewish religion, so ethical and so fanatical. The intense life of this self-centred nation prepared an outlook which began as a Jewish sect and passed into the Gentile world. Here it was transformed and, at Antioch, was named Christianity.

CHAPTER VI

FROM TEMPLE TO SYNAGOGUE

The Larger Culture of the East

THOSE who get their ideas of the religions and culture of the immemorial East from the Old Testament do not do justice to them. The Jews were good haters, and they had reason to hate. But the upper classes of the surrounding nations did not worship idols altogether. Thus the Persians had an ethical religion of a very pure sort which exerted a great influence upon Judaism. Even the Egyptians had approached an ethical monotheism long before Israel did. Investigation is giving the scholar perspective in all these matters. We are learning that the Jews owed much to foreign influence and that many of the ideas which appear in Christianity came to the front only a few centuries before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

A few examples of religious prayers and hymns will bring out the nobler aspects of the higher religions in the countries surrounding Palestine.

Much has been heard of recent years, since the discovery of his tomb with its marvelous art, of the reforming king of Egypt, Ikhnaton. He was the champion of a solar monotheism. As Farnell points out, this Pharaoh was, like the philosopher Spinoza, a *Gottbetrunkener Mann,* a man drunk with the sense of God. Here are some excerpts from hymns composed either by him or for him. "The birds flutter in their marshes, their wings uplifted in adoration to Thee.

All the sheep dance upon their feet, all winged things fly. They live when Thou hast shone upon them. Creator of the germ in woman, maker of seed in man, giving life to the son in the body of his mother. . . . How manifold are Thy works! They are hidden from before us. O sole God whose powers no other possesseth: Thou didst create the earth according to Thy heart." [1] Let us remember that this hymn was written long before the days of Moses.

Pastoral and agricultural life produced their effects upon religion in Mesopotamia and Persia. Thus the image of a god as a good shepherd crops up here and there long before it appears in the Hebrew Psalms. In the earliest part of the second millennium B. C. the sun-god Ré is addressed as the shepherd of all men, and it is noted that Tammuz of Mesopotamia is invoked as "the Shepherd." The shepherd is kindly to his sheep; may not God be like a kindly shepherd? These social images are inevitable. We are, of course, reminded of Christ, the good shepherd. Shepherd and father are kindly ideas.

Zoroaster was, quite obviously, a remarkable man. He was one of the first great religious reformers of whom we have any knowledge. He worked out a religion based on the principle of contrast between good and evil. The world is the scene of a conflict between light and darkness, good and evil. On the one side is Ahura-Mazdah, the god of truth and goodness; on the other, the spirit of evil and falsehood, the father of lies, the ancestor of Satan.

This religion of the Persians was spiritual in a good sense, taught personal immortality, was opposed to idolatry. Let us remember that the Persians, like the Jews, had not developed art and that their religion hindered its development.

[1] Breasted's *trans.*, p. 325.

A glance at the social conditions which Zoroastrianism reflected will be of interest. It has been clearly shown by Moulton that the Persian prophet connected his message with settled agricultural life. Ahura-Mazdah, the good creator, wishes to protect the cultivator from the nomads who are the followers of the Lie. Can we not see here a social struggle such as has always gone on in that region, between farmer and Kurdish brigand? Ahura is called upon as he who "didst create Ox and Waters and Plants, Welfare and Immortality." Again, we have the statement that "He who sows corn sows Righteousness." It is obvious here again how closely religion follows the strategy of human life. It reflects needs and desires for a guarantee.

We have studied the Persian religion partly for its own sake, partly because it influenced the later development of Judaism. It is to the religion of the Jews that we must now turn.

A Glance at Jewish History

When we pass from the traditional story of the Hebrew development to the outline which scholarship is slowly building up, we find ourselves obliged to revise many accepted beliefs. The material is still being enlarged, and many points are yet under judgment. In what follows I shall call attention only to certain stages of development without assigning very specific dates.

The Israelites were Semitic nomads who entered Palestine as a result of one of those outrushes of population from the desert which have occurred since early times. After a struggle of several centuries the invaders began to fuse with the original inhabitants who were quite highly civilized. As is well known, Canaan had long before this been under the

control of Egypt. It had walled towns and its people fought with war-chariots.

The invaders had a tribal god called Yahweh who was brought with them in a sacred ark or chest. He seems to have been a war-god, a lord of hosts. There were other elements in this primitive religion, such as the worship of trees and stones and springs. As the Israelites settled down and became agriculturalists, they adopted the rites of their neighbours. These were often of the fertility type which we have discussed in the preceding chapters. Worship was carried on in the high places.

In the Book of Judges we have an account of a period of tribal federation. This gave way to the Kingdom of Saul and of David. We may date David's reign at about the tenth century B. C. The emphasis upon the worship of Yahweh as the god of Israel is connected with the effort at national unity. The temple at Jerusalem was a symbol of this unity and was opposed to the local centres of worship. The division of the Kingdom after Solomon's death and the successive conquest of the two parts by the larger nations to the south and the east followed.

There were social and economic struggles in these kingdoms as well as the waves of invasion from abroad. The rich became richer and the poor poorer, and many were sold into bondage for debt. This is the same sort of thing that happened in Athens and led to Solon's reforms. But in the case of Israel there was no actual legislation, though much discontent. The prophets seem to have been at first leaders in social reform. They may have expressed the old tribal idea of brotherhood and justice in opposition to the outlook of the city with its commercial traditions. The prophets seem to have conceived of Yahweh as one who stood for the

old ethical ideals of brotherly justice and for simplicity of worship. We must regard all this as natural and as demanding no special revelation. The religious reformer projects his personality and his ethical vision into his god. As to the psychology of these prophecies we know little. The early prophets were whirling dervishes or medicine-men. The ethical prophets were seemingly more like preachers, with a message. About them we know little.

There was one king, Josiah, who attempted reform. It is from this period, about 621 B. C., that most scholars date Deuteronomy. But the exile came shortly after for both the Northern and the Southern kingdom. Thus began the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world.

We must remember that it was during and after the exile that the editing of the sacred literature of the Jews began, and that much late material is to be found all through the Bible. Thus all scholars agree that the latter part of Isaiah is at least post-exilic. A radical Dutch and French school holds that the prophetic part of the Bible is actually of this period and was assigned to the early history of Israel to secure prestige. Thus we know that Ecclesiastes is a very late production and did not have Solomon as author. Solomon was simply a sort of primitive Grand Monarque of the early kingdom. But this short glory of nationalism made his reign stand out for the poor, dispersed Jews of later times.

Later Ideas

But we must pass to the important features of the religious development. Let us discuss this under the following heads: (1) the conception of Yahweh, (2) the idea of immortal-

ity, (3) the Messianic hope, and (4) the law and the synagogue.

Yahweh was at first, as we have seen, a tribal god, quick to anger and cruel in his wrath. His mana would strike dead even those who offended him unintentionally. He was jealous of other gods and demanded that his people worship him alone. Like most gods he was not thought of as a creator; that idea came later, probably, to begin with, from Babylonian mythology. Hebrew religion was at this stage essentially like the religion of the surrounding Semitic peoples, like that of the Moabites, for example. The technical term is *monolatry*. This means that a particular people had its god, just as other peoples had theirs. Yahweh was the god of Israel, but he was not conceived as the sole god.

It was the capture of Jerusalem that brought Jewish religion into a crisis. Would Yahweh let his holy city be taken and the temple desecrated? Either he was weaker than Marduk and Asshur, or else he had decided to punish his people for their sins. This latter was the idea of the prophets and enabled them to drive home their moral conception of Yahweh. It even suggested to them that Yahweh was the one god and controlled the nations according to his providence. Did they get hints of monotheism from the educated priests of other countries? Or did they arrive at it from reflection on their own national problem?

During the captivity the Jews came in contact with the Zoroastrianism of the Persians with its dualism and its belief in immortality. There is every reason to believe that they were affected by it. The time of the zealots had not yet arrived. Upon their return a theocratic society was established. The nation was dominated by its religion just because its secular hopes were frustrated. It was believed that

Yahweh had wonderful plans for his people. At this point we enter upon the Apocalyptic Era about which people as yet know so little. It was from this apocalyptic movement that Christianity sprang. Let me quote a passage or two from Charles, who is one of the authorities in this field.

"So far from the Old Testament being closed in the fifth century," he writes, "it is now acknowledged, even by the most conservative Old Testament critics, that portions of it, such as Daniel and the Maccabean Psalms, belong to the second century B. C.; while progressive scholars are more and more recognizing that late elements are to be found in the Old Testament in a far larger degree than had hitherto been surmised. Old Testament criticism has, therefore, narrowed down the so-called 'period of silence' to something under two centuries. But recent research has shown that no such period of silence ever existed. In fact, we are now in a position to prove that these two centuries were in many respects centuries of greater spiritual progress than any two that had preceded them in Israel." This literature was "probably written in Galilee, the home of the religious seer and mystic." [1] In short, Palestine was thinking and feeling intensely and was in close contact with the whole Hellenistic world. One of the results of the situation was an increase in dualism. God was thrust up into the Heavens and man became increasingly a strange union of spirit and flesh. We have already noted that this development was characteristic of the Hellenistic period everywhere. The religion of salvationism was dawning in Palestine.

We are now ready to study the idea of immortality. Too few people realize that the idea of personal immortality in the Heavens is not mentioned in the whole of the Old Testa-

[1] Charles, *Religious Development between Old and New Testaments*, p. 7.

ment. Yahweh was a god of the living and not of the dead. His rule stopped with the grave. In Sheol the shades lived on a ghostly life according to their social rank in this world. So far as Yahweh was concerned his interest and power was bound up with Israel and not with individuals as such. Only very gradually did the belief in a new kind of immortality arise. This change must be connected with the influence of Persia and Egypt and with the apocalyptic ferment following the loss of national hopes. It was in this period that much of the imagery which we find in the New Testament was developed.

A similar transition in the conception of the Messiah can be noted. At first, the Messianic kingdom is entirely of this world. It is through and through militaristic and patriotic. Then comes the period of doubt and ethical reflection, leading to the passages of the second Isaiah describing the suffering servant. Once more with the triumph of the Maccabees the patriotic interpretation comes to the front, only to be rejected again by events. Finally, supernaturalism triumphs and projects the Messianic era into the future, where it is to be heralded by all sorts of extraordinary happenings. The figure of the Son of Man appears before the religious imagination. It is here that Christianity takes it up and applies it to Jesus.

In this brief historical survey, designed to show the evolution of particular religions, we need say little about the law and the synagogue as features of Jewish religion. For one reason, they are too well known to demand comment. The law consisted in the codification of ritual and of social legislation. Some of this went back to old observances and taboos which made the Jews a people set apart. The social legislation had decidedly humanitarian features which show

prophetic influence. The effect of the law was to bind the people together by distinguishing them from other nations.

The synagogue with its weekly gathering of adherents constituted a religious method of great significance. Less ritualistic than the temple and more open to influences of all kinds, it formed a fairly democratic kind of association which could multiply itself in foreign lands. And it is to be noted that the Jewish religion began, in this period, to secure converts from other faiths. It had become a monotheism of an ethical type, promising immortality to the saints and having a theory of the world past and to come. It had absorbed much that was good in the culture of the surrounding nations while retaining a whole-souled interest in religion.

The Good and Bad Features of the Jewish Development

Those who identify themselves with supernaturalistic religion have had little criticism to pass on the Jewish development. They have extolled its high ethical tone and its stress upon personality. But the thinker sees reason to introduce qualifications. Was there not something morbid and unnatural in this whole development, due to the tragedy of Jewish national life? Was not the later development of this religion a sort of compensation for frustrated hopes? It seems impossible to interpret the whole apocalyptic movement, which so influenced Christianity, in any other fashion. Men projected their hopes into the Heavens and called on their traditional God to enter on a new career of a more dramatic sort. Urged on in this fashion, Oriental religious fantasy painted a tremendous picture of judgment, Hell and the New Jerusalem, a picture which obscure sects still try to decipher. The Jewish people had lost their nerve much as

the Greeks had done. It was a period of greater self-consciousness along with less to satisfy the individual. The mystic development is quite understandable and excusable, but is it of value to ourselves? It is this which the thinker may well doubt.

Again, the very isolation and unhappiness of the Jew made him a fanatic. He formed a shell of ritual and belief and retired within it. This had not always been the case. In earlier times he had borrowed widely from other nations. But, at the end, the development was over and Jewish religion passed into orthodoxy. Much of the spirit of this orthodoxy was transferred to Christianity; and to this origin can be traced many of the unlovely features of our Western religions. It is noteworthy that Islam and Christianity have in them more of the tendency to exclusiveness and theocratic authoritarianism than have the religions of India and China. There is something passionate, personal, self-centred about them. In this has lain both their strength and their weakness. They have been *par excellence* religions of personal agency. It is for this reason that they have offered such resistance to science and philosophy. Added to this is the fact that they are religions of a book, of a specific revelation sanctifying the beliefs of the Ancient World, and we can appreciate the problem which they give to a new culture and which a new culture gives to them.

We shall now study Christianity as it actually was. What it is to-day is a still harder question to answer. What is happening to traditional Christianity in this period of new knowledge and social activity? But the needed perspective for an answer to this last question rests upon insight into the Christianity of the past.

CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIANITY AS IT WAS

OUR hope of gaining insight into the present religious situation and of giving some measure of *guidance* to those who feel that much of traditional religion is outworn depends, certainly in part, upon our knowledge of the past. If we are to be creative, we must master the past and not allow it to master us. And the surest way to master it is to see it as it was. Illusion gives it a strength over us that it should not possess. It inclines us to look backward rather than forward and blunts our perceptions of the present. We become divided selves without that integrity of personality that is so essential to spiritual exploration.

Perhaps, a reference to the teaching of psychology may bring home to us the danger which lurks in the usual romantic treatment of the past. It is well known to-day what a rôle is played in our thinking by our feelings. Sentiment directs our interests and determines the attitude we shall take towards the objects of those interests. That which is idealized is seldom analyzed; it becomes sacred and resists closer inspection. It is thus given dominion over us. Nowhere is this principle better exemplified than in religion, for religion by its very nature touches our deepest emotions. Looked at in this way, it is not hard to understand why religions tend always to be conservative. There is no need to appeal to priestcraft, as the eighteenth century did, nor to the self-conserving force of institutions. So far as these

also are at work, they are supplementary to tendencies in human nature itself.

It is clear, then, that we must explore Christianity and find out what it actually was if we are to escape its unconscious control over our thinking. And at this point we must go to the scientific historian and not to the theologian.

The Quest of the Historical Jesus

In his book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus,* Schweitzer calls attention to the absolute indifference of early Christianity to the historical Jesus. "It is," he writes, "only at first sight that the absolute indifference of early Christianity towards the historical Jesus is disconcerting. When Paul, representing those who recognize the signs of the times, did not desire to know Christ after the flesh, that was the first expression of the impulse to self-preservation by which Christianity continued to be guided for centuries." As soon as Jesus was interpreted as the Messiah by the early Palestinian church, his actual life on this earth lost importance. And the Gentile groups thought of him as a saviour bringing immortal life to those who entered into communion with him. For them, also, Jesus, the man, was of slight interest. Even Protestantism was not at first concerned with the historical Jesus. For instance, "Luther had not so much as felt that he cared to gain a clear idea of the order of the recorded events."

It was the rise of a new standpoint that led to the historical study of the New Testament and of every record that could throw light upon it. We may call this the secular, historical outlook. Here was a commanding figure in the history of human thought; what could we find out about him when myths were cleared away? One way of approach

was tried after another. And it was not at first realized what a complex problem faced the student.

In his *Life of Jesus,* Strauss eliminated the supernatural and mythical as something which *a priori* could not be true. It was just that wrapping which all religions showed. The result was a rationalized account of Jesus as a moral prophet. Then came Renan's rather sentimental and florid *Life* which combined rationalism with edification.

The vogue having been given, many popular lives, guiltless of scholarship and dominated by apologetics and edification, issued from the press. They are, in fact, still issuing. One of the latest, according to an advertisement which I have received, declares that Jesus was the ideal Rotarian. Now, all of this illustrates the tendency of popular thought to create Jesus after its own image. To the Anglican divine of the Victorian era, he was, quite obviously, a cultured and kindly gentleman; to the evangelical American, he was the ideal preacher and teller of parables. But for all traditionally minded Christians he was the Son of God, a tremendous and mysterious figure, not to be treated as other historical characters must be. He was sinless, superhumanly wise, a willing sacrifice for our sins, the first fruit of a new dispensation. Doctrine dominated history.

But, quite obviously, all this is piousness, edification and apologetics, and not history. Slowly scholars began to accumulate the technique of investigation. The New Testament was analyzed verse by verse and comparisons between the synoptic gospels made. This is what is usually called the "higher criticism." It was accompanied by careful textual study and the endeavour to discover the exact meaning of individual words in the Greek. It was really a tremendous, co-operative labour whose magnitude very few people real-

ize. Certain conclusions began to stand out, such as the view that the gospel by Mark is the oldest of the three, that another source was incorporated in the gospels, that there was constant redaction or editing, that we have no good reason to believe that tradition has given us the correct names of the authors of the gospels, etc. The following statement by an American authority in the field expresses the general character of this New Testament investigation: "Thus 'historical' study, as we have called it, in contrast with the practical and doctrinal type of earlier times, has now for upwards of a century been in process of development, and has produced some very definite results. Beginning with thought of the New Testament as a single book existing in a modern tongue, historical inquiry has threaded its way back through the centuries to the time when the several documents were not yet assembled into a canon. Treating them individually, it has endeavoured to submit each to a just process of scientific examination. It has tried to restore the exact form in which each book left the author's hand, and to interpret its meaning in terms of the original writer's own vocabulary and idiom. . . . It has also ventured to formulate in whole or in part a system of New Testament thought." [1]

But, as time went on, it was more and more realized that the New Testament was a product of a complex religious movement and that the whole Ancient World had to be studied from this angle. It was Christianity that produced this literature, and Christianity was a movement which grew and changed as it passed from Palestine into the Gentile world. Jewish apocalyptic literature had to be studied. The mystery religions of the Orient had to be investigated.

[1] Case, *The Social Origins of Christianity*, p. 21.

Greek philosophy and its theosophic corruptions had to be analyzed. In short, the scholar had to study all the influences which took hold of Christianity and to which it reacted in characteristic ways. And the more this was done, the more it was seen that Christianity was an expression of the religious beliefs and desires of the people of the Mediterranean basin during the first four centuries of the Roman Empire. In the preceding chapter we tried to throw some light upon this ferment of ritual and belief, so alien, on the whole, to our own culture. It should not now surprise us to discover that primitive Christianity was quite different from modern liberal Christianity. Many of our obscure sects are better Christians, in the sense that they stand nearer early beliefs, than the enlightened divines who condemn them. But they should not be puffed up at this compliment, for Christianity has, all through its history, been given to displacing old beliefs by new. Nothing stands permanently still, and age is no adequate criterion of value.

But we must not be lured into neglect of the question with which we began, the historical Jesus.

The Probabilities in Regard to Jesus

As the evolution of Christianity has been worked out, it has been seen, ever more clearly, that Jesus merely began a movement which changed rapidly into something far different from what he had in mind. It is for this reason that scholars are not nearly so excited over the question, Did Jesus actually live?, as they are supposed to be. This question means far more to the orthodox, who make Jesus the Son of God, than to the historian. One can quite believe that the historical probabilities are that Jesus actually lived and still feel that no religious questions are thereby settled.

But we cannot ignore the Christ-myth theory of Drews, Robertson, and Smith. It points to certain admitted facts about the culture and beliefs of the time under discussion. And the most conservative scholars admit that we do not know when Jesus was born and that the stories which adorn Christianity and make of it a delightful saga grew up gradually around his figure. The twenty-fifth of December was the day of the Sun's new birth and was adopted by the Church long after the period of primitive Christianity. And the stories of the Wise Men, of the Virgin Birth, of the Annunciation are, also, obvious accretions expressive of religious folk-lore. A theology which accepts them is building on sand.

We must always remember that all this is supposed to have occurred in Palestine some two thousand years ago and that the final account was not written until over a hundred years after the event and in an atmosphere of religious phantasy. The gospels are full of contradictions, though the oldest is the briefest and most human. But the reader will understand the situation better after I have examined the evolution of early Christianity.

While, then, I am not persuaded of the complete truth of the mythical theory, I am quite ready to grant that legend and myth are incorporated in the Christian epic.

If we take Jesus as an historical figure and try to determine from the gospels the chief facts of his career, they seem to be much as follows: Jesus, or Joshua, was a carpenter by trade, living in an obscure Galilean village. He had probably received an elementary education in the school connected with the synagogue of the place, and was aware of the chief events in the history of his people and of its apocalyptic hopes. Now the Galileans were notorious for

their patriotism and religious enthusiasm, and they were less in touch with the details of the law and temple usage than were the Jews near Jerusalem. It was, therefore, in a social atmosphere somewhat like that of older times that Jesus lived his youth and early manhood.

It is probable that Jesus's awakening to his mission occurred in connection with the preaching of John the Baptist. After John's arrest, he appears as a new herald of the coming Messianic Kingdom. His message was simple and consisted in the proclamation of the near advent of the promised Messiah and the need for repentance. Instead of going into the wilderness and allowing people to come to him, as John did, he moved about from village to village preaching his message. This brought him into touch with both sympathisers and enemies. We cannot say that his ideas were new, for they are those with which the apocalyptic literature of the day have made us familiar. It has been suggested that his methods of popular appeal and his disregard for the sensibilities and traditions of the teachers of the law were the things which caused friction. Most of those in authority feared suicidal conflicts with the Romans, and they noted symptoms of popular ferment with anxiety. Now our gospels have been carefully edited to bring out the harmony of Christianity with the Roman state; but there are passages remaining which may echo an older tradition. Add to this cause of disharmony the non-conformity of Jesus, the Galilean, and we can quite understand why Jesus aroused very conflicting opinions.

Did Jesus consider himself the promised Messiah? It is more than doubtful. Careful study of the more primitive documents shows that he never openly proclaimed his Messiahship. He, also, was a forerunner and proclaimer. The

early church was led to the conviction that he was the promised Christ, and so developed the gospels in conformity with this belief, making Jesus hint at his real nature. Only by this interpretation can all the mystery about his Messiahship be understood.

Did he call himself the Son of God? Again we must answer in the negative. Such an expression would have been blasphemous to a Jew, and we must remember that Jesus was a Jew.

The conclusion to which we are led is that Jesus considered himself as a prophet and felt himself urged to proclaim the coming Kingdom and the necessity to prepare for it in a moral way. One of the best French scholars asserts that Jesus the Nazarene meant Jesus the nazir, or saint, and did not refer to his native place at all. And we must remember that the early Christians spoke of themselves as "the saints."

Just why Jesus turned his face towards Jerusalem cannot be determined. He must have known that his enemies would be there in full force. But the city of David must have exercised a powerful fascination over him. His message had to be proclaimed there in the heart of the religious life of his people. He would but do what the other prophets had done, and he was undoubtedly a brave man.

His enemies secured his arrest by the Roman governor, and he was given short shrift. The story as we have it in the gospels is self-contradictory and impossible in detail. Much of it is motivated by the desire to throw the blame on the Jews rather than on the Romans. This reflects a period when Christianity was already largely a Hellenistic movement separated from the mother-church at Jerusalem.

It symbolizes the fact that the Jews had rejected the Messiahship of Jesus.

We do not know how long Jesus preached. It may have been for a very short while, just long enough to secure faithful disciples. His message was too noble to appeal to the multitude, except as regards the assertion of the near approach of the divine reign on earth. We can imagine, then, that many heard him but few followed. That has been the fate of most prophets. The personal tragedy may have been great. Did he hope to the last for some divine intervention in his behalf? This, also, is probable. But the heavens were dumb as they always have been. The planets circled around the sun, and the sun sped through space, while his life ebbed away on the cross.

The body of Jesus, the Galilean, was undoubtedly thrown into the common pit reserved for malefactors, as Abbé Loisy suggests, while the story of the burial by Joseph of Arimathea grew up to save him from the terrible dishonour of such a last resting-place.

This story of Jesus appears to me very natural and very probable. Other prophets have suffered a similar fate. We know, for instance, how the Persian Bab died as a result of the antagonism of the Mullahs. And Mani, the founder of Manicheism, died some three centuries after Jesus in somewhat the same fashion.

The Beginning of Christianity

If our interpretation of the life of Jesus is correct, he was not intentionally the founder of a new religion. What led, then, to the beginning of Christianity? And through what stages did it evolve? Scholars have gradually built up

a pretty clear picture of the course of events, and it seems to have been as follows:

The twelve disciples fled homeward after the disaster which seemed to deny all their hopes. Here they probably gathered together and talked over the message which he had given them. Memories flooded back. Surely, it could not all be a mistake. Remember that these Galileans were firm believers in the advent of a Messianic Kingdom and in the supernatural power of God. It was an age of faith and of belief in the miraculous. It seems that the key to their problem was given to them in the form of a belief that Jesus had arisen from the dead and was to come in the future. The stories in the gospels are collections of later accounts and are self-contradictory and clearly mythical. What did happen to encourage the disciples in the assurance that Jesus had arisen and was to be the promised Messiah on the Great Day foretold by the prophets? We can only guess that ecstatic vision had something to do with it and that these strongly religious men worked upon each other until a common conviction arose: Jesus was the Messiah. Thereupon they went up to Jerusalem again to proclaim their news.

Christianity began, accordingly, as a Jewish sect. The twelve sought to convince their compatriots that God had raised Jesus for the great work he had planned. "As occasion offered, either at the public meetings in the synagogue, or in private conversation with individuals, they sought to win allegiance to their cause. They invited their kinsmen to join their company and thus form a nucleus of faithful ones, especially prepared and set apart by the initiatory rite of baptism, ready to receive Jesus when he should

appear to establish the kingdom of God in accordance with the contemporary apocalyptic type of Jewish hope." [1]

They were successful only in a small way. The mother-church at Jerusalem remained relatively weak. What seems to have happened is as follows: The Jews of the Dispersion, scattered throughout the provinces of the Roman Empire, often visited Jerusalem. Here they heard of the new sect. Now these Jews were more liberal than the Palestinian Jews and more open to new ideas. Many of them must have carried back the account they had heard to their own cities and talked it over with their friends at the local synagogue. And some undoubtedly became enthusiastic missionaries, like St. Paul later. It is, at any rate, well known that Christian centres were formed at Damascus and Antioch. What happened in this new environment?

In the previous chapter we tried to offer some idea of the ferment of religious notions that was taking place at this time in the Roman Empire. Salvation gods with their mysteries were everywhere in evidence. It was not a Jewish Messiah for which men were looking but a saviour who would give them the gift of eternal life and free them from the woes of this world. Now scholars know that many Gentiles who were called "God-fearers" associated themselves with the synagogues. Jewish monotheism had a strong appeal to many religious men who could no longer believe in the old gods.

It seems likely, then, that, even before Paul, ideas were developing which connected Jesus with the fundamental ideas of the salvation-religions. Perhaps this connection was made at Antioch. If so, Christianity as it was understood

[1] Case, *The Social Origins of Christianity*, p. 62.

in the Gentile world was there born. Here Jesus, who had never been known according to the flesh, was made into a divinity. A Jewish Messiah very naturally did not interest these people. They needed someone of more universal religious significance, someone who could be fitted into their rites, beliefs and traditions. In this social medium Jesus became a salvation-god with the gift of a blessed immortality. The servant of Yahweh becomes the Son of God.

It was at this stage that Paul came into contact with Christianity. And it was the Christ after the spirit that he preached. Christ is the Lord before whom every knee shall bow. Having once adopted the new faith, Paul threw himself with all the fervour of his ardent nature into its advance. Christianity was still plastic and needed interpretation; and Paul's subtle mind worked out an interpretation which combined Jewish thought with Gentile perspective. But into Paul's Christology we cannot enter. What a theosophic system was in process of growth! Around the name and career of Jesus had thus begun to crystallize the whole religious inheritance of these old civilizations. Nationalistic religions could no longer satisfy. Men of all nations were swept together by the Roman Empire and thrown upon their own resources. Everywhere there was borrowing, merging, seeking.

After Paul, men trained in the schools of Alexandria began to come into touch with the new religion. To them, Jesus was the *logos,* or word, which mediates between God and the world. He was the creator-god sent by the Father who dwells afar off. Thus the very maker of the world is incarnated in man born of woman; the mystery deepens; we are far from the outlook of the Old Testament. By now the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is arising, and we are in the

full tide of Græco-Roman thought. Soon the famous theologian, Origen, will apply his subtle intellect to the problems raised by these various traditions and movements of growing Christianity. The prophet of Galilee has been adopted by thinkers trained in the cosmological speculations of Philo and Plato. And, as the centuries pass, Christianity becomes a religion with a well-developed theology and with theologians trying to give this theology system and order. For instance, the doctrine of the Trinity is but the resultant of the meeting of various elements and traditions in Christianity. The saviour-god must be united with the High God of Jewish thought and Greek speculation.

There are those who regard all systematic thought as an encumbrance. Such people seem to believe that they can get along without definite ideas. But that is an illusion for, implicit in their very feelings, are ideas of all sorts.

Evolving Christianity had at its disposal the religious material of the whole Ancient World. It could not avoid systematizing it, and it did this with a large measure of sanity. A religion unable to express itself intellectually would never have won the recognition of the upper classes and would have remained a sect. As it was, Christianity had to fight for its life against the highly organized thought of the Manicheans, followers of a religion that arose in the East two centuries after it. And there is reason to believe that the Roman state was of assistance here, for it disliked the Manichean religion more than it did Christianity.

By the fourth century Christianity had become a highly organized religion with splendid rites and an efficient clergy. But its worldly success brought elements of accommodation and compromise. As large numbers poured into the Church it was harder to assimilate them, and their traditions and

habits forced concessions. Thus the worship of the saints is clearly analogous to the pagan worship of heroes, while the Virgin Mary resembles the mother-goddess who is found everywhere in ancient religion. Christianity paid a price for its success. What would the twelve have thought of all this?

The Growth of the Church

It is impossible to neglect altogether the growth of the Church as an efficient administrative system. And in this connection we must point to the development of the sacraments.

The early Church was a democratic association modelled after the synagogue. Each local body was autonomous, and there was undoubtedly a large measure of variation among them. There is reason to believe that those gifted with "tongues" and vision occupied a conspicuous place in the early Church. Let us remember that it was still the common expectation that the world would soon come to an end.

The Christian community had in it many poor and, from the first, charity was stressed. This was in line with the best Jewish tradition, and even the Gentile world had this element more fully developed than is commonly supposed. Any brotherhood worthy of the name cares for its own.

As time passed, a greater need was felt for officials. Soon we find the council of presbyters supplemented by a supervisor or bishop. The social situation favouring unity, the bishop acquired more power and prestige. Probably the Jewish tradition of the High Priest assisted this development. As yet, the various churches had no official connection with each other although the bishops probably met and talked problems over. The larger cities with older churches naturally had prestige in all matters of tradition and usage.

In fact, there arose a feeling for what was called the apostolic tradition.

Heresy and uncertainty of doctrine led to the appearance of councils to determine the true teaching of the Church. And, as Christianity began to cover the Roman Empire, its political organization began very naturally to parallel that of the state. We hear now of the metropolitan bishop and of the patriarch. The bishops of such cities as Antioch, Alexandria and Rome stand out as leaders. It is not surprising that the bishop of Rome acquired greater and greater standing in the Western Church. The evolution of the papacy had begun. Political events, including the Germanic invasions, made the movement to centralization unavoidable.

The growth of the clergy is also extremely interesting to trace. Their separation from the laity accompanied the rise of the sacraments. And we must remember that the ritualistic worship of the period gave suggestion enough to the Christian community. Every religion had its priests, and the new converts could hardly conceive a religion without them.

The evolution of the sacraments in Christianity is intertwined with the religious traditions of the Ancient World. The eucharist probably began in a simple Jewish form of breaking bread. It is this form which Protestantism attempted to revive. But, as Christianity ceased to be a Jewish sect and passed into the Gentile world, this commemorative act became a communion repast, similar to those of the mystery religions, and expressed the belief that the Saviour was present and somehow gave himself and his divine nature to the communicants. Long ago man had eaten his god and secured his mana. Now this participation in the divine nature was secured more indirectly and symbolically, but

the aim was much the same, identification with the saviour-god. The doctrine of transubstantiation, or the mysterious change of the substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus, was the logical expression of the mystical interpretation of the sacrament. Greek philosophy with its distinction between substance and accidents came to the rescue of dogma. Another great mystery was added to the many which Christianity had evolved in its assimilation of the religious material of its time.

Did Protestantism Recover Primitive Christianity?

