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BELIEF AND ACTION

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AN EVERYDAY PHILOSOPHY

BY

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They are, of course, in no way responsible for any of the views expressed.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
Chapter 1.	This Time of Confusion	9
2.	The World Around Us	13
	Note to Chapter 2	23
3.	The Scientific Outlook	27
4.	Ancient Creeds and Modern Knowledge	38
5.	Intuition, Mysticism, Miracles	54
6.	Religious Possibilities	75
7.	The Fact of Evil	94
8.	Right and Wrong	111
9.	Why Act Rightly?	124
10.	Family	142
11.	Poverty and Property	152
12.	Liberty	176
13.	The Nation and the World	194
14.	Conditions of Peace	217
15.	Action	239

APPENDICES

I.	Reality	249
II.	Values	259
III.	Mind and Matter	267
IV.	Causality and Indeterminism	277
V.	Free Will	303
	Table of References	321
	Index	351

CHAPTER ONE

THIS TIME OF CONFUSION

THE age in which we live—it is commonly agreed—is an age of confusion. In religion, philosophy, politics, morals, it is a time of doubt. New science has undermined all the old orthodoxies. With numbers of people the traditional religions do not grip. There is a divorce between religion and daily life. Philosophy also gives no clear message. The ordinary man passes philosophy by; hears it only as a distant murmur of confused and unintelligible voices. In politics, even the root ideas of liberty and justice are rejected by dominant parties in powerful States. Almost everywhere a wide-spread poverty continues, generation after generation, in the presence of abundance and luxury; it breeds a bitter discontent that threatens the very structure of society. And there broods over the world of to-day a chronic sense of insecurity because of the danger of general war. On every hand we see uncertainty, questioning, anxiety.

The seething unrest of our time has spread over the world. Look East, look West; in Japan, China, India, Turkey, in Russia, in the countries of Central or Western Europe, or in America; among Buddhists or Confucians, Hindus or Moslems, Jews or Christians—everywhere there is lacking a feeling of stability. There is no general

confidence in the ideas inherited from the past, or in the existing order of things founded upon them. Nor is there any clear vision anywhere of new ideas for the founding of a new order.

Many individuals, no doubt, in every country and in every community, remain untouched. Many preserve a religious faith serene and unshaken, and are guided through life by a definite code of conduct based upon it. Many others are content with a secular philosophy of life, of their own making or learnt from accepted teachers; they feel that they know where they stand, if not in relation to the universe, at least in relation to human society. But this, clearly, is not enough. It is vital that there should be some standards, at least, which are generally agreed. Our civilization cannot go on indefinitely with the fear in its heart that its ethics and its politics, the training of the next generation, the relationships of individuals, classes, nations, races—that all this rests upon nothing solid; that the entire structure, vast and elaborate, is built upon foundations that are shallow and weak, that seem to be already quaking. The whole company of thinking men throughout the world, brought into closer touch now than ever before, are aware of the facts; they see the danger.

These being the conditions in which we live, what courses are open to us?

Shall we try to return to the old orthodoxies and con-

ventions; call our wishes beliefs; be content with "a faith in someone else's faith"?*

Shall we say: It is liberty of thought and action which has brought these confusions; let us abandon liberty; let us follow whoever has the courage to seize power and the cunning to control ideas; let us accept intellectual tyranny for fear of moral anarchy?

Or shall we withdraw into a fatalistic indifference? Shall we say, with Gibbon, that "history is little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind"? Why should things be otherwise now? "Agreement among religions or among philosophers"? When has there ever been agreement among either? Is there any possibility of finding even the basis for the beginnings of an agreement? After all, what is human reason? What is Truth? And what is Right and Wrong? Meantime let us "look upon the wine when it is red"; or take refuge, perhaps, in art or else in amusement. Let us leave mankind to its crimes, its follies and its misfortunes, enduring as best we may the evils that come to our share.

Shall we be content then to see the world divide itself once more into Cynics and Epicureans and Stoics? Disaster, sooner or later, assuredly lies that way, as the Greeks and the Romans discovered.

* The sources of quotations and references to authorities will be found in the Table at the end of the volume.

And the great problems are insistent. We have felt too deeply the beauty and majesty of the universe; we have listened too long to

> all this mighty sum
> Of things for ever speaking;

we have experienced too often

> the burthen of the mystery,
> . . . the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world;

to be content to fall back into mere indifference.

There is another course open; the course taken more than once in former ages when societies have been redeemed from phases of confusion and peril. It is for men everywhere to give the best of their minds to solving the problems of the times; and to view them as a whole; not to fear examining and testing the very foundations on which civilization rests; to reshape, if need be, even its basic ideas.

Perhaps we may already be at the threshold of a different time. That far-sighted observer, eminent among our present-day philosophers, Professor Whitehead, has ventured the prophecy that " we are entering upon an age of reconstruction, in religion, in science, and in political thought." And he adds, " Such ages, if they are to avoid mere ignorant oscillation between extremes, must seek truth in its ultimate depths."

CHAPTER TWO

THE WORLD AROUND US

THE world around us may be seen under various aspects. Three are familiar. They are the aspect of ordinary life; the aspect revealed by physical science; and the vital, or mental, or psychical aspect—call it what you will.

In ordinary life we know of material objects. They are solid; they have substance, size and weight. They have colour, odour, heat. The rose is red, and it smells sweetly; the grass is green; a fire is hot, and ice is cold. There are sounds, and we hear them. We see the sun rise and set, and at night some thousands of little stars twinkle in the sky. There are wind and weather, and "the wind bloweth where it listeth". Men act as they choose, according to their own free will. They are subject also to chances; one wins a prize in a lottery and one is killed in a railway accident; it is pure hazard which is which. In this world time is one thing and space is another; the clock and the calendar tell us about time; the measure and the map tell us about space; and the two are quite distinct. This is the world as perceived for hundreds of thousands of years by primitive man, as perceived now by the child, and probably also, in its main features, by animals.

Physical science reveals a very different world. Books, articles and lectures by scientists have made us well acquainted with it. It is the world of chemical molecules and atoms; of protons, electrons, positrons and neutrons; and of quanta. It is the world of electro-magnetic rays —the gamma rays, the X-rays, the ultra-violet rays, the rays of visible light, the infra-red rays, and the Hertzian rays used in broadcasting; the whole forming a continuous series, differentiated by their wave-lengths.

When we would form some idea of dimensions in this underlying world, we are told that if a drop of water were enlarged to the size of the earth, the atoms of oxygen and of hydrogen that compose the drop, enlarged to scale, would be about as big as toy balloons; if one of those hydrogen atoms were again enlarged to the size of the earth, its nucleus would still be no more than two inches across. (Yet the weight of an atom can now be stated to within its ten-thousandth part.) Physicists tell us that they do not yet know how an electron moves within the atom, but that they do know that its motion, whatever it is, has frequencies of the order of thousands of millions of millions in a second.

In that world it would be meaningless to say " the rose is red ". The right statement would be—the atoms forming part of the surface molecules of the rose are of a kind which absorb the greater part of any ray of white light that falls upon them, and reflect that part of the ray

which has a wave-length of about one-eighty-thousandth of a millimetre.* If a human eye happens to pass across a beam of reflected rays of that wave-length, some of them are conveyed through the retina, and affect part of a system of about half-a-million " rods and cones " behind the eye, and ultimately a portion of the brain, causing there a sensation which we name in language by the word " redness ".

The rose does not " smell sweetly ". What it does is to emit continuously a cloud of minute material particles. They are such, and our bodies are such, that, if a number of the particles enter the nose of a human being, they cause, by way of the olfactory nerves, a sensation in the brain for which we have no other name than " the sweet smell of a rose ".

There is no such thing as " sound ". Waves in the air may be started by something vibrating, such as the vocal cords in a larynx or the brass of a trumpet. If an ear is within range, the air-waves cause corresponding vibrations in its drum, with specific effects, through the aural apparatus, upon the brain.

Heat is not a quality of fire. The quality of fire is radiation of particular wave-lengths. When our bodies meet that radiation they experience a feeling which we

* Such is the description that would be given by wave-mechanics; quantum mechanics would express it differently.

call heat. Or contact with an accelerated movement of molecules, in a gas, a liquid or a solid, may give rise to the same sensation of heat.

That the sun does not rise and set, but that we are on a globe revolving on its own axis and circling round the sun, has been known for some centuries. And we have long been aware that the stars are not small, and are not to be numbered merely in thousands. The number of separate stars, which our most powerful telescopes are now able to show us, is of the order of a thousand millions, each one comparable in size with our sun. All these are part of our own galaxy, the Milky Way; while there are many millions of such galaxies. The light from the nearest of these, travelling at its speed of over ten million miles a minute, has taken about a million years on its journey; from the farthest that are visible, about two hundred and fifty million years.

In the universe presented by physical science there is no possibility of ultimately separating space and time; there is only a single Space-time. And there is no such thing as chance. Every event is the consequence of previous events; everything that happens is the effect of a combination of a multitude of prior causes; and like causes always produce like effects. The Laws of Causality and of the Uniformity of Nature prevail everywhere and always.*

* To these points we shall return later.

Such, then, is a second aspect of the universe. It is a materialist aspect. There was a time when many scientists were content to rest there. They anticipated that further research would bring into the same frame all the phenomena that still remained outside, chief among them the phenomena of Life and Mind. Those hopes have so far been disappointed. Those views are seldom heard to-day. Biology has become less and less materialist. Professor Wildon Carr, writing from the standpoint of philosophy, said: "A material thing, say a billiard-ball, is what it is in such a place at such a moment; it is altogether present whenever and wherever it is. A living thing, a germ, or a seed, an animal or a person, is never all that it is in any place at any moment. Its reality is not its actuality, but its potentiality.* At every moment it is more than it actually is at that moment. An acorn is the potentiality of an oak-tree, even though it may be crushed under foot and never develop its nature. The most exhaustive description of the constituent molecules, atoms, electrons, and the completest history of their assemblage, will not express the reality of the acorn. The chemist in his laboratory might conceivably assemble and fit into their exact order all the actual constituents of the acorn, but to synthesize a real acorn he would need to create its past and endow that past with a directing power.

* We might rather say that both are elements in its reality.

to determine its future. This is the great distinction between the living and the non-living; there is no more in the non-living that its actuality; in the living there is more than its actuality; its reality is its potentiality."

A magnet is held over a needle and the needle jumps to the magnet; that is a purely mechanical phenomenon. But watch a chess-player cogitating for half-an-hour whether he shall move a pawn one square forward or the queen two squares back, and finally deciding for the one or for the other; can that process, by any refinement or elaboration, be held analogous to the jump of the needle? Or imagine a dramatist sitting down to write his next scene, or a mathematician thinking out the solution of a problem, or a violinist playing an air from memory—there is something essentially different there from anything which physical science can describe.

You cannot explain a piece of cloth merely by analysing the wool-fibres into their cells, the cells into their molecules, and so to the atoms and to the protons and electrons. Some essential things would be left out. You would be forgetting the mental qualities in the sheep, which allowed them to feed and to breed; their vital qualities which caused the wool to grow; the intelligence, also, of human beings which enabled them to domesticate sheep, to shear the wool, to make machinery and to manufacture the cloth. Omit these, and there would remain the electrons and the atoms, but not the cloth. Essential to its existence are Life and Mind.

Consider the strange phenomena of growth. We are so accustomed to seeing grass grow, leaves and flowers unfold, chickens being hatched out of eggs, that we seldom stay to think how these things come about. Biology tells us that living growth is usually accomplished by the division of cells; it differs from the inorganic formation of crystals in being from the inside outwards, and in using material which is in most cases quite different from that composing the organism. Embryology tells us of the single fertilized germ-cell as it divides, proliferates, differentiates. In an animal embryo some groups of cells become muscle, some nerve tissue, some bone, skin, heart, lungs—each in right proportion and in the right place. Science describes this process as observed fact. But chemical molecules cannot so arrange themselves, under the influence only of mechanical attractions. We are bound to ask—What is it that is happening in each cell to lead it to develop just in that way? Clearly there must be something tremendous happening there.

Samuel Butler, in his *Life and Habit*, contended that a mental process of some kind is at work, some kind of choice; that there is an element of memory, inherited from all past ancestors and crystallized into habit, which determines the action of the germinating cells. Sir Arthur Thomson held much the same view. He wrote: "There must be, one cannot help thinking, some evolutionary urge or *nisus*, *élan*, or impulse, rather subtler than has been yet analysed into either mechanical or chemical

or biological terms. I mean nothing mystical, but something more than tendencies to aggregate, to colloidify, to incorporate, to grow, to multiply, and so on, with all the involved catalysts, hormones and organizers—I mean a psychical urge, the subjective side of endeavour." Again he wrote elsewhere, " It is difficult to think of a germ-cell, of a higher animal at least, as being without its psychical aspect. Unless we think of ' the mind ' as entering in at a later stage in development, the germ-cell must have a dim primordium of the subjective, the promise and potency of mentality."

So the world about us may be seen under a third aspect, the psychical aspect.

All three relate, of course, to the same world. When we speak of the everyday world of common sense being a different world from that of physical science or from the world of mind, we are obviously using a mere figure of speech. There is only one world that we apprehend.

We may make mistakes as to its nature, and often do. Common sense had to admit that the movement round the earth which it attributed to the sun was illusion. Some of the scientific theories of yesterday have been abandoned to-day, and some of those of to-day will doubtless be superseded to-morrow. Sometimes there are incompatibilities which have to be studied and resolved. So far as our perceptions are right, the aspects coincide. Where they do not, our perceptions must be wrong.

But, it may be said, there are plain contradictions. How can we accept, for example, both the " solidity " of material objects as held by common sense and also their diaphanous character as revealed by modern physics? If this wall consists " in reality " of whirling or pulsing electrical charges, through which the rays from a broadcasting station can pass as easily as if it were not there, its " solidity " must surely be " mere appearance ".

That conclusion need not follow. The wall may be both solid for us and not solid for the rays. I cannot walk through the wall because the electrons* that compose it are so ordered as to resist the system of electrons which is my body; but their order is also such as not to resist the passage of the wireless rays. Light rays easily pass through a glass window; but that fact does not make its solidity an illusion for the bee buzzing on the window-pane trying to get out, or for the rain that beats upon it outside.

When the invention of the glass lens and the prism, and their use in telescope, microscope and spectroscope, enabled science to disclose another aspect of things than the customary one, it was generally assumed that this must be the real world, and that the other was appearance. But

* Using the word " electron " in the sense that has become customary, as including all the various forms of electrical units, positive, negative and neutral, which are believed to exist within the atom.

why should that which is newly-discovered be more real than that which is familiar? Why should the atom be more real than the solid object, or the electron than the atom? The protoplasmic cells of which a man is made up are not more real than the man; or the chemical molecules in a cell more real than the cell itself.

So also it is often held that if mind be accepted as fact, matter cannot be so accepted. It is difficult to find a reason for such a view. In the mind of the chess-player there is some process going on which is not material; in the chess-board and the chess-men there is not; both these statements may be true, and they are not incompatible. Thought may be as real as matter and matter as thought. The ideas in the mind of the architect, from which the design of the house has sprung, may be not less real, nor more real, than the house itself.

This is substantially the doctrine of Spinoza. Summed up by Sir Frederick Pollock, in his *Life and Philosophy of Spinoza*, it is expressed as follows: "There is not a world of thought opposed to or interfering with a world of things: we have everywhere the same reality under different aspects. Nature is one as well as uniform."

NOTE TO CHAPTER TWO

CAN we now go forward, taking this position as an agreed starting-point for our search?

It is certainly not agreed. Almost every part of it is challenged by philosophers or scientists of various schools. Those criticisms cannot be ignored or evaded.

On the other hand, the average reader might resent being led into philosophical and scientific controversies, which can hardly avoid being technical, and which some might find obscure. A book is deterrent, when the writer, having stated his purpose and opened out his subject, detains his readers with chapters of argument against opposing theories. Their patience is strained; they are only waiting to discover whether, by some unusual happy chance, he has any constructive ideas of his own to offer. In these circumstances, not wishing either to evade or to deter, I have included statements in defence of the general position that has been taken up in the previous chapter, but have relegated them to a series of Appendices. The reader who is philosophically-minded may find them there, and he who is not may there leave them, undisturbed.

The criticisms touch some of the oldest and some of the newest of the discussions about fundamentals. Whole libraries have been written on them. It is rash indeed to

attempt even to approach them in short sections of a single volume. Yet the attempt must be made; otherwise we should be feeling at every step that we had not sufficiently considered at the outset our right direction.

There are five criticisms to which, in the Appendices, I endeavour to give the outline of a reply.

The first is the basic objection of the Idealist school of philosophy—that all our knowledge is derived through our own senses, and can relate only to our own sensations; consequently there is no possibility of our apprehending " things as they are in themselves ", or knowing, indeed, whether any exist at all. A realist position, such as that which has been taken here, is untenable, it is said, from the beginning.

The second criticism is that the presentation of the aspects of the world about us, which has been offered here, is incomplete and unacceptable, because it does not take into account a further aspect of " Values ". It is urged that such values as Beauty, Goodness and Truth are integral elements in our world, and, rightly understood, are as " real " as anything else, and at least as important.

The third comes from the opposite side. It is the objection of the Mechanists to any essential separation of psychics from physics. They would take exception in principle to a division between mind and matter; they consider that the recent researches of Pavlov and his school have gone far to re-establish the nineteenth-

century faith that all biological phenomena, including those of life and mind, will ultimately be found to be referable to physical and chemical rules.

The fourth criticism springs from the theory of a school of present-day physicists that science, after all, is not determinist. The old doctrine of a uniform Law of Causation must yield to a new "Principle of Uncertainty". The exploration of the structure of the atom reveals, it is said, that not law, but pure hazard, reigns at the heart of nature. If in physics, then also in philosophy, any system which bases itself upon a principle of universal Causality is ill-founded.

Another criticism, with which this last has been linked, but which is substantially independent, raises one of the most ancient of controversies. It asserts that human free will is an indisputable fact, and that it is incompatible with a universal Law of Causation. Therefore the familiar world and the world of physical science, as they have been presented here, contradict each other, since the one admits the freedom of the will while the other insists upon determinism. So we must either admit defeat, and say—Here is a mystery, which it is impossible to resolve; or else abandon the whole position as vitiated at the outset by a contradiction on an essential point.

Those are formidable issues, which cannot be escaped by any who are willing to face the task of "seeking truth in its ultimate depths". But if we resist being led this way and that in deference to the authority of the

great philosophers of the past—all of them more or less in disagreement with each other; if we refuse to be drawn along by-paths, insist upon keeping to the main tracks, are resolved to seek definite conclusions wherever that may in any way be possible; and if we remember that, here as elsewhere, the simplest is often the truest, " simplicity is the hall-mark of truth "—then we may perhaps reach, even in these difficult problems, some abiding-place.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK

We seek the causes of the moral unrest and the tendencies to pessimism prevalent in our times. The discoveries of astronomy are among them.

When the average man, going about his daily life in this familiar world, is confronted with the vastness of the cosmos as it is now revealed, he stands appalled. He has an almost physical sensation of vertigo. It is as though a chasm had suddenly opened at his feet, an abyss bottomless and boundless. In presence of the cold immensities of illimitable space, he feels himself puny and lost.

"Man must reconcile himself to the humble position of the inhabitant of a speck of dust, and adjust his views on the meaning of human life accordingly": Sir James Jeans says that, and his view is commonly accepted. We learn that even the continuance of any form of life upon this globe is precarious. A time will inevitably come when the diffusion of the sun's heat will have made the earth too cold to be habitable. Its ultimate fate will be that of the lifeless moon—

The vastness of the universe is also, if we come to reflect, of no special significance. There is no more reason for man to feel " humble " because the world of stars and galaxies is so much bigger than he is, than for him to feel exalted because he himself is so much bigger than the world of atoms and electrons. These are matters merely of size, and size in itself is unimportant.