Until very recently all reform movements tried to find their sanction in the past. Consciously or unconsciously, they felt that they must work from some accepted precedent. There was as yet no idea of progress and improvement. The golden age was in the past. Then it was that the gods spoke with men. This attitude was common to religion and politics and but signifies that tradition with its backward-looking glance dominated the minds and hearts of men. All good things were inherited and not created by personal and social effort.

It is not surprising, then, to find that Protestantism took this traditional path. It did not conceive itself able to create a new and more adequate religion. Indeed, such an idea, if it had occurred, would have been considered blasphemous. The sole aim of the reformers was to restore the Church to its pristine purity, to retrieve the golden age of Christianity. Actually, new social forces were awake which could not easily be fitted into the inherited, hierarchical system.

The attempt at reform resulted in a struggle which shook Europe for centuries. Loyalties and emotions were engaged

to the utmost. It is a tragic and not altogether a pleasant picture. After the period of the religious wars, a sort of *modus vivendi* was worked out which has endured till our own day. In the next chapter we shall try to determine the result of the post-Reformation era for Christianity. Did Christianity stagnate, or did it slowly adjust itself to new ideas and social demands? How great a change can take place within the framework of this inherited religion? In an earlier work I put the query which was uppermost in my mind in the following fashion: "We must frankly ask ourselves what features of historical Christianity are congruent with our modern life. The Hellenistic world to which dogma and ritual are mainly due is a thing of the past, existent for no one but the scholar. Ours is a new world with new ideas, new problems and new possibilities. Does the recognition of historical continuity preclude the acknowledgment of very radical changes?" [1]

Human nature and human society being what they are, both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism took very understandable paths. The old institution fought for its existence and was successful in Southern Europe, while the newer movement became dominant in the North. But, as we should expect from social conditions, there was no wide-spread challenge of the fundamental assumptions of traditional religion. At the best, the supernaturalism, the dualism, and the mystic salvationism of the Hellenistic outlook were rationalized and ethicized into a sturdier system.

We have shown why Protestantism looked backward rather than forward. No other course was open to it in its day and age. It inevitably sought its credentials in a return to what it regarded as the original and unsullied

[1] Sellars, *The Next Step in Religion*, p. 94.

form of Christianity. These men were reformers moving within a given circle of ideas. From this standpoint they cannot be put on the same intellectual level as the creative thinkers of science and philosophy. They were necessarily more on the level of the common people of their time. How could it have been otherwise? Even had they been more sophisticated than they were, they could have secured leverage upon society in no other way than by pointing to the past.

And yet we now see that no lasting solution of our religious difficulties is possible in this fashion. In the first place, we tend now to look forward rather than backward. We trust less in a final revelation which occurred once in the past and which must be the standard for our belief. In the second place, we realize what a changing and protean thing even primitive Christianity was. Upon examination we are presented with many revelations rather than with one. The old simplicity has vanished. The standard appealed to does not exist. Perforce, we must think things out for ourselves. Even a selection is our selection and expresses what appeals to us.

The history of sectarianism has written this lesson large. It shows how impossible it is to find a standard in the past. Each impassioned zealot has taken his choice and preached it with fervour as the sole way of salvation. And it is becoming clear that this method has had its day, for sectarianism has fallen into increasing disfavour. One reason at least for this is scepticism of its foundation. The Scriptures have not the authority they once had. They are felt to belong to the past.

In an earlier chapter we pointed out that the rationalism of the eighteenth century was the first clear prophecy that

traditional Christianity could not in the long run maintain itself. But, for reasons I there pointed out, the sharp crisis was postponed until our own day. How is it being met? What is the situation in the religious world to-day? It is to this question that we must now address ourselves.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRESENT SITUATION

WE have now gained a measure of insight into the general nature of religion and of the forces back of it. It is clear that it is neither instinctive nor something supernaturally given. It is not instinctive because it is a complex in which there are many variables in the way of ideas, emotions and aims. It is not something supernaturally given because it is clearly an outgrowth of man's life in the kind of world he is in, and has taken many forms in different regions. From its very nature, therefore, religion is a variable.

In order fully to understand religion our canvas should be large. Otherwise, we are apt to be so dominated by a tradition or by a small span of history that we lose sight of this variability. We must learn to look upon any religion comprehensively and note its changes, for those under its spell are taught that "the truth as we have it was delivered to the fathers." It is for this reason that I have devoted so much attention to the evolution of Christianity. And, had my time permitted, I would gladly have sketched the history of the other great world-religions.

But I hope that even this brief historical introduction has shown convincingly enough that its religion is intertwined with the culture and basic conditions of a people. If the culture is backward, the religion will be also. If it is unprogressive, so will be the religion. If profound, and even revolutionary, changes are occurring in the culture

and outlook of a civilization, the religion will ultimately show it. Religion is not something apart which can continue unmodified while all else shifts and takes on new form and meaning.

But we must not forget that a complex society is never homogeneous. There are cultural layers which co-exist. And the principles which we have found to hold for history apply in large measure to these social layers. It is a vast mistake to hold that all Methodists, Baptists, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Buddhists, Mohammedans have the same type of religion. This wholesale way of taking denominations is very misleading. For example, I have talked with ignorant French Canadians about their religion and with subtle teachers in Catholic seminaries here and abroad, and I assure the reader that the differences were tremendous. It is so easy to assume greater uniformity and stability than there actually is. We must remember that institutions always put on a bold front in these matters, for it is officialdom that speaks.

With these suggestions in mind, let us now seek to appreciate the trends and movements of the present religious situation. There is reason to believe that religion is entering upon a new critical period, that the great religions of the past have lost much of their appeal, and that the human spirit is slowly creating a more naturalistic and humanistic outlook. We are in the midst of a tide of civilization and culture in many ways unique and unparalleled. How is this affecting religion?

The New Culture International

Cultures differ in what we may call their texture and their extent. Thus the culture of to-day is in large measure inter-

national for the upper classes of society and promises to be so for the mass of the people before many more decades have passed. And its texture is fundamentally industrial and scientific. Ours is an age of rapid communication and of the application of science to every phase of life. It has a sense of the mastery of nature and the disappearance of mystery. The steamer, the automobile, the aeroplane, the radio, the hospital are its symbols. These are penetrating everywhere and producing their mental effect. It is said that Japanese peasants who used to visit the temples when they came to the city now flock to see the skyscrapers and the underground railway. Technical civilization is like a huge, onrushing flood which promises to sweep to one side former methods of life and obliterate them.

The full significance of this world-wide spread of a new type of civilization is seldom grasped. It is too often regarded as something purely external. It is true that the external aspect of it can be grasped more easily than the system of ideas and methods of thought of which it is the creation. And yet it seems obvious that it represents a definite attitude towards nature, quite different from the old one. It is positive, confident, creative. And as a man acts and lives he will in the long run tend to feel and think. Slowly but surely there will be an assimilation of mankind to the same patterns of thought.

We must not, of course, confuse the technical side of civilization with culture. Culture is something very deep and personal which requires meditation and reflection. It cannot be sold and transported as machinery can be. All social groups have their traditional culture, and this is at most modified and redirected by outside influences. But it is undeniable that the culture of all peoples of any significance is actually being so modified and redirected by the

impact of science and industrial technique. The Western outlook upon life is spreading to China, India and Egypt. The world is being drawn together into a cultural unit. And the speed with which this is being done promises to be accelerated. The tempo of change is increasing.

It is clear that there is nothing in the past with which to compare the present situation. The scale of intercourse between nations is unparalleled. But we must not forget that the same tendency has always been operative. Recent discoveries in Southern India show that a civilization flourished there at least four thousand B. C. and that it was in close touch with a corresponding civilization in Mesopotamia. In the Ancient World, Egypt influenced Greece and, later, the whole of Southern Europe and Asia was in cultural contact. Buddhism and Zoroastrianism were not without their effect upon the rise of Christianity. Such a phenomenon is called syncretism. Ideas are borrowed and combined in all sorts of ways. It is like a solution of various ingredients in a common solvent. Such periods are times of mutual adjustment.

What is happening to-day has in a measure happened before. The difference consists in the scale of events and in the texture of the culture which is predominant. Ours promises to be a world culture dominated, as I have said, by industry and science. Literature and art will remain and have their place as an expression of life, but the general setting of the civilization is as I have described it. The question which we must ask ourselves is this, What will be the effect of this new situation upon religion?

Every World-Religion in a State of Ferment

Americans are apt to be so engrossed in their own controversies that they are unaware that similar disputes are

raging elsewhere. There are both fundamentalists and modernists in India, China, Japan, Egypt, Turkey, England, France. Traditionalism is confronted by those who feel that the old views must be modified in line with modern knowledge. The defenders of the old outlook rise in its defense and proclaim that the new views are outrageous heresies which must not be permitted. It is all very natural, and has occurred over and over again all through human history. If social fundamentalists had had their way, men would have lived in caves to this day. But, at present, I am not concerned with an attack upon fundamentalism but merely with the situation which exists to-day the world over.

Perhaps the state of affairs can be best indicated in the following way: It is not so much a question of Christianity's success in confronting the new culture as it is a question of *religion as such* making its adjustment. All of the world-religions are—to use an expressive phrase—in the same boat. What is true of Judaism holds of Buddhism, and what applies to Christianity is almost equally applicable to Confucianism. One of the signs of the times is the appearance of Congresses of Religion with delegates from all over the world. It is realized that these various religions have common problems and are confronted by common dangers.

It is rather interesting to note how quickly this new state of affairs has developed. Not very long ago, missionary enterprise was in full vigour. I do not mean to suggest that it is not continuing but merely that it has been passing into a new phase. Formerly missionaries were sent forth to save the heathen and to rescue their souls from eternal torment. In other words, the narrow and intense type of traditional Christianity was in full command. The

work of the missionary was to carry the message to those who had not heard the word in the hope that they might listen and be saved. But, of late, missionary enterprise has increasingly taken on social features. Education and medical service have bulked larger. This change is very significant.

In the first flush of this new world union the great world-religions entered into rivalry. Islam had always been a missionary religion, but now Buddhism and Hinduism began to preach and teach beyond their old boundaries. In their cases, however, the missionaries were sent to the cultured of other lands and not to the masses. These religions were theosophies and philosophies with a pantheistic background rather than religions of personal agency. In this first period, Christianity was the most aggressive, probably for two reasons: It had always been a missionary religion and it was the religion of the conquering whites. Official Christianity knew little of the artistic and philosophical heritage of the other ancient civilizations. It was not concerned with the things of this world, and it possessed the truth.

But the Orient proved resistant. Converts were few and of the humbler classes. And, while effort was renewed, new ideas began to gain ground in both the homeland and the East. Commerce brought with it subtler and more pervasive influences, and the higher cultures of the more educated met and were found to be less dissimilar than had been supposed. Scholars went abroad and returned with new ideas. In short, Christianity began to meet everywhere the new scientific and philosophical culture. Only in the Islands of the Pacific or in Darkest Africa did it have something to bring in the way of a higher civilization. And,

even there, it had at times deplorable negative effects in that it destroyed a culture without being able to replace it.

Looking deeper into the situation, we soon realize that religion is an expression of the whole culture of a people. The emphasis upon doctrine and creed blinded Christianity to this fact. Being a religion of personal salvation, it did not sense the social ties which bound individuals to their groups. But a moment's consideration should make each one realize that actually he belongs to a cultural group with certain traditions. Thus, an authority on Islam who has lived with the natives of Egypt informs me that Christianity in the Near East is largely negative, that it is bound up with social history and social oppositions. The educated Mohammedan would not think of becoming Christian. He may not believe in Islam as a creed, but he is one with his people. His ethos and perspective is largely theirs. As he becomes a free-thinker, he is apt to say "a plague on all these quarreling religions with their creeds and intolerances."

Instead, then, of one religion conquering the others, the likelihood is that each world-religion will fight its own battle with the cultural forces of the present. The result may be an evolution in somewhat the same direction, but an evolution with differences, due to divergencies in the social medium. Those who make their rallying-cry the watchword, "To evangelize the world in this generation," simply do not realize the bigness and social complexity of the world.

Modernism and Fundamentalism in the East

If my argument is correct, the struggle between fundamentalism and modernism is world-wide. Let us see whether the facts bear out this supposition.

In an excellent article in the *Journal of Religion,* dealing

with modernism in India, we find the following analysis: India's fundamentals have been social rather than creedal. Thinkers have been fairly free to formulate religious ideas. There has been a great variety of sects and movements. The real elements of religious fundamentalism have been the inertia and tenacity of custom. In India all social dogmas and customs *are* religion.

A good illustration of this basic character of social custom is, I think, to be found in the history of the theistic movement called the brahma samaj. This movement was begun in 1830 by Ram Mohan Roy. Impressed with the perversions and corruptions of popular Hinduism, he investigated the scriptures of various religions and finally inculcated the principles of monotheism found in the Upanishads of the Vedas. The creed of this movement falls into about fourteen headings. It must be characterized as a syncretistic movement having much in common with liberal Christianity. There is belief in prayer, in one God, in the reality of providence; and there is the rejection of caste and of extreme ceremonial. Now it is interesting to note that the brahma samaj split in 1865 over the question of caste. Babu Chunder Sen tried to carry their religious theories into practice by demanding the abandonment of the external signs of caste, and this the older members of the movement refused to do, considering it premature.

The philosophic religions of India were quietistic and mystical, and this meant that they accepted social arrangements. The background was pessimistic; salvation meant release from life. But, while this was true, we must not forget that popular religion was polytheistic and full of cults of a very direct and human sort. In some of these sex played a very important part. Just because, up to the

present, social conditions have been much as they were two thousand years ago, popular religion has changed little.

What seems to be happening now? The mass of the people are feeling the impact of economic forces of an industrial type. This means a social readjustment, and in India this involves religion. In a sense, then, modernism means the breaking down of caste, the destruction of vicious customs like child marriage, popular education, political reform. And in a country so full of people and so dominated by the past, all this will be slow work. In the meantime, we must not forget the fact to which I called attention, the existence of social layers with religions corresponding. The upper classes will move towards pantheism or towards theism, while the lower classes will cling to their many gods and rites. Any other result would imply a profound social and economic change hardly to be expected in the crowded East.

It is of interest to point out that among the priests there is going on something like the struggle between Biblical literalism and higher criticism, although their Bible is the Vedas.

In this connection I cannot refrain from telling a story which seems to me to have a decided point. In his admirable *Moral Philosophy,* Professor Fite writes as follows: "One of my most instructive specimens of this kind (to illustrate the fact that people may talk together and yet scarcely know what the other has in mind) is a conversation between a Hindoo gentleman and a Christian lady, each of whom found in the other a true type of 'heathen.' The exasperated Hindoo gentleman guessed very well how he was being regarded, but the Christian lady remained blissfully unconscious. She had no inkling of the horror aroused

in her auditor by her frequent references to 'the blessed blood of Christ.' 'In India,' he assured me very earnestly afterwards, 'it has been thousands of years since we have believed in human sacrifice.' "

Hindoo modernism, as Sir A. Lyall pointed out, is apt to be speculative and mystical. The traditions of philosophy are old and much admired. It remains to be seen how much influence modern science will have among the educated. To quote from the article in the *Journal of Religion* once more, "Christian theological dualism and creedal dogmatism have often driven India's thinkers to an increasing pride in their own thought, at once more free and more susceptible to a scientific world-view."

In China we meet with a different tradition. China has always been more naturalistic in its thought. Let me quote from an article by Professor Haydon. "Everywhere modernism drifts steadily towards a world-view of naturalistic humanism. The Orient makes the adjustment to naturalism, intellectually and emotionally with the greatest ease, and nowhere more easily than in China. While in both Hinduism and Buddhism the tendency has been to slight the everyday world and to seek reality in the unseen, the native philosophies of China have kept the stress consistently upon the practical, the ethical and the human. . . . If the religion of the future lies towards a social idealism grounded on an evolutionary naturalism, the intellectuals of China are predisposed to take that path by their traditional heritage." [1]

As elsewhere, there is a wide cleavage between the thinking on religious subjects of intellectuals and the attitude of the masses. Thus Buddhism in its popular form represented an adjustment to the desires and beliefs of the people.

[1] *Journal of Religion*, 1925.

It developed "a galaxy of splendid gods, an imposing ceremonial, a sure hope of immortality, and a promise of safe passage to the Western Paradise." Degenerate Taoism did much the same. In these forms of popular religion, we find embodied the ancient folkways with their belief in magic and otherworldly hopes.

Modernism is at work in this field. The intellectuals find little difficulty in theory because none of the traditional religions of China were originally of the popular sort. They were aristocratic in origin and degenerated afterwards. Confucianism was essentially social and ethical in outlook and cared little about cosmology. Taoism was inclined to naturalism, and Buddhism was originally atheistic. These religions find little difficulty in making their adjustment to modern scientific ideas. There are no authoritative dogmas to bar the way.

As in India, the most difficult readjustment will be social. The old social customs are not easily changed. But, here again, we find the impact of modern industry and education. Individualism is making progress.

There is a very interesting movement in China called the Renaissance movement. The leaders of this group are rather apprehensive of the word religion because this term has meant the complex of supernaturalism, otherworldliness, and salvation technique characteristic of foreign cults and of popular Taoism. These Renaissance leaders wish to turn their backs on this perspective and to stress the possibility of humanizing industry, educating the masses, releasing the clinging hands of the past, and guaranteeing the values of the higher life.

What is our natural comment after studying the struggle between modernism and fundamentalism in these old civi-

lizations? Surely that the situation has its marked analogies with our own. We have the advantage that our civilization is younger and therefore simpler and more flexible. Hard as our social problems are to master they do not equal those of these crowded and unwieldy countries. But as soon as we pass from the religion of the masses to the religion of the educated and reflective classes, it becomes clear that the struggle between modernism and fundamentalism is of much the same character as ours. Religion must make its adjustment to science and philosophy. The merely traditional is doomed.

Modernism and Fundamentalism in Judaism

In passing from the East to the West we must traverse the area in which Islam is dominant. Contrary to the general idea on the subject, Islam is full of sects and always has been. In its best days, liberalism was rampant in Bagdad and Cordova. Mediæval culture owed much to the Saracens. But Islam fell on evil days. Bagdad was wiped out by the Mongols, Spain reconquered by Spanish Christians, Syria overrun by the Turks. Islam passed into a state of social decline from which it has not even yet awakened. Since modernism is an expression of new social forces we should not expect to find much of it as yet in Islam. Even as it is, however, we find echoes of disputes in the University of Cairo, one of the great schools of Islam. And the Turk or Egyptian educated at Oxford or Paris is apt to become a free-thinker rather sceptical of all religions. Nationalism is then likely to become his social religion. He is one with his people against the European. Unrest rather than modernism dominates the scene in Islam.

Suppose we pass to another world-religion which is international in a peculiar way, *viz.*—Judaism.

The history of the Jews is tragic. Until a century ago, they were essentially homeless. They clung to their traditions and traditional hopes, which were much as they had been in Roman times. As late as 1650 they arose to welcome a Messiah, Sabbatai Zebi. And it was not until the Mendelssohn movement in the eighteenth century that a ray of hope entered the Ghetto. Here again we find the liberating influence of that period of rationalism. It has been in America that the Jew has found his refuge and a large measure of freedom.

The usual division in the Jewish religion of to-day is that between orthodoxy and reform. Orthodoxy is the religion of the past with its acceptance of the Law. The code of Qaro, completed about 1564, was the means of organizing the social and personal life of the Jewish community. The great festivals were observed and the ritualistic demands complied with; and thus Judaism became a racial and group religion within the larger Gentile community.

It was inevitable, as social ostracism decreased in the West, for the educated Jew to question the value of much of his tradition and detailed ritual. The Jew is a thinker and could hardly retain beliefs which educated people in general had outgrown. He realized that his religion was essentially a theism akin to that of liberal Christianity. It was the setting in tradition and race life that differentiated it.

Modernism appeared in Judaism as liberal reform. In Germany, Holdheim and Geiger led the reform movement which spread to America and England. It should, however, be noted that an earlier reform movement had begun in

America in 1825 long before the great Jewish immigration of the end of the last century.

Reformed Judaism resembles theologically Unitarian Christianity. Both are forms of theism which reject the salvation tradition of orthodox Christianity. This stage of reformed Judaism finds expression in the following statement of its mission taken from the *Journal of Religion*: "For our religious knowledge we do not depend upon tradition, the Bible, the Talmud or the philosophic writings of earlier days. With the great teachers of the past, we believe that in a limited way our reason and our conscience can help us fathom some of the mysteries of God's existence. If with all our minds and with all our hearts we truly seek Him, we shall truly find Him. Our sacred literature and traditions must guide us on our way; but we ourselves must search after God. Modern science which has disclosed the wonders of the earth and sky has revealed to us in a new light the majesty of our God, of that 'Nekor Chayim' source of all existence, whose life throbs in star and flower and heart of man. . . . Humanly speaking, we can find no more sacred word by which to stammer forth his great name than that of Father."

But such liberal theism is not the last word in Jewish thought. There are many signs that a humanistic naturalism is arising in the liberal seminaries not unlike that which is arising in the thought of advanced Christian thinkers. Must God and Immortality be relinquished in favour of a nobler concern for human life here and now? What do philosophy and science say? Those who give up tradition must answer these questions themselves, bravely, sincerely and tentatively. And here we pass from Judaism into the great current of modern thought.

Modernism and Fundamentalism in Protestantism

Each Protestant church has its own variety of internal struggle, and it would obviously be impossible to go into detail. I shall take the situation in America as typical.

Fundamentalism represents an aggressive attack by those who accept the traditional beliefs against what they feel to be the insidious encroachment of science and liberal thought. It is not led by great theologians familiar with church history but rather by preachers trained in the ways of political democracy. I do not wish to do injustice to their pronouncements, for they are evidently sincere, but they do strike the philosopher as expressions of an outlook tinged with Mediævalism. With this qualification, it is undeniable that the fundamentalists stand for what we may call popular dogmatic Christianity. The riddle they are propounding is this, When does Christianity cease to be Christianity? Our fathers believed in the virgin birth; do we? Our fathers believed in miracles; do we? Our fathers believed in Christ's atonement for sin; do we? If we don't, we are not Christians.

Well, it was not a bad thing to have the issue raised. What was unlovely was the spirit of persecution and intolerance that went with the movement. That smacked at times of a union of Church and State.

The following quotation from a book by E. U. Mullins called *Christianity at the Crossroads* illustrates the fundamentalist position very well: "The issues as to fact concern the person of Jesus Christ. All other issues turn upon this: 'What think ye of Christ? Was he supernatural in origin? Was he sinless in character? Did he perform miracles? Was his death on the cross an atonement for sin? Did his crucified body come forth from the grave in resurrection

power?' These are the crucial questions. . . . To deny the facts themselves is to evolutionize Christianity."

What we may call liberalism is usually less sure of itself and its beliefs. That is but natural in an age of transition. One of the best characterizations of liberalism is that of Dr. Parks, who calls it "a state of mind." This state of mind consists of openness to the streams of culture of the present.

There are two directions which liberalism is taking; the one we may call *mysticism,* the other we may call *humanism.* And, of course, these tendencies may be blended in various degrees. From a recent volume of sermons called *Humanist Sermons,* edited by Curtis Reese, I select a passage or so as typical of what seems to me the humanist direction. "To me," writes E. Burdette Backus, "the signs are clear that humanity has struck its tents and is again on the march towards a new religious faith which I dare to believe will provide us with a religion greater than Christianity, greater than any of the historic faiths of the past, though I am keenly aware that that which I call religion will seem to many earnest men and women not religion at all, but rather irreligion. . . . The concern of the religion of the future will be human values, the enrichment of character, of personality, the creation of beauty, the discovery of truth."

Mysticism takes its departure from a peculiar kind of experience, largely of an emotional type. In it, there is often a belief in a communion with some spiritual being. It should be noted, however, that the ideas and interpretations which are associated with mysticism are always expressive of the cultural traditions. The Mohammedan or Hindu mystic does not sense this transcendent reality in the same way that the Roman Catholic or the Protestant mystic does.

Since we are not at present concerned with the truth of mystical revelations, we need only point out that some of the saner mystics seem lifted to a high level of living. They are convinced that they get re-enforcement for good.

Instead of taking the great mystics of the past like St. Catherine or George Fox I shall take as an example of contemporary mysticism that apparent rationalist, Herbert G. Wells. In *God the Invisible King* he writes as follows: "Then suddenly, in a little while, in his own time, God comes. This cardinal experience is an undoubting, immediate sense of God. It is the attainment of an absolute certainty that one is not alone in oneself. It is as if one was touched at every point by a being akin to oneself, sympathetic, beyond measure wiser, steadfast and pure in aim. It is completer and more intimate, but it is like standing side by side with and touching someone that we love very dearly and trust completely."

It will be one of the tasks of our later chapters to determine whether humanism or mysticism best agrees with our knowledge.

Modernism in the Roman Catholic Church

More was heard a few years ago about modernism in the Roman Catholic Church than is heard to-day. England and France had their many modernists and even America had its liberal Catholic thinkers. I do not think that the situation has changed in its essentials despite the excommunication of Loisy and Tyrrell and the encyclical of Pius X. Any alteration in this historic organization will be slow and almost insensible. Its genius favours authority and tradition. And yet I am not convinced that Catholic thinkers are impervious to new ideas.

Were social and intellectual conditions to change rapidly and radically, the Roman Catholic Church might modify itself to meet the new situation. As an institution, it has at various times shown capacity to adapt itself. But the probability is that it will continue for some time to play the rôle of refuge for those who seek authority and assurance. And it is very questionable whether it could break with the dogmas which it has so solemnly affirmed without shaking its prestige.

The particular modernistic movement represented by Loisy and Tyrrell was an expression of a characteristic wave of thought of the nineteenth century. While not technical philosophers, these men were under the influence of an evolutionary romanticism similar to that found in much of pragmatism and Bergsonian intuitionism. Even Cardinal Newman must be regarded as one of the spiritual fathers of their thought. The Catholic modernists believed that the Church was a spiritual community which was unfolding its life and "slowly realizing the ideas and ends in whose service it was founded." For them, revelation was a continuous process and theology a human product largely symbolic in nature. While liberal Protestantism sought to return to the Jesus of the Gospels, they stressed the life of the Church. In this demand, they were, of course, true to the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. But, while so doing, they called upon the Church to give up Mediævalism and adopt modern culture whole-heartedly. Did they realize how much they demanded? It is hard to believe that they did. They were really asking for a reformation even more thoroughgoing than that of the sixteenth century. The reply of Pius X was the inevitable one.

The Fringe of Esoteric Cults

No consideration of the present religious situation can afford completely to neglect the various esoteric cults. Their name is legion. One can scarcely pick up a newspaper without remarking some odd occurrence. For instance in this morning's number of the *Detroit Free Press,* I note the discovery of a religious type of free-love cult at Sault Ste. Marie and a riot over a Hindu Swami in Miami, Florida. It is evident that the conventional churches no longer satisfy many who are yet mystical and supernaturalistic at heart.

Some of these cults rest upon what is called new thought, others upon old thought of a theosophic kind traceable to India. It is quickly discernible that the enemy of all of them is naturalism of a materialistic kind. The world, they maintain, is at heart spiritual. In their fashion, they represent what I have called the mystical rather than the humanistic tendency. I shall have space to mention only three of the many varieties: spiritism, theosophy and Christian Science. In no case shall I here undertake a refutation; that task must be left to the second part of this book in which I shall discuss the world as it is interpreted by modern philosophy in touch with science.

Spiritism, or spiritualism, accepts a dualistic philosophy akin to what the anthropologists call animism. The soul is other than the body and can exist after its death. By means of mediums, the spiritist tries to enter into communication with departed souls. Many revelations of the life beyond are thus proclaimed. Unfortunately, these revelations cannot be tested and psychologists are, as a whole, very sceptical of the whole procedure. Even where there is no fraud, the phenomena have such an easy psychological

explanation that it seems unnecessary to resort to a spiritistic hypothesis.

A quotation from Sir Oliver Lodge must suffice us. It should be noted that immortality is the religious demand that stands out. "Our friends," he writes, "on the other side are not far from us; they are removed from the range of our animal sense-organs, that is all. They appear to be less limited than we are. Love bridges the apparent chasm, and they are more in touch with us, more aware of our troubles and joys, than we can well imagine without special knowledge." [1]

Christian Science is, quite obviously, a religious philosophy based on a *deductive denial* of our ordinary experience. Since there is a God and since he is all-good and omnipotent, there can be no such thing as pain; it is an illusion. But have we a right to accept these premises? No modern thinker can so begin; he must start with human experience in its complexity. To be really a scientist, he must be *inductive.*

Let me quote from a pamphlet on Christian Science published officially and which seems to me typical. "No change needs to be made in the evolving of everlasting goodness, the Principle of man's life, but a change does need to be made in the consciousness and understanding of man. We need to get rid of the idea that life is in body and dependent upon matter. We must get rid of the idea that there is any happiness in sin, or that man can find any joy whatever in anything contrary to what is good and true. And when the illusion of sickness and the illusion of sin have been displaced by the illumination of Truth and the understanding of divine Love, then is brought to pass the proof that

[1] Quoted from *Hibbert Journal,* Jan. 1920.

sin and sickness are swallowed up in victory; and that there is no death, since man, understanding God, loving God, being at one with God, recognizing God as his life, recognizing God as the Source of holiness, understanding that he is related to God actually as father and child are related, as Mind and idea, as Principle and manifestation, as the Sender-forth of love and the answerer to love,—man thus developed and related knows that all that is, is Good and its manifestation as it was in the beginning when God saw all that He had created, 'and, behold, it was very good.' "

This quotation seems to me very typical of the Christian-Science outlook. Only to those who live within a certain set of assumptions and are impressed by vague terms can it seem at all convincing. The method of approach is, quite obviously, entirely different from that of science.

Theosophy is a cult which pretends to rest on ancient and esoteric wisdom. In this reverence for the past, it resembles other traditional religions. But when we are informed about the hidden mysteries we cannot help wondering how all this was revealed. It sounds so much like a hodge-podge of uncertified and untested assertions. I quote from *A Primer of Theosophy,* issued by the American Section of the Theosophical Society. "The world is many millions of years old and in much earlier days there came to our earth Great Beings from the Planet Venus, who gave men the rudiments of mind and taught them how to think. From them was derived the Ancient Wisdom or knowledge. They knew definitely because they had investigated and experimented at first hand." Again, "There are seven great realms or planes of Nature, three of which, the most exalted, are almost unknown to man. We know that these three exist. But we have not been told much about them."

As a religion, theosophy regards itself as free from the gross mistakes of popular cults and as standing for a purer outlook. It teaches that all the great religious prophets possessed part of the truth. In this sense, theosophy must be regarded as an attempt at synthesis. "No one religion has a monopoly of the truth, but all the great religions are needed to help souls in their progress through reincarnations on earth." As a philosophy, theosophy links itself with the Vedanta school of Ancient India and with the romantic idealism of the nineteenth century.

It is, I think, obvious that all these esoteric cults are taking the path of mysticism. Does the future lie in this direction? I cannot believe so. It is a very natural path to take because it does not break with the traditional, religious outlook. But a revamping of the past will not do. Ours is a new age with genuinely new knowledge about human life and the universe. It is inevitable that the coming religion will express this culture.

The Growth of Humanism

The natural place to look to-day for the prophets of the coming religion is in the domain of sensitive thought. Here I find myself in agreement with a writer from whose philosophical position I diverge in large measure, he being a theist and I being a naturalist. "If religion is to survive," writes Brightman, "it cannot be by accepting any and every philosophical system. . . . Religion should come to an understanding with the intellectual life of the times in which it lives. It should become clearly aware of its relations to contemporary scientific and philosophic thinking." [1]

Now it is very interesting to note the increase of natural-

[1] Brightman, *Religious Values*, p. 19.

istic humanism in religious thinking. An ever-growing number regard this world as the domain and seat of human values and look upon religion as a kind of experience and activity directed to their furtherance. For them religion is becoming a deep sense of human life. Moreover, the old framework with its gods and providence is vanishing to be replaced by a vigorous realization that man's destiny lies in large measure in his own hands. He must do things for himself, work out his own fate by trained intelligence and strong determination. From petitioner, man is becoming creator and designer. The old sense of helplessness is gradually giving way to a sense of power and self-respect.

Obviously, this new attitude is only in the making. As yet, it has not spread far, for it requires favourable conditions such as social stability and the knowledge that casts out fear.

This new attitude had its growing pains. Much of its energy was at first taken by a struggle with the assumptions of traditional religion. The break involved was so great that it was not at first realized how much the old and the new had in common. To many, religion seemed inseparable from the old supernaturalistic cosmology. It was at this stage that Guyau, a brilliant French writer, spoke of the non-religion of the future. And to the same era belong the monism of Haeckel and the agnosticism of Huxley. In place of the worship of God, this newer outlook could put at most a cosmic emotion. Man was still trying to make himself at home in the universe.

But humanism was maturing and beginning to move inward into the strategic heart of religion. What, after all, was man's chief concern? Surely his own fate and the fate of that which he admired and cherished. Why should the

centre of gravity of religion revolve about a point outside man? Had not man been the victim of an illusion? The answer gradually came in terms of an emphasis upon values. The heart of religion is a concern for human values. The noonday of the gods passed and we enter the twilight of the gods, the *Götterdämmerung*.

It was not easy to make the psychological adjustment. Old habits clung and even keen thinkers tried to make a compromise, as did Auguste Comte, by transferring worship from God to man. But the change had to be more radical. Worship implied the old framework. What, then, remained which could be called religion? Man's intense sense of his life in its cosmic setting, not from the outside but from the inside, his admiration for those things which are noble and of good repute, his loyalty to them and his will to further them. The deeply religious man is serious though not sad and, in his moments of meditation, there will always be a tragic sense of life which reaches out to take in the whole universe. Cosmic emotion will not be absent from his high loyalty to values. Thus and thus only can modern man have a religion without illusions.

That such a radical reinterpretation of religion is taking place to-day among deeply religious thinkers is disclosed by the literature. Thus William James was led to define it as "a man's (or nation's) reaction upon life." And we can add to this Santayana's "any reasoned appreciation of life is . . . a religion even if there are in it no conventionally religious elements." Similarly, Ames has defined religion as "the consciousness of the highest social values" and Haydon speaks of it as "A co-operative quest for the good life." And we should note the definition of Whitehead: "Religion is the art and the theory of the internal

life of man, so far as it depends on the man himself and on what is permanent in the nature of things. . . . Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness." Clearly, it is felt that religion concerns man's deep sense of the texture, content and relations of human life in the kind of a world in which we find ourselves. In his little book entitled *Humanism,* Reese gives an excellent interpretation of this view of religion. It seems that the younger leaders of the Unitarian Church are taking this next step in religion.

A cross-section of the cultural world has given us a ferment of old and new, of fundamentalism or traditionalism, on the one hand, and of liberalism, modernism, occultism and humanism, on the other hand. It is to philosophy that we must make our appeal. What does it say of God, freedom and immortality? Let us remember that its verdict must not be a dogmatic one. And in these matters I speak only as representing one definite school of thought. The reader is asked to follow my argument closely but to retain to the full his own personality.

CHAPTER IX

IS THE UNIVERSE FRIENDLY?

If Tradition Has Failed, Why Not Try Philosophy?

OUR careful historical study of religion has clearly confirmed the thesis of our first chapter. The old perspective is gradually weakening and a new one is being developed in its place. Nature is not the unknown thing she once was. Man is looking about him with awakened eyes and seeking to understand the texture and setting of his life.

Religions have always been philosophical in their degree. Hindu religion, for instance, has been dominated by reflection about the nature of reality. That is, as soon as we pass from the religion of the masses to the religion of the thoughtful. And the same is true of Christianity. All through the Middle Ages theologians and mystics were in close touch with philosophical traditions and distinctions. Unfortunately, this philosophy was often not much better than theosophy, a sort of rationalization of traditional assumptions. The besetting temptation of religious thinkers is to select their philosophy to suit their prejudices.

But, in a time of crisis like the present, there is no safety in such a procedure. To the critically minded it is but a begging of the question. It convinces only those already convinced. The frankest and wisest thing for religion to do is to consult philosophy as an independent, co-operative movement concerned only with the truth of things. What has philosophy to say on ultimate problems which may be of guidance to the spirit of man?

Philosophy has played a smaller part in American thought than it deserves. There are historical reasons for this. For one thing, it was at first robbed of its independence in this country and made a servant of the religious tradition. For long, its only abiding place was in the higher institutions of learning; and here the genteel tradition was dominant. In the second place, philosophy requires a breadth of reflection rather alien to the American spirit as a whole. It is a matter for congratulation that philosophy in America is very much alive at the present moment. Does this mean that American culture is entering a new era?

When old views break down, systematic reflection must be resorted to; there is no other recourse. And systematic reflection is just what philosophy is. It is a sturdy attempt to think things through.

Now it is undeniable that the great dissolvent of past belief is science. To be quite true we must add that the whole texture of life has also altered because of social adventure and discovery. A shift in values and perspective has gone step by step with the advance of science. Now one reason why philosophy is necessary at present is that it understands both values and knowledge and can be sympathetic with both religion and science. Like science, it stresses experience, reason and evidence and rejects arbitrary revelation or authoritative tradition. For both, massive reflection upon experience alone counts. But, like religion, philosophy is interested in human values and the meaning of life and seeks to grasp man in his relation to the universe and to achieve something like a working attitude to man's situation and activities. It tries to see life clearly and see it whole.

If, then, tradition has failed, if systematic and unceasing

doubt is abroad about the inherited cosmic perspective, what can we do but ask philosophy to undertake the task of interpreting our world?

The Situation in Philosophy

Philosophy feels these days that many of the old riddles are clearing up. For instance, more progress has been made recently in understanding what the human mind is than was made during the thousand years preceding. Again, we are on the road to a comprehension of the nature of human knowing and, in that connection, are settling the age-old controversy between idealism and realism. And, as though this were not enough, it would seem that the antagonism between a spiritualistic view of the universe and a materialistic one is yielding to an evolutionary, naturalistic outlook whch does justice to much of what philosophical idealism fought for, while granting materialism its naturalism. Finally, it seems that philosophy is in a fair way to link up human values with reality, to see them as a natural expression of human living in the kind of universe we are in. In short, the whole situation is extremely promising. Philosophy has, I am convinced, reason to congratulate itself that so great an advance is being made just when the break-down of traditional religion makes it so valuable and necessary.

I have used certain terms which, perhaps, need explanation. Since I shall discuss the modern view of mind in a later chapter, I shall not go into any detail in regard to it at present. Suffice it to say that our idea of mind is changing and becoming much more concrete. In place of an immaterial substance merely dwelling in the living organism, we now think of mind as a term for certain operations

and activities which accompany the response of the organism as a whole to its environment, physical and social. These operations and activities are intrinsic to the organism and express its capacities. Mind is becoming a term to cover acts of memory and perceiving and intelligent solutions of specific problems. The science which devotes its energy to the study of mind is psychology, and this science has accomplished much of late. We can put mental-testing to its credit, also psychoanalysis, the determination of the laws of learning and habit-formation, the discovery of mental growth. Working with psychology, philosophy has moved to what may be called a *functional* notion of mind, that is, a conception of mind as a natural feature of the activity of the living organism. This functional notion of mind is certainly displacing the old notion of mind as a separate substance or kind of thing.

Theory of knowledge is a part of philosophy which seeks to understand the nature and conditions of human knowing. It has turned out to be quite a complex subject. Much of the difficulty connected with it was, we see now, due to the old view of mind and to the way the problem was formulated by Descartes. Under these conditions the best minds floundered about, and theory of knowledge seemed like a morass from which there was no escape. Many were convinced that we could know only our own ideas and not external things. For the idealist the physical world, as science and common sense think it, disappeared. Mind became the fundamental reality. The names of Berkeley and Hegel occur in this connection.

But now we are beginning to see that a false start was made. If we begin with ordinary perception in an empirical way, with all the beliefs that go with it, and work up reflec-

tively, we soon realize that knowing is concerned with external things and not primarily with our ideas. Following this clue, realism of a more adequate sort has come more and more to the front and bids fair to displace idealism in theory of knowledge. What, then, is human knowing? Apparently an interpretation of objects in terms of characters like size, shape, weight, behaviour, structure. Knowing refers to things and involves a thinking of them in terms of logical ideas which develop in our minds in connection with these things. Taking this view of human knowing, we can bring it into touch with the modern notion of mind and with the results of science. We can now accept a belief in the physical world and think of ourselves, quite frankly, as a peculiar part of it. In this fashion, philosophy and science have come together to a remarkable degree.

This realistic view of knowledge fits in with, and sustains, the scientific conception of the world, but it does not exclude that supplementary knowledge of ourselves which each of us builds up, our knowledge from the inside. And the thinker to-day is quite ready to acknowledge the reality and significance of our awareness of social groups with their developed culture and valuations. The universe is complex and includes many kinds of things equally real, such as stellar systems, planets, land and ocean, plants, animals, human beings.

In a book of this sort, I must, of course, eliminate technicalities as much as possible and stress conclusions. What stands out, then, in recent theory of knowledge is the perspective which takes human knowing as an empirical and natural act quite capable of grasping the nature of external things, breaking with common sense in detail because more aware of difficulties and yet accepting the main distinctions

which are common to it and science. Now the rise of such a theory of knowledge makes it impossible for religion to escape the impact of science by taking refuge in idealism and holding that the physical world is more or less illusory. The religion which will survive and flourish in the future is a religion which will face the facts.

I suggested, next, that another feature of recent philosophy is the rise of a position in metaphysics which bids fair to mediate between spiritualism and materialism. Here were two extremes which were almost equally unsatisfactory. Materialism taught that nothing is real but matter and that all changes are mere shifts in position of its particles. In the past, at least, matter was thought of as a multitude of self-contained atoms and it was supposed that these atoms impinged on each other in accordance with specific mechanical laws. It followed that all events in nature were mechanical and of the same type. There might be differences in complexity but not of quality. It is easy to see that values and purposes could find no natural place in such a world as this. And, in spite of much ingenuity on its part, it was generally felt by philosophers that materialism could not be established. Spiritualism was in a similar situation. It rested on an idealistic theory of knowledge which cast doubt on the reality of a physical world and it did far greater justice to the mental activity of human beings. In fact, its strength lay in its handling of history, ethics, and art. It thought in terms of value, meaning and purpose, the concepts which come out in human life. Its weakness was in its treatment of the results of the physical sciences.

The outlook which promises so much to-day as possessing the strength of both of these positions and avoiding their

shortcomings is called, indifferently, evolutionary naturalism, emergent evolution and emergent materialism. The name is unimportant. The essential thing to grasp is, that we have here at last a naturalistic position which does justice to human life.

Before we explain the adjectives, evolutionary and emergent, it may be well to give the gist of naturalism. Naturalism is not the same as materialism, for this has always been more specific. Thus it would be right to call materialism a form of naturalism but it would not be right to say that naturalism is identical with materialism. What, then, are the controlling principles of naturalism? Essentially those of science: the beliefs that nature is an all-inclusive, spatio-temporal system and that everything which exists and acts in it is a part of this system. In short, naturalism is the expression of the desire for explanation in terms of objects which can be handled and studied in accordance with scientific methods and is opposed to what we may roughly call mythology and supernaturalism, that is, explanation in terms of superhuman agencies of a generally invisible and unlocalizable sort. A naturalistic philosophy seeks to understand nature by taking into account all that can be known about any part of it and about its general structure and texture.

Now, the fault in the older naturalism was that it was *reductive,* that is, it was fascinated by the inorganic world and it sought to interpret all the rest of nature, animals, human society, art, in terms of a very simple, prevalent theory of inorganic processes, the impact scheme of mechanics. But, as we have already seen, that is to ignore what is characteristic of human life, plans, valuations, intentions. It is to make the world homogeneous.

The new naturalism asserts that nature is actually heterogeneous and that heterogeneity is intrinsic. Evolution means for it that new kinds of bodies arise with new properties; after electrons and protons come atoms, molecules, chemical substances, living things, sentient things, self-conscious things. These new kinds of things have properties of their own expressive of their organization, and these new properties are said to emerge. It is also held that a whole acts differently from its parts and that the laws of the parts are not descriptive of the laws of the whole.

It is clear that such a view is able to do justice to human life in a way that the older naturalism was not. It is more empirical and takes things as they are. Thus it does not claim that physiology is just an obscure and incompletely analyzed physics. Novelty must be studied and seen in the light of all other knowledge, but it should not be the aim to explain it away.

Finally, a word about values. I asserted that philosophy is in a fair way to link up human values with reality. How, you will ask, can it do this? By regarding values as the expressions of the interests and knowledge of human beings, as projections of their desires and demands upon things. In valuing we are on the inside of that part of reality which we call a human being. Here man is an agent adjusting himself to the things and persons around him and interpreting them in terms of his feelings, desires, plans, knowledge. The value of things is what they mean in this concrete way as connected up with his life as a going concern. It expresses his active response to his surroundings.

We shall have much to say of values in later chapters, for it is being pretty generally admitted these days that religion is an affair of values. I want now just to point out that

the physical sciences have nothing to say about values because it is their task to *know* external things and not to discuss what they mean to human life with its needs. Of course, the knowledge the sciences give helps us to value objects but that is not the same thing. It is for this reason that it is a great mistake to go to science to find out what religion is. All science can do is to help us decide what religion should not believe in.

This very brief survey of recent trends in philosophy is necessary for our later work. It will prevent misunderstanding and make the argument clearer.

The Conflict Between Past Beliefs and Naturalism

In our third chapter we called attention to the impact of science upon the intellectual framework of religion. This is usually called the conflict between science and religion. This description is only partially justified. If religion is an affair of adjustment to the conditions of life, it always involves an interpretation of the universe as well as an insight into the values and meaning of life. Beliefs and attitudes always go together; they are, as it were, organically interwoven. Now the conflict referred to concerns the clash between the traditional beliefs associated with religion and the beliefs developed by science. Since religion is an inescapable aspect of life, it does not conflict with science except through this framework of the past. Change this, and religion is transformed in many ways but remains as significant as ever. Another way of putting this fact is to point out that religion is primarily an affair of human values while science is primarily an affair of knowledge. Values and knowledge are connected but they are not identical.

So far, then, as a conflict occurs between the well-tested conclusions of the sciences and traditional beliefs adopted in the past by religion, the outcome will be in favour of the sciences. Here religion is condemned to wage a losing battle. What intellectual instruments has she at her command to give her respect in this matter? Revelation? Intuition? They will not stand against steady observation and experimentation. Let her take a lesson from philosophy which to-day never presumes to dictate special beliefs to science. Tradition will wage only a hopeless fight against investigation. Astronomy, geology, biology and psychology will work out their account of the world, and this account will replace for educated people the story of the book inherited from a comparatively ignorant past. The liberals of all countries have come to this conclusion.

But there is a deeper conflict and struggle going on beneath this battle over Darwinism. It is the clash between the universe as conceived by traditional religion and the universe as envisaged by a naturalistic philosophy. We may call this the conflict between naturalism and supernaturalism in religion. The readjustment demanded by naturalism is so basic that many religious people feel that they are being asked to give up religion itself.

Our study of the history of religion helps us to appreciate the cause of this profound conflict within the heart of religion. The older religions centred their interests around human life. It was the preservation and furtherance of the life of the group which dictated their intercessions with the extraordinary powers which they imagined surrounded them. Even the public religions of Jerusalem, Athens and Rome concerned themselves primarily with the safety of the state. A prosperous state meant on the whole prosperous citizens.

But with the breakdown of the state and the alienation of the individual from it, with the growth of self-consciousness and uncertainty, the religions of salvation and redemption swept over the Western world. Imagination built itself a paradise and a technique of escape to another and happier world. As yet, the human mind was unable to guard itself against such a flight of the creative imagination. A few philosophers stood aloof, but the majority of people succumbed gladly. Emotional and intellectual attitudes were socially established and sanctified by institutions. Worship, prayer, sacrifice, faith, immortality, salvation, these became the accepted ingredients of religion. The universe was theocentric, centred in God.

And was this not a perfectly logical development of the belief in superhuman powers, socially minded and inclined to justice? Man thought in terms of personal agency and merely socialized, humanized and king-ized the control of nature. In this fashion he created the gods in his own image; and he adopted towards them the attitudes appropriate to those in authority. He expected them to meet his demands upon life, his dreams and hopes. Human, all too human. It needs no Freudian psychology with its father and mother complex to explain it. And yet that does give added insight into the religious psychology of many. A tired and discouraged person feels lonely and deserted. He would like to go back home and be caressed by his mother and fall asleep comforted. Life is very hard at times. And here is a great tradition which offers him a father in heaven.

But is this tradition true? Can it be retained by religion? Science and philosophy are beginning to say *no* in no uncertain terms.

Because man was a hater as well as a lover, harsh as

well as kindly, God was as often cruel as loving. Man created hell as well as heaven, terror as well as joy. But the logic back of both developments was the same. To destroy hell is not enough. That would be only a reform expressive of our modern humanitarianism. We must go deeper and ask, Is there any good reason to believe that the universe has a ruler, that it is theocentric?

Causation versus Personal Agency

To appreciate the difference in approach between traditional religion, on the one hand, with its appeal to personal agency, and modern science and philosophy, on the other hand, with their stress on natural causes, is to get to the heart of the matter.

Myths, we said, are stories about how things happened. Once upon a time, a god or a hero did this. The texture of such an explanation is personal action. God created the world. God planned a scheme of redemption. God will reward his faithful servants. It is the sort of thinking that goes on in politics. God is literally the heavenly king, and the world is his field of action, his kingdom.

But the Greeks began another kind of explanation, an explanation in terms of natural causes, of what may be called things. And modern science took up this new way of explanation and developed it. What is a cause? It is a specific and localizable antecedent. It is a natural event which we have good reason to believe conditions a later event. It is something measurable and observable, something which is a part of nature. Thus nature stands on its own feet and explains itself. It is a domain of events and changes which are connected together. It is a vast system in space and time.

It is interesting to note the stages in human thought about nature. At first, nature was the region of the usual as over against the unusual, the weird, the extraordinary. Then, as religion developed and became more speculative, nature was supposed to be *ruled* by the gods in a more or less capricious way. Thus, in Greek thought, Neptune ruled the ocean. These are called departmental gods. The Hebrews seem to have thought of Yahweh as having concern with rain and sunshine and sickness, with all happenings on the earth, at least as far as the boundaries of Palestine. It was not at first monotheism but monolatry, the worship of a national god. Then, as thought deepened, nature began to assume greater self-sufficiency, and God interfered once in a while by way of a miracle. We have here a divided control. The next stage appears in deism which admits God as First Cause and Creator but believes that, after it is once set going, nature takes care of itself. Finally, naturalism achieves clear expression in the belief that nature is reality and that we are evolved parts of nature.

To think naturalism through requires a reconstruction of the old outlook with its ideas of creation, a first cause, a purpose, and a providence. Can we cut under all these traditional demands? It is this that a naturalistic philosophy is forced to do.

Is personal agency valid at all? Yes; in human life and human affairs. Here the intelligent organism, raised to a high level of co-ordinating power by inherited culture, controls the relations of things by muscular exertion exerted directly or through machinery. Such action is always local action and arises in nature in a way that conflicts with none of our canons of thought. What evidence have we for super-personal agency? Has not such evidence dwindled and

vanished upon scrutiny? Action *in* nature is one kind of a thing; action *into* nature something quite different. It is the task of science and philosophy to see how human agency operates and to show how it evolved from actions and processes of a lower level by differentiation and complication.

Was it the mistake of early religion to project human agency into the world at large in a sort of disembodied way? To think of the mysterious and terrible as hiding mind and will? The dualism which animism began gave wings to the imagination. Like an unseen force the ghostly could penetrate and work everywhere. An invisible world added itself to the visible and became the home of the gods.

But in all this we must not see the mistake of a thing called religion. It was the mistake of the human mind, itself. The religion of an age is the expression of the whole mind of the age. It is foolish and unjust to single out religion as the sole culprit.

Our conclusion is that personal agency is causation in the places in which we can actually experience and localize it. It is a personal agency which has no precise locus in time and space and is not the expression of some actual physical system of which we have good reason to be sceptical. Since miracle and providence are the traditional examples of such non-natural agency, it may be well for us to examine them and to point out why modern thought is unambiguous in its rejection of these notions.

Special Providence and Miracles

Liberal religious thinkers of all schools have pretty definitely abandoned the belief in miracles and special providences. It is clear that the thought of the universe as an

orderly whole precludes the notion of capricious happenings which break into nature from the outside, incursions, as it were, from some source of agency alien to nature.

In Christianity miracles have served two purposes: (1) the vindication to doubters of the proclaimed revelation; and (2) the accomplishment of a good turn to the faithful. It must be acknowledged that the tables have been turned in regard to the first purpose. The account of miracles, which was supposed to bring belief, is rather a hindrance than a help. And the modern conception of the vastness of the world's stage makes difficult the parochial scale of divine charity. Social imagery balks. No one to-day expects the Federal government to hunt out and reward its good citizens. The President is too busy with affairs of state to concern himself with local events in the suburbs of Detroit or Chicago. And if there were a Ruler of the tremendous universe which science has disclosed could we expect Him to give individual attention to the lives of all the inmates of this little planet? And we are too good democrats to want him to compromise by concerning himself with the great and mighty.

Protestantism has been slowly moving away from anthropomorphism, that is, the picturing of God as a superhuman man. And, as it does so, it gradually relinquishes special, personal relations analogous to getting the ear or eye of God. The difficulty is an old one, and was already treated with irony by Lucian in Græco-Roman times. The Roman Catholic has been pluralistic and has met the difficulty by multiplying miraculous agents; however, there has gone with this in popular Romanism the continuance of something strongly resembling magic and mana.

Many religious thinkers make a play upon words when

they discuss miracles. A miracle is just an extraordinary event, something marvelous and not easily accounted for. They then proceed to rationalize miracles in the most naïve fashion. But this means that they do not see that they are really giving up the strict, theological idea of miracle as something involving a supernatural agency. And, of course, the prime question is one of evidence.

I have treated the problem of miracle and special providence elsewhere in greater detail than I can permit myself at present. Let me quote a passage and summarize my argument: "The forces which are so strongly working against the acceptance of miracles are just those forces which are antagonistic to the primitive view of the world. If nature is a self-contained, spatial system, the complete mechanism of change should be open to study. Even human wills must be connected with human bodies, and shown to act in accordance with psychological and physiological laws. In the place of such vague terms as *mana* we have chemical and electrical properties, bacterial infection, hypnosis. Magic and miracle are closely connected; and the replacement of magic by science put miracles on the defensive. Nature became a realm of recurrent processes." [1]

Very few people realize what they are really believing in when they accept miracles. They have not the detailed knowledge to feed their imagination. Thus what did the supposed stopping of the sun in its course by Joshua really involve? In the past nature was not thought of as close-knit and interdependent. Credulity reflected lack of clear ideas about the structure of nature. Under such circumstances emotions and desires had few obstacles in their path. To-day education is gradually changing this psychological situation.

[1] Sellars, *The Next Step in Religion*, p. 125.

I said that liberal religious thinkers no longer defend miracles. Here is a passage from the writings of a theist which is fairly typical: "The abandonment of miracles, as the products of the naïve imagination of peoples cradled in a world-view incompatible with the scientific conception of a well-ordered universe, does not in any respect invalidate the ethics of Jesus. Indeed, when we have once grasped the great conception that the universe is an orderly and continuous whole, in which there are no causeless effects and no effectless causes, in other words, a living and continuously creative universe; our minds are thereby emancipated from the crude and often cruel deductions which arise from separating God, the ruling spirit of the cosmic order, from the world in which he lives and moves and has his being." [1] Thus the theist defends causal order and system. It is interesting to note that he recognizes that this involves the relinquishment of a special providence and any other prayer than that of "Thy will be done." So far as events are concerned, naturalist and philosophical theist are in much the same position. Neither expects special intercessions. God helps those that help themselves really means that there is no special, divine help.

And yet the attitude of the theist does differ from that of the naturalist. The theist identifies himself with the supposed divine plan and with the Divine Planner by an act of submissive union. This act may rise in the mystic to one of absorption in deity and the dismissal of the world as unreal. The naturalist, on the other hand, seeks to control the course of nature and refuses to admit that there is a prearranged plan. Responsibility and intelligent deliberation are brought to the forefront. We might say that the theistic

[1] Leighton, *Religion and The Mind of To-day*, p. 206.

view reflects man's old attitude towards the universe. It is the will of Allah. The humanist is an agent seeking to mold events co-operatively, to read nature for man's good. Man has become himself a creator and ruler on a planetary scale. One may, of course, mock at the little he has yet done. But who can deny that it is a start in the right direction? Judging from the current practice of Americans—which indicates what they really believe as against what they believe they believe—the humanist's perspective is the one they have adopted.

General Providence and Evil

Traditional, Christian theism assumed a plan for the universe. The grand course of events was predetermined and prearranged. God, it was argued, was a ruler; therefore, he had a policy. A just, omniscient, omnipotent ruler must necessarily be guided by a well-thought-out conception. The only exception from complete control ever permitted was in the possibility of free-will. The only qualms experienced were aroused by the existence of evil. Popular thought even took refuge in various forms of dualism. Sometimes a devil was accepted as a sort of co-equal or, at least, a powerful opponent of God. If asked why an omnipotent and omniscient deity permitted such a being to do his nefarious work, such people could only sigh and shrug their shoulders. It was a *grand mystére;* God's ways are past finding out. Then, again, matter was often conceived of as intrinsically evil and capable of thwarting God. In brief, theological speculation wavered between cosmic dualism and providential mystery. Either God was limited in some inscrutable fashion or His scheme of things transcended our comprehension so completely that what was evil to us was good to Him.

While the history of these speculations and the myths that accompanied them, from Zoroaster to James and Wells, is fascinating, the philosophical structure is comparatively simple. Induction and deduction clash. Deduction says that the world must be good since God is good. Induction says that there is much evil in the world. Those who are emotionally dominated by the idea of God allow deduction to rule supreme and assert that evil is really good. All that is necessary is to make evil a relative term and shift relations. What is evil to you at first sight is really good for God in his inscrutable providence. And, since God is the standard, your first impression is mortal error. But this shift of relations expresses a relinquishment of your own experience and point of view and an identification of yourself with deity. Evil is still evil to you, however good it may be to God. The situation is psychologically quite analogous to what has occurred in warfare when the wounded soldier cheers a Napoleon, riding, a conqueror, over the field of battle. It is a sublimation of the social instinct.

The great problem of theology has been the making evil good. The ingenuity used has been remarkable. Casuistry has often reached its highest point of development. But it is generally admitted in this franker age that the task set could not be accomplished. The best that has been done is to show that man responds creatively to both evil and good and often puts up a splendid fight. Moderate evil is not crushing. But alas! immoderate evil is. So much for theodicy. The doubt will not down that the problem is artificial. Our worst mysteries, those which have aroused the greatest doubts as to man's powers of thought, may be false problems. Theology has been the popular literary philosophy; but has not a note of scepticism about it all been on the

increase? The popularity of Omar Khayyam has not been without significance.

The idea of a finite and limited deity may be regarded logically as a compromise between theological deduction and scientific induction. And it will be remembered that the question which dealt, in the questionnaire I discussed, with the problem whether nature is indifferent to our human ideals received a large number of affirmative answers. The mass of people do not feel that nature puts itself out for them. Their refuge is in Allah. But, then, what is God's relation to nature?

Modern philosophy, like science, is dominantly inductive. It is an effort at discovery and exploration. What kind of a universe is this anyway? And the swing towards naturalism has meant the recognition that we human beings are a part of a larger whole and that our nature and career can be understood only when so approached. Nature is a system of give and take, of trial and error, of large processes and small, of adventure and of drift. Man's problem is one of adjustment and relative control. Life is inseparable from effort and danger. Evil is as intrinsic and as necessary a part of human experience as good. This fact does not make evil good; it simply robs it of mystery.

To the naturalist the problem of evil becomes a practical one: How to decrease it? Such a position is called meliorism. Meliorism does not involve undue optimism but merely activity instead of resignation. What we can do, that we will do.

And what a simplification all this is! The new cosmic perspective simply refuses to project into the universe at large in a theologically *a priori* fashion a magnified group of social and human categories like rulership, justice, plan,

purpose. These categories are significant and valid in their proper place, which is human life, but they are not relevant to the universe at large. Traditional religion tried to humanize the universe and got into all sorts of difficulties for its pains. And it left as an inheritance pathetic demands for some sort of "meaning" in the universe, some cosmic "purpose" which philosophy is asked to read. Are not these demands obvious relics of the old perspective? Life must possess its own inner meaning and worth. If it does not have this, no external meaning can make it up. If life does not seem to you interesting and enjoyable, how can it be made so by some hidden cosmic plan? Only by an escape through *identification* with this supposed plan as personified. Such is the psychology of the prayer, Not my will but thine be done. We may learn to live not our own life, which is poor and insignificant, but another's, which is magnificent. We are then children of God. Now all this is psychologically possible and has been fostered by traditional religion. But the humanist regards it as far less desirable than creative enterprise in mundane affairs and the healthy nourishment of a joy in life here and now.

Is the Universe Friendly?

We shall return in a later chapter to the present philosophical status of the God-Idea. We should expect that many philosophers and all theologians—and there are many able and noble men who still cling to the traditional outlook—would show great ingenuity in seeking to retain as much as possible of the theocentric universe. And past philosophy gave them many opportunities in the way of idealism, agnosticism and the weakness of old-fashioned materialism. At present, I shall only state that I think that

all these efforts are as misguided and as doomed to ultimate failure as the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures to make them fit in with science. Such edifices act as halfway houses of the spirit. Readjustment takes time. But of all this more later.

The question before us now is this, Can the naturalist still regard the universe as friendly? He cannot, of course, reach out hands to it, worship it, pray to it. These attitudes of traditional religion with its personal agency and its theocentric universe seem logically to be excluded. What attitudes will take their place?

The first phase of the religion of naturalism was inevitably negative. Men felt keenly what they had lost. They were like children who had been bereaved of parents. They were alone in the world. The silence of the infinite spaces terrified them. No human voice came to them through the thunder. The bravest took refuge in stoic calm, while the weaker gave one glance and turned their faces back to tradition and authority, seeking to believe what they could hardly believe, snatching at the fainter hope. But to this first response there has succeeded a saner and more balanced outlook which is receiving the name of humanism. Let man stand on his own feet and trust his own powers. The universe is not unfriendly; rather is it the natural scene of his birth and achievements. It is something within which to work in a human way, bravely, creatively, gently, wisely. Here is a new attitude, that of an adult shifting for himself, set on carving out his own fortunes, aware that life is not a path of roses, knowing that tragedy may claim him, and yet fighting a good fight for whatsoever things are honorable and of good repute. Here we have man and religion coming of age.

The more negative phase of the religion of naturalism appears in Bertrand Russell's famous essay on *A Free Man's Religion.* It expresses a mood of withdrawal, of alienation from nature. He sees in nature only brute matter and a remorseless fate, a huge machine which crushes all that gets in its way. In this sense, Mr. Russell is almost otherworldly; he does not realize that we are a part of nature. I quote from him even though I doubt that this essay still expresses his outlook: "When, without the bitterness of impotent rebellion, we have learnt to resign ourselves to the outward rule of Fate and to recognize that the non-human world is unworthy of our worship, it becomes possible at last so to transform and refashion the unconscious universe, so to transmute it in the crucible of imagination, that a new image of shining gold replaces the old idol of clay. In all the multiform facts of the world, in the visual shapes of trees and mountains and clouds, in the events of the life of man, even in the very omnipotence of Death—the insight of creative idealism can find the reflection of a beauty which its own thoughts first made. In this way mind asserts a subtle mastery over the thoughtless forces of Nature." And then comes the famous passage: "Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of Fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands built; undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward

life; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power." [1]

This is magnificent, but is there not exaggeration in it? While death is inescapable for all of us, does not nature have her more kindly aspects? Does not man live on her and by her? Does she not lend herself to beauty? And, as a matter of fact, are not the causes of human troubles to-day more man-caused than nature-caused? The austerity and aloofness of this essay, which certain young radicals admire so much, seems to me forced. And it strikes me as too rhetorical to be quite true philosophically. No; man is not opposed to nature. He is within nature and a part of nature. And, so far as this planet is concerned, he is almost too much of a conqueror. Such stoicism as Mr. Russell's is a rebound from religious romanticism.

[1] Russell, *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 66-70.

CHAPTER X

ANSWERS TO TRADITIONAL RIDDLES

The Origin of Riddles

FROM the very beginning, man was aware that his life and fate was bound up with his surroundings. On the one side was the impulse toward self-preservation in its many forms; on the other side, a world to be propitiated containing mysterious Powers. If things were propitious, he prospered; if they were adverse, he failed, starved, fell sick, perished.

The scientists describe this situation in different terms. Man must adjust himself to his environment and, if possible, master it. But what the scientist calls man's environment, man himself long thought of as a complex of agencies. He peopled his surroundings with Powers endowed with wills and minds to be controlled by magic or propitiated by sacrifice, prayer and gifts usually offered in a communal way. And these spirits became bit by bit, as we have seen, transmuted into gods with dominion, power and glory past comprehension.