Our standards of measurement are arbitrary, and relative to ourselves. We are five or six feet high, so we consider a thousand miles a long distance, a thousandth of an inch a short distance. We live about sixty or seventy years, so we regard a thousand years as a long time and a second as a short time. But nature knows nothing of our standards of large and small, long and short. She can work as easily on the scale of the stars, or on the scale of the electrons, or on the scale of our terrestrial life which lies about midway between. And there is no " superiority " or " inferiority " in one or the other. It is a kind of cosmic snobbery to expect us to feel " humble " in the presence of astronomical dimensions merely because they are big; like the vulgarism of the guide who asks us to admire a marble table because it is the largest in the world, or a picture because it cost an impressive sum.

But what is significant is Mind. Not humility because our planet is but a speck of dust, and our bodies infinitesimal in relation to the cosmic vastness, but rather a pride and an exaltation that our minds transcend it—this

may justly be our demeanour. "More wonderful than the heavens seen through a telescope is the eye and brain that sees them."

> But what to me is Alpha Gemini?
> Why should I follow where the comets go?
> The firmament of Mind is just as high,
> And in its spaces brighter planets show
> Than any the astronomer can know,
> And secrets deeper than infinity.

Consider again our picture of the world about us, in its various aspects. How far is that picture reliable? What does it omit? What conclusions can be drawn?

Accepting the objective reality of the universe, still the question arises, how far, if at all, the presentation given by science can be trusted. The scientific theories of to-day differ greatly from those of a century ago; no one doubts that the theories of a century hence are likely to differ greatly from those of to-day; how then can we put faith in any of them?

But it would be false to say that all is flux and nothing established. The discoveries in physics and in biology which stand, and seem likely to stand, are many. Sometimes, no doubt, a hypothesis has been proclaimed as a fact prematurely. Sometimes mistakes have been made in experiments or in deduction. Sometimes perfected instruments have enabled old observations to be super-

seded by better ones, and earlier theories have had to be revised. It may be that discoveries in the future will show that the structure of the atom is different from what is now supposed, or that the measurements put forward by the astronomers of to-day are ten times too large or ten times too small—or perhaps a thousand times. Nevertheless the general picture remains.

The conclusions of science are tested, every day and on every hand, in their practical applications—in mechanics, communications, manufacture, agriculture, medicine. Everywhere they stand the test. In the main and as far as they go, we are bound to accept them as valid.

How far do they go?

On the physical side science has brought us a long way. The revelation of the inner structure of matter may be counted as the most marvellous achievement yet, in the material sphere, of the mind and hand of man. From the object to the molecule, from the molecule to the atom, from the atom to the electron, the explorers have pushed far into the secret of nature. But they have not brought us all the way. They know well that the heart of the secret lies further still.

Whitehead tells us that, since there is motion everywhere, everything must be an event. "The event", he says, "is the unit of things real." "For physics", he says again, "the thing itself is what it does." Matter he

defines as " group-agitation ", and nature as " a theatre for the interrelations of activities." Other philosophers have said the same; the universe is a process, and the process constitutes its reality. But can we find satisfaction there? One cannot help thinking that if you get rid of everything except a happening, there can be no happening either. Confucius said, " To know what we know, and know what we do not know, that is wisdom." Better to admit that here we reach the point where—as yet—we do not know.

On the psychical side science has gone much less far. Our knowledge of life and mind seems to be now at about the same stage as was man's knowledge of matter three or four centuries ago. Psychology is still awaiting its Galileo and its Newton. The key-science of electrobiology is still in its infancy. Physiologists have just begun merely to time and to measure the electric impulses along the nerve channels.

Only quite recently has it been recognized that the psychical and the physical elements in living organisms are not distinct and separated, one here one there, but that they are inseparably interfused throughout. And we have not even begun to guess how this comes about—not even in relation to our own minds. Sir Charles Sherrington, the eminent physiologist, has felt constrained to say: " Strictly, we have to regard the relation of mind to brain as still not merely unsolved, but still devoid of a basis of its very beginning." In psychics, far sooner than in

physics, we reach the point where Confucius bids us say "we do not know."*

The one sure conclusion that we can draw from our picture of the various aspects of the universe is the negative conclusion, that that picture must be incomplete. These aspects cannot be all. The universe, as we see it, cannot be a "closed system"; it is obviously not self-created; it does not explain itself. Whatever is doubtful, this at least is as near certainty as thought can reach—that there must be something else.

We have spoken of three aspects of the world about us; but that is an arrangement merely for convenience of discussion, and not arising out of the nature of things. There may well be a fourth aspect—a fifth—others beyond. Primitive man was altogether unaware of the aspect of the world which physical science has revealed;

* The speculation may be hazarded that some day the distinction between life and mind may be eliminated. It has been usual to suppose the course of evolution to have been from primal matter, which was neither living nor conscious, to matter endowed with life but not with consciousness, and finally to matter endowed with both. The so-called "vegetable kingdom" is in the second class, the "animal kingdom" in the third. But is this more than an assumption? Is it not possible that, if the simplest organic cell has—as Sir Arthur Thomson be-

for him it did not exist. Civilized man perceives it. And he has gone further; he apprehends, though still only dimly, the next, the psychic aspect. Why should we doubt that there are others as well?

It is often said that the human mind is so constituted that, if such aspects indeed existed, it would never be able to perceive them. A man goes into his library followed by his dog; the dog will be aware of the books; it can see the volumes, smell them, touch them; but by no possibility can the mind of the dog understand the contents, say, of the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* It is commonly assumed that it must be the same with the mind of man and the true nature and ultimate meaning of the universe. And of course it may be so. Considering the origin of man from the lower organisms and the way in which his mind has been evolved, it would be surprising if it were not so. Nevertheless it may not be so.

To primitive man such matters as the microbe, the

lieved—some degree of mentality (that is of awareness, power of choice and will)—this is itself the factor that makes it alive? "'Mind' or 'sentience,'" he says, "is probably conterminous with life itself." We should then not need to assume two mysteries, in addition to the existence of matter—one some "vital element", or Bergson's *élan vital*; the other a subsequent accession of consciousness. There would only be mentality. As soon as, in some way, mentality is added to matter, and not until then, it becomes organic and living.

electron, radiation, the quantum, or the concepts of higher mathematics would have seemed altogether beyond the limits of human comprehension. Yet they have proved to be within them.

It is possible that even now we may be close to some brilliant discovery in psychics which will bring a number of phenomena, not yet understood—such as telepathy, hypnotism, water-divining perhaps, and the methods of communication between insects—into their places in an ordered scheme. Experimental psychology is eagerly seeking a theory of the nature of consciousness which can be established empirically.

By dint of trying, scientists may once more hit upon some sudden simplification: as Copernicus did when all the apparent motions of the sun and planets, which seemed so intricate and confused, were brought into order and harmony by his discovery of the actual movement of the earth; or Newton and Einstein when they presented the theories of gravitation and relativity; or J. J. Thomson and Rutherford, when the discovery of the electron revealed the common principle underlying the diversity of the chemical elements; or Darwin, with the origin of species; or Pasteur, when he proved the similar bacterial causes of many different and mysterious diseases. If that should come about, then man will at last be able to trace the whole course of development, from the simplest elementary stuff to the highest manifestations of mind—" the evolution of gas into genius." Specula-

tion may go yet further, and envisage the discovery of other universes than ours, with radiations of a different kind, waves of a different speed, of which we are now completely unconscious; just as a wireless receiver tuned to one wave-length is completely unaffected by a broadcast on another wave-length.

Who can foresee whether, in the passage of the ages, these realms also, if such there be, may not be brought within the cognizance of man? Herbert Spencer made a division between the known, the unknown and the unknowable. But whether there is an unknowable is itself among the unknown.

However that may be, certain it is that, in our present age, we are far short of such knowledge as this. We must base our thinking upon whatever knowledge we have, hoping to enlarge it as discovery expands. Meanwhile the one point of certainty is its incompleteness. The one thing we know for sure is the fact of our ignorance. There must be something else.

To this point, then, science has brought us. Not necessarily to a dead end; but rather to a region where the broad road we have been following dwindles to a path, and the path fades into faint tracks, which seem to lead towards a new territory, vast and unexplored, that lies ahead of us.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANCIENT CREEDS AND MODERN KNOWLEDGE

Of the great religions of mankind—those that count their adherents in tens or in hundreds of millions—the youngest, Islam, was founded thirteen centuries ago; the oldest, Hinduism and Shintoism, were founded several thousand years ago; the others—Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism—at receding periods between. The world as we see it in this age is very different from the world as it was seen in any of those times.

First, the reign of law in physical nature has been recognized. In the realm of matter at least—whatever dispute there may still be as to the realm of mind—it is established that effects follow causes uniformly and with certainty. "Nature never breaks her own law," said Leonardo da Vinci; "nature is constrained by the order of her own law which lives and works within her."

Secondly, the method of evolution is seen to be fundamental in the universe. The cosmos is a process. It is "act rather than fact". Growth, not sudden creation, is the key to its history.

Thirdly, although the size of the universe is of no special significance in relation to human life, it must have

significance in relation to our idea of Deity. "The heavens", said Hazlitt, "have gone farther off and become astronomical." Our telescopes having revealed to us a universe five hundred million light-years across, with the probability of further immense distances beyond, this cannot fail to affect the conception of a Deity who shall be present everywhere and always and yet be "personal".

In these matters, modern ideas clash with all the ancient creeds; except, indeed, Confucianism, that being a system of ethics rather than a theology or cosmogony. There is, however, another side. In certain other matters modern ideas tend to confirm fundamental features in the old beliefs.

Science, having emerged from the materialistic, self-sufficient phase of the nineteenth century, now recognizes the incompleteness of its own presentation. Since it recognizes that there must be "something else" it gives room for Deity. Indeed, in so far as it accepts, and emphasizes, the principle of causality, and in so far as it perceives that the universe, as we see it, cannot be self-caused, science leads inevitably to the conclusion that there must be a causal factor not comprised within our view of the universe. If this be Deity, then science has made atheism impossible.*

* Mr. Bertrand Russell rejects this view. He says: "To infer a Creator is to infer a cause, and causal infer-

Science, again—having cleared away the old notion of a physical world composed of " substances " which are solid and inert, and also having recognized that there is a vital and mental factor integral in nature—makes a spiritual view of the universe more tenable. Further, since science has itself revealed aspects of the world that were inconceivable by primitive man, it is bound to allow the possibility of other aspects existing which are still inconceivable in our present stage of knowledge.

When we see the whole cosmos as a system, diaphanous, dynamic, radiating, and interpenetrated, somehow, by mind; when we surmise that there are other aspects quite different from what we see; and when we feel certain that there must be a causal element which is

ences are only admissible in science when they proceed from observed causal laws. Creation out of nothing is an occurrence which has not been observed. There is, therefore, no better reason to suppose that the world was caused by a Creator than to suppose that it was uncaused; either equally contradicts the causal laws that we can observe." This argument is open to question. It is true that we can arrive at a causal law only from observation. But once such a law has been established, we can make inferences from it that will extend beyond the range of observation. Creation out of nothing cannot be observed; and it also cannot be inferred from causal laws established by observation. Creation by some agency, not comprised in the cosmos as we perceive it, also cannot be observed;

beyond our cognizance—we are not far away from some, at least, of the ideas that were dominant with the founders of the ancient creeds. "A little philosophy", as Bacon said, "inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

We can see how all these things, taken together —some working one way, some the other—give rise to the confusion of our times. The disagreements of modern knowledge with the old religions, intermingled with the agreements, are the main cause of the confusion. If there were disagreements only, the position would be clearer. The intelligence of mankind would be bound, sooner or later and at whatever cost in turmoil and conflict, to discard the earlier beliefs altogether and to start afresh. But

but, unlike the other, it *can* be inferred from causal laws that have been established by observation.

It may be said in reply that, if the universe we perceive is to be regarded as the effect of causes, for the reason that everything is the effect of causes, then the Creator must also be an effect of causes, and those the effects of other causes, and so *ad infinitum*. To this there is no answer. We come to the problem of the existence of anything, and that we are unable even to approach. But it does not follow from this impotence that we are precluded from saying that the phase of existence which we are able to perceive, namely the universe of which we are part, is not self-contained and self-caused, and therefore must be caused otherwise.

since there are agreements, and on points which are of the very essence of the matter, there cannot be any such simple clearance.

The ancient creeds do in fact retain their vitality all over the world. And each of them commands a great body of orthodox adherents, who go much further than preserving the doctrines on which there is agreement; who insist that the creed must be accepted as a whole, and, as nearly as may be, in its original form. The very fact, they say, that part has been justified by modern science, is a reason why the whole must be preserved and cherished. If not—so runs the argument—if once the authority for any part were admitted to be invalid, no authority would remain for any other part. Surrender anything and you lose everything. Therefore those elements in the ancient religions which present-day knowledge has shown to be incredible are tenaciously defended. They still form part of the daily presentation of the creeds by the organized churches. So the confusion of our age persists.

This state of things, continuing decade after decade and generation after generation, causes immense mischief in many ways.

Millions of people, grouped, usually by heredity, in different religious organizations, stand separate from each other; they feel themselves to be morally apart, alienated, sometimes antagonistic. Where different religions exist

side by side in the same country or in neighbouring countries, there is often continuous friction, culminating sometimes in outbursts of ferocious violence. Worst, perhaps, among all the shameful episodes in human history may be counted the so-called " wars of religion ". For centuries men massacred each other in the cause of their Faith. Those wars are over, but the animosity that instigated them is not dead.

In India, for example, the antagonism between Hindus and Mohammedans is often intense. It makes far more difficult the problems, formidable enough already, of the government of the Indian Empire. It is a constant hindrance to the moral and material progress of the Indian peoples. Occasionally it flames up in fierce communal conflict.*

* For example, the report of a Government Commission describes the rioting that took place in Cawnpore, in March 1931. In the course of a demonstration, " Hindus and Muslims came to blows. This developed into a riot of unprecedented violence and peculiar atrocity, which spread with unexpected rapidity through the whole city and even beyond it. Murders, arson and looting were wide-spread for three days, before the rioting was definitely brought under control. Afterwards it subsided gradually. The loss of life and property was great. The number of verified deaths was 300, but the death-roll is known to have been larger and was probably between four and five

The differences between religions are looked upon as absolute and permanent. Indeed, if the distinctive beliefs, in their orthodox presentation, are sincerely held and acted upon, this divergence is inevitable; and it must continue indefinitely.

I recall that a few years ago the head of one of the principal Christian communities in Jerusalem made this observation to an official of the Palestine Government, who invited him to co-operate with the leaders of the other religions: " How can those," he said, " whose doctrines are inspired by the direct commands of God come to any agreement with those whose doctrines do not rest upon that foundation? "

It is held by almost everyone that these differences, these incompatibilities, are facts in the world situation

hundred. A large number of temples and mosques were desecrated or burnt or destroyed, and a very large number of houses were burnt and pillaged." Although this outbreak was exceptional in its violence and duration, it is by no means unique.

Nor are such conflicts unknown, though on a smaller scale, even in Ireland to-day. In July 1935 fighting broke out in Belfast between Catholics and Protestants and continued for a week. Five persons were killed; some hundreds suffered from gunshot wounds and other injuries; sixty-two houses were burned or wrecked; and over 1,600 people were for a time rendered homeless.

which must be accepted as definite and unchangeable. There is no expectation that any one among the rival creeds, in the form now presented, will be recognized as true by the adherents of the others, and become, within any future that can be foreseen, the single faith of all mankind. So the world, it is held, must shape itself as best it can on the assumption that these are given facts. For all time there must be Hindus and Mohammedans, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Buddhists—each holding, whether by conviction or by loyalty of inheritance, a specific religious creed, in the form, more or less, in which it was promulgated centuries or millenniums ago; each practising its own special observances, with the same differences in doctrine and presentation, as now; each remaining intellectually separate from the rest. Enlightened opinion, it is thought, may perhaps secure a mutual toleration. Where it fails, governments may succeed in quietening passions, or, in the last resort, in imposing peace by force. But that is the utmost that can be hoped.

The divisions themselves are to be accepted as fundamental. Always, as now, there must be people in different places, or living side by side in the same place, who profess religious faiths that are diverse, and in some respects contradictory. It is right—say those who hold this view—or if not right, it is certainly inevitable, that the same doctrine should be regarded as true in Mecca and untrue in Rome; that the record of some event should,

in a church, be accepted as historic, and, in a synagogue, be rejected as false; that a belief such as the transmigration of souls, may properly be held in Asia to correspond with the facts of the universe, and in Europe or America to be a baseless speculation.

So long as this principle prevails, the mind of man must remain bewildered and human society chaotic.

If the crystallizing of the ancient creeds has harmful effects through making their estrangement perpetual, it has effects no less harmful upon each community internally.

Morality ought not to be static. As the generations and the centuries pass, the ethical code of mankind should evolve. It should change with experience, with discoveries, with changes of environment, with the development of ideas. But so far as a code of conduct is prescribed by a religion, and so far as the religion is rigid and unchangeable, this process is inhibited. Rules ordained, once for all, by a supernatural power, cannot be altered by any lower, or later, authority. Fundamentalism stops the evolution of morals. Yet the evolution of morals is vital to the welfare of mankind.

The fixed authority of an ancient creed may have disastrous effects also upon the government of States. It has supported the doctrine of the " Divine Right of Kings ", and must bear responsibility for all the evil consequences of that doctrine in the history of Europe.

The doctrine of Divine Right is often held to give supernatural authority to priesthoods as well as to Kings. It is the parent of clericalism. And clericalism, as history shows, has ever been one of the chief hindrances to social progress. It hampers the natural impulses of men to strive for their own welfare. Under such influence, religion may well become, as Marx described it, " opium for the people." To counter it, anti-clericalism arises. Bitter controversies are waged, which sometimes and in some countries dominate political thought and action for years or even generations, cutting across normal movements for social progress. France and Italy have given examples in the nineteenth century, Russia, Spain and Mexico in the twentieth. This is an ingredient in the confusion of the modern world.

Again, the old orthodoxies carry forward into our own times some beliefs, habits of mind, customs, principles of education, which are clearly harmful to the well-being of man. They hinder him from benefiting by the fruits of his own experience. Regard epidemics as the mysterious work of God and they will continue. Trace their origin to bacterial infection, and take precautions against it, and the epidemics will be stopped.

Almost all the eastern religions foster a spirit of fatalism. The very word " Islam " means " submission to the will of God." Hinduism and Buddhism regard the world either as illusion, or as something evil, or at best worthless. They urge spiritual detachment, rather than

effort for betterment, as the way of salvation. The Buddha declared, " I teach only one thing, suffering and emancipation from suffering "; and the Dhammapada says, " There is no misery like existence." " The Hindu religion in its higher forms," says Dr. Edwyn Bevan, " taught men rather to emancipate themselves in spirit from a world which was incurably unsatisfactory than attempt to make the actual world different. In its lower forms it even incorporated in itself those very customs which destroyed the vitality of the race at its root. So far from disposing men to change them, it made it almost impossibly hard to do so. It made the attempt appear dreadful impiety." Under such teaching, disease, famine, flood, banditry, had a favourable environment. The eastern creeds have helped to perpetuate the very evils the existence of which was the reason for their detachment.

Christianity also has often been ready to sacrifice this world to the next. It has often " insisted on the fundamental antagonism of the inner to the outer life, and made the perfection of the spirit depend on the mortification of the flesh." From time to time it has developed a Puritanism which, passing beyond a fine seriousness and noble self-discipline, has expanded beyond all bounds the sense of sin and excluded all joy.

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

Judaism, again, wherever it has emphasized the doc-

trine of the verbal inspiration of the Pentateuch, and has found an absolute rule of life in its interpretation by the scribes and the rabbinical schools, has developed a restricted and unbalanced system of education; this in turn has tended to produce among the orthodox a narrow, formalistic type of mind.