Thus the imagination, once started on its career, succeeded admirably. Its own logic pushed it farther and farther. On the one hand, it magnified the powers of this divine agent and made him superlative, omniscient and omnipotent; on the other hand, it socialized and ethicized him. *In this fashion, man projected into the universe his own sense of personal agency.* The gods were superhuman rulers, heavenly kings. Finally, in monotheism the idea was achieved that all things were created and held in the hollow

of God's hand. Even now we thrill to the words of the psalmists as they recount the wonder of His handiwork.

The logic of this approach to the universe is, as we have remarked, obvious. Its categories are those of human activity magnified and freed from all limitation. In this sense they are anthropomorphic and projective. The heart of the universe is conceived in terms of something analogous to human life. "So through the thunder comes a human voice."

Does the universe, as we come to know more about it, actually agree with this ancient, animistic logic of personal agency? As we get more insight into it, do our categories change? The history of science and philosophy gives an unequivocal answer to these questions. Personal agency loses its primacy and can be retained only as it, itself, conforms to spatio-temporal patterns of causation. Disembodied agency gradually becomes meaningless. Slowly man has built up a new logic of explanation. True causes must be localized and observed; they must be parts of nature in intimate relations with other parts. The old idea of a personal agent working in nature but not of it fades and the attention is focussed upon actual events and things. For modern science and philosophy, nature seems self-sufficient and vast.

Thus the modern mind has inherited two logics which are at war with each other: the logic of personal agency and the logic of causation. It is only of late that the solution of this conflict is seen and it consists in making personal agency a specific kind of natural causality. But this solution obviously undermines the whole superstructure which traditional religion erected upon the basis of a mystical exaltation of personal agency.

There can, I think, be little doubt that the majority of people are puzzled because they try to think in both of these ways at once. Many of our riddles which seem so perplexing to the average man arise from a criss-crossing of these two logics, of these two ways of approach to reality. Nothing is thought out clearly, and compromises of all sorts are snatched at by liberal thinkers. Thus evolution is thought of as a natural process and yet some divine agent is asserted to guide it. There is an attempt to *double* everything in a ghostly way. Personal agency is an added activity which somehow accompanies natural causality and robs it of its brutality. Plan and purpose can thus be discerned where science can find neither. The two logics are superposed upon each other.

The result is, that in everyday life people are gradually beginning to think in terms of cause and effect, while they retain their old mental habits when they think religiously about reality. The very questions they ask show that the old moulds of thought are at work. Who made the universe? Had it a beginning in time? Must there be a First Cause? Must there not be design and purpose back of it all? Such are some of the questions which are frequently asked and which obviously reflect the logic of personal agency.

These traditional riddles must be met and answered, and it is surely the duty of philosophy to explain why they are less riddles than is generally supposed. Already we have given the clue. They cease to be riddles as soon as we adopt the logic of science and a naturalistic philosophy, as soon as personal agency is reduced to proper proportions and made a case of conditioned causality in nature. And all this will, I hope, become clearer as we proceed.

Was the Universe Created?

Religion must always retain its interest in the external world and in the general nature of reality, for its strategy and perspective is bound to be affected by the kind of a world we find ourselves to be in. A world of personal agency, even created by it, is a very different kind of a world from one that simply *is* in a large and impersonal way. And its very creation would be a symbol of a superhuman power and purpose. It is for this reason that the idea of creation has played such an important rôle in religious thought. It lends itself to drama and will. A god who created would surely have a purpose in his action. If he made man also, he would remember his creatures. They would be a part of his plan. It was in this fashion that Christianity took up the myth of creation and wove it into the epic of God's dealing with man.

The idea of creation arose by degrees out of man's psychology dominated by personal agency and his intense curiosity. It was impossible for early man to give other than concrete answers to his questions. In another work of mine, I have described some of the stories of creation which arose in various parts of the world. The query underlying most of them was, Who did it?

At first, man took the world for granted and wanted to know how particular things began. By and by, as the idea of a powerful god developed, he was thought of as the agent. The more he was separated from the world, the more was he conceived as master of it. The Hebrew story illustrates this stage of development very well. Historians have shown how it goes back to the legends of Babylonia, and how we have earlier and later accounts in the Book of

Genesis. Ultimately, in what is called the priestly account the assertion is made that Yahweh created by his fiat. He said, Let be, and there was.

What now is the natural reaction of the trained mind to this old way of approach?

To the scientist and the philosopher to-day it seems to be a case of explaining the known in terms of the unknown. It is nature that stands out as given. Why not see whether we can think nature as having always been before we seek to account for it in terms of the activity of some supernatural Power?

As a matter of fact, the older stories of creation usually assumed the existence of a stuff which was then moulded into shape by the gods. Creation out of nothing is a very late notion which is supposed to exalt deity, and many Christian theologians have refused to give it their allegiance. But a deity limited by matter could not be omnipotent. In considering the problem of evil, we have already noted the logic which finally led to the proclamation of a creation out of nothing. But, clearly, we are here in a realm of mystery. Has such creation any direct meaning for the human mind? Words there are, but are there ideas? Like David Hume, I doubt it.

The principle of the conservation of energy occupies a commanding position in science to-day. It is believed that energy is neither lost nor gained. What does this imply for the physical universe? Surely that the universe is a self-conserving system. In this sense, it is self-sufficient. It is the particular patterns and organization within it that rise and fall, appear and disappear. The physicist thinks that matter is originating to-day out of positive and negative

grains of electricity. Such creation is all the time going on. But this creation is only origination out of what is already; it is not absolute creation.

Let me see whether I have made the situation clear. If you say that the world must have had an absolute beginning, could not always have been, can you not say precisely the same thing of any other subject, say of God? The logical question is the same. The naturalist begins with the physical universe as the ultimate reality; the theologian with deity. Which position is actually the more empirical? Surely mental habits and traditions alone are at work here.

And is not the assumption of the need for an absolute beginning itself unnecessary? In a later section in which I shall discuss certain supposed puzzles about the spatial and temporal framework of the universe I shall try to show that time is but another word for change and that it is always local and *within* the world. Science and philosophy have relinquished the older notion of an absolute, empty time at a certain moment of which a beginning of things might be made.

I wish again to emphasize the fact that, for science and philosophy with their inductive approach to reality, it is nature that is known. And, since nature does not bear within it the marks of being created, the traditional religious assumption that it was seems to science and scientific philosophy quite arbitrary. It is to pass from one field of thought to another which does not bear its credentials in the same fashion. From the scientific and naturalistic point of view God is an unknown. And this means that nature is becoming self-sufficient and primary. Of course, to a mind dominated by the older religious tradition such an outlook seems unsatisfactory. The world *must* have been

created. Could it be co-eternal with God? Independent of him?

It would seem, then, that we have a clash between two points of view and two systems of logic. Within the one, nature is contingent, had a cause, a beginning. Within the other, nature is self-sufficient, always was, did not need to be created. Each system tends to exclude the other, and puzzles arise when they are mixed, as popular thought does mix them to-day. It is this vague, mixed outlook which people easily fall into and they are then profoundly impressed by the profundity of the problems. But may not these problems be quite unnecessary? In fact, one of the striking features of recent philosophy is the discovery that very many of the old riddles were results of wrong questions and points of view. The advance of thought has brought simplification in its wake. We shall see that the mind-body problem is an excellent example of this situation. To-day it is believed that a wrong conception of both mind and body was the cause of this riddle.

Our discussion simmers down to the following choice. If you are inductive in your approach to reality and stress observation of yourself and the things around you, the outlook which will grow upon you is that of a frank naturalism. Nature will be the ultimate for you and you will undoubtedly go to science to find out about it. If you are kindly disposed to the traditional religious assumptions, you will adopt the logic of personal agency and your thinking will be deductive and theological. You may even do as the Christian Scientist and argue that, since God is good, there can be no evil in the world. But, then you are not really a scientist at all. You are a theologian arguing deductively.

Now it seems to me that the naturalistic outlook is slowly

crowding out the old set of assumptions. We shall have more to say about this, however, when we come to examine the present status of the God-Idea.

Let us remember, too, that, in the old days, the world was very small and homelike. And men did not think much in mechanical and causal terms. Instead, they thought in terms of Powers and actions. They humanized, socialized, anthropomorphized the world. It would have been surprising if they had done differently. But the universe is on a different scale to-day, and its processes are better known. Astronomers tell us of nebulæ in which stars are in process of formation and even of stars which are returning back to nebulæ. Evolution and devolution are like twin processes which co-exist in the immense expanse of nature. And science finds nothing which points outside of nature to a guiding and creating Power beyond. The physical processes are tremendous but seemingly continuous with those we see around us. It is true that an astronomer now and then lapses into poetry and quotes the Psalms; but he is not then speaking as a scientist; he is merely lapsing back into the older point of view, a return which is psychologically not at all surprising. But, as time passes, the bewilderment caused by the intermingling of these two opposed points of view will subside.

Riddles of Time and Space

Because mystery encourages mysticism, it will be well to examine briefly the modern outlook upon space and time. How does the naturalist think of the spatial and temporal framework of things? What difficulties confront traditional supernaturalism in these matters?

I presume that the common-sense notion of space is that

it is a tremendous receptacle in which physical things somehow exist. Our ordinary habits of speech encourage us to think in this fashion. We say that things are in space or occupy space.

But a little reflection ought to show us the impossibility of such an interpretation of space. In the first place, to say that things occupy space is merely a metaphor. It is a way of stating that things are found in certain relative *positions* and that they can be removed and other things put in those positions. We build up the notion of the large framework of physical things, and then by a natural, but vicious, abstraction make a peculiar kind of thing out of it. Space by itself is really an abstraction. We can see and handle chairs and tables, but we cannot see and handle space. We are probably aided in this development of a notion of space as a kind of vague reality by the fact that air does not offer us much resistance. It seems an empty region. This leads us to a second point. If there were a peculiar kind of reality called space, we could not know it. We can know only those things which cause sensations in us and those which we must infer as connected with such causal things. And an absolute, empty space could not be known, for it neither causes sensations in us nor is bound up with things that do.

But, I will be asked, What occupies interstellar space? What is there in a vessel from which all gases have been removed by an air-pump? My answer will have to be that, if there is anything there, it must be physical, it can't be mere space. A vacuum merely means that nothing of ordinary matter is there. There may still be ether or energy-quanta or lines of force.

Science and philosophy have moved to what is called

the relativity theory of space. Space means the measurability and localizability of things. The physical world is not *in* space; it is spatial. Physical space is simply the extended physical world.

It is important that we get these ideas and their consequences clearly in mind, or we may be the victims of riddles which were set up in the old days, when space was thought of as an absolute and unlimited receptacle in which the world floated. As regards space, the traditional riddle was this, Is the physical universe finite or infinite? Kant had a good deal to do with making this riddle popular, for he attempted to show that there was an antinomy, or self-contradiction, in the very application of the idea of space to the physical universe. I cannot here go into Kant's reasoning but can only give the reaction to it which is becoming very general, which is that it is very artificial. It is also expressive of the older notion of space which we have seen reason to reject.

The physical universe is either finite or infinite, if we regard these as clear and definite alternatives. And physical facts and theory, alone, will decide which we shall take it to be. There are at present advocates of both positions. On the whole, the relativity views of Einstein are in the ascendant, and these postulate a finite world whose spatial character follows the geometry of Riemann and not that of Euclid. Lines are really huge circles which return on themselves. We must give up our ordinary pictorial ways of thinking about these matters.

It would seem that naturalism is able to think itself free from difficulties and contradiction; but how about traditionalism? Where shall we place God? And where are heaven and hell?

Popular thought finds it hard not to think of God as *somewhere*. But, then, to put Him somewhere is to make Him spatial and local. How can He be, in that case, in heaven and on this earth at the same time? The usual answer is to say that to God all things are possible. But this answer is merely an evasion. It is to give up thinking. As a matter of fact, the religious thinker of the past has been trying to perform an impossible feat. He has been dominated by space for, in spite of himself, he believes that reality is spatial; and so he has been locating God in a specific place and yet thinking of Him as everywhere. The psychology of all this is fairly obvious. God is put in the heavens according to tradition, yet He must be communicated with and He must be able to reach down to the earth and interfere in behalf of suppliants. The result is like action at a distance, which is a mystery which science has long given up. Let us admit that popular thought has felt some of these difficulties and has introduced angelic messengers. But surely to the modern mind the whole scheme is becoming fairy-like.

But the stronger tradition in all these matters is the dualistic one, going back to the separation of the soul from the body. Spirits, we have seen, are supposedly free from the limitations of the body. God as a spirit surpasses space, and the above difficulties are due to the unwillingness to think of Him as a spirit. But this whole dualistic way of thinking is disappearing in both philosophy and psychology to-day. From the days of Hume, mind as an immaterial substance has been under suspicion. In the preceding chapter we suggested that mind is but a name for the more or less intelligent activities of the organism as a whole, activities which are experienced on the inside as conscious.

In short, souls and immaterial substances are no longer in good philosophical and scientific standing. Platonism, which so long furnished the philosophical framework of Christian thought, is being discarded. We are rapidly moving into a plastic naturalism which identifies nature with reality.

While we are dealing with the spatial aspect of reality, a word or two about heaven and hell may be in order. The difficulties about their location are obvious to all educated people. Dante could locate hell in the centre of the earth but that is hardly possible now. It is too realistic a location and challenges evidence. And what is true of hell holds equally of heaven. We no longer expect to find these realms in our actual universe. They have recognizedly become a part of Christian mythology. But is this way of approach too materialistic? Such a criticism raises the question of the reality of disembodied spirit. If the dualism between spirit and body falls, do not heaven and hell lose their reason for being? Accept this traditional dualism, and traditional beliefs can be reinterpreted and their essentials retained. But reject it—as science and philosophy are doing to-day—and a radical revision of these beliefs becomes necessary. Thus heaven and hell wait upon a decision in regard to the mind-body problem. Clearly they stand or fall with immortality.

I am myself sceptical whether even a metaphorical use of these traditional terms is justifiable. Suppose that it is said that we make our own heaven and hell. Certainly in large measure we make our own happiness or unhappiness. But heaven and hell were conceived as *places of abode* in another life. In these matters it is more conducive to clear thinking to give up mere symbols and allegories.

It would seem that a critical naturalism, able to do justice to man's life, has the merits of simplicity and freedom from riddles on its side. Surely that fact is in its favour. Is the outlook of traditional supernaturalism capable of systematic development in relation to the universe as we know it? Does it not form a sort of ghostly and supernumerary addition? And may not the traditional riddles which bother and intrigue the popular mind be due to their assumptions?

Let us now consider the temporal aspect of the universe to see if we can free it from riddles.

The older view of time, which many people still retain, was that it is an empty and absolute receptacle for events. Events are *in* time much as things were supposed to be in space. Here, again, our abstract way of thinking got us into trouble. We built up in our minds a chronological framework into which we could fit particular events. We asked ourselves what happened in the year 500 and what happened 10,000 years ago. The years became, as it were, empty forms into which we could put events as we learned to know them. The result was the thought of an empty time stretching from eternity to eternity.

But more careful thinking has convinced philosophers that this whole framework is an abstraction. Actually, there is no such reality as empty time. What exists is the physical world and the events in it. Apart from events and changes there would be no such aspect of the world as time. In short, time is but another term for the sequence of events. Time is change. In some of my other writings I have put it this way: *Time is in the world, and not the world in time.*

It is obvious that we could not come to know an empty, absolute time any more than we could know an empty,

absolute space. They are but projections of our abstractions.

Another way of bringing out the situation is to point out that we date backwards but that reality moves forward. The movement of events is like the movement of causality from a "now" to a new "now" while, in knowledge, we glance backwards over this path of advance. And it is because of this backward glance that we easily get into difficulties. We get frightened by the thought that every event has its predecessor, and our imagination gets tired. But, when we come to think of it, we realize that our imagination was trying to do the impossible. It was trying to arrive at a first event. But why assume a first event? If time is but a name for the sequence of events in nature, then there was no first event. Nature and time always were. But you may say that you can't think of something as always having been. Surely you can and do. If you think in terms of personal agency, you think of God as having always been. Either this, or you think that reality can arise out of nothing. The difference between naturalism and the traditional religious outlook is, that naturalism says that it is just as easy to think of nature as always having been as it is to think of God as always having been.

The bearing of this analysis of time upon the idea of creation is obvious. If time is simply a name for events in the world, it is beside the point to ask when the world was created. To this it can, of course, be replied that time can exist for God. But this would be another time than ours and quite unknowable to us. Simplicity is again on the side of naturalism. Once adopt its standpoint and logic, and the traditional riddles vanish. I would not, however, place too much stress upon simplicity and economy of

thought. These are merits of an outlook, but they need to be supplemented by a more basic criterion, agreement with the mass of our experience. To-day this agreement falls on the side of a frank naturalism. Supernaturalism rests on exceptional claims which must accept the burden of proof.

The Riddle of Life

Another riddle which puzzles popular thought and makes it still receptive to supernaturalistic traditions is the rise of life from lifeless matter. How can that which is non-living produce living things? Surely, it is thought, there is need here for a divine and exceptional intervention. What do modern science and philosophy have to say about this riddle?

Let us attempt, first, to clear the field of misconceptions. We must not make this a purely *dialectical* problem, that is, a controversy about terms. To say that the living cannot come from the non-living seems like saying that blue cannot of itself change into yellow. Of course it cannot, if we have in mind just the ideas themselves. The idea of blue is one specific kind of idea and the idea of yellow is another specific idea, and these ideas are distinct; they are what are called universals in philosophy. Now we must not think of the origin of life in this way as involving an impossible change of what is in its essence lifeless to what is in its essence living. And yet I cannot help thinking that many people approach the problem in this fashion. What is lifeless, they say, cannot become living.

The real question is this, Can physical systems arise in natural ways which have the properties which we sum up under the word *life?* Life is not a peculiar kind of entity, or force, to be found in living things and which makes them living. It is only a term for certain ways of acting and

behaving on the part of certain physical systems we call organisms. The question, then, is this, Can these novel, physical systems with their properties arise in a natural way through the working of light and heat upon the chemical elements native to this earth? Modern thought believes that this view is entirely feasible. Let us see why.

The present view of matter is, by the way, very different from the view which existed fifty years ago and which probably accounted for some of the difficulty experienced. Then matter was conceived by physicists as consisting of little particles of inert stuff which merely bounded off each other on impact. This has been called the brickbat theory of matter. How could the wonderful processes of growth which characterize living things be accounted for in terms of such a stuff? Well, I do not think that they could be, and I admire the scepticism of that period. Tyndall could proclaim in his famous Belfast speech before the British Association that matter contained the promise and potency of life; but these were as yet *words* expressive of the demand of scientific naturalism but giving no real insight.

But much water has flowed under the scientific and philosophical bridge since then. Matter is now conceived as dynamic, organized, socially inclined to new unions under favourable energy-conditions. And this view expresses an immense amount of active exploration based on new methods in physics and chemistry made possible by radio-activity, X-rays, and the analysis of spectra. Matter has been opened up to the human mind in a most wonderful way.

What of significance comes out for our riddle? This, that organization is natural to the physical world, and that new types of organization exhibit new properties. It would seem

that properties are expressive of the new wholes, or systems, which arise in nature. Would it be surprising to find that this correlation of organization and properties is the clue to our riddle? As a matter of fact, atoms combine to give molecules, and molecules combine to give crystals and complex chemical substances and colloids, and these can again combine in diverse ways. Under favouring conditions, this process of superorganization may be cumulative and, in that case, it seems quite logical to believe that properties of the class we call vital appear. It is a step-by-step affair from the clearly inorganic to the clearly organic. Now let us frankly admit that the steps have not yet been traced for the simple reason that they probably left no trace behind. But the important point is that this approach fits in with our growing knowledge of the physical and chemical ways of the earth whipped into superactivity by the sunlight.

It is supposed, then, that, certain combinations having developed under favourable conditions, this vital stuff possessed the power of maintaining itself and multiplying. The result was what Mr. Bertrand Russell calls chemical imperialism. At this level, such chemical imperialism was a vital imperialism, a capacity for self-maintenance and reproduction. And so a wonderful evolution began under the stress of internal trends and external forces. The dim, first stages vanished but life climbed onward and upward from one-celled creatures to many-celled creatures. It was a cumulative, creative advance bending this way and that, trying this animal type and that. The story of the later stages is read from the rocks in which fossils have been stored. And, at the moment I write, word comes that mutations, or basic changes in animal and plant forms, have been induced by scientists by means of the bombardment of

the germ-plasm by X-rays. This means that evolution can be experimentally studied.

The perspective which I have been trying to suggest is called emergent evolution. It will be remembered that I referred to it in the preceding chapter. Origination is conceived as natural to the world. The old hard-and-fast barriers between domains in nature are denied. The new arises from the old by cumulative change. "A little more and how much it is." Browning's line comes to mind because it expresses so well the change which is at once one of degree and of kind.

This solution of the riddle of life differs fundamentally from the old beliefs in the spontaneous generation of complex forms of life. All the organisms which biologists study to-day are products of untold centuries of vital growth and adjustment. We cannot in this fashion get back to those first flutterings of life upon the earth untold centuries ago. All that has disappeared. We have the end-products before us, and in this matter time is the great equation. Bit by bit, step by step, life got its hold on the earth and has increased it until now man lords it over land and sea.

Let us grant that this reading of the riddle is only the best we can make. Yet what has supernaturalism to offer in its place? A Yahweh moulding man out of the dust as a potter fashions his pots? A spirit *moving* on the face of the waters? Surely these ideas offer no grip upon events. They are of the nature of myths, of appeal to personal agency. No; we are children of mother-earth and the lordly sun with its radiant energy is our father. Metaphors again; and yet there is this truth in them that we have arisen to our present station from humble beginnings in a world which favoured our struggle upward by not deny-

ing it. It is the very genius of life to rise under favourable conditions to ever higher levels. And these levels involve new capacities and properties. Novelty is a reality. The universe is not a dead-level affair. We must be on our guard against leveling down or leveling up. Old-fashioned materialism resulted from leveling down and disregarding evolutionary novelty; and traditional idealism was always tempted to level up and take the highest as typical. Both of these extremes must be avoided.

In such ways as these science and philosophy are slowly reading the riddles which, in the past, aroused mystic awe. Light is creeping over the universe and chasing away the shadows of ignorance. The wonder, power and immensity of it remain; we measure in light-years and reckon in terms of billions of the annual movements of this little planet; but we see process and cause where our forefathers saw lordly intention and supernatural act. That there is a universe is, if you will, the ultimate mystery. What it is is a matter of discovery and exploration. And, so far as we can see, life and, still more, purpose are very local properties in the immensity of the stellar universe. To forget their specificity and to project them into the universe at large is what the philosopher means by anthropomorphism. Was not the cosmic perspective of traditional religion determined by this mistake?

CHAPTER XI

CAN RELIGION DISPENSE WITH IMMORTALITY?

A Recent Symposium

IN the first chapter we gave some of the results of an English questionnaire on religion. These were, it will be remembered, illuminating because of the increase of doubt with respect to traditional beliefs.

In America a recent symposium carried on by the *New York Times* can furnish us with a point of departure for the discussion of the subject of immortality. The editor-in-charge selected what would undoubtedly, in the newspaper world, be regarded as representative names. We find a famous physicist, a professor of philosophy at the Catholic University at Washington, an attorney, a bishop of the Episcopal Church, the President of the Federal Council of Churches, several distinguished clergymen, several college presidents, Mr. John Dewey, who is an institution by himself, a biologist, one of the leaders of the new negro movement, etc. The Catholic philosopher presents good scholastic doctrine, while Dewey expresses a large measure of scepticism. The ministers hold very markedly to traditional belief, while the scientists do not wish to commit themselves too definitely.

The chief criticism I would pass upon the symposium is that it does not contain the expression of opinion of more psychologists and philosophers. If any people may be said to be able to express an expert opinion on this subject, it is

surely they. They could tell us what the modern notion of the mind is and what relation it is supposed to have with the living organism. To the technical philosopher the problem of immortality rests upon *the solution of the mind-body problem.* A dualistic position, that is, one that separates mind from the organism, makes survival possible. A monistic position, that is, one that regards mind as a function of the organism, precludes survival. And it is a noteworthy fact that monism is gaining adherents in physiology, psychology and philosophy far more rapidly than is dualism. The living body is regarded as the unit in modern thought.

It might be well, therefore, to supplement the *Times Symposium* by a quotation or two from a very recent controversy in England among scientists about the very same problem. This controversy is valuable because it shows that scientists, like philosophers, feel that the mind-body problem is basic for this question. If the mind is one with the brain, survival is unthinkable; if it is not, the possibility of another life can be entertained. I shall quote Sir Arthur Keith and Sir John Bland Sutton on the one side and Sir Oliver Lodge on the other. It should be noted that the basis of decision is the same for both sides: Is the mind one with the brain?

"Every known fact," states Sir Arthur Keith, "compels the inference that the mind, the spirit and the soul are manifestations of the living brain just as flame is the manifest spirit of the burning candle." Sir John Bland Sutton, England's most famous surgeon, supports Keith: "Death is the end of all. It is an endless sleep." And Sir Oliver Lodge retorts: "I think the brain is the instrument used by the mind. Physiologists think the brain is the mind apparently. If the brain is the mind and one is destroyed, the other goes too; but if it is only an instrument and one smashes the

instrument—such as the violin—one does not kill the music."

All this is interesting to the philosopher. But he can never be satisfied with such an assemblage of metaphors. It is his task to analyze these terms and adjust them to each other. It is this that I shall do in this chapter.

It is because the mind-body problem is so basic for one's attitude towards survival that the real experts in this field are the psychologists, physiologists and philosophers. Thus I cannot regard the physicist as having much competence, though, of course, he has a perfect right to a hearing. The concepts which we are dealing with are those of mind, soul, life, organism, function, personality. And these concepts require special training for their interpretation.

Coming back now to the American symposium and glancing at the various reasons advanced for an affirmative belief, we note the following: (1) the nature of the soul, (2) the eternal miracle of the spiritual birth of man, (3) the longing for immortality, (4) the authority of the church, (5) scriptural tradition, (6) the irrationality of life without it, and (7) ethical compensation. There are different shadings of these reasons but the ones given are obviously the effective ones. Let us examine them.

The first one, suggested by Dr. Ryan of the Catholic University, is the only basic one. What is the nature of the soul? I sense good scholastic training back of this position. Dr. Ryan knows where the heart of the problem is. With him I can join issue and have something definite in mind. I think that Dr. Ryan would agree with me that the other reasons advanced are distinctly secondary. And is it not strange that all these distinguished ministers should avoid basic matters? Does this mean that Protestantism has be-

come philosophically superficial? What is this soul, or personality, which is to survive? What is its present relation to the living organism? Surely these are the basic questions.

The eternal miracle of the spiritual birth of man. What exactly does this mean in terms of psychology and ethics? Does it mean reformation of character, moral education, the growth of moral ideals? But to the ethicist and psychologist these are not miracles. They are objects of scientific study; they are processes of a most natural kind.

The longing for immortality. This is very much a variable and, in the beginning, is indistinguishable from the impulse for self-preservation. Longings can be cultivated; and there is no doubt that Christianity has cultivated assiduously the longing for immortality. Even so, statistics show a remarkable lack of interest in it on the part of many. Perhaps the future may show us a decrease in longing for survival if a frankly naturalistic view of human life gains ground. History is not without indications to guide us. As a matter of fact, a decent life here and now is what most people are chiefly interested in.

The authority of the church. We must go to the church for a response; and we have the emphasis of neo-scholastic philosophy as an answer. Our historical discussion should also have point here.

Scriptural tradition. The Old Testament did not concern itself with the question of survival. That belief developed its significant Jewish and Christian form in the last few centuries before our era.

The irrationality of life without it. Such an expression, to say the least, is very ambiguous. Death is not irrational to physiologist and psychologist. It is the cessation of vital functions which sustain the personality. Clearly the reason

which is appealed to here is the practical reason, so-called, rather than the theoretical reason. It is an affair of expectations and demands, and these, again, are variables. The personal equation enters in. I can quite understand why the average clergyman who has drilled himself into a certain emotional outlook feels that the bottom of life sinks out from under him if survival is not granted. But I note that large numbers of novelists and writers to-day have given up the belief and proceed with their artistic work as if nothing had happened. And, as a teacher, I am surprised to find that nearly all the brighter students have given up the belief in immortality—and that before they have taken courses in psychology and philosophy. Life has intrinsic value and meaning as a going concern dealing with interests and values here and now. But I shall have occasion to say more about this in the chapter on *Religion and Morality.*

Ethical compensation. This demand reflects our sense of justice and our recognition that merit is not always compensated adequately in this life. As applied to survival, it is an attempt to answer the problem of evil in the universe. But evil rather shows us the actual nature of the universe; and, *if we were inductive,* we would expect the next life to be like this one, a mixture of good and evil. On the face of it, ethical compensation in the next world is what the psychologists call compensatory; it is a matter of delightful day-dreaming unless we can find some objective guarantee. But this guarantee can reside only in the nature of the universe, and this leads us back to the mind-body problem. We must not forget, also, that man is himself responsible for many of the evils which darken human lives. Let us increase social justice and make human life here and now happier and more satisfying.

It is apparent that these secondary reasons for the belief in survival are bound up with the cosmic perspective which we have seen reason to criticize. What kind of a universe are we in? Is human life a natural part of it and expressive of a certain evolutionary level? Have we a logical right to project our social categories, our ideas of right and wrong, into the cosmos at large and out of the range of their specific setting? The modern naturalist cannot see that such a procedure—natural as it was for pre-scientific man—is justified.

But while I am forced to regard the ethical argument for immortality as distinctly secondary, I am quite ready to admit the need which we are under at present to redefine the spiritual and to show that it is intrinsic to human living. In all these matters, people have been the victims of inherited contrasts handed down from the old dualisms of the past. The spiritual has been set over against the natural; the soul over against the body. But we are to-day realizing that these sharp oppositions and divisions are unjustified. There are levels in nature, and each level has its own characteristics. We can do full justice to the texture of human life and yet see it as natural in its own fashion. The flaw in traditional materialism was the tendency to reduce the higher to the lower; the error of idealism was romanticism and a lack of feeling for the natural foundations and conditions of human life.

Upon analysis, then, this rather typical American symposium reveals a really deplorable lack of appreciation of the task of reflection. Nothing short of a reinterpretation of human personality in the light of our knowledge of it in terms of biology, physiology, psychology, sociology and philosophy can be of any avail. Surely we must determine what

we are before we ask ourselves whether we are immortal. And if we turn out to be part and parcel of this life, our question is thereby answered. The problem of immortality cannot be adequately handled short of the raising of fundamental questions in cosmology. One's position on this question flows from one's whole philosophy. Any other approach is necessarily amateurish and ineffective. Such symposia as these get us nowhere. It is straight, hard thinking about the self and the organism and the texture of human life that is needed.

Some Historical Reasons for Stress upon Immortality

For many, to deny immortality and yet keep the term, religion, is like keeping *Hamlet* with the Prince of Denmark left out. But are not these honest people suffering from the influence of a particular, historical development? It is a very defensible thesis that the heart of religion is man's need to come to an understanding with life. And, so taken, religion is inseparable from human living and will survive even if a future world must be relinquished. A naturalistic religion will still be a religion and will reflect man's strategy in the face of a changed interpretation of reality. I am, in fact, inclined to hold that it will be a healthier religion, more humane, more critical, more constructive.

A period of transition is never pleasant to all concerned. Those who cling to old views feel that invaluable things are under attack. *And it is undeniable that we are entering upon a period of religious deflation.* Such deflation is naturally not delightful, and those who are taking it hard have my deepest sympathy. But does any one who has a reality-sense want to live in a world of make-believe?

History shows that religion can exist without a belief in

personal survival of any significant sort. Judaism was for centuries a social religion dominated by the idea of the safety and survival of the Jewish people. Yahweh was *literally* the god of the living and not of the dead. After death, the shade went to a sort of no-god's land. And even for the living, His providence did not greatly concern itself with the individual. Religion was concerned with the conservation and furtherance of human values in this life. God was the heavenly helper. The great prophets extolled righteousness without the promise of an after-life. Of course, they gave it a supernatural sanction for that was the perspective of the time. And, turning to the Greeks and Romans, much the same thing held. The Greek father felt himself a member of a family whose traditions and loyalties he wished to hand on intact. The rest which he craved was quiet sleep for his shade.

What men have once done, they can surely do again. After all, as we shall point out, true morality is intelligent living. No other kind of living really appeals to sensible and courageous people.

It is very interesting to note the rise of the idea of personal immortality in Jewish thought. Remember that the Jewish people were intensely self-conscious and proud and yet were constantly defeated by bigger nations. The final result was the rise of dualism and a dramatic supernaturalism. The compensation-idea began to work in their minds. First came the notion of the resurrection of the body for the Saints in the coming Messianic Kingdom. Our creeds still reflect this stage. And, as dualism came more and more into being, the ghost-soul was transformed into a living spirit distinct from the body and capable of a significant life after the death of the body. This body-soul dualism manifests itself in Paul,

This connection of the soul-body dualism with survival reinforces the point I made in the first section that the basic problem is that of mind and body. Only thus can the mechanism of immortality be thought. Plato grasped the logical situation in much the same terms. He defined the soul as an immaterial, simple substance. It is his doctrine that Dr. Ryan is repeating after all these years.

The psychology of the late Jewish development is fairly obvious. The stress upon immortality expressed a way of escape; it was a compensation for social defeat.

Now Christianity arose in a similar social atmosphere. What was now effective was not so much national defeat as individual unhappiness and social maladjustment. And popular immortality could become such a thrilling affair with specific heavens and hells. Once such an outlook got definitely implanted in social belief, it could maintain itself. Fear, hope and ignorance laboured together for its survival. It is truer and fairer still to say that a whole philosophy of the world and of human life was knit with it. The replacing of one philosophy by another is at best a gradual affair. The whole perspective with all its ethical and social ramifications must be altered.

It is very relevant to note that our age is not one of pessimism but one of social activity and creation. We have come back with differences to the era of Pericles, of Scipio, and of Hosea. The temper of our age is different from that in which otherworldness came to its fruition. This fact is not without significance to the standing in religion of immortality. Social psychology has altered again to humanism. The individual feels himself more at home in this world.

This new temper began at least with the Renaissance. Men began to ignore the life to come. Thus, in Italy, Aris-

totle was reinterpreted correctly as not accepting concrete, personal immortality. Faustus is ready to sell his soul to the devil for the glories of this world. Bell-towers were erected to mark the passing of the hours. Adventure beckoned men abroad in space and time.

If this interpretation of history is correct, the apotheosis of the soul was the expression of human need in a period of crisis. The soul carried salvation and justice. The realm of divine success was transferred to another world while this was given over to the flesh and the devil. In this manner God's ways were justified to man. By a grand mystery evil was here triumphant. Nevertheless, all was well for the saints since paradise would bring joy. Good was still in the saddle.

Had I been living in that day, I would have wanted to believe this; would probably have believed it. But the social and intellectual context is vastly different now.

The Vicissitudes of the Idea of a Soul

The ghost-soul was not, in the strict sense, a religious idea. It was, rather, a natural hypothesis achieved by man as the result of primitive observation and reflection. We have already said something about this development in an earlier chapter and so need not go over it here. Dreams, trances, memories of the dead, the obvious differences between the living and the dead, the whole animistic thought of the world, all played their part in the rise of the idea of a soul. It was a semi-scientific explanation of certain facts as then understood.

Is it at all surprising that religion, that is, the human mind in its emotional reaction to life, pounced upon this idea and wove it into belief and ritual. Souls are mysteri-

ous and dangerous; they are reincarnated; they linger near graves; they pass to another world. What a point of departure for the imagination!

We must distinguish between the popular idea of the soul and the idea philosophers and scientists tried to make for themselves. The popular idea has always been pragmatic and concrete, and there is not a very marked break between the belief of many people to-day and very ancient notions. Philosophy and science, when they did arise, had the task of thinking the conception through in such a way that it could be fitted into the world as known. Thus they had problems which the mass of the people have never felt acutely.

Just how does the ordinary, unreflective person think of the soul? Does not some remnant of the old tradition of the ghost-soul survive, a remnant filled in with the warm thought of some dear one? After all, the demand is the thing. *How* and *what* are shoved aside for a triumphant reinstatement of personality. What *carries* the personality is hardly asked? Or, if it is asked, the verbal answer, the soul, something immaterial, is given. But, of course, all this is not thinking; it is demanding and believing.

But philosophers have never felt that they could be satisfied with this free-and-easy attitude. From the very beginning, philosophy has attempted to form an idea of the soul. For Heracleitus, it was a bit of the divine fire imprisoned in the body. It was this line of thought that the Stoics adopted. The soul is a fine kind of material inhabiting the body for a little while. All the naturalists of ancient times followed this path. Like Heracleitus and the Stoics, Democritus and Epicurus tried to conceive the soul as delicately material.

It was Plato who, under the influence of the Pythagoreans and of his own philosophical immaterialism, broke with this naturalistic mode of interpretation of the soul. He argued that the soul is a simple, indestructible, immaterial substance. It was this view that the thinkers of the Christian Church found ready to hand and which they adopted. It should be noted, however, that Aristotle, the pupil of Plato, had already begun to bring the soul back into definite relations with the body. Plato's dualism ends in mystery so far as the actual functioning of the mind is concerned. Aristotle tried to conceive the soul as the form of the body. This means, among other things, that the immortality-motive had less weight with him than with Plato.

It is clear, then, that, even for ancient thought, the idea of the soul was intertwined with philosophy. Naturalistic thinkers tried to naturalize the soul, while those affected by supernaturalism sought to conceive it as something immaterial. It is this struggle which is, I think, being decided in our own day.

The dualistic tradition, having received the weight of religious approval, was in the ascendant until the eighteenth century. Descartes asserted the existence of two kinds of substance, matter which is spatial and mind which is non-spatial. To John Locke, the soul had become something unknowable in itself which has the capacity to support our actual thoughts and feelings. Scepticism of the soul is foreshadowed in such a position. It is becoming a mere X, something we know nothing about.

And now came Hume with his frank challenge to produce this postulated soul. Plato's abstract rationalism is giving way to empiricism. How is the soul known? Is it given

in our conscious experience? His introspection is justly famous. The soul, he declared, simply could not be found.

I cannot go into the details of the development. It is, however, correct to say that soul-substance vanished from modern philosophy. Kant continued in his own fashion what Hume began.

But philosophy was not yet out of the woods. Idealism had its innings for the greater part of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The result was that the physical world vanished or, rather, became phenomenal. Mind was constituted the sole reality; and mind was called spirit. Spirit is active, creative. As for matter, it is an abstraction created by the mechanical habits of our thought. There were many forms of idealism, and it is impossible to compress this variety under a few principles.

Now, for the purposes of traditional religion, spirit is just as good as soul. In fact, an active spirit is much better than an immaterial, unchanging substance. If, moreover, the physical world is an illusion, the sting of death can be removed. It may be but an ebb in the activity of our spirit, a momentary pause before the new life. Those who do not take the body and the physical world seriously as anything more than symbolic of alterations in spirit can look upon death in this fashion. Why should the spirit die? What is mortal about its nature? Thus argued those various forms of idealism which were more or less in alliance with the cosmic perspective of the past. A haze hung over the physical world; naturalism seemed checked; man was not yet persuaded that he was through and through a creature of this world.

But idealism had at best won a temporary and largely dialectical victory. Science and philosophy continued re-

morselessly to analyze and to accumulate knowledge, to question old assumptions, to seek new perspectives. The reign of an immaterial spirit in place of an immaterial substance had all the earmarks of an intermission. The battle was again joined; and now theory of knowledge, which had so long upheld idealism, swung back to realism. The reign of romantic subjectivism was past. It had served its purpose by defending the human spirit against a too crude form of naturalism which thought only in terms of inorganic nature and was blind to the rôle played by quality and organization in the world.

I need not repeat what I have indicated already in other chapters. All the basic concepts of nature have been undergoing analysis and reconstruction; and the naturalism which is now arising is far more delicate and far more sensitive to the demands of human life than was the older type. In place of the almost naïve scientific realism of the past, we have a science aware of the nature of the knowledge it gains of the world, aware that it secures information of the pattern and texture of things but no intuition of its stuff. And the reductive tradition of the past is being replaced by a frank acknowledgment of the significance of organization. What is the bearing of this scientific and philosophical revolution upon the problem of immortality?

The answer can be brief. The human spirit is being empirically studied as a climax of a long, natural evolution. It is seen as a complex built up biologically and then carried to a delicate consummation by education within a cultural inheritance. The human spirit is being analyzed into concrete activities resting on inherited capacities. It is becoming a term for interests and valuations and relationships. The human organism is deepening under the gaze of biology,

psychology and sociology into a functional system of a marvellous kind.

It would seem that philosophy and science are pressing beyond the limited visions and sharp oppositions of the past to a view which is neither the mechanical materialism of the eighteenth century nor the romantic idealism of much of the nineteenth. The perspective which is growing before our minds to-day is that of a naturalism able to do justice to the impersonal immensity of nature and the reality and richness of human life.

Let us examine the new idea of the living soul which is accompanying the development of this more plastic and adequate naturalism. Needless to say, dualism and Platonism are giving way to a functional conception of the soul which makes the personality one with the living organism. It looks as though the human spirit had passed through the long night of pessimism and dualism and reached the day of a frank and clear-eyed naturalism. If the Western world lost its nerve for a time, it has fully regained it. It has explored its environment and found no hidden terrors. Thus, some at least of the historical reasons for the stress upon immortality have vanished.

The Living Soul and the Body

Having followed the vicissitudes of the idea of the soul as the carrier of immortality and the mere tenant of the body, we are now ready to open up the question more deeply. And it seems to me that a good way to do this is to ask ourselves what idea of the soul is arising apart from the problem of immortality. When people say, "Look into your own soul," what do they have in mind? Is it not the self, the personality, the concrete human being? A human being

is a living soul, conscious, sensitive, looking before and after, imaginative, aware of duties and goals. All this is an empirical fact; how shall we think it in terms of our knowledge?

There are, I think, three supplementary ways of approach which will help to rid us of old perspectives and prejudices: (1) the fact that the traditional body-mind dualism is vanishing because it is being outgrown; (2) the clearer realization that the living soul is a delicate growth resting on innate capacities lifted to a high level of activity by social life; and (3) a more adequate conception of nature due to the acceptance of the reality of self-observation.

The traditional mind-body dualism, which was often called Cartesian dualism after the famous French thinker of the seventeenth century, Descartes, expressed two motives. One was the growing effort to explain all of nature in terms of a simplified mechanics; and the other was the continued influence of the dualistic tradition of Christianity and Platonism. What is happening to-day is the withering of both of these motives in the light of the advance of science and secularism. The result is a basic reorientation which has gradually found expression in (1) a more plastic view of mechanism which makes it able to include purpose, (2) a more empirical theory of knowledge, and (3) the acceptance of the organism as the real unit of study in place of a disembodied mind and a deanimated body. In short, we nc longer rob the living organism of mind and consciousness at the very start. Such a robbery has no factual justificatior and was committed in the past only under the hypnotic effect of traditional dualism. Once challenged, dualism is fading because seen to be artificial.

We come now to the second point, the clearer realization that the human soul is a growth resting on capacitie

due to biological evolution. We note how much our souls are dependent on our sense-organs which are, as it were, their windows. We must add to these instincts, abilities to discriminate and relate, our capacity for language and social communication. Simple drives evolve into complicated patterns of conduct; sense-impressions are transformed into percepts and ideas; feelings are transmuted into sentiments. The babe, the most helpless creature born, becomes after the passage of years, the artist, the engineer, the shrewd business man, the statesman.

Very patiently psychology and physiology have been tracing this genesis of the living soul within the organism. They have studied sense-organs, muscular responses, nervous mechanisms, the emotions, the working of intelligence, the tense thrust of creative imagination. They have deciphered in some measure the part played by gland, heart, viscera and brain in this living, breathing activity.

But, fully to understand the human soul, we must grasp the guidance given by education and social adjustment to this delicate and complex whole. The spiritual in man is but another word for culture, and this is something sustained by institutions and technique. The living soul is plastic and takes shape under circumstance. Sometimes it turns out to be the soul of a mystical saint, sometimes the soul of an artist, sometimes the soul of a hardened criminal. Nature and nurture are the two great forces which call it into being. There are souls of all kinds around us; and it demands the ability of a great novelist to portray them for us.

And now we come to the climax of this study of the living soul. By what right does the modern evolutionary naturalist assign mind and consciousness to the organism?

I have suggested the new perspective which is arising in science and philosophy. It is realized that the exact sciences can decipher only the pattern of the body as of other external things. They have no means of penetrating to the very content of the brain to tell us that consciousness is not there. It would seem, then, the most probable position that, in his consciousness, the individual is on the inside of that physical reality he calls his brain. Thus we have what I have long called a double knowledge of the organism. We know the brain from the outside, and we are also one with it and thus in a position to know it from the inside. Consciousness is intrinsic to the living organism; it is a complex of events flowing with the response of the brain-mind to situations. Here we have integrative actions of a unique sort and a level of organic action which is reared upon the larger economy of life. To reduce nature to the abstract symbols of quantitative knowledge is to do it injustice. Things are fields of action with a reality-content which eludes our measurements. It is the pattern and mode of working of things which we can comprehend in this external way. And it is not until we come to ourselves that we are confronted with the fact that our living experience is real. Hence psychology has a task no other science has, that of fitting a direct acquaintance with a physical system into the categories of physical science. It is this task which, after much rebellion and groaning, psychology with the aid of philosophy is beginning to accomplish. It wanted to be merely an external science in behaviourism and to escape the need for this basic adjustment of external knowledge with self-observation. But to do so would have been a flight from its unique task. The living soul is at once a living organism and a conscious self.

The explanation of this modern, monistic idea of the self is not an easy thing to accomplish. In a very real sense, theory of knowledge and cosmology come to a head in this problem. The essential fact to grasp is, however, not so very difficult. It is this, that a human being is his organism as conceived from every angle and thought of as lit up from within by his consciousness. Thinking and feeling are a kind of living as experienced on the inside of the organism.

The advance of science often precedes its clarification of its basic ideas. To think cosmology through in such a way as to naturalize human life is no mean task. There is, however, much to show that philosophy and science are slowly achieving a new orientation along the lines of a critical realism in theory of knowledge and an emergent evolutionism in cosmology. How soon all this will sink down into plain terms and habitual points of view remains to be seen. But, as it does so, the old soul-body dualism will disappear. Man will know himself for what he is, a child of nature.

Such naturalism is, as I have said, not a new thing. It is its working out in intellectual detail that is new. Already George Meredith had grasped the central idea and seen its spiritual import. He speaks of Nature as follows:

> "She conscient, she sensitive, in him;
> With him enwound, his brave ambition hers;
> By him humaner made; by his keen spurs
> Pricked to race past pride in giant limb,
> Her crazy adoration of big thews."

The Living Soul and Immortality

I think that it must have become clear why I emphasized the basic import for the topic of immortality of the mind-

body problem. The logic of the situation is clear. Naturalism implies the frank acceptance of mortality; dualism, or idealism, permit, even if they do not demand, immortality. All other arguments are secondary and ineffective. And it is my conviction that the trend of modern science and philosophy is unmistakably towards a plastic naturalism. And in the preceding section, while trying to avoid technicalities as much as possible, I have sought to give a glimpse of the new perspective towards mind and body.

There remain many questions of importance. I might discuss the actual prevalence of the belief in immortality. Is it as great as it once was? Or I might ask how people think of the future life. Interesting as all these questions are, I must forego them, for they are on the margin of my purpose. Instead, I shall limit myself to the discussion of the significant motives back of the belief in immortality. These are, probably, the following: (1) the dislike for annihilation; (2) the desire to meet again those we have loved; (3) the hope for a dramatic display of justice; and (4) the craving for a persistence of human values.

The dislike for annihilation is seemingly very strong in most people. It is in all likelihood an expression of the animal will to live and, if imagination plays on the thought of death, it may become morbid. I suppose that vitality involves a liking for life and a strong repugnance to death. All our active drives and interests crave continuance for their completion. I am myself a vigorous enough personality to appreciate this fact. The natural thing is the possession of life as long as it is clearly a good. It is death while the forces of life are creative that is an evil. But I see no reason why a calm, old age with a long life to look back upon should not be prepared for death as a natural and inevitable

event. With the disappearance of supernatural horrors, it may well be that a new attitude will grow up around the end of life. People may learn to grow old charmingly and to meet death cheerfully as the final withdrawal of the forces of life. After all, is not death the price we pay for life?

Popular religion has usually reflected a certain unwillingness to face life as it is. It has been sentimental and melodramatic. Personal loss is tragic, and religion has tried to make it unreal. Thus the minister tells the grieving mother that she will see her little baby in the next world. To those who can believe this, the hope is a temporary anodyne while the memory of the loss weakens with the passage of time and the inrush of new life.

The desire to meet our dear ones bears witness to the fact that they have been a part of our living soul and that it bleeds when they are torn away. That this should be the case is an honour to human nature. Love is daring because it makes us vulnerable to the shafts of fate. To be willing to love is to be courageous in the face of the possibility of loss. But are not Tennyson's lines profoundly true? Is it not better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all? The sane attitude in these matters seems to me to cherish those whom we love while they are yet with us, knowing that we may soon lose them and forever.

The demand that perfect justice triumph in the kind of a world we are in seems to me naïve and childlike. It ignores the very texture and setting of life. There is much of the fairy-tale about traditional religion with its heaven and hell. The major premise is, of course, theistic. It declares that this life is for some mysterious reason given over to conflict but that death will usher in a totally new arrangement in

which an ideal judge will make the allotments. Clearly, we meet our old friend, personal agency, at work.

While I do not see that the demand that this be a personally supervised universe has any evidential support, I can see how the demand for justice might be put to work with advantage to make our social life here and now more just. If life is not very just, let us make it juster. Man must learn to accept responsibility himself and not push it off on a hypothetical deity.

Finally, we come to the craving for the persistence of values. It is said that there is a huge waste in the death of people. To allow the delicate flower of personality to wither shows an irrationality in nature. Could not human souls keep on for æons perfecting themselves? Does not, as Kant and Browning maintained, morality involve an ideal which cannot be reached in one short life? Here we are confronted with the so-called ethical argument.

I doubt the empirical reality of this way of approach. It assumes an idea of the human soul which does not correspond to fact. The living soul is a function of organisms and society, and is through and through a temporal affair. It grows old and its vitality lessens. And I do not think that morality postulates any such unattainable goal as the old rigourists thought. Moral living is merely intelligent and kindly human living. Moreover, I am very doubtful that human nature permits this supposed eternal plasticity of souls. No; our souls become old and set in their ways. They are creatures of time and circumstance and are capable in only slight measure of lifting themselves into the region of the more abiding values of human existence. A reflective soul acquires humility in regard to its merits. Let one generation give way to the next. A universe full of

acquisitive and power-loving old souls would not be pleasant.

There is, however, an aspect of the conservation of values which I would like to stress. It is the social welcoming and furtherance of achievement. Nothing heartens a worker more than sympathetic understanding. To believe that what you do will be taken up and made a point of departure for further endeavour and will not fall into barren ground gives encouragement. There is joy in working, but this joy is increased if one senses a vista of years of fruition for what one is interested in. Progress has been a very encouraging idea for human beings. Healthy and creative souls flourish best in a healthy and creative age. We can get so interested in this activity or that, that we forget ourselves. Or, rather, our souls are enlarged and identify themselves with causes. Here lies the truly religious cure for sick souls and for feverish individualism. What we work for survives.

Can Religion Dispense with Immortality?

And so I come to the topic which heads this chapter, Can religion dispense with the belief in immortality?

It is my persuasion that it can, but that it must frankly and intelligently reorientate itself to this life. It must hunt out positive values whose furtherance is worth while. It must acquire a sense for life rather than for death. The salvation it must stress is not the semi-magical salvation of disembodied souls shrinking on the brink of an unknown eternity peopled with terrific Powers but a salvation which consists in making the most of life here and now in a creative and adventurous way.

But to become an agent of soul-culture, religion must become better acquainted with culture. It must cease to be

negative and world-fleeing and study the joys and activities of actual human living. It will thus become a philosophy of life keenly alive to the drama of existence.

I do not think that the traditional type of Christianity can dispense with the belief in immortality. Its entire perspective was built up around a supernatural drama ended in another world. But I am convinced that it would be a mistake to identify religion with this inherited cosmology and soteriology, which, to the really educated man of to-day, are things of the past. Religion is a man's imaginative sense of life, a society's feeling for what is significant. It is something intrinsic to the very pulse of human activity.

There is to my mind not the least doubt that a humanistic religion can dispense with immortality.

In the next chapter we shall discuss theism. Let me at once admit that the results of the present chapter have bearing upon the next. Immortality and a separable soul would add a storey to the universe which science and a naturalistic philosophy could not enter. I would assuredly have much less difficulty in believing in a deity could I believe in immortality. And I am sure that many who participated in the *Times* symposium felt the correlation.

CHAPTER XII

HAS MAN A COSMIC COMPANION?

IN the first part of this book we traced the origin of the God-Idea. It is now our task to determine its validity in the light of our present knowledge of the universe. It was natural and psychologically inevitable for our ancestors; but is it significant and interpretative for ourselves?

The philosopher necessarily approaches the subject of theism in the same systematic and objective fashion as that in which he deals with the other problems of his field. First of all, he seeks to know precisely what theism is. This in itself is no mean task. Is God distinct from the physical universe? Or is he—as the phrase is—immanent in it? And how shall we conceive God? Popular theism has always been far more anthropomorphic and pragmatic than theology, and has thereby evaded most of the problems which reflection meets. And, after the philosopher has secured a fairly adequate idea of what theism is, he must endeavour to determine what can be said for and against it. To him, theism is just an hypothesis about the nature of the universe and must fit into our actual knowledge of the texture and mode of working of the world if it is to be logically acceptable.

This logical attitude is not the common one. God is ordinarily taken for granted within a psychological outlook called belief or faith. But, in this day and age the query will not down, Is this belief true? Does it correspond to fact? The physical world has crystallized into a tremendous

system whose ways seem foreign to theistic traditions and hopes. Cause stands out where purpose once shone through; miracles retreat before the advance of law; immortality becomes increasingly doubtful. Thus the human hopes which made theism significant seem to be gainsaid by the knowledge of nature which man has acquired through the technique of science. The world surrounds us human beings in an ever more intimate fashion while superhuman agency becomes ghostly and distant. Is it too much to say that theism is on the defensive?

In this chapter I shall try to analyze those concepts like meaning and purpose which people are accustomed to project into the universe at large as a basis for theism. Has life a meaning? Were we not put here for a purpose? Is there not design in the world?

How Popular Theism Differs from Theological Theism

Popular theism is imaginative and anthropomorphic. God is for the practicing believer an alter-ego, a superhuman person with whom one can enter into friendly relations. Thus the minister prays to Him in a conversational way and the person in distress cries out to Him for help. He is an unseen agent ready to give assistance and comfort. Let me quote from some of the work done by psychologists seeking to find out how people actually think of God. Thus Leuba: "Two-thirds of the men, and nearly half of the women disclaim any mental picture of God. The larger number of the remainder distinguish between image or symbol and reality. In a remarkably large number of cases, however, a description in sensory terms is held to represent God adequately. That young people having reached the mental development of college students should think of God as

'actual skin and blood and bones, something we shall see with our eyes some day,' is almost incredible; but the evidence is compelling. Seven per cent. hold apparently to a thoroughly anthropomorphic conception of God." [1] Pratt affirms that most people have two inconsistent and alternating ideas of God, "each dominating consciousness in its turn according to the varying demands of action, emotion and thought." And he quotes from a writer on *The Conception of God of College Students* as follows: "It is not uncommon to find God imaged as a King in Heaven with bodily form, yet when use is made of Him he is described as 'near me.' . . . There is seldom any attempt to reconcile the two views or to decide which is the true one."

This mode of working of the unreflective mind was known long ago. In the early stages of philosophy, Xenophanes expressed it in these words: "The Ethiopians make their gods black and snub-nosed; the Thracians say theirs have blue eyes and red hair. . . . Yes, and if oxen and horses or lions had hands, and could paint with their hands, and produce works of art as men do, horses would paint the forms of the gods like horses, and oxen like oxen, and make their bodies in the image of their several kinds." An absolute idealist of great ability, Josiah Royce, suggests that if pigeons which we feed were to formulate their ideas after the manner of men, they would express themselves somewhat as follows: "Behold do we not cluster about him and beg from him and coo to him; and do we not get our food by doing thus? He is, then, a being whom it is essentially worth while to treat in this way. He responds to our cooing and our clustering. Thus we compel him to feed us. Therefore he is a worshipful being. And this is what we mean by

[1] Leuba, *The Belief in God and Immortality*, pp. 205-6.

a god; namely some one whom it is practically useful to conciliate and compel by such forms of worship as we practice." This is a very good description of the religion of primitive man.

In popular theism the immensity of the universe is lost sight of in the hour of need and a personal relationship supervenes. But such popular theism with its pragmatic deity is obviously akin to primitive religion. It clings to special providence and thinks of God as an agent very much like a human being but on a grander scale. Such an outlook reminds us of the departmental deities of polytheism. Each individual has, as it were, his own private deity because he ignores the multiple relations involved in God's manifold connections with other persons and with the sidereal universe. His own personal interests dominate his thought. Reality at large is for the time being forgotten.

Theology has always tried to escape from popular anthropomorphism and, in so doing, has been condemned as cold and intellectual. We must admit, of course, that theology is not worship; it is an attempt to think God. To the reflective thinker, however religious, God is far removed from the traffic of personal demand. He is the mystery of the universe, the vast soul of things. His ways are past finding out. Surely the only mood proper to this conception is worship and submission. Worship because the infinite Power back of all things is regarded as good and worthy of it; submission because of the overwhelming immensity of this reality. To the theologian, who is only the religious thinker, the attributes of God become superlative. He is omniscient and omnipotent and perfect. It is the logic of idealization.

We may say that popular theism is subjectivistic in its

approach. It is under the control of personal needs. God is that which can meet these needs. By a well-known psychological law, desire tends to create that which will satisfy it. Given but a nucleus, it weaves around it all its hopes. Thus the popular leader easily becomes the saviour of society. And this psychological tendency is reënforced by man's natural anthropomorphism and by social tradition. The religious pattern is forced on the new-born by society and becomes second nature. Writes Professor Pratt: "The individual is born into the world in a perfectly helpless condition, with a mind which is both entirely empty and exceedingly impressionable, and he finds himself in a society of older persons all of whom, in religious matters, think, feel and act pretty much alike. It seems as if the adult world had entered into a conspiracy against the tender infant mind, to force it into old, approved, social grooves. And indeed it has. The conspiracy, in fact, is both implicit and explicit." [1]

Popular theism and theological theism have always tended to clash. Desire cries out for the human god, while reflection declares that the scale of the universe makes this impossible. In all advanced religions we discover the inevitable conflict. Thus in India, popular religion has demanded its saviours and limited deities, while philosophy has proclaimed the Infinite One into which the finite soul may sink and find peace. In our Western Religion, Roman Catholicism granted to the people their Saints while thinkers proclaimed God to be Pure Form. It must be confessed that Protestantism got out of its difficulties in the main by not thinking much about them. Each level of Protestantism has adopted

[1] Pratt, *Religious Consciousness*, p. 78.

the kind of deity it wanted. And very often thinking has been rather conspicuous by its absence.

This situation is well brought out by Gamaliel Bradford in his book, *D. L. Moody: A Worker in Souls.* "Of course Moody professed not to deal much in doctrine anyway. His idea was that he stuck to the fundamentals and left the theoretical embroidery to the theologians to fuss over. When a lady came to him and said, 'I want to be frank with you, I want you to know that I do not believe in your theology,' he answered, 'My theology! I didn't know I had any. I wish you would tell me what my theology is!' Yet this man was constantly pouring out theological propositions with an abundance which is simply staggering to the enlightened mind. . . . What he believed may perhaps be not unfairly summed up something as follows: that the Bible was absolutely the word of God, that the Bible taught that man was originally sinful and had fallen from grace, that the Son of God had sacrificed himself to atone for our sins, and that by accepting the atonement of his blood and showing that acceptance in our lives we may escape hell and be assured of heaven."

What Theism Is

Leaving popular theism behind, let us see what theologian and philosopher in the past have made out of theism.

Robert Flint, a Scotch theologian of the last century, wrote as follows: "Theism is the doctrine that nature has a Creator and Preserver, the nations a Governor, men a Heavenly Father and Judge." This definition is, to say the least, definite and concrete. It breathes the air of authority. It is monarchical and legalistic. It expresses what Professor Fite

calls the spirit of Ordered Society. It is akin to the divine right of kings.

For Professor Brightman, one of the leaders of Methodist modernism, theism is the belief that "the object of religious value is a real personal God, who is immanent in the world, but who also transcends it. He is an ontologically real person for himself."

One more definition will give us sufficient material to work upon. I take this one from a very able article on Theism in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* by Professor A. E. Taylor of St. Andrews University. Taylor is a man who is very sympathetic with traditional religion and has the reputation of great learning in the history of Christian thought. He defines theism as "the doctrine that the ultimate ground of things is a single, supreme reality which is the source of everything other than itself and has the character of being (a) intrinsically complete or perfect, and (b) as a consequence, an adequate object of unqualified adoration or worship."

When we come to examine these definitions, we quickly note that they all assume that the physical universe as we see and know it is not self-sufficient, that it depends upon something other than itself, and that this something is at least analogous to a person who wills and plans. In other words, theism works in terms of personal agency. But is not the burden of proof on a position that asserts that nature is not self-sufficient? What proofs are there for theism? We shall see that in the past theologians and philosophers did seek proofs and these were a part of what was called Natural Theology.

Natural theology is clearly a rationalizing—if not a rationalization—of beliefs that grew up in the manner we dis-

cussed in the first part of this book. These beliefs reflected the mystery of the world to early man and his dominance by the sense of personal agency. God became the Heavenly King, the source of decrees and authority. Impersonal agency was largely beyond the ken of the times. Once begun, this social and personal outlook was simply refined and systematized. God was a practical reality, something to be prayed to and believed in. The kind of explanation of events thus obtained was not of the scientific sort in terms of local causes, but distinctly of the social sort. Like as a father pitieth his children. . . . Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

It is usual to contrast theism with deism, on the one hand, and with pantheism, on the other. The logic of this contrast is within the setting of the traditional outlook on the world. Deism and pantheism are extremes with theism trying to mediate between them. Deism expresses the growth of nature as a realm of cause and effect in space and time. God is put outside nature in some mysterious realm of his own which cannot be thought. He can, however, interfere with the working of nature if he wants to. Being, however, an intelligent deity he created the world in a satisfactory manner and therefore sees no reason to interfere. Deism accepted the soul-body dualism and, with it, immortality. Everything was supposed to be genteel and rational. Pantheism has always been more mystical. It has wanted to keep God in nature. The result was a sort of mystical naturalism, that is, nature with an æsthetic and emotional atmosphere thrown around it. And usually the pantheist has not had any clear idea of the structure of nature. Theism wanted to avoid the drift to naturalism of pantheism and yet avoid the externality of deism. To the philosopher the

logic of theism is dominated by this contrast. Somehow God must be both transcendent and immanent. But, since nature bulks too large these days to be ignored, God must be postulated to be in and back of nature. *Panentheism,* all is in God, is a compromise term which is coming to have favour. God is nature, and yet more than nature.

Arguments for and against Theism

As every one knows, theology has always been a dominantly deductive subject. It has started with God and the world and has had the task of getting them together in the most satisfactory way. Plato and Aristotle were theists and their philosophy helped mediæval thinkers. Modern Protestant theology has been assisted by idealism in philosophy. Perhaps the reader will remember how George Berkeley, the Irish idealist, wanted to get rid of matter which, in his opinion, led to atheism. The rise of realism and naturalism of late has been a threatening cloud in the sky of theology.

Natural theology tried to prove the existence of deity by the unaided human reason. Let us look at its arguments. I would mention, however, the fact that Hume and Kant are generally regarded by philosophers as having given the death-blow to natural theology. It is very hard to find either empirical or logical evidence for deity. Primitive man did because he projected his consciousness and sense of agency into nature. But, once we are on our guard against this anthropomorphism, the proof of deity becomes notably harder.

The traditional arguments for deity are called the ontological, the cosmological and the teleological. Each of them had a philosophical setting which we have largely outgrown. So well is this recognized that even modernist Catholics have

given them up and fallen back upon mysticism. I find that religious scientists like Millikan usually stress the teleological one, usually called the argument from design.

Under the influence of Neo-Platonism, St. Anselm developed what is called the ontological argument. It is an *a priori,* or purely logical, argument from the idea of God to His Existence. God is identified with "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." But really what does this phrase mean? Surely, not greater spatially? And if it means not greater in value, the difficulty remains that we have no right to assert that our ideals exist. It is generally admitted that Gaunilo, his contemporary, made some shrewd points against this argument.

Descartes, who was quite a theologian, revived and modified Anselm's argument. In one of his formulations of it, he assumes that existence is given in the very idea of God. But Hume and Kant pointed out that existence is not a predicate like other predicates such as large and round and denied that the *idea* of God implies existence. It is very generally admitted that their criticism was final.