All the religious creeds have used their authority—not always and everywhere, but frequently and in most places, and especially in the East—to the detriment of women. They have limited the freedom of one-half of the human race; they have lessened the respect of men for women and of women for themselves, and have constricted their lives. In India, again, the caste system, vehemently defended in the name of religion, has degraded, in the course of centuries, thousands of millions of people; child marriage, similarly defended, has caused distress and deterioration beyond measure.

Cast a glance over past history and contemporary conditions. Take all these factors into account. Try to estimate how much denial of happiness, how much physical suffering and mental misery, how much avoidable destitution, disease and death, have been due, in all the countries of the world, to the dead hand of dogma. Who shall find a statistic that could count that total?

Even this is not all. The founders of most of the ancient creeds (all except Buddhism and Confucianism) assumed, as a matter of course, arbitrary intervention by supernatural powers in human affairs. They had not

reached the majesty of the conception of immutable law, of effect following causes with certainty and always.

The Greek religion, as Homer described it, supposed a constant interference by gods in the course of events. Dreams are sent to lead men to take this action or that; defeated warriors are wafted away in a cloud; men's fate is determined, not by the results of their own characters and deeds, but by the favour or enmity of rival gods and goddesses. If we read the epics, not as poetry but as expressing a view of life, they profoundly offend our sense of justice.

Greek mythology survives in the world of to-day only as poetry, and not as a philosophy; but ideas not dissimilar are interwoven in the ancient creeds that still influence the conduct of mankind. The Book of Job, for example, is commonly regarded as one of the highest expressions of religious feeling. But if one looks beyond the unsurpassed beauty of its diction and the spirituality of its yearning for God, it may be seen that, in essence, the Book of Job assumes that man is but the plaything of Deity. There is no belief that the world is animated by a spirit of justice. Virtue may issue in disaster equally with vice, and the majesty of God will justify either. Such a doctrine cuts at the root all striving to reach welfare by ordered effort. It undermines morals. It leaves a stoic fatalism as the only recourse. To sap the belief in the reign of law in the spiritual world, to imagine arbitrary intervention between normal cause and effect, is

not, as is often represented, to provide a sound foundation for ethics. On the contrary, it would rob ethics of any rational basis, and would dissolve moral philosophy in theology.

The mischiefs are many that must be laid to the account of an uncritical devotion to ancient dogmas now known to be incredible. One still remains to be recalled. It is the greatest mischief of all. It is the harm done to religion itself.

The world does indeed urgently need religion. Men will not live like beasts of the field, intent only on material things and physical satisfactions. A spiritual striving is innate. The intellectual conviction that the universe we perceive is not all, leaves us with a sense of void. We have been asked to believe many incredible things, but that there is nothing to be believed would be the most incredible of all.

And religion has been, all through the ages, a chief bulwark of morals. It is " a discipline as well as a faith." It is " morality touched by emotion." Were religion to disappear as a factor in the life of mankind, the whole structure of morality would tremble and sway.

Imagine for a moment that all the religious organizations were to dissolve; that all the religious edifices were to be closed, and all the priests and ministers of the creeds were to cease their labours. Mankind would be the poorer. There has been gathered during the centuries a great treasure, through the lives and teachings of the founders

of faiths, of the prophets and the poets, the saints and the sages, which is a precious heritage of the modern world. It would be a disaster for mankind were that treasure to be dissipated and lost.

Yet we may clearly see, if we look at the actual conditions around us, that there is a trend that way. And the danger is due, not only to declared enemies, but to some among the most devoted and faithful guardians. "Religion is declining", as has been well said, "for the very simple reason that all religions are full of obsolete science of various kinds; especially obsolete cosmology and obsolete psychology." Their defenders, if they be orthodox, insist that they shall so remain. Few would hold nowadays the extreme doctrine of Tertullian—"Credo quia impossibile", "I believe for the very reason that it is impossible"; but many still say, "I believe although it is impossible."

So there is presented to millions of upright men and women, in all countries and of all religious communities, a formidable dilemma, a tragic choice. Either they must reject the definite religious beliefs, and discard the helpful religious communion, that are at hand; or else they must acquiesce in at least some doctrines and dogmas, which intellect tells them are untrue, and experience shows to be harmful. From this dilemma there constantly arises an acute mental conflict. In an agony of spirit, the mind wrestles with the choice—a choice between that which it has been taught in childhood to

believe, which it thinks it should believe, which it may, to its very centre, intensely long to believe; and, on the other hand, that which it finds, in honesty, it can in fact believe. From this conflict many emerge on the side of doctrinal conviction, perhaps with a firmer faith. Many emerge on the side of negation. But very many never reach a definite issue at all; they wander all their lives, confused and wavering, vaguely complaining that " nowadays one does not know what to believe."

So the modern world tends to fall back into formalism, reciting, with indifference, ancient rituals, emptied of much of their meaning. This is why it is—we may clearly see—that the traditional religions often do not grip. This is why there is the divorce between religion and daily life, and one main reason why the contemporary world is bewildered and restless.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTUITION, MYSTICISM, MIRACLES

We are seeking possible lines of further advance; and we must next ask ourselves whether there may not be some other way of progress altogether, some way quite different from the laborious method which takes scientific knowledge as its starting-point and reason as its instrument. When the paths of sense-perception and inductive reasoning fade away, can we not reach the regions that lie beyond by a direct flight of mind or spirit? May not mystic vision and intuition bring us straight to where we wish to be?

The founders and prophets of the great Faiths have proclaimed the reality of personal communion with the Divine. Saints and mystics of every creed have proclaimed it. All over the world sects have been founded, practices have been devised, in the hope of finding apt ways to catch the gleam of heavenly radiance.

Among the Hindus the system of Yoga is ancient and wide-spread. The Buddhists have their Dhyāna, the Moslems Sufism, the Jews Cabalism, the Christians various forms of mysticism. Tens of thousands of men

and women, scattered through the ages and over the world, have felt a certainty that they, individually, have held communion with the Spirit that animates the universe. Many among them have told us of intimations coming in the silence, like a voice speaking—sometimes vaguely, as a music; sometimes definitely, giving guidance, answering prayers or questions. And sometimes there have been visions of ineffable bliss, sudden illuminations from the Divine.*

Far short of this mystic intensity, there is the normal process of the mind which is called intuition. It is akin to instinct. Psychologists tell us that it is in the region of the subconscious. "Every animal, Man included," says a contemporary writer, "possesses two sets of mental activity: the one instinctive, automatic, innate; the other intelligent, plastic and acquired. These two activities are always blended. They may differ immensely in degrees of development, but they never completely separate from each other. The insect mind and the human mind differ mainly in the development of these two factors . . . The Insect, though predominantly instinctive, possesses also

* Accounts of such experiences by Englishmen in our own day have been given by Lord Conway of Allington in his book, *A Pilgrim's Quest for the Divine*, and by Sir Francis Younghusband in *A Venture of Faith*. The Oxford Group Movement is partly based upon a belief in "guidance" of that character.

19566

glimmerings of reason . . . Though the life of Man is so filled with rational judgement, yet underneath are those primitive instincts."

Intuition is, indeed, the basis of all human thought and action. The infant's impulse to movement, to speech, is intuitive. Self-preservation, hunger, sex—all the primary impulses, are intuitive. So are the emotion of sympathy, which lies at the base of ethics, and the sense of beauty, from which springs art.

There is a tendency among some thinkers of the present day to exalt intuition and to depreciate intellect. It is partly the outcome of the recent discoveries in psychology of Freud and his school. It comes partly from the teachings in philosophy of Nietzsche, Bergson and Croce. Political movements in Germany and Italy, drawing their ideas largely from those teachings, have brought this tendency into the world of practical affairs, and have given it a powerful influence in the shaping of events. The importance it has gained in politics confers on the principle of intuition an added prestige. We see all around us what has been called " the retreat from Reason."

This is a matter which affects religion, morals, politics—everything. It is essential to examine it closely.

Do our normal intuitive thoughts and actions come to us out of the spiritual nature of man? Do they come with an authority superior to any which intellect can

confer? Are they the seat of a conscience, divinely implanted, which, if we would only listen to it, would be an infallible guide to right and wrong?

Or are they no more than part of our physical inheritance from the long development of organic life; nothing more than the instinct of the amoeba developed and elaborated; not superior to reason, but merely the outcome of an earlier, pre-rational stage of evolution?

When we pass from normal intuition to what are claimed to be mystical revelations, the problem takes a somewhat different shape. If these are indeed supernatural messages, their authority must be absolute. But are they real messages, objective, coming truly from the Something-else which is other than the world of our perception? Or are they only ideas coming from within, subjective, nothing more than a trick of the brain? Or are some in the one class, some in the other? And, if so, how are we to judge which is which?

Science will not exclude the possibility of authentic messages from without. Cautious in accepting or rejecting theories within her own recognized domain, she will be even more cautious before rejecting, as well as before accepting, theories which relate to the vast region that lies, as yet, outside.

The fact that mystics and ascetics are sometimes of neurotic temperament, and often receive their impressions when their bodies have been brought into a state which is more or less abnormal, need not involve a negative con-

clusion. William James, who did more than anyone to explore this region in a scientific spirit, is clear on this point. He says, in his classic work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*: "If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite receptivity." And again: "Just as our primary wide-awake consciousness throws open our senses to the touch of things material, so it is logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them. The hubbub of the waking life might close a door which in the dreamy Subliminal might remain ajar or open." Or as Bernard Shaw puts it in his *Saint Joan*:

"*Joan.* I hear voices telling me what to do. They come from God.

Robert. They come from your imagination.

Joan. Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us."

The possibility of authentic messages from outside is not to be denied. But possibility is one thing; actuality is another.

In the modern world, the mystic experiences which have been the most fully described and the most carefully studied are those of the Yogis of India. When one reads a book, or listens to an address, on Hindu mysticism, one

cannot fail to be impressed by the sincerity, and the strength of the spiritual striving, that animate that school of thought—so ancient, yet still so vigorous. But doubt soon arises.

It may be that this is truly, as is claimed, a piercing behind the veil of sense, a transcendence of time and space, a vision into the innermost, a real ineffable touch with the Divine. Or it may be that it produces no more than a kind of mental vapour, luminous, rainbow-tinted, beautiful; but self-created; compounded out of emotion, imagination and rhetoric. And when we probe to the core, do we find anything there?

There is a passage in one of the sacred books of Hinduism, often quoted, which deals with the nature of God and of Being. " ' Teach me the nature of Brahman, Reverend Sir,' Baskali besought Badhva. The latter remained silent. The question was again put. The sage was still silent. The inquirer still persisted. The answer came: ' I teach, but you do not understand. Silent is Atman.' " Is this more than saying, in impressive diction, " We do not know "?

A careful student of Hindu mysticism, Professor Émile Marcault, says: " Some of the Yogis, mostly Hatha Yogis, with whom I worked in India, gave me the impression that, after having effected a suppression of their consciousness, they did not necessarily achieve access to anything outside or above the level of consciousness they had left." But he holds " the belief, based on

personal experience to some extent, that the ascension of the Rāja Yogi towards higher states or levels of consciousness *is* possible."

The late Professor Graham Wallas came to the conclusion, after a close examination of mysticism in general, that the experiences were probably the result, in the main, of self-hypnotism or auto-suggestion.

On these questions different people hold, and are likely to hold, different opinions. But on one point there will be general agreement. Every one will allow that not all the claims to inspiration, to divine communion, can be admitted. It is not enough that the mystic should assert his own certainty. Individual certainty is not proof.

William James says: "Among the visions and messages some have always been too patently silly, among the trances and convulsive seizures some have been too fruitless for conduct and character, to pass themselves off as significant, still less as divine. In the history of Christian mysticism the problem how to discriminate between such messages and experiences as were really divine miracles, and such others as the demon in his malice was able to counterfeit, thus making the religious person twofold more the child of hell he was before, has always been a difficult one to solve, needing all the sagacity and experience of the best directors of conscience."

History is full of the records of prophets proclaiming a holy mission who have been judged by their contem-

poraries, or by succeeding generations, to have been false prophets. There may be, not only conscious deception preying upon credulity, but any degree of delusion, up to insanity and religious mania.*

Besides, if intuition, or instinct, were regarded as possessing absolute authority, its earliest expressions would have become permanent. We should still be in the stage of primitive animism, seeing spirits in the streams and the trees, phantom terrors in the jungle, gods in the sun and the moon. We should still be in the stage of augurs and medicine-men, shaping our actions by portents and magic. And we might still be in the stage of the horrible. For if religious imagination gave Apollo and Athene to the Greeks, it also gave Moloch to the peoples of Western Asia, and their bloodthirsty divinities to the Maya. Dr. Otto, in his well-known work, *The Idea of the Holy*, says that " the ' fearful ' and horrible, and even at times the revolting and the loathsome ", are a primitive expression of religion, which is " quite natural ". This, he says, " is later more and more felt to be inadequate, until it is finally altogether discarded as ' unworthy '." But if the intuitive religious sense is to be regarded as possessing absolute authority, how, when once a practice has been

* In Jerusalem, in 1920, I was told that there were at that time three men each publicly proclaiming himself to be the Messiah. The people of the city were so accustomed to such occurrences that no interest was aroused.

adopted, can there ever be a " discarding "? Must men wait for some new and different intuition? And if it comes, how are they to judge between the authority of the new and of the old?

Amid much that may be doubtful this at least is certain, that a claim to revelation, inspiration, mystic communion, is not to be accepted merely for the reason that it has been made.

So also with regard to the intuitions in the province of morals, which we term the dictates of conscience. Conscience may err.

We may open the pages of history almost haphazard and we shall find numberless instances of deeds done by excellent men from the most conscientious motives which later times have unanimously condemned as acts of cruel persecution or ruthless barbarism. Every persecution springs from conscience. Further, one man's conscience will give direction in one way, his neighbour's in the opposite. One man will be a " conscientious objector ", even to the death, against some law or custom which another accepts as obviously right. If it were true that there is a natural instinct, implanted in every human being, which is an independent and infallible guide to right and wrong, then mankind would always have been, and would be now, of one mind on every question of right conduct. Obviously no such unanimity exists, or has ever existed. So it is clear that the fact that a man holds, however sincerely and tenaciously, that " this is a

right thing for me to do ", does not of itself make it so. It is clear also that mysticism, as William James says, " is too private, and also too various, in its utterances to be able to claim a universal authority." The modern world, seeking a foundation for belief, cannot find it in a simple acceptance of any and every mystic experience, or of the dictates of individual consciences. There must be some test of authenticity, some criterion of judgement. Where can it be found?

In earlier ages force was often the simple test. A faith was established by the crude method of suppressing the unbelievers. When it had become supreme, it was thereby proved to be divine. But in the modern world you cannot kill the unbeliever, nor even silence him. And as the nations come more closely into touch it is realized that the infidelity which would have to be suppressed in one place may be the orthodoxy which would be the suppressor in another. Whatever else may be the test, force is not.

In earlier times, again, the seal of revelation was seen in " signs and wonders ", in miracles.

The word " miracle ", as ordinarily used, includes at least four different kinds of events, and it is important to distinguish between them. It may mean an event which is definitely contrary to the known order of nature, such as one material substance being changed into another chemically different; or a stone statue bending its head

or giving utterance to words. Or, secondly, it may mean an event which in appearance is contrary to the order of nature, but which in fact may not be so; such as the cure of an illness under the stress of emotion or shock, or through influences emanating from another person. Thirdly, an event which is normal in itself may be regarded as a miracle because of abnormal circumstances in which it takes place; for example, the breaking of a drought following a prayer for rain. And fourthly, the term is used of occurrences which are represented as not being in the physical sphere at all, such as " messages from outside ", or apparitions.

It is this fourth class of cases that we have been considering, and the question now is whether they can be validated by any of the other three, whether " signs and wonders " authenticate revelation.

Any one who holds that the principle of the uniformity of nature has been conclusively established by science—at least in the material sphere—will need evidence that is quite incontrovertible before he accepts as true the account of any exception to that principle. As an illustration: it is stated in the Old Testament (in the seventh chapter of the Book of Exodus) that, in obedience to a divine command, " Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and it became a serpent." The reader is intended to believe that " a rod ", that is a piece of wood, which if examined would have been found to have had the ordinary qualities of wood-fibre, was suddenly

changed into an animal's body with the skeleton, the organs, the muscles and the skin of a reptile. Incontrovertible evidence that this actually occurred is not forthcoming. In the sacred books and saintly records of almost all the religions there are many accounts of miracles, more or less of the same kind. When it is said that the old orthodoxies require belief in some things that are incredible, the question is often asked whether, after all, there is anything that we can definitely class as incredible. Miracles of this order must be so classed. Even if any one, with excess of caution, were unwilling to allow absolute certainty even there, he could hardly escape this admission that it is far more likely that those who have recorded physical events having happened contrary to the order of nature were mistaken or deceived, or that their records were tampered with, than that such events should have taken place.

If it is said that the events must have been wrongly described, and that they are capable of some natural explanation, that is an abandonment of the claim that a " miracle " had occurred. The event, whatever it was, would no longer have any significance as a test of the supernatural authority of the prophet or saint in whose story it appears.

If it is said that the events must have taken place because records, the historicity of which is not disputed, show that the minds and conduct of great numbers of people were in fact affected, it must be answered that

this is not a proof that the phenomena, as described, actually occurred. It is a proof only that people, who may have been unduly credulous, believed that they occurred—obviously a different thing.

If it is said, again, that the accounts, whether true or not, should be treated as true, because a belief in them has led to results which were beneficial, such a plea—apart from the question of intellectual honesty—is again an abandonment of the miracle as fact. It is a surrender of the claim that the miracle, in itself, was proof of the divinity of the message. Evidence which is accepted only because it is advantageous to accept it, is no evidence.

When we turn to those events, classed as miraculous, which are in the second of our categories—the sudden healing of the sick through the " laying on of hands ", or under the stress of religious excitement—we come to matters which stand on a very different footing. No one can doubt the reality of the influence of the mind on the condition of the body. The physical effects of the various emotions are among the commonplaces of physiology and of medicine. A piece of good news, or a piece of bad news, may have an unmistakable effect upon the condition of a sick man. " Happiness ", it has been said, " is the best tonic." There is no reason, therefore, to question the possibility of many of the recorded cures which have been regarded as miraculous. Dr. Alexis Carrel, in his *Man the Unknown*, giving a wide accep-

tance to these claims, says that "the miracle is chiefly characterized by an extreme acceleration of the processes of organic repair."

But once this is established, is it right to use the word "miracle" in such cases? By showing successfully that the events described may well be true, since they are not, after all, outside the order of nature, have not the defenders of "the miraculous" abandoned their own position? If these events are natural, the question of the reality of the supernatural no longer arises. The psychic influence of the healer, or of the ceremony, is real; the religious emotion in the mind of the patient is real; the physical effects are real; but whether all this is due to direct divine intervention has now become an open question, since both scientists and theologians have come to agree that natural causes would suffice. That being so, the possession of such powers of healing can no longer be regarded as definite proof of a supernatural mission, lending to the utterances of the prophet or saint an absolute authority.

The holy life of an ascetic, again, has often been taken to give special validity to what he says. This also must be considered an unsafe guide. The character of the preacher is no guarantee of the truth of his doctrine. Exceptional virtue is one thing; divine insight may be another. Further, the saints of one religion say different things from the saints of another religion; both cannot be right. The world cannot find here the sure test by

which to judge between this creed and that, between one claim to mystic inspiration and another.

Nor can we escape the same conclusion when we come to our third class of events usually included under the name of miracles—those which are abnormal, not in themselves, but in their circumstances. For the evidence in these cases is never adequate. When prayer is offered and the rain falls, the fact in itself does not tell us whether it is consequence or coincidence. Only repeated experience could show, and that is never forthcoming.