And yet it would be unfair not to point out that the argument has been revived under the influence of Hegel and has taken another form. Taken away from his peculiar form of idealism which does not have much standing to-day, the argument simmers down to this question, What kind of universe are we compelled to think when we get all the evidence in? This kind of universe must be accepted as existent. This is true because our thinking is objective in its reference. From the first, we are trying to understand our world and not merely to justify some inherited idea. But the naturalist is quite convinced that it is the physical universe that he is compelled to think, though it is not the phys-

ical universe of the naïve materialist. So much for the ontological argument.

The second great traditional argument in Natural Theology was the so-called cosmological argument to a First Cause. It is this that St. Thomas stresses. We need not linger upon it because we have already argued that science and philosophy no longer tend to assume a First Cause. Why assume an absolute beginning for reality? If change is an event *in* nature, may not both change and nature always have been? And, in our human minds, we can go backwards in thought from effect to cause indefinitely. An indefinite series is quite thinkable, and any stoppage would be a matter of arbitrary fiat. Neither science nor philosophy, then, assumes any absolute beginning for reality. Stars are born as well as die within a universe of simultaneous construction and destruction. Evolution and devolution are like two currents which flow side by side. This new outlook cuts the ground from underneath the arguments of St. Thomas.

We have, lastly, the so-called teleological argument from order or purpose in the world to an orderer or a supreme mind. I have used two terms intentionally because both are used, and sometimes as though they were interchangeable. But is order the same as purpose? I would myself argue that purpose presupposes order and not order purpose.

Is There Design in the World?

There are many reflective people who are frankly puzzled about the philosophy of nature. In the chapter dealing with traditional riddles, I tried to clear up certain points. But there are still some important questions which need answering. And until these also are cleared up we must

expect that the traditional perspective will hold people's allegiance.

Many able scientists are spokesmen of the past philosophy of nature. Thus it is not unusual for an astronomer to declare his belief that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Very naturally, the press takes up such a declaration and the ardent defenders of theism are jubilant. And recently physicists and biologists have been known to make similar theistic pronouncements. Are they logically justified? Are these men in touch with something which the philosopher has been unaware of? Is theism written in the structure of the universe? I must confess to a very strong doubt. I have examined their declarations in vain for something novel, something which St. Thomas did not have in mind. A writer in the *Journal of Religion* put the situation very well, I believe, when he said that the theism of physical scientists seems largely an emotional inheritance.

Because Millikan has done such admirable work in physics I shall take his reflections on religion as a point of departure. He is naturally a modernist and evolutionist and seeks to show the middle path between atheism and fundamentalism.

It is worthy of note that much the same sort of thing appears in Pupin's *The New Reformation* and H. N. Russell's *Fate and Freedom.* Our physicists are becoming our liberal theologians.

It may be well to point out again that the philosopher looks upon his present problem as the determination of the general characteristics of the universe. The partisan struggle between anthropomorphic theists and their opponents, called atheists, does not greatly interest him. The essential query is this, What kind of universe is it?

Let us begin with the following paragraph from Millikan's little book, *Evolution in Science and Religion:* "The world is of course 'incurably religious.' Why? Because everyone who reflects at all *must have* conceptions about the world which go beyond the field of science, that is, beyond the present range of intellectual knowledge. As soon as we get beyond that range we are in the field that belongs to religion, and no one knows better than the man who works in science how soon we get beyond the boundaries of the known."

Really this is a quite astonishing pronouncement. Is physics the only science? How about biology, psychology and sociology? And what about philosophy with its study of the nature of human knowledge and its criticism of the basic concepts in all fields? I wish Millikan had enumerated some of these conceptions which go beyond the field of science. I judge from the rest of the chapter that he had in mind the concepts of purpose, meaning, value, intelligence. But actually none of these go beyond the field of science. It is to take the term *science* too narrowly to exclude them.

Again, this semi-spatial division between science and religion in which science is given the known and religion the unknown smacks of the school of Mansel and Spencer with their unknowable. Religion can have what we know nothing about and science can have what we know. This would make religion play with an X or else make it the field of over-beliefs.

In the first chapter I pointed out that the nature of the kind of knowledge given by physics is better understood now than ever before. It is knowledge of the structure and behaviour of physical systems and processes couched in

mathematical formulæ and based upon delicate readings. But we added that the various sciences are autonomous and that chemistry and biology and physiology must work out their own categories or basic concepts. It may well be that organization, selection and action-as-a-whole become more conspicuous as biological evolution proceeds. We do not try to reduce the categories of biology to those of physics without a remainder. Such is the additional thesis of emergent, or evolutionary, naturalism as against the old reductive type of mechanics.

Now philosophy has long realized that the real problem is to show what concepts will harmonize with what is known and how the various concepts can be related. It is this logical relation which is the primary problem of philosophy of nature. It cannot be replaced by such a metaphor as "range" with the apparent assumption that you can walk out of the world as known into a kind of fairy-land. No; the features of the world not yet explored must be continuous with that which we know. And while I do not wish to exaggerate what is known of our universe, I think that it would be equally false to minimize the reach of our knowledge of the *general characteristics* of the universe. Is it not the very life of science to postulate that the universe is spatial, temporal, measurable, orderly? It is the filling-in of this logical character of the world that remains, *not a jump into a world of a totally different logical texture.*

Millikan does not like the atheist. And I do not blame him if he has in mind the rather blatant type of atheist. But, as a view of the universe, atheism must be taken as just a denial of theism. That, of course, does not get us very far. We want something more positive and constructive than that. But it does seem a bit strange to me that

a man so long connected with the University of Chicago does not know that men like Dewey and Ames are pious, socially-minded atheists who are constructive in that they stress social values. It is this disregard of philosophy by American scientific specialists which is irritating. I am glad to say that there are getting to be many exceptions to this attitude. More and more scientists are realizing that philosophy is an affair of systematic logic and theory of knowledge and that these are not negligible things.

I shall quote farther because I wish to use the implications as a point of departure for my own treatment of the problem of design. "The atheist, on the other hand, is irrational and unscientific because he asserts that there is nothing behind or inherent in all the phenomena of nature except blind force, and that in the face of the fact that he sees evidence of what he is wont himself to call intelligence in the workings of his own mind, and in the minds which are a part of nature."

Now I know of no philosophers who would for a moment defend this position which sounds like old-fashioned materialism. The modern naturalist builds upon theory of knowledge and recognizes that in consciousness we have supplementary knowledge of a physical system at a high evolutionary level. And it would seem that Millikan is actually moving in the direction of evolutionary naturalism. But here he makes a leap from intelligent organisms to a "Spirit of rational order," to purpose in nature. This brings us face to face with the problem, Is there design in nature?

An Analysis of Terms

One of the chief tasks of philosophy is to analyze terms or, as they are technically called, categories. There are three of them here which need careful attention. They are

chance, design and purpose. These are words which we should not use carelessly.

In the traditional argument from design in the world to a designer, the logic was analogical. Where we see designs around us in the human world, we infer a designer because we know that such things are made. Thus a watch implies a watchmaker. But nature seems full of designs. Therefore there must be a superhuman artificer. And may not this superhuman artificer be godlike in character, that is, just and good?

Now in the days before the theory of evolution came into play, this argument seemed to many fairly conclusive. Let us appreciate the context. It was supposed to be a choice between anthropomorphic design and blind chance, a rather disagreeable dilemma. Let us now see whether the growth of philosophy and science has not lifted us above this dilemma.

When we analyze the term *chance* we quickly see its ambiguity. In a very real sense, there is no chance in the world; all is causality. What, then, does chance stand for? A situation expressive of our mixture of knowledge and ignorance as to the causes at work. Our estimates give the probabilities or chances of certain resultants as based upon our information. The kind of situation which people ordinarily have in mind is that exemplified in a game of chance as against a game of skill. There are so many possible combinations which are essentially external shufflings and we suppose that the causes at work favour one combination as much as another. Now the old atomistic, mechanical interpretation of nature fitted in with this game of chance structure. *Blind chance was combination without controlled selection.*

But does our knowledge of physical systems lead us to

believe that they have the loose, uncoördinated structure which the old, mechanical atomism supposed? Are not even atoms social, that is, selective? Does not a chemical process reflect the properties of the chemical substances as well as the general conditions of temperature and pressure? This means that combination is not blind in the old sense but selective. At this level, selection does not mean purpose, though it is that out of which purpose may develop at higher levels of evolution.

At the level of living things, this loading of the dice by inherited organization is conspicuous. Food is assimilated and worked up into tissues characteristic of the plant or animal. Again, responses are selective and expressive of the hereditary make-up and the mnemic, or learned, organization of the organism.

Have we not got beyond the old dilemma of purpose versus blind chance? The modern naturalist holds that order is intrinsic to nature however far down we go, that the units of nature are social and unite in ways expressive of their nature and the physical context. Such a view is coming to be called organic in contrast to the traditional type of atomic mechanicalism which ignored internal bonds in nature. Such a view I have long championed and I have been delighted to find Professor Whitehead advocating it. Naturally the term, *organic,* must not be taken literally as a projection downward of biological conceptions. It stands for a *texture of nature* which is demanded by all the physical sciences. But I think that it does indicate a healing of the breach between biology and physics.

Now if we take the texture of nature to be organic or social in this large sense, is not order intrinsic to nature? Do we need external teleology, a designer, a Spirit of ra-

tional order? I cannot see that we do. We have escaped both blind chance and an external Orderer.

We come now to an analysis of that double-barrelled term, *design.* It seems to me to mean two things, structure and a designer. I shall argue that the structure-aspect can be left but that we must replace designing by growth. Can designs in nature grow? The whole logic of evolution lies in its assertion that designs are growths, that is, that structures are growths.

Darwinism was a step in the right direction. It started man to see that designs are growths but it was still so much in thrall to the old physics that it had no adequate theory as to the positive nature of growth. Natural selection was a negative, environmental factor. Now the evolutionary naturalist of to-day is laying stress upon the significance of internal, selective control by the trend of the accumulated organization. Nature becomes *thick* in the organism. Possibilities are determined by this thickness of organization in relation to external forces. And let us remember all the time that we have rejected the naïve view of knowledge held in the past by scientists that the very content of a physical system could be visioned. It would seem that such ideas as activity, spontaneity, drive are returning, though in each case they must be analyzed. Modern naturalism has an atmosphere and perspective all its own. It differs profoundly from both old-fashioned materialism and romantic idealism. We are again recovering some delicacy and imagination in our thought of nature; we do not hear merely the whir of machinery.

In a debate once held between a mechanist and a theist a humorous incident happened which may help to drive home the point I have been trying to make. The mechan-

ist sought to show that organisms are mere machines. But, retorted the theist, machines imply a machinist; who is the machinist of nature, the inventor? Now I have endeavoured to show that the term *machine* is double-barrelled. It calls attention to design or structure and to the making of that structure. But it is so inescapably ambiguous that I would give it up completely and speak of the organism as structured or as containing mechanisms. Has the theory of evolution shown in any measure how such natural structures can develop? It is my opinion that it has, and I am persuaded that the new theory of science supports the idea of growth. Organization is a growth and not something planned beforehand. In this sense design is intrinsic to nature.

We are now prepared for our reply to the perennial theistic argument. Order, it is said, implies intelligence. An orderly world is a rational world, and a rational world implies reason. But do we not have here again one of those double words? A rational world is a world that reason can grasp; and, because of this, it is associated in our minds with reason and thought of as akin to it. But, as a matter of fact, the relation between intelligence and order is just the reverse of the one the idealist suggests. It is intelligence which presupposes order and not order which presupposes intelligence. Without order in the world, the human reason could neither have arisen nor could it have got leverage upon the world. An orderly world is rational only in the sense that it is suited to reason. It is the kind of a world in which reason can arise and operate. This relationship is standing out ever more clearly in modern logic.

CHAPTER XIII

HAS MAN A COSMIC COMPANION?

(*Continued*)

THUS far Natural Theology has drawn a blank. But we should not be surprised at this result, for philosophy has long been of the opinion that there is no clear external evidence of theism. While idealism reigned in philosophy, this conclusion had little sting, for idealism put a supreme mind at the heart of things. But the rise of realism and naturalism has put a new complexion on the rejection of the traditional proofs of theism.

Let us now press a little farther upward from design to purpose and see whether we cannot clear up certain points that have puzzled people almost, if not quite as much, as the riddles which I discussed in an earlier chapter. It will be remembered that we found the exact scientists intrigued by such conceptions as purpose, value and intelligence. They have not been able to see how these could be introduced into nature and given there a standing and citizenship. We shall try to indicate how the new outlook upon nature which is growing up at present makes this possible.

And I would also like to show how the philosopher meets the queries which people propound about the *meaning* of the universe. What, they ask, are we here for? What is the purpose back of human life? And they are apt to assert that, if there is no cosmic purpose back of human

life, it is meaningless. Is this demand a hang-over from the religious projection into nature of attitudes and demands significant in society but irrelevant outside? And, if so, what readjustment can be made? Can life be shown to have intrinsic meaning, or significance, even if it is no part of a carefully laid world-plan? It is my opinion that human life must contain its own justification and meaning. But it is clear that we must analyze a little further.

Evolutionary Naturalism and Purpose

The following quotation from a recent book by an able physiologist will furnish a good point of departure: "In biology," writes A. V. Hill, "to talk of the 'function' of an organ, the 'purpose' of a reaction or adjustment, the 'individuality' of an organism, the 'co-ordination' of its parts, the 'integration' of its functions is perfectly good sense, based upon obvious and verifiable experimental facts. Throughout the realm of living nature we find an adaptation of means to ends. The ultimate 'purpose' if there be one is not visible: to the religious mind it may be revealed, but it cannot be verified by observation or experiment: the intermediate 'purposes,' however, are clear enough. It would be unreasonable to discuss the 'instinct' of a molecule, the 'co-ordination' of the parts of the solar system, the 'rôle' of helium in the atmosphere, the 'purpose' of crystalline structure, the 'functions' of water in the universe: it is not unreasonable, it is a plain expression of everyday observation to speak of the same factors in a living system." [1]

Now how does the evolutionary naturalist explain this applicability of certain categories to living bodies and their inapplicability to inorganic processes and things? It would

[1] A. V. Hill, *Living Machinery*, p. 286.

seem that the *area* of certain categories is restricted; how is this fact to be explained?

First of all, we must try to see these categories in relation to the structure of living things. The function of an organ is its activity in relation to the total economy of the organism of which it is a part. Coördination, again, is a term which calls attention to structure or design. When all these biological terms are analyzed, they bring to the surface the sense of the organization intrinsic to living things. Living things are thickened systems in space and time; they are packed with structure and interrelations.

But it is only this extreme thickening or packing which differentiates them from inorganic things. The inorganic sciences are bringing to the front the existence of pattern all through nature. Biological pattern is a magnificent development of super-patterns, of patterns reared upon, and by means of, sub-patterns. This possibility of development is obvious as soon as we relinquish the older type of reductive mechanicalism. The world does not consist of sand out of which it is impossible to make ropes. Nature is pattern-forming; organization is natural to it.

To see purpose in organisms is to see structure, relations, economy. This is what Hill calls "intermediate purpose." Perhaps it would be better to speak of intrinsic purpose.

But the term *purpose* is ambiguous. At the human level of behaviour, we can study mental purpose, which is at least a specific form of physiological, intrinsic purpose. And when the majority of people use the term they have mental purpose in mind. A mental purpose involves two factors at the very least: (1) a set of the whole organism, and (2) a plan consisting of means and end. Let us look at these two factors.

All types of psychologists are at present agreed that psychology studies the behaviour of the organism as a whole. It is something like the total economy of the organism in reaction to its environment which is uppermost in psychology. It is integrated, intrinsic purpose. Now in such reaction, we have a sort of equilibrium of the individual expressed in decision and feeling and overtly in set. On the inside, the individual feels this as choice and will. But there is also a plan involving a coördinated set of actions in a space-time pattern. I mean that we are set to do A and then B and then C. Is not our mind-brain organized in a patterned way so that we have an *order of action?* Had I more space I think I could show in some detail that human purpose is a development of pattern in nature as this has attained the thickness and complications made possible by intelligence and memory. We are here at a very high level of evolutionary organization and we should expect the novel.

Now man in his reflection upon the universe read this human level of conscious purpose into nature at large by means of the postulation of a God acting somewhat as man does, planning and contriving. What man consciously does has a purpose, is part of a plan. With this perspective, man assumed a cosmic plan. Things were put in certain places as parts of an external plan into which they must fit. This is what Hill means by ultimate purpose. I would call it external purpose of a psychological sort. I mean that the way we handle things is external to them and their own intrinsic economy.

To-day, however, with the idea of growth coming to the front and with the careful avoidance of anthropomorphism, it is doubtful whether the old religious perspective can re-

tain its standing. Perhaps only animals, and man in particular, have plans which call for the arrangement of things as a part of a mental purpose.

To realize the full import of this shift of perspective, let us recall that, for past religion, the gods were leagued with the nation as powerful allies and that the evolution of religion worked within this context until very recently. With monotheism and creationism, God became a king and maker with a cosmic plan. Man was put here for a purpose. Christian theology has asserted that God made man for his own enjoyment. Was it, perhaps, to escape a cosmic loneliness?

But, alas! the idea of creation has been replaced by that of evolution. We thus come to the problem, Is there any good reason to believe that some world-purpose underlies and controls evolution? The theist must hold such a position. What has the naturalist to say?

First of all, the naturalist would say that the idea is deductive rather than inductive. That is, it is an implication of theism rather than something directly suggested by the facts. In the second place, the method of evolution suggests to us that change is of the manner of variation and adjustment within the part of nature rather than of the manner of a plan. It is only at the level of human life that intrinsic purpose flowers into conscious planning. Organic evolution certainly appears on its surface as trial and error (natural selection) along with internal variation rather than as something directed to a preëstablished goal. The deductive approach clashes with the more natural interpretation of the empirical facts. It is hard to bring the God of traditional religion into harmony with nature. Nature quickly begins to swallow up God, and that is called euphoniously pantheism. Theists have always been hostile to pantheism.

It has been said that the higher qualities of human life are ignored by pantheism, and I think that this criticism of pantheism is just. The prime question is, What kind of a universe are we in? Is it not one in which man is both a part of nature as a whole and yet rises qualitatively above the rest of nature? Theism has been the projection of man upon the gigantic canvas of the world. But we must now get back to realities and grasp the status of conscious mind in the cosmos. Does mind rule the whole world, or does mind function in a natural way as a property of living organisms on the surface of this little planet? I fear that this latter is the actual case.

Let me conclude this section by a summary. The evolutionary naturalist has at his command a more critical theory of knowledge than any held in the past and a solution of the mind-body problem which makes mind and consciousness intrinsic to the living organism. In place of atomistic, or unsocial, mechanicalism, he grasps nature as a domain of pattern, activity and organization. This perspective enables him to conceive purpose as a feature of a certain level of nature expressive of complex structure. This thickening of organization develops action-as-a-whole and the relative autonomy or spontaneity of life. Out of this organic matrix, conscious purpose evolves. And man who is conscious of it was at first led to project his own mode of working upon the universe at large. He assumed a mind back of nature as its governor and a cosmic purpose. But the more we appreciate the nature of mind and its restricted area, the more does this projection appear doubtful.

Has Human Life Intrinsic Meaning?

Suppose, then, that we are forced to deny that human life has extrinsic meaning in relation to some conscious,

cosmic purpose, does it follow that it ceases to have any meaning?

The best way to answer this question is to ask the reader what gives his life significance. Does it secure its everyday meaning from relation to some unknown cosmic plan? Or does it secure it from the active pursuit of interests which demand expression? I think his reply will be that life sustains itself by its drives and objectives and the satisfaction the furtherance of these brings. If interests wane, an individual is bored and, as we say, life loses its meaning. It ceases to be lit up from within and to surge forward joyously. This active satisfaction which gives life intrinsic meaning is felt by the individual to justify life. A happy, active person does not ask for some external plan to give his life meaning. Instead, he creates meaning. To the artist, art is the meaning of life; to the mother, her child is a large part of the meaning of life; to the boy, his ambitions give life meaning. Meaning involves linkage with desires and interests.

This intrinsic meaning of life varies from person to person and from age to age. The healthy child simply expresses himself in natural ways. There are things desirable and worth doing because desirable. Their meaning comes to them from this reference or connection with drives. They are values sustained by being taken up into life. The adult demands more, has wider horizons. His objectives become more complicated and distant. But the psychologist informs us that there is always connection with basic interests. The urges of life get interpretation and direction and spread over a wider territory but they still constitute the source of meaning. If the reformer loses interest in his goal, it ceases to have meaning; and it may well be that life itself begins to pale under these circumstances.

We must conclude that life has a great deal of intrinsic meaning and that it is an art, which might well be studied more than it is, to give this internal significance more food and range.

It is obvious that in discussing intrinsic meaning we are in the field of values. And it will be remembered that we maintained that values are never intrinsic to things external to the valuer. The living soul projects values upon those things which connect up consciously with his life. His loved ones are dear to him. His country calls out mixed feelings of loyalty, admiration and revolt. His profession is interpreted in terms of what it means to him as a creative agent aware of the past.

But when I say that value is never intrinsic to things external to the valuer, I wish to be understood. The value we set on things expresses our connection with them in the way of feelings, purposes, ideas and desires. In this sense value is egocentric and sociocentric. It is not something which is out there to be discovered by science. It is a halo around things put there by ourselves. It is our value-interpretation of them. Nevertheless, this halo is not artificial; it is in its own way as objective as a thing can well be. Given the living soul with its interests, emotions and outlook upon life, and the value assigned to objects is inevitable. These are the kind of objects, perhaps, which call out the soul's deepest emotions and mean much to it as a consequence. The value of an object is what it signifies in the economy of our lives.

All this means that, in value as in consciousness, we are on the inside of nature. Here we are living and breathing and not mere spectators of reality. We are agents, feelers, participants. In the exact sciences we are, on the contrary,

primarily knowers. We value science because it satisfies our curiosity about the world but, in itself, science is an affair of the technique of knowing, that is, of comprehending the structure and behaviour of things. Even to the scientist whose thirst for knowledge it satisfies, science is only one of the values of life. It may well be that for most human beings love is the source of the deepest experiences and the intensest values.

The philosopher is quite aware that perspectives secure an emotional force additional to their logical standing. The human personality adjusts itself to an outlook and soon feels that every other point of view is irrational and not to be allowed. Expectations, attitudes, sentiments and associations give stability and the power of resistance to a belief. So closely is thought intertwined with feeling that what disrupts the one shakes the other. Thus we have seen that many are convinced that the world becomes irrational if immortality is denied. This irrationality is probably more of the nature of an emotional disorder than of a logical contradiction. It signifies the overthrow of an outlook on life and the emotional conflict which ensues.

But I think that the sense of reality is becoming stronger and stronger in the men and women of to-day. They want to know what the universe is actually like. And while a cosmic companion may be much missed, there is the compensation that the universe has been robbed at the same time of some of the supernatural terrors which frightened men and women not so many years ago. In the great revivals which swept over America in former years, men writhed on the floor in the most abject fear of the fires of Hell.

Many have thought that still another compensation might be found in the effort to make this world pleasanter. Pro-

fessor Otto suggests that the relinquishment of the quest for a companion behind nature may bring more interest in social construction. He writes: "No; accept the stern condition of being psychically alone in all the reach of space and time, that we may then, with new zest, enter the warm valley of earthly existence—warm with human impulse, aspiration, and affection, warm with the unconquerable thing called life; turn from the recognition of our cosmic isolation to a new sense of human togetherness, and so discover in a growing human solidarity, in a progressively ennobled humanity, in an increasing joy in living, the goal we have all along blindly sought, and build on earth the fair city we have looked for in a compensatory world beyond." [1]

God and the Mystic

Outside Natural Theology the idea of God is connected in the history of religious thought with three things: (1) revelation, (2) authority, and (3) mysticism. We shall discuss these in this order, but give most space to mysticism.

There can be little doubt that the idea of spirits and the idea of revelation grew up together. Shaman, medicine-man and prophet, all inherited and carried on a tradition of communication with the gods. It is generally admitted that dreams and trances furnished much of the material for this tradition. The religions of the book are clearly but high developments of this kind of phenomenon. The intellectual and ethical level is higher, but the assumption is the same.

And I quite appreciate the logic of the demand for revelation. If there be a God, surely he would reveal himself. There is a God. Therefore, he has revealed himself. This is a good hypothetical syllogism, but, like all syllogisms, it

[1] Otto, *Things and Ideals*, p. 290.

is no stronger than its premises. It expresses a belief, postulate, demand. There is danger of moving in a circle. No; it is induction and not deduction that is needed.

This demand for a revelation is, I said, logical. But is it so logical that the absence of a revelation of an adequate sort disproves theism? In the eighteenth century Baron Holbach argued in this fashion. I quote a paraphrase from Wright. "If there really were a God, we should have no doubt upon the subject at all. Such a Being as God is thought to be, all-wise and powerful, who expects men to believe in Him, would certainly have made Himself known to men in some absolutely unmistakable manner, and not merely by the mode of improbable miracles and revelations which are unconvincing to most thoughtful men. If God exists, why has he not declared Himself?"

Authority plays a smaller part in religious affairs than it once did. And yet the more subtle forms of authority are still operative. Public opinion and custom in religious matters are effective. We may say that authority receives much of its prestige from the fear of the emotional and intellectual chaos which seems to most people to yawn before free-thought. Finality has always attracted those who have not the stamina to think things through. The unknown and uncertain repels. People of a certain temperament who have lived into the traditional perspective become weary of doubt and find peace in submission. An august institution welcomes them and undertakes to do their thinking for them. Prestige and authority go together.

The obvious weakness of much modernism is that it still lacks anything approaching clarity and authority. It is something undergoing formulation. Its supporters do not agree and hardly know what to emphasize. To create a new social

and cosmic perspective is no easy task, and few of the leaders in modernism have the training and ability to carry through such an effort. Their hope lies in the newer movements in philosophy and sociology. I cannot develop this point here but will endeavour to say something about it in the last chapter.

Authority is not a rational factor and has no place in philosophy and science except by defect. It is a social and psychological affair resting upon the desire to control and the tendency to submissiveness which this desire meets, a submissiveness based upon such varying factors as respect, love of the customary, suggestion, awareness of incompetency. In spiritual matters authority has little justification. But what is called authority is often no more than accepted leadership by the like-minded.

We come finally to mysticism and the religious experience of the mystic. Have we here a source of knowledge which can counterbalance the negative results we have so far attained for theism?

It is, I think, clear that the burden of proof rests upon mysticism. It is so subjective, so much a personal matter that it must justify itself in no uncertain terms if it is to outweigh the massive, objective movement of science and philosophy.

But to begin with, it will be well to distinguish between a mystical attitude towards life and the world and a mystical revelation. With the first, with certain qualifications, I have much sympathy. It is only the second kind of mysticism that we must confront in a critical way.

A mystical attitude towards life and the world may mean no more than the play of imagination and feeling over life and the world. It is the opposite of drab realism and mat-

ter-of-factness. It is a living sense of the wonder of the world. It is that out of which poetry and music spring. I suppose that Wordsworth has this contrast in mind in Peter Bell:

> "In vain, through every changeful year,
> Did Nature lead him as before;
> A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

And I presume it is this imaginative outlook upon the world that Waldo Frank has in mind when he speaks of mystical realism. I would be sorry, indeed, if science and philosophy were thought by my readers to be opposed to brooding depth and favourable only to extroverted superficiality. While we must be on our guard against the pathetic fallacy, we can rightly look upon art as expression. We bring to nature what we have to give. And we are one with nature in a very real sense. Our activity is nature's activity because we are part of her. In imaginative feeling we are alive and reaching out to the world and not mere knowers.

It is this situation and emphasis which many recent writers on religion have in mind when they make their final appeal to mysticism. The danger is that they leap in an unwarranted way to the mystical revelations of past mystics dominated by the theistic tradition of Christianity and by Neo-Platonism. They may bring to their ecstasy a whole freight of ideas and interpretations which it does not contain. Both the lure and the danger in mysticism come out in the concluding paragraph of Lake's book, *The Religion of Yesterday and To-morrow:* "Well, the mystic claims that he has found 'another way,' which is not the way of the senses, yet

is really his, and his reason can study it just as it studies the evidence of his eyes. It is the experience which makes men feel that at certain moments, which for most are rare, they have become conscious of the unity of all life. The eternal strife between object and subject is over. That is the experience of workers who lose themselves in their work, of artists who lose themselves in the beauty which they feel, of those in whom friendship has leapt the barriers of self, and of saints the eye of whose soul has been able to endure the vision of the One. It is this experience which is the basis of mysticism. It is not an emotion: it is a different form of consciousness. Amid so much that is vague and doubtful in my own vision of the religion of to-morrow this stands out clearly to me: the religious society of to-morrow will have room for mystics." And with this conclusion I quite agree. But what is this vision of the One? Is this Neo-Platonism? It sounds very much like St. Jean of the Cross.

I do think that much will be gained through the interaction of naturalism and mysticism. In my opinion such will be the path traversed by religion as it moves to the new cosmic perspective. Science has stood for an external approach—but a true approach—to reality; mysticism, if no longer dominated by transcendentalism, may stand for an internal approach. And it is curious to note that mysticism has in the past reflected pantheism as well as theism. The Hindu mystic touched the neutral source of all reality while the Christian mystic felt his soul melt into God.

It is no part of my intention to seek to show that mysticism and the deep religious experience of the God-communing kind are abnormal. Such an argument would be absurd and could prove nothing. From the psychological

point of view, all experiences have their conditions and can be carefully studied. It is at least interesting to note that "spiritual exercises" have been favoured by mystics the world over, exercises involving fasting, prayer, almost hypnotic contemplation. Under such conditions, the world fades away and becomes unreal, inner states alone existing. Feeling dominates and ideas retreat. Admittedly, the critical faculty is in abeyance and the individual is on the outlook for an experience in which something like a vague, divine presence is felt. There may even occur a moment of ecstasy.

Now the psychologist has found no difficulty in giving a natural explanation to all this. After all, is it not likely that a sense of the divine presence is just the sublimation of our everyday sense of the presence of loved ones? The set of our lives is so inherently social that it is to be expected that it would reflect itself into dreams, visions and moments of deep feeling. And prayer and worship by their very direction give feeling its cue.

It may shock some of my readers to know that there is strong evidence for the sexual foundation of ecstasy. The organism is tensed and highly excited. Dr. Leuba has shown that women may more readily have self-induced sexual experience without realizing what is happening than is the case with men.

I welcome the lesser mysticism which means imagination and feeling but very much doubt the knowledge value, or even the ethical value, of ecstatic mysticism. There have been great exceptions, but the trend of such mysticism has been world-fleeing. It seems to me that the interpretation has always been added to the emotion in which mysticism ends.

Feeling is a valuable asset in human life and expresses

the response of the whole person to what he finds around him. It is not something alien to thought, but both guides and reflects thought. What is called intuition is feeling-thought, a movement of the inner life to conclusions which are not given logical form and structure. Reflective thought is only a part of thought, though it is, in the long run, the criterion to which we must resort.

Business men and scientists have more need to cultivate their feelings in an intelligent way than do artists and their like, for they are apt to live in abstractions. Business men are prone to be dominated by economic relations and by the love of power, while scientists—unless they are reflective—reduce nature to its quantitative skeleton. Poetry, I would say, is the best antidote to this poison. Religious people, on the other hand, have incurred the opposite danger. They have often cultivated feeling to a pathological extent and so lost a sense for realities. The only sound basis for life is a fresh and vigorous personality capable of imagination. Given this, mysticism will take care of itself.

With this chapter, our discussion of cosmological questions has largely been completed. We shall now turn to the spiritual implications of modern naturalism. How can we give standing and status to the spiritual life of man in the kind of universe we seem to be in? And how can we re-define and enlarge our conception of the spiritual? It is possible that religion may find compensations for the great renunciation which science and philosophy are calling upon her to make. She may learn to understand human life better and find an unlooked-for treasure in earthly things.

CHAPTER XIV

NATURALIZING THE SPIRITUAL

The Need of a New Perspective

To those of my readers not in touch with current movements of thought in science and philosophy my frank avowal and defense of an evolutionary naturalism must have been a surprise. In religious matters plain speaking has seldom been considered a virtue. And I have no doubt that my candour has had the effect on many of a plunge in cold water. But let them remember that such sudden immersions are often salutary and tonic. And one who reads a book on philosophy does so at his own risk. Philosophy and science have nothing in common with apologetics. They are exploratory and creative. Could they accomplish anything otherwise?

One of the constant weaknesses of liberalism and modernism has been vagueness. The situation has been too hard for them to master. That is not surprising when we realize that philosophy and science working co-operatively have just begun to work out a new cosmic perspective. It remains to be seen whether the liberal will grasp the nettle.

It is curious to note how little the usual liberal of to-day in America differs from the liberal of nineteenth-century England. The same watchwords recur. Religion is life. Jesus is the moral ideal. It is not belief but social action that counts. When I read the articles and speeches of the liberals of our churches—there are just a few exceptions, one an episcopal bishop of considerable intelligence and

courage—I am reminded of Frederick D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley. But surely a great deal of water has gone under the bridge in science and philosophy since that day. Such a liberalism will no longer suffice, for it has no future. The great need of the present is a new perspective. And such a new perspective will not come without hard thought and spiritual sincerity. It is my aim to show what aid philosophy can render in this crisis.

The new perspective which I shall suggest is indicated by the heading of this chapter; it is the naturalizing of the spiritual. This involves a two-fold operation, the redefinition of the spiritual and the enlargement of the conception of the natural.

That the conception of the natural must be enlarged is obvious. I shall be asked by my startled readers how naturalism can cope with the spiritual. Surely, they will say, man has a spiritual life which is real and significant, and how can this be explained and dealt with on the basis of a naturalistic philosophy? We have been told again and again that such an achievement is impossible. My reply is simple. The new naturalism differs markedly from the old. For it, man is a living soul sensitive to values, and truth, goodness and beauty are expressions of man's aspirations rather than supersensible realities alien to his nature. This means that we must think of the spiritual as rooted in man's nature and not as alien and introduced in some miraculous fashion from above. We must redefine the spiritual.

Enlarging the Conception of the Natural

To philosophy, naturalism is a very old affair. What has happened of late is the rise of a perspective which bids fair

to remove the objections previously urged against it. Naturalism is rounding out, becoming more plastic and delicate. A good way to bring this alteration into relief is to show the advance in our ideas of evolution since the days of Darwinism. I have in mind particularly the interpretation of the moral.

The distinctive feature of Darwinism in ethics was the emphasis upon the struggle for existence and the survival-value of certain virtues. That is, the concepts of biology were carried over to the field of ethics with the minimum of alteration. And this is what biologists still tend to do. They seem to have little conception of the distinctive nature of the social sciences and of the factors which enter into human institutions and human culture. They think of man as an animal and not as a human being, whereas man is a human being developed by society on the potentialities of a gifted animal. Let me illustrate. In my own university a very able biologist recently gave a lecture entitled, *The Religion of a Biologist,* in which he declared that the chief end of man is to produce healthy offspring. But, surely, to reduce religion to eugenics shows a sad lack of appreciation of the complexity of human values. Has the individual nothing to aim at but careful reproduction? What makes human life worth while as a going concern? And if it is not significant in itself, why continue it however carefully? The point I wish to make is that philosophy working hand in hand with sociology has grasped what is distinctive about human life. It has realized that personality is in large measure a social product rooted in the social history of a group. We must add social naturalism to biological naturalism before we get the proper perspective.

Perhaps I had better be even more specific in these mat-

ters. What biology deals with is organic structure and general capacities. Thus it studies the general inheritance of man as an animal and tries to decipher the laws of this inheritance and what conditions went to the moulding of man. It can deal directly only with what is inherited. And in the early days of evolutionism too much stress was probably laid upon the struggle for existence and too little upon internal variation and its laws.

Now morality is an affair of moral sentiments, judgments and intelligent choice. We distinguish between conventional morality and reflective morality. The first is the morality of the group; the second, the modification introduced by reflection and personal insight. But is it possible to explain either conventional morality or reflective morality in terms of biology? Stress as much as you will the fact that conventional morality is *conditioned* by human endowments, you yet cannot explain morality in detail in this fashion. Why, for example, are the conventions of an African tribe different from those of the natives of Thibet? And these, again, different from the mode of life of the New Yorker? No; biology is quite insufficient. Morality is a social, historical phenomenon. To understand it in any measure you must enter the realm of history. The anthropologist, the geographer, the economist, the historian, the sociologist must work hand in hand with the psychologist and the philosopher. Morality is primarily a social product, an historical achievement. Biology, aided by psychology, may tell you much about instincts but it cannot tell you about human sentiments and social standards.

The new naturalism has added a social level to the biological level of the nineteenth century. It recognizes that man's spiritual life is largely an historical achievement.

Thus it is a naturalism which apexes in social humanism. The gap between man and the dumb brute is not minimized nor maximized but understood. The modern thinker knows the part played by language and education in raising the new-born child to the level of humanity. Its capacities are played upon and drawn out. What it has taken many centuries for mankind to learn is presented to it in its perfected form. The very environment is moulded to reflect human plans and purposes into the child's mind. The family, the school, the playground, the church, are the instruments of the spiritualization of the child. And all this procedure is just as natural in its way as biological evolution, itself, presupposing it but not reducible to it.

One reason why good biographies are so fascinating is because they show us the growth of a living soul. First of all, they usually try to suggest to us the hereditary capacities of the individual. The stock is possibly adventurous and strong-willed. Or it is imaginative and given to dreaming. There is, at most, some suggestion found for what the hero or the heroine is to do in after life. And then comes the social medium and the traditions of the country. Bit by bit, we follow the child through the events of his infancy. We are told that the mother had a strong influence or that a teacher fired the ambitions of the child. The soul which we are studying grows before our eyes from year to year until we are in the presence of a Napoleon, a Mirabeau, a Shelley, a Lincoln. The babe has become a man with ideas, feelings, aspirations, trained abilities. It is this transformation into which careful biography introduces us.

Thanks to the stimulus given by Freud, Adler and Jung, the dynamics of human souls is better understood now than in the past. We know how the inability of some children

to speak plainly handicaps their first adventure into school life and lays the foundation for a marked sensitiveness which only careful handling on the part of parent and teacher can prevent from becoming morbid. The desire for affection, the desire to excel—desires which are so natural to human beings—may lead to actions which bring the individual into conflict with society. Whence maladjustment and tragedy. Clearly, personality is a growth of a most complex sort. There are repressions and expressions, sublimations and distortions. And so after many years our souls are created within us.

I cannot help thinking—and I know that others share my belief—that much of the repugnance felt by the average citizen to the doctrine of biological evolution is due to the fact that biologists have ignored too much the import of social evolution in the making of what is distinctive about man. We have here the almost inevitable abstractness of a specialty. Man is an animal but he is a peculiar kind of animal. He is an animal moulded to an astonishing degree by what has been done in the past by the social groups into which he is born. Culture and civilization are terms essential to his understanding. I do not for a moment wish to defend the anti-evolutionist, but I do think that the bareness of the biologist's presentation did not soften the blow he dealt to the justifiable pride of man. It is time for the sociologist and philosopher to speak up.

Actually, then, a man is the heir of all the ages. He is the heir of the poets of the past; their songs sing in his heart. He is the heir of the artists; their creative power has beautified the world and enlarged his vision. He is the heir of the inventors; his sense of mastery comes from them. He is the heir of the saints; their nobility and tenderness have

quieted his passions and made him sensitive to suffering. He is the heir of the thinkers; his power of looking before and after comes from them. And it is all this inheritance which lifts him immeasurably above the poor, helpless brutes which he is exterminating or reducing to servants. There they are, akin to him in some degree and yet unable to climb the heights to which brain and hand and social evolution have lifted him.

The new naturalism, in short, is a social and spiritual naturalism as well as a biological and inorganic naturalism. It seeks to do justice to all the levels in nature that exist and refuses to grade down actual differences into the blind motions of inert particles. And, fortunately, physical science, itself, has penetrated so deeply into nature at last that it has seen the error of the old, simplified mechanical schema which once fascinated its imagination. Everywhere there is activity and integration. And philosophy, holding to its perennial task of comprehensive vision, sees that man's spiritual life is a product of a complex and delicate social evolution into the details of which the social sciences are only now beginning to gain insight. The new naturalism is enlarged to include society, human souls and the spiritual.

Redefining the Spiritual

We have argued that society is the home of the spiritual. But, without interpretation, this statement might easily be misleading. There is in it no intention to glorify the *status quo* or to flatter individuals or special groups. It does not mean that the spiritual is equally distributed among the members of society. What it does mean is that the spiritual is an expression of human life as it develops in society. Here are its conditions and medium.

Another way, perhaps, of bringing out what I have in mind is to point out that the spiritual is a term for activities concerned with the true, the good and the beautiful in all their manifestations, however humble. It is human activity which alone is spiritual. In this regard we must think of it, as we are beginning to do of mind, as not a thing but a function. Seen in this light, it will be quickly realized that it is absurd to contrast the spiritual with the physical. The proper opposition is with those activities which lie below the level of the spiritual. Thus we hardly feel it meaningful to speak of the activities of the lobster as spiritual. He may be a vigorous lobster active in his pursuit of food and energetic in his powers of reproduction, but we feel that the texture of this activity does not deserve to be called spiritual. The spiritual emerges when there is intelligence of a fairly high order, a sense of right and wrong, an ability to set up standards, a drive for creation in art and in social relations, a wealth of imagination.

Still another source of confusion is due to a judgment of valuation within the spiritual. The higher rejects the lower and declares it to be unspiritual, fleshly, worldly. Within the realm of the spiritual struggle thus goes on. Qualitative oppositions arise in mode of life and human effort. Our desires may clash with our better judgment and with our more permanent valuations. But, surely, it is clear that we have here a phase of the dynamics of the living soul. The self is an achievement which maintains and advances itself by effort. It seeks harmony and happiness. It relates and rejects. It revalues all values and sets itself new objectives; or it may settle down into habits already established.

This redefinition of the spiritual brings us inevitably to

the subject of asceticism. In the old days when man was becoming self-conscious and creating a soul of whose moods and decisions he was aware, he thought of himself in terms of the cosmological dualisms which his reflection upon life and death and good and evil had produced. Recall the fact that he was led to divide man into soul and body and to classify the powers around him as good and evil. The good powers were those of a social nature, ready to enter into compacts with man, those who had the same ideals that he had and aimed at justice and holiness. The evil powers were those in opposition to man, malignant, cruel, destructive, at war with the good powers. Such an interpretation of the universe was inevitable for man with his keen sense of personal agency. The world became for him a stage in which gods fought with demons; and, with the growth of political organization, this disorderly warfare was transformed into an epic battle between God and Satan. And gradually man's own ethical struggle as it became self-conscious seized upon the distinction between soul and body and made these the agents in a corresponding struggle. God was to the soul as Satan was to the body; and the body was conceived as a thing of evil. What shall we say of all this? Surely if our argument holds, it must be regarded as magnificent mythology. The flesh is not evil, for there is no such thing as the flesh as a kind of thing opposed to the spirit within man. The whole situation must be reanalyzed. In so far as historical Christianity has reflected in its ethics an asceticism founded on a cosmological dualism between the body and the spirit as two kinds of realities opposite in nature, it must be reformed. Such asceticism must be condemned as a superstition. The only justifiable asceticism is that of intelligent inhibition and control in the service of a

wise and temperate life. There is nothing in our nature which is intrinsically unspiritual.

Historically, asceticism has been the expression of a *moral perspective* of a very interesting sort. There can be little doubt that the belief in a cosmic dualism between the flesh and the spirit played its part in the determination of this perspective. Certain activities and desires could be connected very easily with the flesh and so condemned. Sex was one of these, and its repression was an element in asceticism putting value upon virginity and celibacy. But it was natural to extend the flesh to include the worldly, all the things of this world, not only wealth but also art and science. The spiritual became in contrast an inner state of mind conceived as purity and humility and worship, things meet for the spirit. It is obvious that the spiritual, when so conceived, was largely bound up with the supernatural perspective of past religion which gave content and value to states of mind which would otherwise have been almost entirely negative. In fact, we must assert that asceticism has always been regarded by the humanist as a negative position. And it is so when robbed of its religious and metaphysical perspective and direction. The psychological danger which it has incurred has lain in this, that it has stressed repression and found it difficult to put adequate objectives in place of the more social and human ones it condemned. Its supernatural objectives and sanctions could not readily secure sufficient moral energy to give them motive power. Human nature, as has so often been said, took its revenge in indirect ways.

It would be unjust to asceticism not to point out that it had a partial justification as a program in the life of the world in which it arose. It served in a measure as a protest. But, nevertheless, it was unfortunate that the protest did not

have a better theoretical foundation and did not build upon something positive and human. To master pleasure by stirring objectives is the better and more intelligent way, as Spinoza well pointed out and as modern psychology has demonstrated.

To redefine the spiritual is to show it as an expression of active human life. That is the spiritual which appeals to man as significant. And in our highly developed social life with its rich spread of interest and activity the spiritual is manifold. All things of good repute are spiritual. And in the less ascetic parts of the New Testament this is recognized. Nevertheless, Christianity as an historical movement has been afraid of the world. Its perspective did not teach it how to direct and guide human life here and now to human achievement and happiness. We must not blame the churches too severely, for they had neither the technique nor the purpose to do this positive work. In truth, no human institution has adopted social advancement as a program. We are still drifting and muddling along. It is only a new religion, which will revalue many of our values, that can help us lift human life to a higher level. And there is no doubt in my mind that socialism, for all its weaknesses, is the nearest to such a religion that we have yet come. In this, I may say, I see eye to eye with William Morris. Without vision the people perish. I wish more Americans would dream dreams. True religion and the spiritual are within you. They are the only Kingdom of Heaven.

Naturalizing Religion

Having once naturalized the spiritual, it is an easy step to naturalize religion. The life of society absorbs the one as it does the other. Religion is now seen as an expression of the

human spirit, always reflecting its cosmic perspective and its objectives. In this, it is like art and literature, with which it is akin. The breath of the time-spirit is always blowing upon it.

The very choice which confronts religious people to-day drives home the fact of the intrinsic relativity of religion. As I see the present situation, then, there are three lines of interpretation struggling for supremacy. The traditional view takes theism seriously and builds upon it along the lines of historical Christianity. The illusion view maintains that such an outlook is inseparable from religion but that it is obvious to the modern thinker that this perspective is essentially illusory. The humanist view, which seeks to dig down to the proper function of religion, sees it as an expression of man's struggle to further his values.

We have already dealt at such length with the cosmic perspective of the traditional view that it would be useless to discuss it again. It has seemed to us that the old outlook is untenable. Those who hold it are, even to-day, divided against themselves. The result is an inner suspicion of insincerity. Moreover, those who can hold this older view are almost inevitably out of touch with the new knowledge and the new morality.

The illusion theory of religion holds that, in religion, people express their day-dreams and all sorts of desires which are struggling for birth in their souls. We want to ignore this world, turn our backs upon it, deny it. We try to lose our reality-feeling or transfer it to an ideal world. Religion is, then, like poetry, of the stuff of dreams; only people can fool themselves because of the social support they receive.

That there is a measure of truth in this theory there can

be no doubt. Men are by nature dramatists and artists. And, in traditional religion, the desires of social groups are, as it were, projected on an immense canvas. But religion has always been more than this. It has expressed the theory of the time. The religious person has not always been a day-dreamer. He has often been active and militant. Thus the Christian has fought for the right as he has seen it, encouraged by the feeling that God was on his side. Traditional religion has been a mixture of day-dream and intellectual belief with moral purpose.

It is the contention of the humanist that the heart of religion, as we study it through the ages, is a struggle for the preservation of values. At first, these values were elementary and crude; but they became more complex and refined as civilization advanced. As long as man interpreted the universe in personal terms and as long as man felt essentially dependent on the Powers he felt around him, religion possessed a perspective and a technique of the traditional sort. What is happening now is that this perspective and its technique are vanishing. Dependence upon nature is giving way to a feeling of control. And, where control stops, courage and resignation begin. Religion is self-conscious, human life functioning in the face of its problems. It is the setting up of objectives and courage in their pursuit.

If the humanist is correct, religion is not inseparable from *Aberglaube* or over-belief. We are just entering another culture, and the old culture with its perspective still sings in our minds and hearts. I venture to prophesy that a hundred years from now, if the word religion be still retained as valuable, it is this humanistic outlook that will stand out. Cosmic perspective as it impinges on human life will be its theme and furnish the continuity with the past.

A man's religion will be his imaginative realization of life.

My thesis is, that religion is something larger and more significant than what we have been told it was. Human life demands interpretation and vision if it is to secure unity, reasonableness, and passion; and is not such interpretation of the very essence of religion? If so, religion is as natural as human living itself. It is not something coming in from outside in a supernatural way. To some, it will be a philosophy of life; to others, a moral perspective; to still others, a code and loyalties. May we not say, then, that the very indefiniteness and conflict of objectives which we note around us to-day is a symptom of the inadequacy of religious traditions to the needs of the present? Is not the great lack of our times a religion adequate to our culture and its possibilities? We need, as never before, social and personal vision and a sense of human values. An inadequate religion has done us much harm.

To call traditional Christianity an inadequate religion will startle those who are dominated by mystical, and dramatic, personal loyalties. But we have seen that Christianity was *primarily* a salvation-religion, with a supernatural perspective. This is not to deny the tremendous value and significance of an ethical attitude which it contained. The portrait of Jesus has been its ethical strength. Historically true in detail or not, it yet presented under high sanctions, to the imagination of the West, an ideal whose spirit was love and gentleness. And this note has been recurrent in the history of Christianity. In our humanitarian age it has sounded more and more loudly. But, when we look deeply into the situation, we realize that this element in Christianity is quite separable from the supernatural framework which it

was given. And, be it said to the honour of human nature, the same note was struck by religio-ethical leaders from China to Greece. We are in touch with what Professor Cooley calls human-nature values. Love is a social bond. As nobly spiritual, it means imaginative sympathy.

The Christian tradition is a spiritual one. It has been creative of much good in the world. But the point is that it is just one of the aspects of man's creative, spiritual life. It needs supplementation. Its supernaturalism has given it too much pride, held it too much aloof from other spiritual movements. Love by itself easily becomes sentimental and ineffective. And the salvation-tradition of Christianity with its emphasis upon an afterlife worked in the direction of selfish concern with the safety of one's own soul. Nor is this all. Man's spiritual life needs breadth if it is to be healthy. Art, science, statesmanship are activities of immense import, and there was in Christianity, as a going concern, too little interest in social creation. It arose among the humble in a pre-scientific age and in a people knowing little of art and thwarted in their national life. The intellectual perspective which it inherited as a religion made it suspicious, if not hostile, to these genuine things of man's abiding, earthly life. All this is a tragedy which we cannot ignore because our life has suffered from it. Christianity will not be adequate as a religion until it conquers its past limitations and is hospitable to all aspects of the human spirit. When it is reborn to the world of art, to the world of mind, to the world of creative human endeavour, then and then alone will it be adequate. As it is, we cannot but register our opinion as a philosopher that evangelical Christianity has never sufficiently freed itself from this too thin, spiritual perspective. This is what has made it inadequate.

An adequate religion must be full-blooded and alive to all domains of the spiritual life of man. It must yea-say human endeavour.

It follows that I am not arguing for a specific new religion with a revered founder, analogous to those of the past and represented in this country by Christian Science and Mormonism. The day of that kind of religion is, I hope, waning. It is assuredly past for educated people in touch with science and philosophy. The religion of humanism will be a growth due to, and resting on, the coöperative spiritual life to the making of which will go a multitude of minds and hearts. And, once we have secured true historical perspective, we may well speak of it as a new reformation of Christianity, but a reformation far deeper and more significant than that of the sixteenth century. In a very real sense, each generation has its own religion. There is continuity, but there is also novelty. Let us, therefore, take Christianity, not as something revealed once for all to the Fathers, but as a term for our Western spiritual life. Once we have cut the supposed bonds with a supernatural world, we see that religion is, and has always been, a social product. What would Jesus have been without the insights which he inherited from his Jewish past and which he absorbed in the synagogue? I do not for a moment wish to belittle the rôle of the great man in society, but we must always see him in his social setting. The texture of his life is social and its setting is social. What he can add is a creative ferment and the suggestions of new combinations.

To the humanist, then, with his social naturalism, man's spiritual life is like a mighty stream to which there are many tributaries. It is said that Erasmus put Socrates in the calendar of his saints. *Sancta Socrate, ora pro nobis.* The

modern man who is spiritually alive has many saints in his calendar. Human living produces ever new vistas. The artist is born again to see the beauty in Rembrandt and Beethoven. The statesman gets inspiration from Lincoln and Washington. The philosopher draws renewed courage from the work of Aristotle and Plato. And I have no doubt that, in every line of life, the spiritual torch is thus kept burning. All creators enrich man's heritage. There is no need to drop back into the language of traditional theism and speak of manifold revelations. To create is to reveal. The things of the spirit are made in the tension of living and can only so be retained. Here, if anywhere, to be is to be active. Dead souls have a minimum of the spiritual.

"Man," writes Paul Valéry, "is the separate animal, the curious living creature that is opposed to all others and rises above all others by his—*dreams!*—by the intensity, succession, and diversity of his *dreams!* by their extraordinary effects, which may sometimes even modify his nature, and not his nature only, but that surrounding nature which he tirelessly endeavours to subjugate to his dreams. . . . At every instant he is something else than he is. He does not form a *closed system* of needs and gratifications for his needs. From such gratification he derives I do not know what excess of power, which destroys his content. Hardly are his body and his appetites appeased when something stirs within him; it torments him, informs him, commands him, goads him on; it directs him secretly. And that something is the Mind, the Mind armed with all its inexhaustible questions. . . ."[1]

Did space permit, it would be fascinating to make a voy-

[1] Paul Valéry, *Variety*, p. 28f. It is very interesting to contrast Valéry, the Frenchman, and Unamuno, the Spaniard, in regard to the things of the spirit.

age of spiritual discovery into other civilizations than our own. The human world falls apart into epochs and regions. Societies evolve under pressures which are always local and always shifting in their incidence. And the dreams of men are never quite the same under these different conditions. The result is a variety of competing values and perspectives. Thus the soul of the Oriental is not like the soul of the Occidental; and the reason for this is not primarily biological but social and historical.

And it is well to wander now and then into these alien cultures and to sense the human spirit at work in slightly different ways. The spiritual has here evolved in a different perspective and stressed different moods. And yet, beneath these very real divergences, we can recognize the eternal human expressing itself. The motto of the humanist must ever be that fine expression of Terence: *Humani nihil alienum a me puto.* Nothing human is alien to me.

CHAPTER XV

RELIGION AND MORALITY

Morality and Religion Intertwined

MAN'S spiritual life has always been an organic whole. The idea of the gods, which people had, reflected their notions of good and evil. A revengeful god meant that revenge was held to be natural and a virtue. A kindly god indicated, on the contrary, that human nature was softening and becoming pervious to notions of forgiveness and mercy. The moral evolution of the gods runs parallel with the moral evolution of mankind. Man creates god in his spiritual image.

In spite of the many re-editings which the Jewish Scriptures underwent, it is easy to note the stages of Yahweh's moral evolution. At first, he was a tribal deity urging his followers into the Promised Land and commanding them to slay all the original inhabitants, men, women and children. Later, in the mouths of the greater prophets, he becomes the God of social justice, of righteousness. In the struggle between the ethics of the city and the ethics of the country, he takes sides with the country. He is for the old ideas of brotherhood within the group, for mutual support and kindliness. The rich are oppressors of their brothers and hold them in bondage and sell them into slavery. Surely, this is not right. God is a god of mercy and righteousness. Thus spoke forth Amos and Hosea. And it was this moral trend, which expressed the ethics of the simple, tribal group with its natural emphasis upon human-

nature values, that appears in the Gospels. God is a god of love. "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me." There is, in this saying, the call of kindliness and pity.

And we have here morality at its religious best or religion at its moral best. It makes little difference which way it is put. We must not forget that religious sanction has always been given to the everyday morality of the group. Customs and laws, whether civil or ecclesiastical, were under the protection of deity. God would punish those who disobeyed the commands of those in authority, the customary folkways, the ritual demands of the priests. The social approval was projected into sky and earth and echoed back with a voice of thunder.

Social theory has gradually laid bare the motivation of this projection and return of morality. It points out that morality is primarily a group affair. It is a term for the customs which have grown up through the generations and which are absorbed by each new-born individual in his turn, much as he takes in the air he breathes. Custom is immemorial; it is the ways of the fathers; it is that which is right, fit and proper. The child notes and is taught the "law" along with the attitude of approval. His loyalty is invoked and attached. He becomes a hundred-per-cent tribesman. Language, initiation, affection, punishment, all work in this direction. And we must remember that, at this human level, the social group controls because there is, as yet, little personality to resist. Feeling and perception dominate and control the folkways. Conscience is a reproduction of tribal morality.

In our study of the history of religion, we have seen that the gods were a part of the social group, its supernatural and terrible leaders. Hence, the customs were known to the gods and approved by them. Here was an everseeing eye which could not be escaped. The gods punished remorselessly and relentlessly even if human agents failed. A crime was at one and the same time a violation of right and a sin. Even to-day we have this two-fold reference. Crimes are proclaimed by the clergy as sins against Almighty God. There are, besides, other, more specifically religious, sins such as unbelief in what the Churches teach, pride, worldliness, selfishness.

Because of this religio-moral perspective, whose naturalness we have emphasized, we may say that *morality had a double sanction and a double content.* We mean by sanction in ethics that which sanctions and supports a moral code, such as public approval, punishment, pleasant results, pain, moral judgment. The double sanction consisted in this, that society enforced custom in its own concrete way and believed that the heavenly powers did likewise. I mean by double content that part of the code sanctioned was concerned with human relations, part with conduct with respect to sacred things. The Bible has made every one who has read it familiar with this distinction. Tabus of all sorts were put on the same level as acts affecting one's relations with one's fellows. Priestly morality everywhere tended to lay more stress upon ritual observance than upon merely human affairs.

At first, the superhuman sanction was supposed to operate on this earth; the wicked man was to be cut down in his prime by the vengeance of the gods, and the virtuous to be rewarded with the things his heart desired. We have al-

ready noted how Jewish religious thought dealt with this problem in the Book of Job. He who has misfortunes is thereby declared wicked. Clearly, a very logical deduction from a divine providence. It is said that our Puritan forefathers reasoned in an analogous way that prosperity in this world's goods was a sign of virtue and heavenly favour. But reflection challenged this naïve providentialism. The doctrine of immortality supervened and gave help. Punishment and reward would come in another life. This hypothesis had the obvious merit that it could not be empirically tested.

Theological Hedonism and the Divine Policeman

There can be little doubt that popular ethics tends to take the form of hedonism, that is, it sets pleasure as the criterion and goal of conduct. It demands compensation for pain suffered if the world is to be just. I do not say that popular thought does justice to the subtleties of philosophical hedonism but only that it feels that goodness should go with happiness or else that something is wrong with the universe.

Here we have a very old dispute. There are many who hold that a morality dominated by the thought of pleasure and pain falls short of true morality. Virtue, they say, is its own reward. The good man is happy because he has a good conscience and, therefore, inner contentment. He does not seek happiness; rather does true happiness seek him. It is a sort of ethical by-product. Such has been the position of ethical rigourists like Plato and the Stoics in the Ancient World and Kant and Fichte in the Modern. Thus Plato argues at length in the *Republic* that it is better to suffer injustice than to do injustice; better here and now.

In a later section of this chapter I shall examine ethical theory and offer my own position. At present, I am interested in pointing out how general in Christian thought has been what is called *theological hedonism,* the doctrine of reward and punishment in the next world to counterbalance the injustices in this one. In fact, ministers have never been convinced that morality has its natural sanctions in this life. They are nearly all haunted by the notion that the wicked are happy and the good unhappy. Why is this? It may mean that they are superficial in their ethics and have had too little training in the subject; or it may signify that they have complexes due to artificial repressions in their own life consequent upon the formal standards set for them. They are supposed to be more conventional than the conventional. College professors and teachers are the only others who are as subject to public review.

The view of morality apparently implicitly held is that it is a code pressed upon people from the outside and violating all their natural impulses. No one would be good unless he had to be. It is something forced upon people by public opinion and law. It must, therefore, have very strong sanctions to enforce it.

What an indictment of morality such a view is! No teacher of ethics would for a moment endorse such a theory of morality. Morality should be rational; and to be rational it must justify itself by its actual working in human life. Otherwise, it is mere voodooism and superstition. Inhibition and self-repression should be a minimum and self-expression and activity a maximum. Unfortunately, we must admit that much of past morality has been traditionalistic and blind. It has consisted of tabus which were not explained and connected up with actual life. It has been

taught as commands. Such morality was naturally irksome.

St. Paul, who had enough acquaintance with Stoicism to know better, is largely responsible for theological hedonism. The ascetic repressions encouraged in past forms of Christianity have also played their part. Very naturally, people wanted to be repaid for what they really wanted and gave up. A healthy, active human life was not emphasized.

That the ecclesiastical tradition in these matters has often not been healthy I can illustrate by two quotations, one from Martin Luther and the other from Massillon, a French priest. Writes Luther: "If you believe in no future life, I would not give a mushroom for your God. Do then as you like. For, if no God, then no devil, no hell. As a fallen tree, all is over when you die. Then plunge in lechery, rascality, robbery, and murder." And Massillon: "If we wholly perish with the body, the maxims of charity, patience and justice, honour, gratitude, and friendship are but empty words. Our passions shall decide our duty. If retribution terminate with the grave, morality is a mere chimera, a bugbear of human invention."

Now we would not expect such vigorous statements from the clergymen of to-day. Perhaps a popular evangelist or a priest addressing an audience of relatively ignorant people might indulge in such explosions of theological hedonism but, in general, it would not be considered good form. Nevertheless, the tradition is still with us that morality does not justify itself. This means, I think, that it was the Greeks who tried to give morality a rational explanation in terms of human nature and human life, while Christianity did not. It must be admitted that this remains one of the inadequacies of past Christianity.

Let me illustrate. It happens that, as I write this chapter,

Easter is very near. When I picked up the *Detroit Free Press* this morning, I noticed a sermonette in it issued for the Detroit Council of Churches by a bishop of the Episcopal Church. The sermonette was, as could be expected, of a high order, and yet it deserved analysis just because it raised those questions we have been discussing. It begins with the famous verses from *First Corinthians:* "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." "If," writes our clergyman, "death ends all, nothing is harder to explain than the fact that righteousness and self-sacrifice so commonly end in *failure.* The patriot who gives up his life for his country gives all. The slacker who cheers him on and waxes fat on the profits of the war has at least a chance of rounding out three score years and ten of the only life there is. The devoted daughter who gives up the flower of her youth to care for an aged parent, while her sisters and brothers are able to marry or follow careers, loses forever her opportunity for growth and development. This view of life the *noblest men* will never accept."

There is, first of all, a degree of ethical pessimism here which does not seem to me justified. Do righteousness and self-sacrifice so commonly end in failure? What kind of failure? What standard is being used? Let us remember that a moral action is a self-chosen action. The alternative presented may make the whole situation tragic, and yet the choice is a real one. And if, for example, slackers are more successful than emotional patriots, may it not be that patriots do not use enough intelligence? The way to correct this evil is in our human hands. Why helplessly appeal to a future life? Long ago, Socrates pointed out the important

part played by knowledge and wisdom in virtue. Let us not blame the world but ourselves collectively if certain things are permitted and our mortal choices are very hard. Again, much self-sacrifice is unnecessary. Let the other brothers and sisters play their part and hire help. Many problems were met sentimentally and stupidly. The burden was put too much upon one pair of shoulders. But, granted that self-sacrifice is sometimes necessary, has it not a moral lining? The greatest moralists have regarded such free self-sacrifice as less tragic than some kinds of success. It is not mere externals which alone make for happiness. I know a very tragic case in which the wife has kept a bed-ridden husband and has been cheerful through it all. Human relations are intimate and essential. When the invalid dies, the survivor may hardly know what to do. We make a mistake when we look at these things from the outside alone.

The supernatural sanction to established morality was the heavenly policeman. And many people still maintain that morality would suffer if belief in a future reckoning were to disappear. This means that it is believed that human sanctions are insufficient. The fear of God must be put into people. This expression is used now metaphorically, but it was meant quite literally not long ago.

In the eighteenth century it was a common saying among statesmen that, if there were not a God, He would have to be invented. But, surely, we understand morality better these days. Of course, if our human institutions are unjust and are so regarded by large numbers, fear, alone, will not subdue people to conformity. But we know now that the forces making for conformity are psychological and educational. The criminal has always been the exception. A decent morality has little to fear; and just institutions have secure

backing. In times of anarchy and lawlessness, both morality and laws are outraged; but is it not the case that religious sanctions then also go by the board? They have seldom been more than supplementary.