There are those who say that, after all, everything is miracle. "Why! who makes much of a miracle?" wrote Walt Whitman; "As to me, I know of nothing else but miracles." Or as Laurence Housman puts it, "Find something that isn't a miracle, you'll have cause to wonder then." And no doubt this, in a sense, is true. There is no common thing or usual event which, for the philosophic mind, does not touch what is termed the supernatural. But to introduce that fact in this connexion merely confuses thought. We seek to know whether there are special marks of the hand of God which validate the truth of particular revelations. To say that the hand of God is in everything evades the question.

So we find, viewing the matter as a whole, that "the miraculous" does not help us. Indeed it is a hindrance. In the modern world, the clinging to miracles—which for the purposes of this discussion must be defined as events outside the order of nature—is, without question,

one of the chief causes of the weakened hold of religion. It alienates people of scientific mind. Where there is religious doubt, it tries to settle it by methods that cause greater doubt. By offering physical tests for spiritual things, it lowers religion to a materialistic plane. " The craving for signs and wonders," says Dean Inge, " —that broad road which attracts so many converts and wins so rapid a success—leads religion at last to its destruction, as Christ seems to have warned His own disciples." To quote Dr. Otto: " Here, too, as in the case of the fearful and terrible, progress to a higher stage of development shows the gradual elimination of . . . the miraculous; and so we see how, on the more enlightened levels, ' miracle ' begins to fade away; how Christ is at one with Mohammed and Buddha in declining the role of mere ' wonder-worker ';* how Luther dismisses the ' outward miracles ' disparagingly as ' jugglery ' or ' apples and nuts for children '; and finally how the ' supernaturalism ' of miracle is purged from religion . . ."

Is there any other quarter where we may look for the test we need?

Many would find it in the authority of sacred scrip-

* See *The Koran*, Sura xvii. 95, 111, Sale's Translation, pp. 214-15; and C. T. Strauss *The Buddha and His Doctrine*, p. 103: " The Buddha specially forbade his disciples to perform so-called miracles."

tures or of an established Church. But the absolute authority, in every particular, of the sacred books of any religion is unacceptable to modern thought. One of the most eminent among the recent leaders of the Anglican Church, Bishop Charles Gore, wrote: "It seems to me (as to St. Chrysostom of old) quite impossible to maintain the literal infallibility of the Gospel records." And again, "The power of naked appeal to the infallible book—chapter by chapter and verse by verse—was exactly what the New Learning of our day has cut at the root." Numberless declarations in the same sense have been made by writers of authority belonging to almost every creed. But if the authority of sacred books is open to question in any particular, we no longer find in them the certain guide, the final test, for which we are searching. We have to discriminate; we have to pick and choose; we have to apply some other test than the words of the books themselves.

As to decisive authority being vested in a Church, when it is asked on what that authority itself is based, we are led at once into a logical circle. The authority of the Church authenticates the revelation, and it is the revelation that gives its authority to the Church.

Some say that the test may be found in the common agreement of mankind. Find the points in which all the creeds concur and the true voice of God will be found there also. But apart from some simple ethical precepts, there is hardly any doctrine which will command the

allegiance of the Buddhists and Confucians, who comprise one-third of the human race, together with that of the adherents of the theistic religions. Even if they were excluded, this principle would still give no guidance with respect to the many fundamental points of doctrine on which Christians, Jews, Moslems and Hindus differ from one another. Further, the doctrine of general assent would have crystallized religion in its more primitive forms. Seneca maintained that the gods of the Roman pantheon must exist because the belief was upheld by common consent; and Socrates himself is recorded to have declared at his trial that he believed in the godhead of the sun and moon " which is the common creed of all men ". We cannot find here the criterion of truth.

Some take refuge in assuming that there are two separate spheres—that of science which is the province of reason, and that of religion which is the province of intuition. The briefest inquiry shows that both elements enter into both spheres. The brain of the scientist, like every other brain, works at bottom through intuition. In religion it is obvious that the rational and the intuitive elements are intertwined.

Many even of the Indian thinkers recognize that intuition cannot be relied upon apart from reason. The eminent Hindu philosopher, Professor Sir S. Radhakrishnan, writes, " In order to be able to say that religious experience reveals reality, in order to be able to transform reli-

gious certitude into logical certainty, we are obliged to give an intellectual account of the experience. Hindu thought has no mistrust of reason. There can be no final breach between the two powers of the human mind, reason and intuition." And he comes finally to the pragmatic test: " The truths revealed in the Vedas are capable of being re-experienced on compliance with ascertained conditions. We can discriminate between the genuine and the spurious in religious experience, not only by means of logic, but also through life. By experimenting with different religious conceptions and relating them with the rest of our life, we can know the sound from the unsound."

Nor is it profitable to discuss which of the two, intuition or reason, is " the higher ". The word has no significance in this connexion. There seems to be no sense in saying that " Reason is sovereign ", and that the primary instincts, which do in fact govern all human activities, are merely the servants of the intellect. And there is no sense equally in saying that " In the last resort we are bound to follow our intuitions "; that vague irrational inklings, in the sphere of religious belief or of practical conduct, are to be listened to uncritically, regardless of the established facts of science or the plain lessons of experience.

But, it is said, reason itself may err. That is obviously true. The intellectuals are often found to be wrong. Examples may constantly be found in the world of ethics

and of politics, where practical tests can be applied. Again and again general principles have been proclaimed, based upon a study of history and upon moral and political philosophy, which, when put into practice, have been found to do mischief. There is, however, this difference between the mistakes of reason and those of intuition. The former can be detected and remedied by the processes of reason itself; indeed, if rational methods are consistently applied, sooner or later they must be detected and remedied. Intuition does not provide for its own revision. Left to itself, its mistakes persist indefinitely. It is only when the claim to absolute authority is surrendered, it is only when reason is brought in, after all, to the rescue, that the harm done by wrong intuitions can be repaired—in morals, in politics, in religion also.

So we reach the end of our inquiry whether there is some way of advance other than by the pedestrian methods of reason, whether we cannot go straight to ultimate truth on the wings of intuition and mysticism; and we are bound to conclude that we can feel no confidence of reaching any good result that way. I would summarize the reasons that have been given.

Intuition is an integral part of the processes of the human mind. That mystic revelation is possible, science would not presume to deny. But not every claim to divine communion is to be accepted as valid; not every

intuitive impulse, or ruling of the conscience, is to be regarded as reliable. There must be some means of discrimination, some criterion of judgement. It is not, of course, to be found in successful force. Nor can it be found in miracles. Some events which are included under that name may have no supernatural element at all, and therefore do not impart the authority that is needed. Those that definitely contradict the established order of nature are not supported by evidence sufficient to overcome their inherent incredibility. Nor can the test be found in the declarations of an ecclesiastical body or in sacred books, since the churches and the scriptures themselves derive their authority from the revelations which they are to authenticate. Nor can it be found in the general agreement of mankind; for agreement is rare; where it is lacking the test does not apply; and such measure of agreement as may prevail in one age may be lost in the next. There is no justification for dividing religion from science and assigning the one to intuition and the other to reason; nor for accepting either of these as superior to the other. But there is this difference between them—that, although reason may err as well as intuition, it does carry within itself the means of remedy, and intuition does not.

CHAPTER SIX

RELIGIOUS POSSIBILITIES

THE ordinary man of to-day, eager for the peace and welfare of the world, seeking a way out of the confusion of the age, and realizing that there are both agreements and disagreements between modern knowledge and all the ancient creeds, must ask himself in what direction he would wish the religions to move. Assume for the moment that the creeds are not rigid, and that change is possible. What form should that change take? A generation hence, a century hence, where would we wish the religions to stand?

The ancient religions are compounded of elements that are various. They offer explanations of the universe and of man's place in it. They offer a code of morals, and reasons for obeying it. And they offer an outlet for man's emotions—his craving for help in loneliness, for comfort and relief in suffering and sorrow, for the means to strengthen his good impulses and to resist the bad. Out of these elements arises a conception of Deity as at once creator and prime mover, law-giver and judge, father and friend.

Theologians are ready to make the most confident assertions as to the nature and actions of God—His purpose is this, His will is that, His qualities are so-and-so; " as if ", says Matthew Arnold, " he were a man in the next street." We could, indeed, find grounds for such assertions if we were to accept as direct revelation all the accounts given in the sacred books of the religions, or of any one religion, or all the records of the visions of saints and mystics. But we cannot accept these entire and unquestioningly, since we should at once be involved in contradictions and led into some beliefs that are certainly untrue. We are bound to exercise a choice, under the guidance of rational judgement. But the moment we do that, we are seeking a knowledge that shall be independent of specific revelation; and then we find how scanty are the data, falling within the present limits of our understanding, on which such knowledge can be based.

The principle of causation is our best hope. If the cosmos is the effect and God the cause, the nature of the cause must be seen, if only in part, in the nature of the effect. From the music we infer the musician, from the picture the painter, from the thought the thinker, and from the universe the Deity. " The more we understand individual objects ", says Spinoza, " the more we understand God." And since there is mind in the cosmos there must be mind in the Deity.

Minds of the human order have will and purpose. It cannot be supposed that a mind of the cosmic, creative

order, fundamentally different as it must be, would be without those qualities. We speak of " the blind forces of Nature "; the natural agencies are, in the main, unconscious of what they do; but that is no reason for thinking that there is not will and purpose behind them.

Can we go further than these generalities, and find, in human history and present civilization, a fuller indication of the nature of Deity?

Among the thinkers who accept causation and the existence of Deity as the starting-point, and mind, will and purpose as attributes, four different views have been prevalent on the relationship of God and the world. One of these sees God as historic; creation as an act in the past, done once for all; the universe set going under forces which work themselves out automatically through all time. A second view sees God as the author of the primordial laws of Nature but also as perennially active and watchful; intervening, some think, only through a single Prophet or Mediator, or from time to time through a few of the elect; or intervening, others believe, in ways consistent with the laws of Nature, by specific but frequent acts of will. A third sees Deity at work everywhere and always, here and now and in all things: " Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father." The fourth is the pantheistic view, which can find no boundary between God and universe. It conceives God not merely

as external, as Something-else. If a simile is looked for in modern science, it speculates whether the relation between Deity and the world of mind and matter may not be akin to the relationship between a living body and the billions of cells that compose it, each with its own individuality, but each permeated by the life of the whole organism. It is a view that sees in God, as Wordsworth saw,

> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

Or, as Elizabeth Browning said,

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.*

* Epictetus wrote: "Concerning the Gods, there are who deny the very existence of the Godhead; others say that it exists, but neither bestirs nor concerns itself nor has forethought for anything. A third party attribute to it existence and forethought, but only for great and heavenly matters, not for anything that is on earth. A fourth party admit things on earth as well as in heaven, but only in general, and not with respect to each individual. A fifth, of whom were Ulysses and Socrates, are those that cry:—'I move not without thy knowledge!'"

When we ask whether we can find some guide to the nature of God by seeing it reflected back from the world, we have to consider at the outset whether everything that is and happens on our planet is to be looked upon as God's doing. It will at once be clear that it does not matter, in that connexion, which of those four views is taken. Let one man say that, creation having happened, Deity has withdrawn itself from the affairs of the cosmos; let another say that God is ever present and sometimes active; let a third hold that He is the constant mover and guardian of all life and action; and let a fourth identify universe with Deity—it will make no difference here. All four must agree that in the last resort the divine responsibility is absolute. The results of action, and the results of abstention, must equally be attributed to Deity. Abstention is also an act. Ultimate responsibility is indivisible, since nothing is conceived with which it can be divided. If any, then all; you must attribute everything or nothing to Providence.*

On the question, however, which of those four doctrines really corresponds with the facts of the universe, or whether any one of them does so, no one can claim to speak with assurance. So also with the question of the human soul, and its immortality, and a variety of

* This connects with the problem of Evil, which is discussed in Chapter Eight, and with the problem of Free Will, discussed in Appendix V.

other questions: in the province of religion the area of uncertainty is vast. There is therefore a wide scope for reasonable difference of opinion; and differing views will find expression in differing creeds.

Even when there is agreement as to doctrine, there must be variety in the presentation. Religion caters for the whole range of humanity, with all its diverse characteristics—of race and tradition and culture, of sex and age, of personal temperament. It would be wrong to desire, as it would be futile to expect, the evolution of a single standardized religion, uniform in creed and liturgy. Any future development, while it may bring an approximation between the creeds, cannot be expected to lead to an ending of all diversity.

Secondly, a religion, to be effective, must be corporate. Giving room for idiosyncrasy, its constitution must be collective. Many people need to have offered to them, at the hands of some organization, a system of belief. The exceptional thinker may frame his creed for himself, may dispense with churches and start afresh; but not—in the present stage of civilization—the ordinary man, with limited learning and pressing occupations. Multitudes of men, and even greater multitudes of women, find satisfaction in prayer. Although, to the sceptic, prayer may seem to be no more than auto-suggestion, everyone will admit that, for the worshipper, it may be a tuning of the mind to good things; its confessions may make him more alive to his own shortcomings. Fellowship vitalizes

prayer. "Devotional contact", said Oliver Wendell Holmes, "makes a worshipping throng as different from the same numbers praying apart as a bed of coals is from a trail of scattered cinders."

Thirdly, in this and other ways, religion must offer an outlet for emotions; it brings in poetry as a servant of the spirit. Poetry weaves for religion legends and parables, creates symbols and inspires liturgies and ceremonies. It calls in the aid of architecture and music and all the sister arts. It puts us in touch with prophets and saints and martyrs, who lived and enjoyed, suffered and died, for the sake of spiritual things. It brings us under influences that exhale from the traditions of thousands of years; links the past with the present and the present with the future. The sacraments of religion, permeated by poetry, lend dignity and solace to the familiar things of life—to love and labour, birth and death.

This is why no philosophy has ever become a religion. A philosophy may inspire or guide the formulation of a creed, but it cannot itself be a creed. It has been well said that "Technical philosophical terms are inadequate to express human emotions. They call forth in our soul no echo, no resonant notes of any kind; they do not lead us from the pure intellectual conception to the living idea." To the philosopher the universe, the society, are the environment of Man, but to the ordinary person his environment is his home, his family, his town, his country.

Philosophy is not poetry—or should not be. The philosopher, it is true, is always under the temptation to bring in the poetic to lend attraction to his system. Many have yielded to that temptation; Plato among the earliest, Bergson among the latest. It may, of course, be said that the poet has a deeper insight into things than the philosopher; and perhaps he has, sometimes. But that is no reason why the two provinces should be confused. Poetry may build lofty and inspiring structures from materials brought by the imagination; philosophy cannot build that way. Her materials must be of more solid kind, and observation, science, reasoning, must supply them. As Santayana says: "At heart these finer philosophers, like Plato, are not seeking to describe the world of our daily plodding and commerce, but to supply a visionary interpretation of it, a refuge from it in some contrasted spiritual assurance, where the sharp facts vanish into a clarified drama or a pleasant trance. Far be it from me to deride the imagination, poetic or dialectical; but after all it is a great advantage for a system of philosophy to be substantially true."

So also in relation to science. The impulse which moves the scientist may be, in a sense, poetic; and poetry may find noble themes in the achievements and revelations of science. Nevertheless it is not science.

Separated from philosophy and from science, it is in religion that the poetic comes back to us.

It may be asked—if religion is to be, first diverse, secondly corporate, and thirdly emotional and poetic—in what way it would differ from the orthodox creeds of to-day.

We have given grounds for holding that reason must be brought in to check the claims to revelation; that dogmas held on the strength of ancient authority must be opened to revision. Poetry, with a power of its own, must not seek to usurp the power that belongs to knowledge. Truth is to be put in the first place.* The saying current in the time of the Renaissance, that a belief may be false in philosophy or science and still be true in theology, is to be frankly discarded. As Dr. Inge has written, "the healthy human intellect will never believe that the same proposition may be true for faith and untrue in fact." But if these principles are fully accepted and acted upon, they will involve great changes.

Accounts of the origin of the universe which are quite incredible in the light of present knowledge will no longer be included, as they are now by all the theistic religions, in the authorized presentation of their creeds. The belief in miraculous events, contrary to the order of nature, will be discarded. Myth will be recognized as

* "It makes all the difference in the world whether we put Truth in the first place or in the second place." —Archbishop Whately.

myth, and legend as legend. No longer will belief in a localized heaven and hell be made an article of faith. The imagination of man, all through the ages, has peopled space with " intermediate beings ", with angels or demons, with the jinn of Islam or all the rank outgrowth of Hindu theology. That phantasmagoria will disappear. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls has profoundly influenced the civilizations of Asia; the modern mind, in the east as in the west, is bound to recognize that the doctrine rests on nothing better than speculation and assertion. That there is an entity, the individual soul, which finds itself successively in various bodies, animal and human, and proceeds from one to another, upward or downward in a scale of superior or inferior beings, according to its practice of virtue or of vice in each of its successive lives—is inherently improbable, and there is no substantial evidence to lead us to think that any such process does in fact prevail.

The habit of relating some things to Providence and others not—for example, of distinguishing between an escape from an accident and the accident itself, and regarding the one as " providential " but not the other —must needs be abandoned, when it is realized that, if anything, then everything is to be ascribed to Providence. Such is the confusion of mind on these matters that, in an opposite spirit, the English law still describes any unfortunate event which cannot be explained, as specially

the " act of God "; as though anything could be regarded as not being an act of God.*

No longer can the doctrine be held, whether implicitly or explicitly, that myths may be represented as fact to simple-minded people for the sake of beneficial results that may be obtained—spiritual comfort, or a strengthening of social bonds, or a sanction for morality in general. It is said, perhaps with good reason, that " the control of primitive men by delusions was necessary because of their incapacity to understand the real reasons for social order and unity, and to desire these things for their utility." And it is often assumed that a large part of our present population are still to be classed as primitive. Mark, however, the drawbacks and the dangers of connecting religion with delusions. Not only does it alienate altogether men of honesty and intelligence, whose needs also should be catered for, and whose co-operation is at least as valuable as that of the primitive; but in the long run it fails of its purpose; and, when it fails, there follows immense disaster. Sooner or later—and, in these times of wide-spread popular education, sooner rather than

* At an inquest on the victims of a disaster to a flying-boat, the coroner said in the course of his finding: " It was clear that there was no fuel in the carburetter when the engines failed, but if the stoppage was due to an air-lock in the petrol-feed system the accident was an ' act of God '." (*The Times*—March 20th, 1936.)

later—the myth is revealed for what it is. Then—if the whole structure of life and conduct has been built upon it—with the collapse of the foundation the edifice crumbles. As it crumbles around him, the soul of the simple believer may sink into misery and desolation. And the society, whose system of ethics has been so ill-based, will find itself with no moral habitation in which to live. Look round the world to-day, and see how widespread is that danger.

We have assumed provisionally that the creeds are not rigid, that religion may change. Many will say that that is a false assumption: nothing is so fixed as dogma, no one so tenacious as the theologian. Others will say the opposite—that change is proceeding already; that all these contentions are accepted by thoughtful men almost everywhere; that nothing is needed but to let things continue to take their present course. Others, again, see the need of change but are deeply anxious as to the consequence of attempting it; they doubt whether the letter of the creeds can be modified without their spirit being lost.

History does not wholly support the doctrine of unchangeable religions. There has been modification in all the faiths, if not in fundamental doctrine, at least in practice and in emphasis. "The spirit of the age", to quote Dr. Inge again, "as well as the spirit of Christ, has moulded the various types of Christian piety"; and

he points out how one century saw the finest pattern of Christianity in the monk, another in the crusader, a third in the social philanthropist. All religious organizations amend their creeds and formularies, perhaps by imperceptible stages; they select, and they retain or quietly discard; so that the orthodoxy of one period is found not to be the same as that of another. And it is true that at the present time change is proceeding, in some degree, almost everywhere.

In many of the faiths there are definite movements for reform. Within the fold of Christianity there have been successful efforts, during several centuries, to throw off the bonds of Byzantine mediaeval theology; to-day powerful tendencies towards Modernism are evident. Among the Jews of the western countries, Liberal Judaism is a growing influence. In the world of Islam, remarkable changes in religious ideas are taking place, in Turkey, in Egypt and elsewhere. Bahaism is a recent and noteworthy effort which seeks to bring eastern belief into line with western knowledge. New forms of Hinduism are being promulgated in India, and of Buddhism in Japan.

These movements have their significance, but it would be an error to attach to them, as yet, a great measure of importance. Taken at their highest, they touch but a small fraction of the hundreds of millions who belong to those faiths. The numbers whom they influence are trivial compared with the multitudes in all lands who are

silently drifting into scepticism or indifference.

Clearly, therefore, it is wrong to say that the development of religion, which is so plainly desirable, is impossible; and wrong also to say that it is already being effectively pursued.

That it involves risks is undeniable. Whether institutions so ancient can be refashioned without falling apart in the process must be a matter of doubt and a cause for anxiety. Yet if that risk is not taken, the other risk remains to be faced—that a moving world will leave behind the immobile creeds.

So we see, gradually shaping itself in broad outline, a picture of religion as it may be in the coming age. Where there is uncertainty, and room for different views, there will be diversity of doctrine; and there will be variety of presentation to fit national characteristics and personal needs. Religion will be warm and human, and corporate and poetic; for it is not only a matter of intellectual conviction; it is an attitude of mind, an aptitude, as for music. Not all men and women are strong enough to accept their religious ideas stark.

But truth will be put in the first place. A rational judgement will be applied to every phase. Where facts are established, and there is no room for different views, the creeds must of necessity teach the same things. That is bound to be so with regard to the uniformity of nature and the supremacy of law. If the principle be accepted,

also, that everything is to be attributed ultimately to Providence, the effect of that belief will be felt through all the formularies of all the faiths.

A position such as this is subjected to criticism from several sides.

It is said that religion ought to be regarded as transcending the rational, that to give authority to reason degrades it. We have already discussed the relation between intuition, mysticism and reason, and it is unnecessary to reopen that issue. But is there any question of degradation? Many thinkers of deep religious feeling have held the opposite.

One or two examples, out of a number that might be given, may be cited from English writers. Benjamin Whichcote, a seventeenth-century divine, summed up the matter well. "I oppose not rational to spiritual", he wrote, "for spiritual is most rational. Where reason speaks, it is the voice of our Guide; a natural voice, we cannot but hear; it is according to the very voice of our nature. It is also true in Religion, to follow God and to follow right Reason, is all one." Bishop Butler, in his *Analogy*, said the same: "I express myself with caution lest I should be mistaken to vilify reason, which is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself." In our own day, Dr. Inge has condemned "the notion that faith is fundamentally irrational, and its dogmas exempt from

being brought to the bar of ordinary evidence "; this, he says, " entrenches superstition."

A second criticism contends that to assert the supremacy of law would lower our conception of God.

It may be answered that this is no more than a survival of the primitive oriental idea of the Deity as King. See God as a monarch—infinitely greater, no doubt, and infinitely more powerful than any human Pharaoh or King of Kings, yet essentially of the same pattern—and then, indeed, He will not seem fully royal unless He is sometimes arbitrary. But when the mind has once firmly grasped the conception of the eternal laws that rule all things, immutable through the infinities of space-time; and when Deity is seen behind and in the laws, appearing, not in exceptional " miracles ", but in the very existence and process of the cosmos itself—then there is revealed a greatness far more august than any that our forefathers could conceive, even in the noblest flights of their spiritual imagination. Science does not derogate from worship. It may exalt it immeasurably.

Science, it is true, cannot discover, in the general scheme of things, any boundary line between a " natural " and a " super-natural ". There is a frontier real and obvious, though shifting, between what we know and what we do not know. If some choose to call the one " natural " and the other " super-natural ", that is only the chronic tendency of human beings to treat distinctions which are merely relative to ourselves as though they were

something absolute; and no great harm is done. But if an attempt is made to regard one as the sphere of man and the other as the sphere of Deity; and if such a separation is to be taken as an enhancement of the glory of God and of the power of religion—then there is real harm. For the effect must be just the opposite. That would be, in James Martineau's words, " to push all the sanctities into the far spaces we cannot reach." It is only when we discern in nature itself the reign of law, and in the law the hand of God, that we may see a divine splendour in the natural that is about us, and may open an access to what lies beyond.

A third criticism protests against religion being brought into the open air and the crude light of day; it ought to be something half-lit, mysterious, sheltered. But this is to undervalue its native vigour. Religion need not be so delicate a plant as many of those who tend it have thought. It can flourish in the wind and sun and rain, and grow more sturdy than when it is housed in mysteries. If creeds are too weak to face inquiry and discussion, are they strong enough to control conduct?

Risks in the future are possible no doubt, but present evils are certain. We have discussed a number of them, made evident by history and plain to everyday observation. A changed attitude in religion may bring the remedies.

No longer will the reluctance to modify dogmas hold

back the healthy evolution of morals. No longer will theology be held to justify clericalism, and clericalism hinder social progress. Religion may become, not " opium for the people ", but a tonic. It will no longer be seen as something essentially historical; moving merely under an impulse from the distant past; but rather as forward-looking, striving towards ideals; animated by the consciousness that the process of evolution is basic in the universe, and conforming with that process.

Fatalism will yield place to a recognition everywhere of the value of effort. A new dignity will be added to man's status. As has been finely written, " No longer shall men be wondering spectators of a divine task accomplishing in the world, but themselves the accomplishers of it, themselves the hands by which the eternal purpose realizes itself." Under that inspiration, religion, now so generally divorced from daily life, may come back into the home and into the State.

Our emotions will no longer be at variance with our intellect when religion seeks truth as earnestly as philosophy does, or science, and is ready, whenever it is found, " to put truth in the first place ". Then Bradley's confident forecast may come within range of fulfilment: " It is absolutely certain ", he wrote, " that the world will one day achieve the closer approximation of knowledge and aspiration, so that its religious system may satisfy the soul of the saint without disgusting the intellect of the scholar."

Not least important, the discordances and antagonisms between the religions themselves will be mitigated. They will be able more freely to draw from each other the best that each can contribute, in example, exposition, inspiration, for the reinforcement of those precepts and purposes which are common to them all. They will emphasize rather the unity of their aim than the diversity of their approach; there will be emulation between them rather than enmity. So they will help to cure the confusion of the age.

We may see the great religions, and all the independent beliefs, standing, as it were, in a circle; some close together, some far apart. Within the circle stands Truth; nearer, perhaps, to one side, farther from another. If they turn their backs on her, and each go in search of some distinctive way, the circle will grow wider and the faiths more separate. But if they face inwards, and try to approach the place where Truth is, they will be drawn nearer together; and should they at last come within reach of her hand, they will find that they are able also to grasp each other's.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FACT OF EVIL*

We ask whether we can deduce, in some degree, the nature of God from the experience of man; at once we are faced by the problem which has vexed the heart and the mind of humanity all through the ages—the problem of the existence of evil. It is the ancient question, "Why do good men suffer evil if there is a just Providence?" The good in the world, the virtue in man, argues, it is held, the benevolence of God. Does then the bad in the world, the vice in man, argue malevolence; or, at best, a careless indifference?

The intellect will not be satisfied with the answer that here is a mystery, beyond comprehension, to be accepted with the submission of humble faith. And there are many reflecting people, throughout the world, who are not content with the answer that unmerited suffering in

* Parts of this chapter, and some passages also of Chapter Three, were included in my Presidential Address for 1933 to the British Institute of Philosophy, published as a booklet, under the title *The Tree of Good and Evil*, by Messrs. Peter Davies, Ltd.

this world will be compensated, and more than compensated, by immeasurable happiness, after death, in another. Nor can the question be evaded by denying the fullness, ultimately, of divine responsibility, since nothing is conceivable with which it can be shared.* Those sturdy warriors of the spirit, the old Hebrew prophets, were not afraid to face the issue squarely. "Shall evil befall a city, and the Lord hath not done it?", said Amos. "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am the Lord, that doeth all these things," said Isaiah. And again: "I have created the smith that bloweth the fire of coals, and bringeth forth a weapon for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy."

Nor can we find refuge in some illusion that evil is non-existent. We may pass in imagination across the world, and we shall find everywhere the tale of suffering. Here an earthquake has destroyed a town and with it a

* Even in the present day, however, a strange Manichaean duality is sometimes preached. For example, Dr. Winnington-Ingram, the Bishop of London, in a sermon on the Great War delivered in 1916, said, "You have no right to blame God; it's the work of the Devil. God is hindered at every moment by the Devil and all his works; you cannot therefore blame our great and glorious God for the defeat of his design." (Reported in the *Christian World Pulpit*, Feb. 16th, 1916.)

thousand innocent lives; there a drought and there a flood, has brought famine or destruction. Here is a man broken by an accident; and here a woman dying of an agonizing disease; and here a child doomed from birth by some inherited defect. Everywhere are the victims of inhumanity—those who pay the toll to war, or crime, or sin, or social injustice. When the Stoics said " there is no evil ", they were using hyperbole, not expressing a fact. They meant—steel yourself against evil, and you may regard it with as much indifference as if it did not exist. But it is plainly not true that there is no evil in the world.

We must try to find some other approach.

Assume three conditions. First, that there is to be life, and that it is to be conducted on a finite space, like this planet. Second, that life is not to be static, created from the beginning in all its fullness, but is to evolve. Third, that the living beings shall be so constituted that they have mind, and some power of choice; within the limits set by their own nature and by their environment, they are to be responsible for their own welfare. Assume that a world of this order exists. Certain consequences must inevitably follow.

The power of choice must involve the possibility of error—that is of the essence of choosing. And error must involve some kind of penalty—for that is of the essence of error. If men, therefore, are to bear the immediate

responsibility for their own welfare, they have to choose at every moment between actions that will promote welfare and actions that will injure it. When, for whatever reason, they decide wrongly, either as individuals or as communities, their welfare suffers accordingly. They speak then of evil befalling them. The enjoyment of freedom necessarily involves the possibility of evil.

Consider the fact of death in relation to those conditions. If there is to be birth, there must be death. Unless there were departures, a time would quickly come when there could be no arrivals, since the area of the finite earth would be filled. We can imagine a world in which there was neither birth nor death; but not a world in which there was one without the other. And a world of immortal beings, who were never replaced, could hardly be other than static. Certainly the evolutionary plan, which in fact prevails throughout organic nature, does require that one individual should be superseded by another, one generation by the next. Death itself must therefore be an essential element in such a system. When a death is premature, or violent, or painful, it is clearly among the evils; and it is almost always an evil from the standpoint of the individual. But if we try to view it in relation to the general scheme of things, we may see that the evil is in the untimeliness, or the violence, or the pain, or it is in the bereavement. Death itself is socially a good. The egoistic instinct leads us to abhor death and to resist it; the social instinct

should lead us to accept it, in its due time, without repining.

It is recorded that Xerxes, the King of Persia, who had gathered vast forces at the Hellespont for the invasion of Greece, caused a lofty seat to be set up on a hill from which he could survey them. "But when he saw," says Herodotus, "the whole Hellespont hidden by his ships, and all the shores and plains of Abydos thronged with men, Xerxes first declared himself happy, and presently he fell a-weeping . . . 'For,' he said, 'I was moved to compassion when I considered the shortness of all human life, seeing that of all this multitude of men not one will be alive a hundred years hence.'" But it would surely have been a truer cause for tears if some fate had condemned them all to immortality; if the King had had reason to foresee that in a hundred years, and a thousand years, and ten thousand years, all those men, and himself with them, would still be cumbering the earth, and that all the new life that would otherwise have replaced them was foredoomed never to be. There is pathos in the things that pass, but in things that never passed there would be despair.

If the people of Xerxes' day had been given immortality, we ourselves should never have come into existence. But why should it be assumed that the change had been effected only in their time? The world would have been filled long before by an immortal race of Simian men; or rather, ages earlier, by lower forms of life; prob-

ably by the most primitive organisms, which coming first would have occupied the whole planet. It seems a paradox, but it is none the less true, that if we had been made so as to live for ever, we could never have lived at all. We can only count death as an evil if we count a world of amoebae as better than a world of men.

Death, it is plain, is the condition for birth. If some Messenger were to come to mankind with the offer that death should be overthrown, but with the one inseparable condition, that birth also should cease; if the existing generation were given the chance to live for ever, but on the clear understanding that never again would there be a child, or a youth or girl, or adolescent love, never again new persons with new hopes, new ideas, new achievements; ourselves for always and never any others —and if the answer to that Messenger were to be given by the light of dispassionate reason, could there be a doubt what it would be?

Among physical evils, pain is usually accounted the chief. Here again, if human beings were immortal, and were immune from injury no matter what they did—no matter how they might bring their bodies into collision and conflict with the material world around them, no matter how they might choose to feed them—then they could dispense with pain. But since that is impossible, pain is a necessity. Its marvellous apparatus of sensory nerves and swift mental reactions is not an infliction,

but a precious endowment. It gives warning against injury or disease that might lead to mutilation or death.

Turn for a moment from human conditions to those of the animal world. It is commonly held that a ruthlessness of mutual slaughter prevails there, chronic and universal, which heavily weights the balance in the general scheme of things on the side of evil. But examine the facts a little more closely.

We must be on our guard against applying the standards of our own nature to a sphere they may not fit. We know little either of the satisfactions or of the sensibilities of other creatures. In the relations between individuals of one species and another, it seems that the emotions of sympathy and pity are usually absent; but it may be that the sensitiveness to pain, and the emotions of alarm, terror, and despair are of quite a different order from what they are among ourselves. Especially does this seem likely among the insects, where mutual conflict appears to reach the greatest pitch of ruthlessness. Consider, for example, this instance given by Professor Wheeler, one of the leading authorities on the social insects. "While an ant", he tells us, "is feeding on nectar or syrup her abdomen may be snipped off with a pair of scissors, without interrupting her repast." We are observing a different world.

It is of interest to recall the conclusions reached by two thinkers, of great eminence, who had devoted them-

selves to intimate study of animal life, and whose own characters were marked by a humane kindliness. Alfred Russel Wallace wrote: "Now that the war of nature is better known, it has been dwelt upon by many writers as presenting so vast an amount of cruelty and pain as to be revolting to our instincts of humanity. Now there is, I think, good reason to believe that all this is greatly exaggerated; that the supposed 'torments' and 'miseries' of animals have little real existence, but are the reflection of the imagined sensations of cultivated man and woman in similar circumstances; and that the amount of actual suffering caused by the struggle for existence among animals is altogether insignificant . . . On the whole, then, we conclude that the popular idea of the struggle for existence entailing misery and pain on the animal world is the very reverse of the truth. What it really brings about is the maximum of life and of the enjoyment of life with the minimum of suffering and pain. Given the necessity of death and reproduction—and without these there could have been no progressive development of the organic world—and it is difficult even to imagine a system by which a greater balance of happiness could have been secured." Charles Darwin took the same view. "When we reflect on this struggle," he said, "we may console ourselves with the full belief that the war of Nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply."

But when these things have been said, not all has been said. Other facts remain, obvious and inescapable, affecting the whole range of human life; facts of unnecessary deaths, of excessive and apparently gratuitous pain, of innumerable cases of physical and moral suffering undeserved by the sufferers.

On this there are three main considerations which may be called to mind.

The first is that, if man has to bear the disadvantages that belong to a world that is not static but evolving, he can also gain the advantages. The world is a process. Evil conditions, like all else, are to be regarded, not only as what they are, but also in relation to what they may be becoming. The stream of events carries them along with the rest, out of the past into the future; they may be changed or stopped as they pass.

The animals have to await, unconsciously, their adaptation to their environment, in the course of an evolution spread over numberless generations. Civilized man may, in some measure at least, consciously adapt the environment itself to his own needs. In doing that, he diminishes evil.

For the people of ancient Egypt, for example, there was no greater calamity than the failure of the Nile flood. It caused distress throughout the land; repeated a second year and it brought destitution; a third year—famine and death. Hardly less disastrous was an excessive rise of the river; the inundation would sweep through

the country drowning and destroying. And nothing could have seemed to those people more absolutely beyond the control of man than those hostile phases of the formidable river. Here, if anywhere, was the work of the unseen Powers, or of destiny, or of chance; to be averted, if at all, by prayer and sacrifice, or perhaps by virtuous conduct; if not averted, to be accepted, with resignation and fortitude, as a clear example of the inevitable evils which mysteriously, and regardless of justice, afflict mankind. Yet now these very evils have in fact been struck out from the long catalogue of human woes. The ancients built temples to propitiate the mythical gods of the Nile; the moderns build dams to regulate its flow. The Government of Egypt has brought into being great lakes as reservoirs, hundreds of miles of canals, thousands of sluices; an expert direction supervises the irrigation, and the peasant, cultivating his land, can feel secure that the water will come, not too little and not too much.

Pestilences used to sweep over whole continents—the Black Death, the plague, cholera. The disease entered town after town, house after house, bringing everywhere suffering, mental agony, bitter bereavement. Those were patent evils. They too were thought to be inevitable—the acts of God. Yet they are past. There is no more Black Death; epidemics of plague and cholera are rare, and are stopped at the start. Preventive and curative medicine in its triumphant march, generation after gen-

eration, is striking disease after disease from the list of evils.

Sometimes the pessimist has hardly completed his indictment when the grievances he quotes to support it have gone. Schopenhauer set out to prove that evil dominated the world. He instanced those who "bear misery, need and death, without measure and without object, in the form, for instance, of millions of negro slaves, or of the three million weavers in Europe, who, in hunger and care, lead a miserable existence in damp rooms or the cheerless halls of a factory." Within twenty years from the time he wrote, American slavery was abolished; within fifty years, the conditions of the textile workers in Europe, though still far from satisfactory, had been improved out of recognition.

If men were wrecked in storms at sea, they learnt to construct ships so large, and with motive force so powerful, that they could outride the storms; they invented compasses and sextants, developed the science of navigation, put lights around their coasts. If their dwellings were struck by lightning or overthown by earthquakes, they learnt to divert the lightning, and even to erect buildings that would often withstand earthquake. If they starved on a niggardly soil, they migrated by millions to more fertile countries. If aggregation in great cities brought new ailments and diseases, they found ways to avoid polluting the soil on which they lived, the water they drank, the air they breathed. Anodynes were devised

to mitigate pain. The social evils that sprang from the oppression and corruption of governments were lessened by the advent of democracy. It would be useful if someone could invent a system of negative statistics which would count the evils that do *not* occur!

Some calamities, indeed, arising from the physical conditions of the globe we inhabit, must be reckoned as inevitable. On June 30th, 1908, a great meteor fell in the Yenisei district of Siberia, blasting out a number of great craters, and destroying by fire a thousand square miles of primeval forest. In some earlier age a meteor struck a hole nearly a mile wide in what is now the desert of Arizona. If ever some fearful catastrophe were to result from such a cause—although the chances against it are immense—it would obviously have to be counted as an inevitable evil. We have constant experience that people are killed unavoidably by hurricanes and by lightning, and that towns, which have been built neither of steel and concrete on the one hand, nor of bamboo and paper on the other, are overthrown by earthquakes. But although there are categories of physical evils which are difficult or impossible to escape, these are exceptions. In the main, viewing things as ever in the process of change, we see that many ills of yesterday are gone to-day, and this gives us the right to believe that many of the ills of to-day may be gone to-morrow.

The second point to be called to mind is that the issue

is not one in which the individual finds himself, alone and unaided, face to face with the conditions of life, an unequal battle between the man and circumstance. In between is the social unit.

Each of us is a member of social organizations of various forms—the family, the city, the State, all kinds of associations of interests, parties, creeds, nations. We have the advantages of membership, and we have the disadvantages. Each man gains by the achievements of others, in previous generations and in his own generation; and he suffers from the faults and errors of others, in the past or in the present.