My conclusion is, that we must press forward to a rational morality which clearly justifies itself in terms of human welfare. I do not say that the establishment of such a morality is an easy thing to accomplish for it may involve serious changes in our economic institutions. But I do say that this is the direction which we must take. A religion which throws its weight in the scales of reactionism and tries to scare people into being "good" has already outlived its usefulness. The ancient projection of morality into the skies, whence it returned with increased authority, is no longer natural. We are too well aware of the purely human factors which mould and control our conduct. The mysticism of blind traditionalism has been replaced by analytic self-consciousness. And the changelessness of morality has given way to constant reconstruction. Morality is now experimental and exploratory.

Our Christian Inheritance

It surprises many good people when they are informed that philosophers find the pure, Christian tradition in morality inadequate. Do we not, they say, owe our Western moral progress to Christianity? By no means, it must be replied. Many other factors have gone to the making of our moral temper and outlook. Our spiritual life has many sources. Greece, Rome, chivalry, science, industrialism, all have played their part. We have had moral leaders a-many and in various fields. I fear that the evangelical outlook has been over-simple and romantic.

One way of bringing this position home is to point out that slavery was accepted by both Protestant and Catholic until the nineteenth century. In the South of this country of ours, ministers defended the peculiar institution in terms of the Bible, and they had exegetical right on their side. At most, the Bible stands for a series of attitudes rather than for a social code. It lends itself to moral interpretations which the changing conscience demands. But it is the time-spirit which has created the content which we read into the Bible. It was industrialism which made slavery unprofitable. And this freed the protest which was always lurking in the background. The chief critics of slavery in the Ancient World were democratic and humanitarian philosophers. The Cynics, particularly, were its avowed enemies. We must not forget that, in our Modern World, the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church held serfs in France and Germany until the time of the French Revolution, a revolution which got its inspiration from Greece and Rome more than from Christianity. Good Bristol, Liverpool and Boston merchants of accepted Christian connection made much wealth from the shipping of black cargoes. On the other hand, we must not forget the part played by Bishop Wilberforce in the nineteenth century. Good men both in the churches and out of them finally felt outraged by slavery.

Much the same conclusions could be drawn from a study of economic reforms. We quickly see that modern spiritual forces expressive of a larger intellectual and social life have supplemented Christianity. One of the great world-movements of the time is socialism, and yet how much does it owe to Christianity? Perhaps, it owes more than it thinks, for man's spiritual life is organic. Yet other forces and ideas were at work. The average conventional Christian does not

realize that he is reading back into the Gospels what has come to pass through the last three centuries of creative progress. To him, it is merely making the implicit explicit. I am convinced that it is far more than this. Man's spiritual life has been deepening and broadening.

It was Nietzsche who startled the Western World by his indictment of Christian ethics as a slave-morality. Now I am convinced that this indictment is a romantic exaggeration. Christian ethics is, rather, the kindly morality of a small group not concerned with social creation and expecting the world soon to come to an end. It reflects assumptions and demands which are rather alien to our life. The spiritual life of such a group appears to us noble but thin. Also much of its perspective must strike us as false and exaggerated. It follows that people have expected too much from Christianity. They have leaned on it too passively and mystically. It was for them a sort of final moral revelation whose enigma they must read. They did not realize that the heart of morality is good-will and intelligence and that each generation must solve its moral problems by spiritual effort, using all the knowledge at command.

A few passages from the writings of the critics of the Christian, moral tradition may be stimulating to my readers. It is the negative, world-fleeing aspect of traditional Christianity that Nietzsche has in mind. He does not think that Christianity has stressed the creative element in life. "When everything strong, brave, domineering and proud has been eliminated out of the concept of God, when he sinks step by step to the symbol of a staff for the fatigued, a sheet-anchor for the drowning ones, when he becomes the poor people's God, the sinner's God, the God of the sick *par excellence*, and when the predicate of Saviour, Redeemer, is left as the

sole divine predicate . . . God degenerated to the contradiction of life, instead of being its transfiguration and its eternal *yea.* In God hostility announced to life, to nature, to the will to life, God as the formula for every calumny of 'this world,' for every lie of 'another world.' In God nothingness deified, the will to nothingness declared holy!" [1]

Now every one who knows something about the history of Protestantism, for example, is aware that it, unintentionally almost, swung away from Mediævalism. And every century Protestantism has altered. It has been a growing, changing thing reflecting what I have called the time-spirit. Take so-called muscular Christianity, for instance; how decidedly it reflects an aspect of modern life in which there is a return to the Greek outlook. Can we imagine the early Christians interested in Olympic Games? Or take the influence of transcendentalism of the Emersonian and Carlylean type. Here life is affirmed as it is by Nietzsche. God is conceived as immanent in the world. And Anglo-American Protestantism absorbed this outlook. But where is the dualism and pessimism of early Christianity? What a protean thing Christianity has become! It is obvious that Christianity has been yielding to the impact of creative forces in our Western life, but yielding only half consciously and often unwillingly.

In order to bring home the point that we need a thoroughly developed moral philosophy to-day, alive to all human activities and interests, I shall quote from another critic of Christianity.

"The moral teaching of the gospels," writes Sturt, "lies in a very small compass: apart from the general exhortations to love or charity in the gospel of St. John there is little

[1] Passages from *Antichrist.* Quoted from Perry's *The Present Conflict of Ideals.*

beyond the Sermon on the Mount. It is on this Sermon that the preacher usually draws. It tells us to love enemies and persecutors, to give to all that ask, to do to others as we wish them to do to us, to be merciful and forgiving, to reform ourselves before offering to reform others, to support good profession by good practice. . . . Now my complaint against this kind of exhortation is that it is not sufficient for the guidance of ordinary men, and falls hopelessly short of the principles which animate distinguished men. . . . Ruskin the interpreter of art and champion of the hand-worker, Watts the painter and sculptor, Mill the philosopher and socialist, Jowett the educator, Darwin the patient enthusiast of science—what has Christianity to say to any of their various works? As these great men were spending themselves freely in the noblest tasks under the neglect or even the hostility of the accredited exponents of religion, what were the accredited exponents doing meanwhile? Saving their souls. There is not a word in the New Testament to recognize the value of art or literature or philosophy or the sympathetic study of the past or science or education or political enterprise or soldierly valour and honour. To what a mean, spiritless monotony, destitute of every enthusiasm that distinguishes civilized society from a herd of inoffensive human cattle, to what a level of sainted noodledom would Christian exhortation drag us down." [1]

Now such criticisms as these have enough truth in them to make us think. Is it any longer wise to rest our spiritual life upon the New Testament alone? Has not one of our great institutions been rendered ineffective by its perspective? We must put the spiritual life of humanity above any partial and conditioned expression. This means that the whole

[1] Sturt, *The Idea of a Free Church*, p. 12f.

idea of a final, and peculiarly sacred, revelation must go in morality as it has in cosmology. We must cease to be mystical romantics in religion. An adequate morality is something that requires the creative energies of the best spirits and is something which is approached by effort. Let us now pass to the philosophic tradition in these matters.

Conventional versus Reflective Morality

It was the Greeks who put the study of morality on a secular, as against a supernatural, basis. These thinkers tried to understand the nature of morality and to work out standards and criteria. Moral philosophy is continuous with their interpretations.

To-day we usually begin the presentation of ethics with a contrast between conventional morality, which is largely external and authoritative, and reflective morality, which is internal, critical and self-chosen. It is reflective morality which is regarded as the ideal.

What we have called conventional morality consists of the customs and the usual standards operating within a group. We can, I think, bring under these terms such things as moral codes, accepted virtues and admired moral sentiments. Something of this sort is meant when we say that this is a Christian country. In customary morality the group dominates over the individual. And, in a static, homogeneous society, this aspect of life is very definite. It constitutes what is approved in the way of conduct and attitude, and is a growth in which beliefs, experience, social temper and accident have all played their part.

There is a strong element of custom in our own social morality. That is, social tradition and inheritance are effective conditions. But we must admit that our society is

neither very homogeneous nor static. It is heterogeneous in that many ethical currents have swept into it, and it is dynamic in that new forces are operative. We can, as a consequence, speak only of the dominant customs in any part of the country. And, even then, we know that the South is not like the North and that rural sections differ markedly from the urban in point of view.

Conventional morality is never negligible, and we must all adapt ourselves to it to a certain degree in order to avoid friction, but it cannot be regarded as a rational standard which we must perforce accept. Along the line of the homely virtues which the masses can understand it sets a high level of excellence. Thus honesty, kindness and loyalty are the virtues which we see wide-spread among the population. They are the old, established virtues expressive of social tradition and human nature. A nation which loses these is in a perilous way. But the scope of application of these virtues is limited by lack of experience and lack of imagination. It is not fully realized that loyalty may extend to intellectual and artistic matters and that customs may not do justice to the intricacy of life.

Reflective morality differs from customary morality in two main ways: (1) content, and (2) method. The difference in content goes with a wider range of experience and knowledge, while that in method accompanies a gradual change in attitude. The second difference requires special emphasis because it connects up with certain significant questions we wish to raise.

The flaw in customary morality from an intellectual standpoint is this, that it cannot justify itself. If I ask why I should obey certain customs, the representative of customary morality is taken by surprise. He will reply:

"Because they are right." But I have a perfect right to ask how he knows that they are right, and what he means by right. In other words, reflection is bound to raise questions which are not natural to custom. The moral categories of right and wrong, good and bad, conscience and duty, need analysis. Now it is unfortunate that the Christian tradition was not intrinsically philosophic to this extent. Its morality has been one of inspiration rather than one of reflection. I would be the last one to deny the value of inspiration in morality but this approach can be overdone. One of the weaknesses of the religious tradition lies in its mystical attitude towards morality. Since this was combined with an ingredient of theological hedonism, it gave a wrong slant to the popular thought of morality. It made morality something supernatural and more or less irrational.

Now I am convinced that the humanistic religion into which Christianity will gradually be transformed will correct this mistake. Moral philosophy can be of great assistance here. In what follows I shall try to indicate the principles which seem to me correct. Obviously, I cannot develop them in detail, but the interested reader will find a similar outlook in a companion volume of this series by Professor Drake, entitled *The New Morality,* a book devoted entirely to ethical questions. May I say again how important I think this reflective approach to morality is? It is very unfortunate that, in this country at least, to say that a question, like prohibition, has become a religious issue means that people take an emotional, and almost fanatical, attitude towards it. Our evangelical tradition needs cross-fertilization with philosophy.

The ethical position which is slowly arising in philosophy may be described as experimental humanism. Much reflec-

tion upon human psychology and ethical experience has gone to its making. It differs from both utilitarianism and Kantianism. In many ways it seems to me to resemble Aristotelian eudæmonism more than any other historical position, though there are new notes in it. It may be well to explain some of these terms which are second-nature to the technical thinker but which he has no right to assume that his readers —however intelligent—necessarily know.

Aristotle tried to connect morality with the idea of human good and decided that this was happiness or well-being. It should be noted that, for the Greeks, the idea of right and wrong was subordinate to the idea of what is good. Now it appeared to Aristotle that happiness must consist in the expression of the functions proper to man, an expression accompanied by pleasure. Frankly, I would think of experimental humanism as akin to this outlook. The difference between them lies in a certain divergence of perspective. We interpret human nature a little more broadly and a little more democratically than did Aristotle. There is more of experiment and variety in our outlook.

Utilitarianism was an empirical, British theory of ethics which stressed the consequences of actions as alone determining their moral value. That is right which leads to human happiness. And we must find out by trial what is right. Utilitarianism is often called universalistic hedonism and is properly so described in the form it took with John Stuart Mill. The moral individual aims at the greatest happiness of the greatest number. We may, perhaps, say that the hearts of the utilitarians were in the right place, for they were moral and political reformers, but that they stressed states of pleasure too much in their psychology of morality.

Kant and the Stoics were rigourists who laid stress upon the concept of duty or moral choice. They felt that all forms of hedonism were too easy-going, that they did not do justice to the moral experience. It is the good will which alone is good.

As a result of reflection upon all these analyses, philosophy has gained a comprehensive outlook. It has made delicate studies of moral valuations and moral choice. Moreover, a detailed knowledge of morality throughout the ages has destroyed any assumption that morality is an unchanging thing. It is realized that morality is relative to social conditions and to knowledge. What is intelligent in mode of life in one age would be absurd in another. There is a less changing framework of moral attitude, but the content varies enormously from period to period. The position of women in society furnishes a good example of what I have in mind.

I have suggested that the outlook which is evolving in ethics may well be designated experimental humanism. It asserts that the basic thing in ethics is human good and that human good is the satisfaction of human interests. The living soul is an integration of interests having what may be called a dynamic balance or moving equilibrium. These interests manifest themselves as specific desires which are then valued in the light of one's general system of values or plan of life. It must be remembered that such desires are, at the level of ethics, rationally interpreted desires, that is, they are brought into relation with one another and with their bearing upon the individual and the social group. The living soul is, then, what we call a system of interests and activities. These interests may be called values or things valued. Another point. The living soul is always a socially

moulded soul, and its interests are never purely biological and personal. The human self embraces all that it is interested in, all that it identifies itself with. The flaw in much of past egoistic hedonism was its inadequate conception of the human self.

What does duty mean for such a position? Surely the fact of moral choice. Values conflict and a preference is often demanded. Shall we do this or that? It may in critical situations become a tragic question. Here we have our idea of the self, the objectives and standards which we with the help of society have built up; and here we have a desire, a demand, a danger. What decision shall we make? It is often a tense and emotional question. And very often it takes the form that we cannot bring ourselves to do certain things, that our soul abhors them, that we would rather die than do them. The analysis of the psychology of such choices is a difficult and delicate matter that takes us away from a superficial type of hedonism but most assuredly does not carry us to supernaturalism. It would seem that there is a principle of harmony-seeking in our souls and that we are constantly checking up on the lastingness of the satisfactions which various lines of activity give us. And we must never forget that the self is moulded by the moral traditions of society and that these indicate, in some measure at least, what furthers social welfare.

It would seem that such a position does justice to what was valuable in both traditional hedonism and the rigouristic doctrine of virtue for its own sake. It is empirical and experimental just as hedonism was, and it has a clearer conception of the self, in this resembling rigourism. Pleasures are expressions of the kind of a self you are; they are not passive effects produced in you. A man with imagination

and sympathy simply could not be happy and do certain things. It is in this sense that virtue is in part its own reward. But sacrifice should never be an end in itself. It is always well to mix intelligence in such affairs and work out a position happiest for everybody concerned. But I would be the last to deny that there is actual tragedy in the world and that some choices are pretty hard. But, then, that is the kind of world it is. Theological hedonism would try to persuade us that tragedy is an illusion, that our sacrifices will be made up for us in dollars and cents. But, if we accepted this view, would not sacrifice lose all meaning? Surely, this is not what the noblest men desire. No; our sacrifices are merely our moral best under the circumstances; it is the circumstances that we would like to see changed.

In the next chapter we shall try to show the bearing of this interpretation of morality upon religion and the church as a going concern.

CHAPTER XVI

RELIGION COMING OF AGE

IN this final chapter I wish to summarize my conclusions, draw certain implications and make a few suggestions.

The spiritual life of man, we have argued, is a growth and has passed through stages which are more or less distinct. It began in a cry of supplication to the mysterious powers of life and death; it was caught up into the magnetic influence of the belief in another world and thereby became a religion of salvation, yearning for Heaven and fearful of Hell; finally, it is in our own day clearly shifting to a religion of this life with its problems and possibilities. Religion and humanity have been organic to one another. The progress of one has been bound up with the growth of the other. In a rough way, we may speak of these stages of religion as corresponding to the childhood of the race, its romantic adolescence, and its maturity. Religion is coming of age.

In all these stages, the dynamics of religion has lain in what man valued and believed. Long ago man could peer but a short way into himself and his world and he felt himself helpless before the powers which surrounded him. And so he danced before his gods and gave them burnt offerings. But, with the growth of culture and self-consciousness, man came to think of himself as a soul imprisoned in a body. Nature became the scene of a tremendous drama in which gods fought with demons for man's soul. Prophets arose who told him that there was a way of sal-

vation. At first, this salvation was largely a magical affair but, in the nobler and later religions, it became transformed into an act in which duty mingled with obedience to, and recognition of, the Heavenly Powers. The human imagination constructed a tremendous epic of the universe and its Ruler, gathering material, generation after generation, from tradition, ritual and speculation. Thus man's life was dominated by a definite perspective, by the belief that the universe was under the control of personal agency. What we may call the orientation of religious life was determined by this belief. In the third stage, which is just dawning, religion is slowly moving to a new orientation. I mean that the spiritual perspective of human life is shifting and so profoundly that the effect is that of a revolution. The Heavenly Powers of the old outlook are fading from the human mind and the natural world is growing clearer and more definite. What this means for man's spiritual life we shall try to show. But it is obvious at first glance that it will involve a drastic reorientation and an alteration of the very technique of religion. The point is, that man is at last coming to learn what kind of a universe he is actually in and what kind of a creature he himself is. We might well speak of this new stage as the *Copernican Revolution in Religion.* It remains for us to work out its implications.

Three Possible Procedures

In such a period of crisis, three possible procedures offer themselves: (1) fundamentalism, (2) liberalism, and (3) systematic thought. In the chapter dealing with the present situation in religion we indicated that all three attitudes are to be found. The fundamentalists cling to the old cosmic

perspective; the liberals follow the drift of change at various rates, according to their education and mental capacity; the philosophers are trying to think the whole situation through thoroughly and systematically in the light of modern knowledge.

Fundamentalism and liberalism are conditions which we must leave to psychologist and sociologist. There is, so far as I can see, nothing very difficult about them. As positions, they are quite understandable. I may merely remark that I have been agreeably surprised by the inroads which liberalism has made in this country. And when I say that liberalism is the procedure of following the drift of thought and experience in our age, I wish to be understood as praising it. Such following is not a passive affair; it involves readjustment and interpretation in regard to all sorts of concrete problems which the philosopher as such does not have to meet. And when I bear in mind the emotional pull of tradition in religious matters—it is for this reason that religion has always been notoriously conservative—I have the highest respect for all liberals. In matters of thought they are at a disadvantage with respect to the highly trained thinker who, from the very beginning, has adopted an objective attitude and has given his life to persistent reflection with the best intellectual equipment possible. Once the idea of a final revelation is given up, it is obvious that the world must go to the scientist and to the philosopher for leadership. But this leadership must be kindly, tolerant and explanatory. And the philosopher, like the scientist, must remember that it is far easier to understand a result than to discover it. It is for this reason that the true liberal can keep so near to the original thinker.

It must be recognized that the philosopher has a task

which is at the same time a duty, that of thinking the whole situation through as carefully and with as much insight as possible. If he is recreant to this duty, whither can thoughtful men turn?

The New Universe and Man's Spiritual Orientation

The drastic shift in perspective which I have called the Copernican Revolution in Religion must now occupy our attention. What are its implications?

I would suggest that this new stage of religion is going to differ from its predecessor along three lines: technique, values, and beliefs. By technique I mean such things as ritual, worship, prayer. The other terms are self-explanatory.

Ritual may be roughly defined as the ceremonies of religion, the important acts to be done. The great national and international religions of the past have possessed an elaborate ritual whose evolution can be traced back to the primitive stage of religion. Thus the Roman Catholic Church owes much to Greek and Roman religion and to the ritual of the Jewish Church. Many elements were assimilated and developed with a keen sense of emotional and artistic fitness. Crudeness was replaced by delicate symbolism. Beliefs were given an incarnation in the pattern of action and thus made concrete.

Historically, rites and beliefs were closely connected. Some have maintained that rites gave rise to beliefs. And this is in a measure true; yet it is probably more accurate to say that they have been inseparable. They are of one mental tissue.

We can distinguish an æsthetic attitude towards ritual from a religious attitude. They are independent variables. Thus many non-Catholics enjoy the ritual of the Mass with

its artistic surroundings, the throb and beat of the music, the intoning, the patterned actions, the dim light of the cathedral. And I can quite understand the power this ritual has upon those who were brought up in that faith.

It is generally admitted that worship plays a larger part in all the Catholic traditions than in Protestantism, where the emphasis has been upon communion of a personal sort. And worship has always involved ritual. There is a certain procedure meet for approach to the divine. Monarchical tradition and the sense of great, symbolic mysteries like the Passion and the Mass have moulded the ritual of Christianity. And it is not surprising to me that Episcopal clergymen who are still able to keep these old beliefs are attracted by the ritual. It is their ability to keep these beliefs, without which the ritual is but mummery, that astonishes me. The power of institutions is effective here and combines with scholastic education and social isolation. Those brought up from childhood in these traditions are not apt to depart from them.

It is well known how drastically the Reformed Churches reacted to this ritual. They emphasized the direct relation between man and God and attacked ritual as bound up with the old conception of the priestly function and as savouring of idolatry. Much of the burning feeling underlying this attitude has departed. In his *Tale of a Tub,* Swift shows us Martin ripping off the superfluous and forbidden fringes and linings of his coat with meticulous care, while Jack tore his away with such vehemence that his coat was left but a tattered caricature.

Very curiously, Protestantism feels now the bareness of its worship and wants more of the æsthetic in its service. But can it introduce ritual without the beliefs which went

with it? It is a question, then, not of ritual but of beauty. And is there any reason why all public services should not have that decorum and artistic texture which makes them expressive? This yearning for beauty is at its roots humanistic and cultural; it is a turning from the simplicity and privacy of Protestant theory.

The technique of the second stage of religion included prayer as well as the ritual of worship. Now prayer is an act bound up with belief in some one who hears and may grant petitions. It is inevitable, then, that this part of the technique of the second stage of religion will pass with the beliefs which go with it.

Can the new perspective offer a substitute for prayer? Many have suggested self-communion, meditation, reflection. I myself find music, poetry, and a quiet walk into the country effective for that gathering together of oneself that is good for one at times. Those who are more dependent upon the reinforcement which social groups give to the individual will probably find help in prayer which has become the breathing out of common aspiration and in public meetings where enthusiasm reigns.

But the technique of the new stage of religion will be worked out gradually as the past was. We may be sure that the permanent demands of human nature will find expression in it. And we must not take it for granted that we shall always have the same institutions as were built up around the old cosmic perspective. Institutions are built up around functions, and these express needs and beliefs. As these change, we must expect institutions to alter, though they will do it reluctantly and slowly.

So intrinsic is the technique of religion to its perspective that it is impossible to alter the one without the other. And

since religious technique has a strong emotional backing, it will seem to many that nothing of religion is left when the familiar attitudes are given up. But is not this an illusion which reflects the solidarity of the old outlook? It stands or falls as a whole. And time will heal all these conflicts as it has so many in the past. New generations will neither think nor feel as the old did. It is the period of transition which is tragic.

We come now to values. I need say comparatively little on this topic since I earlier devoted a chapter to its consideration. I tried to show how the spiritual will be enlarged and re-defined and thereby become more positive, complex, creative, and cease to be otherworldly or ghostly. Life here and now will occupy spiritual, or religious, interest.

I shall make use of passages from a presidential address, delivered by a religious layman of a liberal denomination, to indicate the kind of problems which are now thought of as religious. Some of these problems are: Relations between parents and children, the economic status of women, the causes of criminality, the lack of financial responsibility among many rich people, international honour. "We cannot pass a single day," he writes, "without being confronted with urgent, personal, domestic, civil, social, industrial, and international problems, every one of which in the last analysis has its ethical and religious implications. . . . How can we 'see life steadily and see it whole' unless some such central group helps us to achieve clear spiritual vision into the complex facts and forces of the good life? *And is this not the first and foremost function of the church?*" [1]

The kind of values emphasized in this address clearly

[1] Percy W. Gardner, *A Presidential Message*, Unitarian Layman's League, 1928.

involves a change of religious technique. It is human action, social control, that is brought to the front. It would seem that man is turning from supplication to manipulation, from passivity to activity, from dependence to responsibility. The helpless cry of primitive times is changing to the intelligent and planned deed.

Knowledge and values, these are the intertwined realities of the new outlook. Writes Professor Ames: "But at the very height of this scientific era the wisest men are beginning to see that no amount of knowledge is adequate to the demands of human life in its deepest needs. Bertrand Russell and other observers of our civilization see that the development of scientific technique affords no guaranty of any significant use of that technique. The great question of their later thought is as to where and how there are to be found means for relating knowledge to the great values and ends of life. These values are the qualities which belong to the natural social bonds of the fundamental social units, the face to face groups of mutually sympathetic and helpful individuals. These values are the concomitants of social attitudes, and these attitudes at their highest are the religious verities." [1]

We come lastly to beliefs. The difference between the second stage of religion and the third with respect to beliefs is startling. The theologies of Christianity gave an account of God and of God's plan in regard to the world and man. It had a story of creation and of redemption. And these theologies resulted in definite creeds, upon belief in which salvation was supposed to depend. In short, the universe was under an ideal control. Goodness, justice and power were united at the heart of things as they never appeared

[1] Ames, *The Journal of Religion*, Jan., 1928.

to be on the earth. Science and philosophy have taught us to relinquish all this imaginative and dramatic construction. The universe is an immense and, in the main, unconscious system which arises in areas to the level of conscious thinking and valuing. It has no ideal unity, but is a spread-out complex of suns and planets behaving towards each other in terms of gravitational pulls. The drama of man's life is unrolled in an obscure, little planet, but it is all in all to him. There the individual is born and acts and loves and dies in a space of time that seems both long and short to him. His need is adjustment and spiritual creation.

Now both of these views were *a priori* possible. Investigation *might* have justified the Biblical story. The universe might have been centralized in an ideal person; events might have been planned in an epic way. But investigation has unfalteringly shown that the universe is actually of the second kind.

Already, under the bombardment of science, the creeds have faded. We have already entered an era of tolerance expressive both of doubt and of conflict of opinion. In many churches, already, adherence to a creed is no longer considered necessary. It is the mode of life that counts. Such is the bridge across which we may pass from the old perspective to the new. Morally, the heart of Christianity is in the right place. The *odium* theologicum is vanishing, and charity coming to its own.

All this does not mean that belief about man and his world is disappearing, but that it is securing a new foundation, that exemplified in science and philosophy, inductive, critical, experimental, tentative, accepted freely.

It seems undeniable, then, that each stage of religion forms an organic complex of technique, values and beliefs

and that these together constitute a perspective or orientation. In basic ways the new perspective which is arising among us diverges from the old.

Is This New Complex of Technique, Value and Belief Religion?

This drastic shift in perspective which science and philosophy are bringing home to the reflective individual is so revolutionary that many refuse longer to keep the word *religion.* To their minds, religion is inseparably connected with the first two stages. Thus it was with Lucretius, who identified religion with fear and superstition. Thus it is with many of my friends who regard religion as an illusion which intelligent men at last will learn to outgrow.

I am not myself convinced by their arguments. It seems to me that the basic and continuous thing underlying all religion is man's attempt to interpret life and the world. It is the perennial and intrinsically human impulse to maintain and further his values. The perspective alters with knowledge; the content deepens with the level of human life; the technique is modified as the orientation changes. But the springs of religion are to be found in the very strategy of life, and not in these variables. They are the needs and demands and objectives of men and women.

The old perspective was so dramatic with its saviours and archangels and heavens and hells, and it had developed so interesting a technique of worship and prayer and communion with its personification of the world and its belief in supernatural, personal agency, that the shift to the new complex seems like a complete break. If the old was religion, how can this new be it also? But is it not probable that those who look at the matter in this way are like

those who are so fascinated by the machinery and stage-setting that they are unable to see the drama itself? Or, to use another comparison, are they not like those people who refused to believe that Shakespeare could be played in modern clothes? The new perspective in religion is actually like putting Shakespeare—say Hamlet—in modern clothes. Here are everyday gentlemen walking around and conversing; here is a tragedy, here a comedy; but it is human life as it ever was.

When we read between the lines of much of modern liberal, religious thought, it becomes apparent that this new outlook is gaining ground. It will take time to become familiar and second-nature, and, until it does so, it will seem different, strange, not quite satisfactory. But there is good psychological ground to hold that what the physicists are saying of the relativity outlook of Einstein will apply here. The new generation, they say, will not find relativity so hard as the older generation has, because they will be brought up on it.

It would be easy to point out how thinkers are already making their adjustments. Objective idealism with its denial of personal immortality and its infinite was, as many have pointed out, akin to naturalism. In fact, it was an idealistic translation of the older type of naturalism because it did not admit the creativity of man and the significance of practical, human idealism. It was, as Dewey has often pointed out, not idealistic in quite the right way.

And now Whitehead and his followers are trying to do a similar thing in a still more overt way. Thus in a recent book Professor Wieman asserts that God is the life-bringing part of our environment. "God is (that) most subtle and intimate complexity of environmental nature which yields

the greatest good when right adjustment is made . . . the feature of our total environment which most vitally affects the continuance and welfare of human life . . . that in the universe which will yield maximum security." And religion is "man's acute awareness of the realm of unattained possibility and the behaviour that results from this awareness." Surely we are well on the road to the new perspective.

It is my suspicion that the universe at large will play a smaller part in the religion of the future than it played in the past. Man projected his problems and maladjustments into the universe at large in the past for two reasons: (1) he personified it, and (2) he felt helpless. With an increasing sense of the orderliness of nature and its impersonality and with a stronger feeling that he must solve his own problems and make his own adjustments, the centre of gravity of religion is on the whole certain to swing manward. There will, however, always remain a penumbra of cosmic consciousness. Man's sense of life can never be pure humanism in any subjective meaning of that term. But humanism will be a larger ingredient of religion than in the past.

Let Us Stand by the Churches But Demand More of Them

There is much to be said both for and against the churches. They have been bigoted and obscurantist, but they have also worked for human good as they saw it. And it would be unfair to them to judge them *now* for what they were in the past. Frankly, I think they have always constituted far more than a fair sample of human life through the ages. Their intentions have been high and noble in the main, even though love of power and a touch of cruelty have at times disfigured their records. Let me quote some

relevant passages from Emerson with which I find myself in agreement. "Be not betrayed," he writes, "into undervaluing the churches which annoy you by their bigoted claims. . . . I agree with them more than I disagree. I agree with their heart and motive; my discontent is with their limitations and surface and language. Their statement is grown as fabulous as Dante's Inferno. Their purpose is as real as Dante's sentiment and hatred of vice."

We must point out, however, that the function of the church was conceived in the past in terms of the otherworldly orientation. As this orientation slowly gives way to a this-worldly perspective the function of the church will likewise undergo a change. This movement is as inevitable as logic itself. And, as a matter of fact, the churches are interesting themselves as never before in human welfare and in social problems. They are loci of discussion and of agitation. They are sensing their social responsibilities. In this respect I have great admiration for the Federal Council of Churches.

I cannot help but suspect at times that the old perspective with its liking for feeling and its distrust of reason and analysis has handicapped the churches in their handling of problems. Is this why social agencies are encroaching on their domains? The churches have what may be called a divided personality. They are looking backwards and forwards at the same time. Their personality needs integration, and sound thinking can alone help them to it.

The gradual disappearance of creedal requirements for membership in churches makes it possible for men and women to belong who would otherwise be unable to. The churches would be wise to hasten this day of moral fellowship. And such members could make increased demands

upon the churches in the way of thought, action and adjustment. They could hold them to a higher intellectual and spiritual level. And this not in an outworn and shallow way of mere creedal criticism, but in the way of constructive suggestions founded on a rich sense of personal and social problems.

Man is a social being, and there is need of associations of a voluntary, and yet organized, kind devoted to common ends and sensitive to personal relations. Our modern world is as yet so dominated by the commercial that it is bleak and lonely. The churches can be centres of light and social warmth and fellowship. One thing is certain, that they will exist only as long as they do satisfy an actual need, and no longer. The task of the Protestant churches is to find these human needs which they can help to satisfy. The old feeling of obligation of attendance at church as a sacred and mysterious duty is disappearing. That is admitted by all. In its place must be put concrete and understandable motives related to human fellowship.

There are experimentations going on in the way of community churches, centres for the spiritual life of the community. Will this line of experimentation lead on to something humanistically constructive? I hope so. It depends upon leadership. Can we have great civic centres which are the homes of art, literature, music, social planning? As denominationalism decreases, something like this may occur. I am sure that beauty in buildings and service will increase in America. But I do not favour an empty æstheticism. There must be a keen sense of reality back of it all.

But the problems which present themselves when one considers the effect upon the churches of a drift to the third

stage of religion are too many and too intricate to be discussed in this book which is dedicated to principles. What will be the texture of the society of the future? Tell me that and I can in a measure deduce certain implications. But, in this age of turmoil and reconstruction, we cannot look very far ahead in institutional matters.

Let me assure my readers that this is intended as a very constructive book. If I have cut deep in places like a surgeon, I have cut to heal. The duty of the thinker is to discover what kind of a universe it is, and it is the duty of the churches to help man adjust himself to life. No good can come of self-deception. And is it not good tidings, that, as religion comes of age, man's spiritual life promises to be deepened and enriched rather than impoverished?

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