If any evil that happens to us is traced back to its causes, it will be found that—apart from natural catastrophes—it is due, immediately or ultimately, to the fault or error of some person or body of persons. It may be ourself, or it may be another person, or many others; through acts of commission or of omission; at the time or earlier. The evil is not an arbitrary blow from the hand of some fictional "Fate", of some "Necessity" formless and mindless, before which effort is futile and hope is vain. It is the consequence of the action—or frequently the inaction—of human beings.

Since man is a social animal, his acts are usually co-operative. When a group or society does rightly, all the members may gain; when it does wrongly, and therefore suffers a penalty, each member may share in the suffering. One country takes precautions against epidemic

diseases, and all its citizens benefit by the immunity; another does not, and any one of its citizens may be stricken and die. If, in such a case, we take the individual as the unit, there is injustice; but if we take the society as the unit, there is not.

The scheme of things is based on human solidarity. Corporate activity, rightly directed, by every social entity from the single family up to the comity of nations, is necessary to welfare. The evils that a man suffers may be due either to his own failure or to a corporate failure. The suffering is the means by which men are impelled to avoid failures, whether caused by individual error or by corporate error.

Here again the position must be seen, not as static, but as changeable and changing. The social environment can be modified, like the physical environment, and far more easily. Ignorance, vice, crime, disease, war, may yield to the forces of advancing civilizations; and, as they diminish, " the evils from which good men suffer " will diminish also.

The third consideration is the need of maintaining a proper sense of proportion. We have to strike a balance; and we must do it fairly, objectively, not over-weighting, because of our own temperament or mood, either side of the scales.

We are sometimes tempted to believe that the troubles of life bulk in the same proportion as the attention that

we give to them. Columns of our newspapers are filled with accounts of disasters, crimes, riots, wars; and it often seems as though the whole world were in a chronic state of calamity and turmoil. The impression is largely due to the fact that nowadays every incident is reported instantly, from every quarter of the globe, by methods unknown to previous generations. The presentation by a quicker and wider news-service suggests a more chaotic world. It is right, indeed, that attention should be specially directed to crimes and disasters. The news-services are the sensory nerves of society. Warning is given that may prevent repetition, and allow opportunity to provide a remedy. But this is no reason for thinking that the bad constitutes the whole, or even a substantial part of it.

The workhouse, the prison, the asylum, the hospital for incurables, are facts; they come into the reckoning; but they are not the town. So also in surveying the records of history. We look back over the long level stretches of the past, and we see the striking events standing up like woods or hillocks—the wars, the religious and political conflicts, the plots and the persecutions, the plagues and the earthquakes—and in the retrospect it seems as though they filled the whole country. But we know that, inconspicuous, between the woods and the hillocks, are the fields and the villages, where generations of men and women have carried on peacefully their daily avocations.

The modern mind—determined to put truth in the first place; profoundly influenced by the experience of the Great War; filled with anxiety as it sees the forces gathering which may bring about a repetition; sensitive to the wretched social conditions that blight the lives of a great part of the world's population—will not consent to be soothed by illusions. It is angered rather than comforted, by " robust optimism " of the nineteenth-century kind—

God's in His Heaven—
All's right with the world.

It has learnt, too, that the great discovery of nineteenth-century science does not, as was thought, bring reassurance; evolution does not guarantee progress. There is no automatic force in the nature of things which will carry us forward irrespective of our own efforts. Biology finds too many examples of the deterioration and the extinction of species, and human history too many examples of the decline and the disappearance of civilizations, to allow us to rest in the simple faith that the discovery of the principle of evolution disposes of the problem of evil.

In reaction, a wave of pessimism is evident in present-day thought. Life is seen by many as something to be put up with; to be endured without zest; to be accepted with resignation because we can do no other. Yet this also is an unfair tilting of the balance.

When we try to view the cosmic process as a whole; when we envisage the birth of the worlds, the coming of

man, the growth of civilization; when we take account of the value of human freedom; and when we look round and see the achievements of science and art, and the profusion of simple things that make people happy—it seems blind folly to contend that the evil in the world outweighs the good. If we can tune our ears to catch the authentic chant of nature, we shall hear a music swelling from her innumerable voices which is not a dirge but a paean, a song of life abounding and triumphant. And if in our world there are vales of tears, there are hillsides also of joy and laughter, and peaks of splendour shining in the sun.

The conclusion cannot be pessimist. Nor can it be optimist, if by optimism is meant a denial of the reality and the prevalence of evil, or a belief that it will be cured of itself. Rather should it be " meliorist ", to use George Eliot's term—a conviction that the present is on the whole better than the past, and that the future may be better still, but that effort is needed to make it so.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RIGHT AND WRONG*

Our times are lacking in agreed standards of right and wrong. People were accustomed to look to the religion into which they were born to furnish them. But now the adherents of each religion are more fully aware of the existence of other religions, proclaiming sometimes different standards. The authority of all of them is questioned. Revelation, intuition, conscience—no claim can be accepted uncritically. Dogmas and precepts must all be submitted to the rational judgement. Where shall reason itself find a criterion?

We expect philosophy to provide it. But it must be confessed that philosophy gives little help. For a long time the Idealist school dominated philosophic thought.

* This chapter and the next, and Appendix V on Free Will, cover parts of the same ground as my book *Practical Ethics*, published in the Home University Library by Messrs. Thornton Butterworth in 1935. The substance of some of the paragraphs included here has also been included there.

Platonists and Neo-Platonists, Kantians and Hegelians, set out to find the Idea of Virtue, the Absolute Good, the Categorical Imperative, the Ultimate Values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. From these guidance was to be drawn for the life of man. After two thousand years of search along that line, no system has been found which commands general acceptance. There is indeed no school of philosophy of any kind to which we can point and say —here is the teaching which gives to mankind the rational basis for practical morals.

Thinkers of the eighteenth century propounded a doctrine of Natural Rights. It was asserted that each man came into the world endowed with certain rights in relation to society. They were fundamental; all laws and customs must conform to them; by them could be determined the standards of right and wrong. The theory of Natural Rights had a profound influence upon the politics of the time. The American Declaration of Independence stated in its Preamble: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Thirteen years later the French National Assembly declared, "The end of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; and these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance of oppression." A truth, however, is not "self-evident" unless it is such that no sane man

will deny it. These principles have constantly been denied. At the very time, indeed, that the Declaration of Independence proclaimed the inalienable right of all men to liberty, negro slavery was a legalized institution in the United States, and it remained so for nearly a century afterwards. In many parts of Europe in our own day the claim to liberty has been challenged by philosophers and rejected by dictators. The " natural and imprescriptible right of property " is repudiated by a hundred and seventy millions of people in Russia. Assertion is not enough. It is not enough to proclaim that this or that is " self-evident ". If someone says that, for him, it is not self-evident, what then?

Thinkers of the nineteenth century believed that a firm basis for ethics was to be found in the principle of Evolution. Nature had decreed a struggle for existence as the means to the survival of the fittest, and so to the progress of the species. Harsh, even cruel, in its working, the process was ultimately beneficent. Here, then, was the test of right and wrong. Whoever conformed to nature's decree was doing right; whoever tried to impede it was doing wrong, as well as attempting the impossible. This process, pervading the life of sea, swamp and jungle, must apply also to human societies. It was held to justify an unrestrained economic competition between individuals, a conscienceless bargaining between interests, a ruthless struggle between States. Industrial oppression was part of the natural order of things, and war the

ordained instrument of the progress of mankind.

Closer thinking soon showed that all this was fallacious. The very term " Law of evolution " was seen to be misleading. It is unfortunate, and the source of much confusion, that the word " Law " is used in two quite different senses, one in science, the other in ordinary affairs. " The Laws of Motion ", for example, or " the Law of Evolution ", are not commands; they are simply names for processes, for sequences of events. They have nothing in common with a moral law, such as " Thou shalt not steal ", or with the laws enacted by legislatures and enforced by penalties. There are no " commands " issued by " Nature ", for " Nature " has no personality—is indeed nothing more than a useful figure of speech. If we will, we may imitate the methods of the sea, the swamp and the jungle; or we may find better methods, if we can; and there is no cosmic legislation to enforce the one or to forbid the other.

Further, as Huxley pointed out, " survival of the fittest " does not mean survival of the best. It means no more than " the survival of those best fitted to cope with their circumstances." It often leads to degeneration and not to the development of higher types. Evolution in nature, then, furnishes for man no moral standards of any kind. The attempt to find them there failed, having worked much mischief in the meantime.

There is yet another possible basis for an ethical code, seldom advocated nowadays, but accepted in earlier times

almost universally—the custom of the community. "Originally," says Bergson, "custom is the whole of morality, and as religion forbids departure from custom, morality is co-extensive with religion." The idea is enshrined, for example, in the ancient Hindu laws of Manu: "the custom handed down in regular succession since time immemorial is called the conduct of virtuous men." But this involves the conclusion that whatever are the laws and customs of a particular society at a particular time must be accepted in perpetuity. It would compel us to believe that "cannibalism is moral in a cannibal country." Ethics becomes a stereotyped code, and no generation may ever seek a better standard of conduct than its predecessor. We need hardly stay to examine more closely that creed. Civilization emerges from barbarism precisely through the discovery that the right is not identical with the customary.

After so many negatives where shall we find our positive? If neither theology, nor intuition, nor natural rights, nor the principle of evolution, nor established custom can give us the test that we need, where shall we find it? Is there no answer to the challenge of the sceptic —After all, what is Right and Wrong?

While the idealist philosophers have been striving to find some *a priori* principle of ethics, the ordinary people of the world, who have to live, and to live in communities, have been silently developing, all through the ages, their

own systems of practical morals. While philosophers have been trying, as it were, to construct the roof first and then hang the house from it, the people have been building, brick by brick, from the foundations up. And the house stands. The philosophy for which we are searching is there all the time—is in practice all around us; only we do not recognize it as a philosophy because it is not dignified by the name. It uses no technical terms; but in effect it abandons the *a priori* and proceeds *a posteriori*. It adopts the simple rule that right is that which leads to good results and wrong that which leads to bad results.

Ideas, principles, laws, customs, actions, are to be judged by their consequences. They are to be accounted right if they will conduce to welfare, and wrong if they will not.

At once the question presents itself—What is meant by "welfare"? To this no short answer can be given. Welfare cannot be defined in a single phrase. It is the collective name for a great number of different things, each one of which is beneficial.

We see in the world about us what, in general, these things are. Some arise out of our physical characters. Health rather than sickness; a meal when one is hungry; a rest when one is tired; a shelter from the weather—that these are "goods" is indeed self-evident, for this at least no sane man would deny. There are satisfactions derived from sympathy and love and the fulfilment of duty. There are the gifts of art and science, and all the achieve-

ments of a high civilization. There are pleasures, innocuous in themselves, that gratify the mind or the body. " ' Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale? '—' Yes, by Saint Anne; and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth, too! ' "

It is not possible to bring all these into a single definition of welfare, or of " the Good ". Any definition wide enough to be complete would be too vague to be useful.

What guidance, then, is given by this principle when we are trying to decide whether any particular thing is good or not? Apart from the obvious physical cases of health and the like, how are we to evaluate " goods "? What kind of civilization is to be considered " high "?

The answer here must be that, in this as in all else, intuition and reason must combine to guide us. Experience is the chief test. Discussion, experiment and example are the means to a conclusion. In some matters, indeed, it makes no great difference what the choice is. A preference for one flavour or one odour rather than for another, for one kind of music or for one kind of scenery—these raise no ethical questions, and individual taste is the arbiter. But where different results do follow from the choice, then the test is to be found in the probable consequences. The conclusions reached, in each case or group of cases, by individual judgements, and ultimately by the common sense of mankind, set the standards of good and bad, establish the rules of right and wrong. If

fuller experience shows that a conclusion was mistaken, or if new conditions render it no longer sound, then, by the same process it may be changed. Thus, over long periods of time, sometimes by slow imperceptible changes, sometimes suddenly and after vehement controversies, the customs of society have been evolved and our ways of living established.

Countless are the issues which have had to be solved, or are now being solved, in the age-long and world-wide process of history. Human sacrifice, tribal raids, slavery —are these good or bad? Is toleration in religion a right policy? Is the duel the right way to settle disputes? Is war on the whole a good thing or a bad thing? These are examples. And on the narrower scale of individual conduct, every day and everywhere we have to choose whether this object or that is good; if both are good, which is the better; if both are bad, which is the lesser evil. We are always asking ourselves what are likely to be the results, direct and indirect, of our choice, whether they will make for welfare or against it.

Does this mean that each person on every occasion has to consider afresh all the possible consequences of the action he may be taking? If so, the result must be moral chaos; the task would be far beyond the powers of the deepest and quickest thinker, much more of average men and women. And does it mean that such general conceptions as virtue, duty, good character, are to be dropped? That would be the negation of morality.

Neither of these follows. Consider what has in fact happened. In course of centuries this thing and that, this action and that, have been found by experience to be "good". The human intelligence has grouped the particular goods together. This class of things or of actions is good, that class is bad. There come into being general rules of conduct. Social customs develop. They are formulated, fortified, expanded, by religious creeds and legal codes. Sometimes a prophet, a seer or a poet will sum up in a flash the diffused, and perhaps unrealized, experience of generations; his insight is recognized, his teaching accepted, his authority afterwards points the way. Or the lessons of the past may be crystallized in a proverb, which becomes the popular guide in current cases. In ways such as these, certain qualities come to be ranked as good and to count as virtues—truthfulness, honesty, courage and the rest; their opposites bad, and as vices. Individual habits are formed—good habits or bad habits. The normal person, in the ordinary conditions of daily life, does not ponder at every moment what is right and what is wrong; he usually acts by habit and as a matter of course. Custom in the community corresponds to habit in the individual.

The conclusion to be drawn—important to our present discussion—is this. When doubtful issues arise; or when there is reason to think that a habit or a custom, an article in a creed or a law in a code, is bad and ought to be changed—we are not obliged to seek a criterion in

some Absolute Good, or Categorical Imperative. It is futile to turn to any such mystical or transcendental conceptions. They are no more than "fictional abstractions". They possess no intrinsic authority; they may all be challenged and defied. But we may go back to facts. We may appeal to the evidence of actual experience; and on that basis we may make, where necessary, a fresh valuation of consequences.*

The problem is often put whether, in morals, it is the rightness of an action that matters, or the rightness of the motive. If a person, with the best of intentions, does something which proves to be injurious, was his action good or bad? And conversely, where a person, animated by a corrupt motive, takes a course which turns out to be beneficial, was he acting rightly or wrongly? But to put the problem in that way is to confuse the issue. There are two questions to be answered and not one. One issue is—was the man's motive good? The other is—was the course he chose the right one? The answer may well be

* The Utilitarian School of philosophy started from the same standpoint. They held that "ethical precepts must be judged in the light of the consequences which result from the practice of them." But, seeking precision, they adopted certain secondary principles which have been judged to be unsound. They held that the consequences are to be valued by their "utility"; that utility is a question of "happiness", and happiness is to be measured by "pleasure" and "pain". In politics they

in the affirmative in one case and in the negative in the other. The right motive is one good thing and the right action is another good thing.

This discussion may seem at first sight abstract, and remote from our main theme. We are, however, in search of a way out from the intellectual anarchy of our time. We are complaining that there is no agreed basis for moral standards. We have found that those offered by the several religions must be tested by the rational judgement. We cannot discover in the idealist philosophies any criterion by which that judgement can be applied. If, then, we are challenged to say what other criterion there is, we are bound to give an answer, and to defend our answer against criticism.

We see that mankind long ago has found empirically the principle on which codes of conduct can be based: actions are right or wrong according to their effects upon welfare; welfare is not one thing, but is compounded of many. This principle, of course, is not itself a code of

drew from these premisses a theory of extreme individualism, which, when put into practice, was found to cause harm. The criticism to which Utilitarianism has been subjected is regarded almost universally as conclusive. But it does not touch the primary principle from which Bentham and his brilliant school had started. We may set out again from the same point, while following afterwards a different course.

conduct. Nor can it produce a code by any short or easy process. Bentham believed that, where a choice was to be made between two courses, the pleasures and the pains that would follow from each could be estimated, and be divided, so to speak, into lots; these could be multiplied by the number of people concerned; the totals balanced against each other; and the result of the sum would tell which of the two courses was the better. But the matter is not so simple as this. In ethics there is no calculating machine which, by the turning of a handle, will give the answer to our problems.

Through all the centuries of human history, and most actively in our own times, an immense process of private judgement and public discussion has been at work. Out of it have emerged the rules of right and wrong, for all the varied activities of life, which we have inherited from the generations that have gone before us. Through that same process we confirm, or in our turn we mould and modify, those rules before handing them on to our successors. Throughout that process immediate advantages have to be weighed against later advantages; benefits to the individual balanced against benefits to the society; the good of a nation considered in relation to the good of mankind. Experiment, publicity, education, persuasion, legislation, are the instruments. Theologians and philosophers, statesmen and poets have helped on the process. But not seldom they have confused and hindered it; through proclaiming general principles which prove to be

unsound, or drawing from sound principles false deductions.

This vast process is not a science. There are no fixed laws that it can follow. It allows no clear predictions. The factors are too many, too varied, too changing to permit it to become a science; although parts of it—in ethics, politics, economics, eugenics—may be handled in a scientific spirit. Viewed as a whole the process is an art. It is in fact the art of living.

CHAPTER NINE

WHY ACT RIGHTLY?

WHEN it was generally accepted throughout the western world that every personality lived on after death, and would pass innumerable years in torment if the earthly life had been bad or in bliss if it had been good, men had an effective inducement to resist temptations and to act well. Most of the religions also of the East offered systems of penalties and rewards more or less similar. Here, then, was the sanction for morality. Granted that there was a right and a wrong, here was the motive for doing the one and avoiding the other. But now that these beliefs are held with less certainty, now that Heaven and Hell have lost their vividness, where are we to find sufficient reasons why ordinary men and women, day by day, should do the things they ought to do when other things are pleasanter? To discover in what the right consists, and to declare it, is not enough. The modern world needs to understand, clearly and definitely, what reason there is, when the right course is known, why people should take it, rather than follow their own desires, which may be opposite. If the theological reason is doubted

or denied, does there remain any reason at all?

Here again we shall be well-advised not to look for some *a priori* theory. We shall succeed better if we try to learn from life as it is lived. If we can discern what the motives are that do actually influence those men whose lives are recognized to be good, that which we are seeking will stand revealed.

And here again—as so often—we shall find, as soon as we examine the facts, that not one force only is at work. While thinkers have been trying to discover some single principle of righteousness, in practice mankind is led to right living, so far as it does live rightly, not by one motive but by many.

This man is honest in his business. Why is he honest?

It may be that he values honesty for its own sake. His inherited instincts, his upbringing, perhaps his religious beliefs, make him an honest man. He would be ashamed ever to do an act that was dishonest. Without needing to consider any other reason, he is honest by principle and that is enough.

Or it may be that that estimate of his character would be mistaken. In reality he may belong to that large class of people who are honest because they believe that it pays. He may be used to remind himself, whenever temptation offers, that " honesty is the best policy ". He thinks his business will prosper best if his reputation is good. He

will gain respect among his family and friends, and position among his neighbours, and he will take satisfaction in that. Possibly his religious faith leads him to believe that honesty will be rewarded, and dishonesty punished, by some supernatural power and in some mysterious way, either in this world, or in another world, or in both.

We may, however, again be mistaken; and, if we could see into the man's heart, we should find that, as a matter of fact, he is little influenced by any of these things, but is moved by a wholesome fear of the criminal law. He refrains from dishonesty because he is afraid of being detected and convicted, punished and ruined.

Everyone knows that such motives do in fact influence human conduct. Some are worthy motives and some unworthy; some will have more influence with one man and some with another. Sometimes one among them predominates and will decide the course that is taken; sometimes there will be a combination of various motives; and sometimes a conflict, different forces pulling different ways, and the stronger deciding.

When we are asked what, in these days, is to be the sanction for morality, the answer, then, must be that there may be various sanctions and not only one. Society will shape its measures accordingly.

It has been said that "every new generation is a fresh invasion of savages." In a civilized country, society takes hold of the young and trains them to civilized

ways.* They are subjected to all kinds of influences, from the day of birth, through infancy, childhood and adolescence, on into maturity. They are influenced by the family and the school, the church and the State, the press and the stage—by the whole atmosphere around them. Innate qualities, brought by inheritance, are moulded by the society; those held to be good can be fostered, those bad discouraged. Character is formed, and character determines action.

The primary instincts that each individual brings with him are twofold; one set of instincts seeks his own preservation and welfare; the other takes satisfaction in the welfare of others. We call them egoism and altruism, self-interest and sympathy.† Such instincts are innate, not alone in human nature, but in animal nature generally. Egoism is obvious throughout the animate world. Altruism is seen most clearly in the care of parents for their offspring. Animals that are usually timid will face danger to protect their young. Birds build nests; and it is difficult to find any instinct of an egoistic kind that would lead them to do so. Gregarious animals or social insects help each other in various ways. In man the instinct of sociality is carried to the highest point. Reason here confirms

* " Homines enim civiles non nascuntur, sed fiunt " —For civic men are not born but made.—Spinoza.

† Using the word " sympathy " in its primary meaning, of " feeling together ", or " fellow-feeling ".

instinct; it realizes the value of sympathy between individuals, and of the institutions and customs that spring from it. A system of morals, if it is to be strong, will enlist in its support, not one only, but both of these sets of primary instincts—the egoistic as well as the altruistic.

It has often been held, however, that morality is a question purely of altruism.* A man's goodness is to be judged entirely by his readiness to make sacrifices for the sake of others. To seek his own interest, or his own pleasure, is held to be either immoral or apart from morality. Society, when it sets out to civilize each new generation in turn, is expected to use all the various influences at its command—and particularly those of religion—to suppress self-interest and to fortify self-sacrifice. " La morale, c'est faire les choses ennuyeuses."

Examine this view more closely, and it will be seen to be unsound. True that the teachers of all faiths and the moralists of all schools have continually laid their emphasis on the duties to others. And it is right that they should do this; for men's innate tendency to seek

* In the following passages, for example:
Kant—*The Metaphysic of Ethics*, Book I, Chap. 1, pp. 8, 18.
L. T. Hobhouse—*Morals in Evolution*, p. 14.
E. Westermarck—*The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, Vol. II, p. 154.
W. Lippmann—*A Preface to Morals*, p. 221.

what their own immediate interest demands is potent, and no persuasion is necessary. It is the altruistic side that needs outside support. But it does not follow that self-interest also may not be, in some forms and in some measure, a moral motive.

We are accustomed to say " a man has duties to himself ". If someone perversely neglects his own health, or is careless about his own livelihood, we blame him for failing in his primary duties. Spinoza reminds us that we cannot wish to act well and to live well without, at the same time, wishing to act and to live; that " no virtue can be conceived prior to this, the endeavour after self-preservation."

Many self-interested acts, of course, are anti-social, but many are not. Some, indeed, are indispensable to the social good. By seeking his own health, education, efficiency, by realizing the capacities of his own personality—physical, mental and spiritual, the individual serves the community also. The better the units, the better the mass. Posterity also is served. The better the people of this century, the finer will be the heritage of the next.

Further, it is irrational to hold that my duty is to be found in seeking only my neighbour's welfare, and never my own. If that rule were right, it would apply equally to my neighbour; he would have as his own duty the promotion of my welfare. But why should that be his duty unless my welfare is a good thing in itself? And

if it is, have not I, too, an obligation to promote it?

This aspect, however, is not often recognized. Morality and regard for one's own interest are commonly looked upon as opposites. Christian theologians and preachers, for the reason already stated, have laid stress on the " other-regarding virtues ". Religion in general has come to be looked upon as requiring pure self-sacrifice.

Here we may find an additional cause of the loosening hold of religion, and of the perplexity of our times that has followed. For the modern mind, looking at the whole matter afresh, without feeling bound by traditional orthodoxies, sees that morality, if it is to be comprehensive, must allow that egoism, at proper times and in proper measure, is a right motive, that it is indeed essential to welfare. When religion seems to ignore or to contradict this, common sense and religion stand opposed.

There is, however, a misunderstanding here. Religious doctrine rarely makes that requirement. The Golden Rule is usually accepted as the highest of the ethical precepts of the religions of the western world, and it clearly does not support that view. It does not prescribe that a man should take no care for his own interests and his own welfare. The Old Testament says, " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself "; and the New Testament, " Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." They do not say, Thou shalt care for thy neighbour and not for

thyself. On the contrary, care for oneself, and the treatment one would wish for oneself from others, is taken as the very standard of one's duty to them. Egoism in fact is made the measure for altruism.

None the less, in practice religion does concentrate upon self-sacrifice, and the established systems of morals are inclined to pass by the claims of personality. This has now led to a powerful reaction. An emancipated age asks the reasons for these repressions and renunciations. Receiving often no answer, except a reference to ancient texts or inherited customs, it is ready to assume that there are no valid reasons.

A Nietzsche arises; propounds a system "Beyond Good and Evil"; makes direct war on all traditional morality; wins enthusiastic supporters, and sets flowing a powerful current in the thought of the time. A great political movement, inspired largely by ideas such as his, conquers Germany and spreads beyond. We see a vehement revolt against the creed of abnegation, of self-suppression. The discoveries of modern psychology appear to support the movement from the side of science. Action comes to be glorified for the sake of action, and regardless whether it brings welfare or not. No matter whether life is lived well or badly; the important thing is that it should be lived strenuously. The ideal man is seen, not in the saint, but in the warrior-hero, and the ideal life in "the merry days of battle". "Man," said Nietzsche, "shall be trained for war, and woman

for the recreation of the warrior; all else is folly." So each new generation is to be taught, not to overcome, but to cherish and cultivate, whatever innate savagery it brings.

The element of truth that underlies this movement —its rejection of the doctrine that the good life consists simply in self-renunciation regardless of self-realization— is overlaid by its own opposite mistake. Rightly asserting that altruism without egoism is a false morality, the impetus of its reaction has led it to over-shoot the mark, and to plunge into the error, far more dangerous, that the contrary must be true. Egoism is now exalted, and altruism suppressed. Justice, Mercy, Kindness and Peace are no longer to be regarded as good words; Struggle, Ruthlessness and Victory are to be the good words. Self-sacrifice is still to be a virtue, but only when it is for the sake of the State or the nation, which shall itself merely embody and apply the massed self-assertions of all its citizens.

The hero, to be a hero, must have an enemy. How else can he prove his heroism? How shall Siegfried display his fearlessness if he has no dragon? Of what use would be the mystic sword, that has been forged and tempered with so much travail? If no enemy is at hand, it is essential to create one. So the spirit of violence and hatred is let loose in the world, launched with eloquent appeals to noble emotions, and justified by a new philosophy of one-sided ethics.

It should be obvious enough that altruism, in its proper measure, is essential too. The individual cannot exist apart from the social unit; his good cannot be found apart from its well-being. The social units begin with the family, the neighbourhood and the town, with the trade or profession; they enlarge to the nation, and then to the comity of all the nations. The man depends, in one way or another, upon all of these. They nurture him, guard his health, feed his intellect; they supply him with opportunity for livelihood; they preserve his safety and his peace. Not one of these social units, from the family to mankind, can fulfil its purpose, or even exist, unless its members are ready to accommodate themselves to one another, to subordinate, when necessary, personal or sectional interest to the general interest. A philosophy which ignores or depreciates altruism must be a false philosophy. The truth is plain to see: both egoism and altruism are necessary to welfare. Both, therefore, are moral motives. Right living is the right balance between them.

We are constantly called upon to do things which are not to our own interest, and for which sympathy, love, duty—altruism in some form—is the only motive. Many thinkers, it is true, from Plato onwards, have set out to show that all motives can be resolved into one—the egoistic; that " in the long run " or " rightly understood ", the individual is really serving his own " en-

lightened self-interest " when he makes sacrifices for the public good. There has always been " a philosophic craving for unity "; for the sake of a unified theory, philosophers will sometimes not hesitate to do violence to facts. To say that a man who, in a shipwreck, gives up his place in a boat to a woman, or a martyr who goes to the stake rather than recant his faith—to say that these are really acting out of regard for their own interest, from a motive which is at bottom egoistic—is to use language that offends common sense. In the ordinary conditions of everyday life, lesser occasions continually arise where personal interest has to be sacrificed. Life is lived in the short run, as well as in the long run; and not by " the individual "—some generalized abstraction whose good may be seen to be ultimately identified with that of " the society "; but by actual men and women, side by side with others like themselves. Constantly they are called upon to do things for which they can expect no return in this world, and, as many think, no sure return in another.

We come back to our question, why then should they do such things at all? And we may return to our exemplar—the honest man.

At his best, he acts rightly because he has a good will. He is well-disposed and single-hearted. It may be that he is so intuitively; with him this is innate. He is well-bred—in the true sense of that term; good-breeding being a matter, not of class, but of quality. Such

tendencies, if they are innate, may be fortified and developed by training; or, if they are lacking, may in some measure be instilled. Here comes in the function of society. If an element of self-sacrifice is essential, and if the best motive for it is to be found in the good will, society will ask itself how it can most effectively promote that good will. Hence arise all the problems of the training of character, in the school and in the home.

At this point we find ourselves linked again with what was said earlier on the need of the modern world for religion. Huxley said that " the religious feeling " was " the essential basis of conduct ". From the most primitive times, among all the races of men, religion has been the chief agent in morals. It furnishes a discipline. Sanctions are stronger if they are also sanctities. When our mundane affairs are seen as one piece in a universal scheme, then each human life rises above the trivial, every character becomes of moment and every act a sign.

For this reason the present weakening of religious influence cannot fail to be a cause of grave and general anxiety. If the ancient buttress of morality is itself sinking, how can it be supported?

The answer can only be that which was given earlier, but which comes now, in the light of these considerations, with even greater insistence through a more pressing sense of urgency. The answer must be that it is vital to offer to the modern world systems of religion which can be accepted—not merely formally and perfunctorily,

out of respect for old traditions and for lack of something better—but honestly and earnestly; faiths that can be woven into the pattern of practical life and determine the daily conduct of ordinary men; and can do this because they are believed by the enlightened mind as true.

Good will is the best sanction for morals, but good will is not universal; and we cannot be sure that it can soon, or ever, be made so. One man has it in high degree; his neighbour in less degree, or hardly at all. As Santayana says, "the social instincts, seated in the human heart, differ indefinitely from individual to individual, and may be atrophied altogether." Our honest man may feel the need for some support for his honesty, and he may find it in the knowledge that it is the best policy.

Society will be wise to see that this shall in fact be so. It cannot safely rely only on pure altruism. It will try to enlist egoistic motives of one kind in order to counter the pull of egoistic motives of another kind. It will give inducements that appeal to some personal interest in order to persuade him to subordinate other personal interests. It may be regrettable that this should be necessary, but such is the fact. Any nation which abolished all restraints upon bad action and all rewards for good action, in the hope that every man would always do right just for the sake of the right, would dissolve quickly into chaos. Those conditions are an ideal, but a distant ideal. We

may advance towards them; we dare not act as though they were already here.

Rewards and penalties may be of various kinds. Theology offers one code; public opinion another; the economic system a third; the State a fourth. One man will pursue goodness for the sake of a divine recompense; another for the sake of good repute, or as the road to fame; a third as a means to material comfort or to affluence; another in order to win approval or distinction from the public authorities, and in any case to avoid penalties at the hands of the law. Inferior though these motives are to the pursuit of goodness for its own sake, society, in the present stage of civilization, cannot afford to neglect them.

Because man is a social being he cares for the judgement of his fellows. He is gratified by praise and hurt by blame. Everyday observation shows that where there is no effective public opinion, morals more easily become lax. As John Stuart Mill wrote: "Undoubtedly mankind would be in a deplorable state if no principles of justice, veracity, beneficence, were taught publicly or privately, and if these virtues were not encouraged, and the opposite vices repressed, by the praise and blame, the favourable and unfavourable sentiments, of mankind." The connexion between conduct and its consequence is of the essence of morality. "The way of the transgressor is hard", because society sees that it shall be hard. "The family that accumulates goodness", says the Chinese *Yih*

King, "is sure to have superabundant happiness; the family that accumulates evil is sure to have superabundant misery." So far as that is true, the reason is to be found, not only in the happiness that comes from a good conscience and the misery from a bad, but also because society tries so to shape its laws and customs that those who are good shall be happy, and those who are bad shall not.

The best community would be one in which no one was ever inclined to wrongdoing; but since that cannot be attained and we have to be content with a second-best, we may find it in a community where all those who are disposed to do right will find it advantageous to do so, and all disposed to do wrong would find it not advantageous—using that word to include, not only material advantages, but all the satisfactions that men desire, good repute among them. In such a society, with conduct and consequence closely connected, crime would always be stupid and every knave would know himself a fool.

There is a doubt to which a doctrine such as this may give rise. It may be feared that the pressure of public opinion and of law may weaken the springs of self-reliance and the power of personal initiative. A social system, indeed, that made its people well-behaved at the cost of keeping them enslaved, or apathetic, or merely conventional, must be a bad social system. But this raises the general issue of Liberty, which can best be discussed later in another context.

Among the ordinary supports of morals in everyday life we may see that habit is of the first importance. The normal person is not constantly reflecting whether he shall be honest or not; he is honest by habit and as a matter of course.

Habits are formed under instruction, or by one's own actions. They grow by mere force of repetition. Things constantly done come to be done subconsciously, through a psychological mechanism that does not call into operation the conscious will. This applies not only to muscular movement—in walking, speaking, eating; it applies to activity of almost any kind. There is literal truth in the proverb that habit is second nature. "Could the young", as William James wrote, "but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone." Habit is capitalized action.

In the moral sphere there is an "ease reached by frequency of right doing". Habit becomes conscience. To the primitive man the forbidden totem animal, the tabooed action or food, become instinctively abhorrent. To the civilized man of a higher religion that which he counts as sin may be so obnoxious to him that he becomes incapable of committing it.*

* St. Thomas Aquinas said: "Magis est non posse peccare quam non peccare"—It is a greater thing to be incapable of sinning than not to sin.

Here we find another motive of an egoistic kind that may lead us to do what is right when other things are pleasanter. It is the effect of our actions upon our own character. Every deed has subjective as well as objective results; it has a recoil upon the doer. As Bergson puts it: "It is right to say that what we do depends upon what we are; but it is necessary to add that we are, in some measure, what we do, and that we are creating ourselves continually." One of the penalties of any wrong act is its reaction upon the character of the agent. "The greatest penalty of evil-doing", says Plato, "is to grow into the likeness of bad men."

In forming his habits each person is largely influenced by what he sees around him. He is largely guided by "custom-thought". This is one means through which a nation becomes homogeneous, and the social mechanism runs with continuity and, on the whole, with smoothness. "Habit", to quote William James again, "is the enormous fly-wheel of society."

So we reach a conclusion as to the sanctions for morality.

There is one class of right actions which bring immediate benefit to the agent. He will do such actions for that reason and will need no other.

There is a second class which are not to his immediate benefit, but which he sees, or may be brought to see, will bring him some kind of indirect or ultimate gain.

He may do these actions also from egoistic motives—material or non-material. Society will use all its many means of influence so as to strengthen the inducements to right action and to weaken the inducements to wrong. Public opinion will persuade and dissuade. If need be, there are in reserve the penalties of the civil and the criminal law.

But there is also the third class of right actions, those which will bring to the agent personally no benefit in this life, whether direct or indirect, immediate or ultimate; which may even cause him hurt. Yet he ought to do them because they conduce to social welfare. Unless his religious faith supplies him with an egoistic motive in an expectation of reward in another life, he must act for some reason other than self-interest. " Virtue ", said Carlyle, " is its own reward, because it needs no reward." He must act from kindness or love, from patriotism, or from sense of duty of some other kind; he must act altruistically.

This class of motive springs, equally with the egoistic, from instincts that are primary. Sympathy is innate, as well as self-interest. The task of society is to foster and develop the altruistic instinct, to fortify it by early training, and to enlist in its support the power of habit. So there may gradually be evolved a social order in which all shall " endeavour to do well and to rejoice ".

CHAPTER TEN

FAMILY

In this and the following chapters, I propose to discuss in outline the application of these principles of ethics to four of the chief problems of social life. They are problems as old as civilization itself, but which in our own times take on new forms and press with a new insistence. They are the problems of the Family, of Property, of Liberty and of International Relations. I shall end by drawing together the threads of the whole argument and offering a conclusion.

Every home, in any country or under any social system, is constantly faced by questions of family duty. How far should husband or wife sacrifice their separate wishes for the sake of the other? How far should married couples sacrifice their comforts for the sake of children? Should the marriage bond be rigid, or should it be elastic, and if so, to what degree? Each young man or woman has to consider both duties to the home and duties to oneself. Each has to decide whether to marry, and whom and when; whether to observe sexual abstinence

before marriage, and continence after. In some eastern countries questions of polygamy or of child marriage are still subjects of debate.

Until the present age all such matters were usually settled by custom. Tradition and public opinion, supported sometimes by law, decided individual conduct. Custom might differ greatly, according to religion, or to the degree of civilization. " At one time and in one place ", says a character in one of Mr. Aldous Huxley's novels, " you honour your father and mother when they grow old; elsewhere and at other periods you knock them on the head and put them into the ' *pot-au-feu* '." Though custom varied from age to age or from country to country, it existed; it was powerful; it was usually respected. If any man disobeyed, his neighbours condemned him; he was of bad repute; in some cases the law might punish him; he himself felt that he was doing wrong. Women conformed to custom even more submissively than men. But now, in this sphere also, there is doubt. Our parents or grandparents regarded it as wrong to do this or that. But we ask, is it really wrong? How much of the old conventions should stand? Should anything stand?

A number of causes have promoted a change in the attitude to marriage and the family. The growing emphasis on self-expression has made restraint more irksome. The emancipation of women, already largely achieved in the countries of western civilization and advancing rapidly in the east, has called for many readjust-

ments. Religious sanctions have weakened, in this as in other matters; civil marriage has been introduced, divorce legalized in Christian countries; marriage has come to be regarded more as a contract and less as a sacrament. There has been a tendency to discredit nineteenth-century standards, as the laxity and hypocrisy which sometimes underlay them have been more fully brought to light. The invention of methods of birth-control involves consequences of which, maybe, we are seeing only the beginning.

As civilization advances, the conditions that, in earlier ages, made the family an indispensable safeguard to society, lose much of their strength. When there were no police and no magistrates, the chief preventive of crime and disorder was found in the collective responsibility of the family. It had to restrain each of its members from injuring other people, or else bear the penalty itself; it was the family which had to inflict on any stranger who might injure one of its members the penalty that was due. And when there was no Poor Law, no system of social insurance, no old age pensions, the family was often the only refuge in distress or incapacity. Under the conditions of the modern world needs such as these fade away. Further, in earlier times, parents and children and descendants as a rule spent their lives, generation after generation, in the same neighbourhood and in close touch. Now they often scatter, and the family link is broken.

Novels and plays have been a powerful solvent. As

a contemporary writer says, "Virtue and respectability, so long the objects of praise, become outmoded; they are felt as a source of embarrassed shame . . . Interest is shifted more and more from virtue rewarded to evil-doing unpunished. . . . The abolition of censorship left literature free to allow itself anything and everything . . . A large . . . public grew accustomed to excesses of literary licence, willing to tolerate them because it had been taught to associate the idea of art with them."

Those domestic problems that arise day by day in every home—sometimes trivial, but building up perhaps an aggregate that matters; sometimes reaching a crisis, with lasting effects upon a life or a group of lives—those problems raise a question of principle. It is the question of the value of the family as an institution. Do we regard it lightly?—then we shall take one course. Do we think it important?—we shall take another.

History, when it looks behind events, sees that the customs of nations with regard to family have had profound effects upon their character, and so upon their destiny. The strength of the family system was a principal foundation of the greatness of Rome, of the permanence of China, of the valour and efficiency of Japan. Scottish clannishness has contributed not a little to the striking achievements of Scotsmen. Such successes as have been won by the Jewish people have been largely due to family solidarity and stimulus.

The knight or the yeoman in the great and simple days of early Rome, who had been accustomed to worship at the shrines of his ancestors, to offer annual sacrifice on their birthdays, place garlands about their tablets and meditate upon their memories; who knew that he in turn would live in the thoughts of his descendants, with honour or dishonour according to his deeds—had a constant and powerful incentive to duty. So with other times and peoples; so, in some degree, with ourselves. Each member of a family knows that there is a group of people, intimate from his childhood, who would feel pride in his success, sorrow at his failure, shame at his disgrace. The man who has no one to care about him loses both an encouragement and a restraint.

In discussing the sanctions for morality we have seen how essential it is that public opinion should exert itself to strengthen the inducements to right action. Family opinion is a form of public opinion. It is on a small scale, but it acts at close range. A temptation may be resisted when a man remembers that a wrong action will degrade the name left by his forbears and will be condemned by his descendants. Family honour is a stand-by for social morality.

Useful to society, family still remains necessary to the individual. Obviously that is so with the child. A friendly and stable home is the right environment for childhood; there cannot be a really happy childhood without it. Recent psychology has revealed how deep are the

effects upon adult character of the influences that surround the child. To the young man or woman the family supplies a background; a base from which to sally out upon the world, upon which, if conditions are adverse, to retreat. No matter what assistance the community may give in times of difficulty through its social services, there will still be need for a helping hand—close by and sympathetic.

No one lives fully who does not share, in some degree and in the measures suited to him, in all the activities that go to the making of the best life. Physical, intellectual, economic, domestic, religious activities—no life can be complete which omits any of these. The home and the world are therefore the right environment; the self-centred or the separated life is inferior. And the essence of the home is stable marriage.

Here, as everywhere, there must be sought that balance between egoism and altruism which is the very essence of the art of living. If what has been said is sound, the conclusion must be that more weight should be laid in the scale of self-restraint and self-sacrifice than present tendencies often would allow. Self-realization is good in itself; but the point that emerges is that the movement of these times towards egoism, healthy up to a point, ought not to be carried so far as to sweep away, or even to impair, the family system.

A tendency is not to be counted good merely because it is considered modern.

'Old things need not be therefore true'—
O brother men, nor yet the new.

If ancient customs are to be indiscriminately discarded on the ground that they can all be nothing more than empty inhibitions, we may find sometimes that the gain in immediate freedom is far outweighed by the loss in ultimate welfare.

A convention need not be absurd because its original sanction was irrational. Some of our present customs may have been first established by the help of magic, taboos or myths; nevertheless there may be good customs among them. We do not observe one day's rest in seven because we now believe that the world was made in six days, that the Creator rested on the seventh, and that He wishes us to do the same; yet the practice may be beneficial and one that it is wise to maintain. So with marriage and the family system, and the traditions and sanctities that surround them.

The proper grounds for divorce is a question now under debate in many countries. This book is not a discussion of topical proposals in this or other matters, in one country or any other, but seeks to deal with the ideas and principles that underlie particular proposals. Here the factors point to the conclusion that to maintain the stability of marriage is of prime social importance; not less important than the need of affording relief in excep-

tional cases when conditions have become intolerable. If unions can be lightly broken they will be lightly made. Homes are no longer secure, and the children suffer.

The practice of birth-control raises new and difficult problems, social as well as personal. What is the optimum population for a country is an economic and political question to which the leaders of thought everywhere are beginning to address themselves. In spite of the halving of the rate of infant mortality in a number of western countries in recent years, the diminution in the birth-rate is considered by many observers to have been carried already too far; and if that view is right, there is offered to prospective parents an urgent practical problem in social ethics.

Methods of birth-control, as well as advances in preventive and curative medicine, have lessened the risks and the penalties that attach to unchastity. None the less, promiscuity would be likely still to prove, as it has proved throughout history, a sure road to degeneration of physique and degradation of character. If new conditions in the modern world are to lead to a wide-spread laxity in sexual morals, the level of civilization cannot fail to be lowered.

Nowhere has research been more fruitful in recent years than in the fields of embryology and heredity. Investigation along Mendelian lines is discovering the right principles for selective breeding. "Heredity and breeding", says Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, "are becoming exact experimental sciences." Efforts to adapt the

rules to mankind, so far as practicable, have given us the new science of Eugenics.

As the means are discovered by which the physical qualities of the human race may be improved generation by generation, to make use of those means will rank as a duty. It has long been a matter of conscience, when choosing a wife or a husband, to have regard to physical and mental qualities for the sake of the general stock. To put debased money into circulation is an offence, but to put degenerate men and women into circulation is an offence far graver.

It seems likely that, in this matter of the family, there will develop two contrasted schools of thought, each, as time goes on, defining more and more clearly its own philosophy. The one will lay stress upon freedom, self-satisfaction, enjoyment; will treat sexual relationships lightly; will regard a marriage as experimental, separation or divorce as merely an incident in a life; will prefer to be childless, or to have only one child or two, and in any case will look upon children's interests as secondary. The other school will lay stress upon lasting affection, stability, the home; upon children; upon the social value of the family system. They will regard the permanency of a marriage as a matter of course; adultery, separation, divorce as a disaster and a disgrace—outside their purview altogether. Their own matrimonial differences they will resolve, because they hold that they must be resolved.

They will not expose their own children to the fate of the children of broken marriages, with half a home in one place and half a home in another, and missing something always.

In between the two schools there will be many gradations; but fundamentally there are those opposite philosophies, and the world must choose between them. The one draws its strength from a potent instinct. It has the support of many brilliant minds in literature and the other arts. Nevertheless it is likely that in the long run the other school will prevail; and that for three reasons. First, because those who follow it find, as a rule, more satisfaction in their lives than do the others. Their experience shows that on the whole it is the better way to live, and it will therefore be taken as an example. The second reason is that it is to the interest of society to maintain the family as an institution; whenever it seems to be threatened, the social forces will be mobilized to fight for it. And the third is that those who hold the other view, and act upon it, have few progeny or none; so that those strains and tendencies, as fast as they appear in one generation, are bred out from the next.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

POVERTY AND PROPERTY

Of the many hindrances to welfare in our present civilization none is more destructive than poverty. Poverty fetters men's lives; it lowers physique; vitiates happiness; evokes resentment and bitterness. From the protest and struggle against it springs the wide-spread social unrest that is one of the main causes of the uneasiness and instability of our time.

For a century and a half the peoples of Europe have been striving to lift themselves out of poverty. Their efforts have been sometimes sporadic, sometimes continuous; occasionally violent, usually pacific; marked often by intense fervour, and drawing upon inexhaustible wells of self-sacrifice. The upheaval of the French Revolution was social and economic rather than constitutional. Ever since that time, all over Europe, the industrial workers, and, less generally, the peasants and farm labourers, have been struggling to escape from the cramped and degrading conditions which were partly an inheritance from the Middle Ages, and partly the outcome of the Industrial

Revolution. The introduction of machinery, the gathering together of masses of workers, an unrestrained competition in the labour-market, together with recurring cycles of bad trade, created the modern proletariat and brought untold numbers into misery. The American continent escaped, until recently, most of these evils; relatively small populations had the use of immense natural resources; energy and enterprise were free from laws and traditions that hampered the Old World. On the other hand, the crowded parts of Asia have known a poverty more wide-spread and more intense than the worst in Europe.

The century and a half of effort has brought striking improvements almost everywhere. Viewing the world as a whole, there can be no doubt that the material standard of living of mankind is far higher now, on the average, than in any previous period in history. But averages are often misleading. A grinding poverty persists, affecting hundreds of millions. Hundreds of millions more are cramped by narrowness of means and harassed by insecurity of livelihood. "Hope, freedom and change", wrote Marshall, "are necessary for efficiency." They are necessary for happiness too; but multitudes are denied them by poverty.

The long effort has achieved only part of its purposes, but it has won general agreement as to the rightness of the aim. Throughout the civilized countries, among the great majority of thoughtful men, there is now

a clear conviction that the cure of bad economic conditions must be made, deliberately and persistently, a principal aim of private and public action. In the democratic countries, every political party proclaims this among its main purposes. The dictatorships also proclaim it. In Russia it has been made the fundamental principle of the State. In India we see the beginnings of a wide movement for raising the condition of the people. Even China is stirring.

In the last century there was no such approach to agreement. The individualist school was powerful. Deploring the vile conditions of the industrialized masses and anxious to see them remedied, it held that this could best be accomplished by non-interference and " letting things take their natural course ". Political economy in its early days, having fallen into false assumptions as to an " economic man " and as to the fluidity of enterprise, labour and commodities, preached a doctrine of *laissez-faire* which, when practised, was found to bring disaster. " No one now holds ", says Professor Whitehead, " that, apart from some further directive agency, mere individualistic competition, of itself and by its own self-righting character, will produce a satisfactory society." Mr. Keynes quotes Cairnes as declaring, already in 1870, " The maxim of *laissez-faire* has no scientific basis whatever, but is at best a mere handy rule of practice "; and Keynes adds, " this, for fifty years past, has been the view of all leading economists." Few will now hold that

law must always lessen liberty; most will agree that rightly devised, law may defend liberty and expand it. " There is a general admission that liberty is no fixed quantity which necessarily diminishes as corporate control increases."*

Occasionally a voice is still heard, like that of Dr. Carrel in his *Man the Unknown*, declaring that all our humanitarian legislation is misconceived from the beginning; it merely " keeps alive the weaklings ", and it would be better for the race to let them die. Such voices are few, for it is plain to most observers that the conditions which kill off weaklings also produce them. Improve on the other hand the surroundings, the nutrition and the medical care of infants, and we may, it is true, be keeping alive some children who will still be delicate and a burden to the community; but we shall also save a far larger number of children from being made delicate and becoming a burden. And so in other cases.

To speak of " natural " and " artificial " in this connexion is a misuse of the words. A mountain or a river, the soil or the climate are natural; but any social environment, no matter what it may be, or any law, or absence of law, is not. These are all the products of human acts or decisions, and are therefore " artificial ". An industrial system, whatever its type, can never be " natural ". To

* See also the following Chapter.

leave it unregulated, by legal codes or by collective bargaining, does not make it so.

In the consensus of opinion that now prevails as to the evil of poverty and the urgency of a cure, religion also joins. For religion no longer, as formerly, strikes a separate note. In earlier days many held a religious faith that demanded a complete devotion to non-material values, and therefore an acceptance of poverty; to be poor was a means of grace rather than an injury. But now every western Church joins in the general movement towards economic betterment. The saying, "Ye have the poor with you always" is seldom quoted nowadays—divorced from its context and misinterpreted—as a plea for quietism among the poor and an excuse for complacency among the rich.

It is recognized that, for the average of mankind, material values are a necessary substratum for spiritual. Although it is true that life is more than livelihood, that thought and leisure, love and beauty are of greater worth than "things", nevertheless things, as a general rule and in their proper measure, are prior conditions for those others. Inferior they may be, but essential they certainly are; and to tell the poor not to resent their poverty, because knowledge, or saintliness, or a contented spirit are more than riches, is stigmatized now as no better than cant.

Nor is the argument any longer heard that hard economic facts make it impossible, in any event, for all

to live in comfort. A generation ago it was commonly said that if all the wealth in the world, or in any particular country, were to be divided equally, the standard of living of the poorer classes would still hardly be raised. The rich are so few and the poor so many that to impoverish the one class would not go far towards enriching the other. At that time there was some ground for such a contention. But now it is clear that the question need not be limited to a redistribution of a given quantum of wealth, but is also one of an expanded production of wealth. The application of science—mechanical and chemical and biological—to industry and to agriculture has gone so far, and opens such ample prospects for the future, that shortage is no longer a barrier.

We often hear it said, indeed, that mechanism is so all-pervading in these days that man has become the slave of the machines he has created. It is a hasty judgement; the contrary rather is true. The machines are our substitute for the slave-system of the ancient world. If working conditions are not properly adapted they may, it is true, inflict a nerve-strain and a monotony which it is urgent to prevent. The fact remains that the machines, allied with chemistry and biology, have given, to a vastly increased population, an abundance and variety of commodities and amenities, together with a lightening of toil, such as our ancestors in their most sanguine visions could never have imagined. Certainly all substance has

gone from the argument that poverty must endure, and be endured, because the world's wealth can never suffice to cure it.

The social unrest has a second source. It does not spring only from the struggle of the proletariats to escape from their material miseries. There is another, an immaterial factor—the sense of social injustice. Even if all the workers in every country were assured of comfort and security, while much of the bitterness of the conflict would disappear, the conflict itself would not be ended. In our economic system the inequalities of income are so immensely wide, they often spring from causes so indefensible—sometimes so largely fortuitous—that the moral sense revolts. A skilled artisan, after a long training, must work steadily through a whole year in order to earn a sum which he knows many wealthy men receive, without working, every week; some every day. If service has been rendered to society by men of enterprise, the rewards that they gain are often out of all proportion to the service. A fortune accumulated by some industrial pioneer descends to heirs who may have done nothing, and it may pass on from generation to generation, growing, unless checked, as it goes. Financial cleverness or lucky speculation often amasses wealth in proportions that are in striking contrast with the ordinary rewards of industry, efficiency and thrift. The economic side of modern civilization is shot through and through with

injustice. And the worker in private industry, when he reflects upon his life and its conditions, not only knows all this, but knows also that he himself is spending his years in serving another man's purposes and in earning him profits.

Is it strange that our age should be restless, unstable, insecure? It would be strange if it were not.

That poverty is to be counted among the evils, and that a strenuous effort should be made to attack it, is generally agreed. But we are soon brought face to face with the great issue of the ownership of property and the distribution of wealth. Here there is no agreement. We enter the vast controversy which has plunged the modern world into industrial conflict, class antagonism, social revolution, sometimes civil war, and which threatens to divide Europe into hostile menacing camps.

Under the pressure of this situation, all kinds of social and economic experiments are being tried. The world of the present day is a vast sociological laboratory. The varied conditions and traditions of the different countries lead to the adoption of different methods. Russia tries one system; Germany and Italy another. Great Britain, together with most of the countries of western and northern Europe, adopts a third policy; which is now being followed also by the United States.

In Russia nearly one-tenth of the human race, occupying one-sixth of the land area of the globe, are being sub-

jected to a sudden and sweeping change in their economic conditions. Logically planned, ruthlessly enforced, it strives to make good in the course of a generation the arrears of centuries. Communist in name, the system, as yet, is one of State socialism, with some elements of communism intermingled. All the instruments of production, and most of the land, have been effectively socialized. Class inequalities, though not abolished, have been minimized. The livelihood of the workers has been made secure, that of the non-workers destroyed. At the same time all discrimination of sex or race, though not of religion,* has been swept away.

Observers everywhere watch with keen interest this gigantic enterprise—undoubtedly one of the most momentous events in this period of the world's history. Is it to be an example, or is it to be a danger-signal, " a guide to direct or a beacon to warn "? Some watch with hope, rising to enthusiasm; others with revulsion and alarm.

It will be well not to forget that the conditions in Russia were unique. The vast area was under a central-

* There is no preference for one faith over another, but professed believers in any religion are not admitted as members of the Communist Party and are therefore excluded from all share in the management of affairs. (See S. and B. Webb—*Soviet Communism*, Vol. II, p. 1012.)

ized government; a monarchy, absolute in power, but bewildered and incompetent, at the close under the influence of a sinister and superstitious mysticism. There was an aristocracy, largely self-indulgent and irresponsible; a clergy, generally ill-educated and unspiritual, presenting religion in a form little calculated to win intelligent acceptance; a peasantry only two generations removed from serfdom; a proletariat inefficient and, like the peasantry, mostly illiterate, sunk in poverty, often living in miserable squalor. Within this society there developed an active-minded intellectual class, humanitarian, devoted; determined to effect an utter change, by any methods and at any cost. A slowly-widening education among the people brought them an audience and a backing. Into such a nation, so constituted and so conditioned, came the ferment of a sanguinary and disastrous war, fought for distant and irrelevant objects. Such factors have no parallel. It is unlikely, therefore, that the Russian history will be repeated elsewhere.

The time has not yet come when it is possible to draw conclusions as to the results of the experiment, whether favourable or unfavourable. Certainly the average standard of living of the Russian workers has not yet been raised to that of the peoples of western Europe. It is not to be expected that it would be. In so short a time, starting from so much lower a level, handicapped by the need of devoting a large share of the available energy and resources to military defence, it would have been almost

impossible for any régime to have achieved that result. But until it is achieved, the claims of the Soviet system, on the economic side, will not have been vindicated. Whether the progress that has been already made will continue in equal measure, the coming decades will show. By one means or another, it will be necessary to provide a sufficient substitute, in the normal working of the economic machine, for the motives of hope of profit and fear of dismissal that have been eliminated. Will a sense of social duty be enough? Will the initial enthusiasm and impetus continue, or else, as it dies down, will it be replaced by an effective training of the next generation? Will the ordinary human tendencies to inefficiency and corruption be overcome by the power of the humanitarian spirit, canalized into what seems to be a self-contradiction—a materialistic religion? And, further, will it be possible, consistently with an economic system of this order, to allow that measure of freedom in thought and action, in forming opinions, in choosing a career, which is an essential mark of a good civilization? On all these questions it is too soon to form a judgement.

The dictatorships of Germany and Italy have their different way of handling the problems of poverty and inequality. Employment for profit is allowed to continue, but the Governments try to rule the economic waves and tides of a capitalist system by decrees and penalties. The ideas that underlie their economic policy are crude and

confused; the results, as yet, unattractive. Observers in other countries find no guidance there.

The third system springs from no single dogma. It is seldom formulated as a whole. It makes no claim to be an "ideology". Yet, up to a point, it serves. Its results are visibly better, so far, than those of either of the two alternatives. Among the larger countries, although important parts originated in Germany, the system as a whole has been developed furthest in Great Britain, so that it is worth while to take the British method as the example.

If you go where poverty is, you will find that its causes are either personal or social. One home may be poverty-stricken because of bad health, or injury, or perhaps incompetence or bad character; another because of low wages in the trade, or of irregular work or unemployment due to distant factors. Illness or accident bring many families to disaster; drink or gambling, dishonesty or inefficiency, bring many more; the defects and failures of the economic system cause undeserved suffering—always to thousands, in bad times to millions. Personal faults and misfortunes are to be dealt with mainly by personal action; but indirectly they are themselves often the outcome of social causes, and public action may help also, and powerfully. The social causes are a matter for the society itself. The British method tries to attack both the personal and the social. It proceeds upon several parallel

lines. Throughout it brings voluntary organizations into co-operation with State action.

There is the system of national education. Our politics definitely broke with the theory of *laissez-faire* when the Elementary Education Act was passed in 1870. Since then a vast elaboration of schools, colleges and universities, of scholarships and fellowships, has been built up. It aims, not only at the training of the individual in knowledge and character as an end in itself, but also, and partly through that, it aims at attacking poverty and inequality. A class that is illiterate will certainly be inefficient, and therefore poor; its members will be denied openings for the talents they possess; ignorance will perpetuate inferiority. Universal education and equal opportunity is at least a step on the way to social justice.

There is the effort to improve environment. Here again, already in the nineteenth century, an active movement had been set on foot. The present century has seen a marked extension. A great system of law, public administration and voluntary action has been created for the safeguarding of health and the improvement of housing. The proper planning of towns has at last been begun. Opportunities for recreation are being provided. Not least important has been the careful control of the liquor traffic; nearly thirty thousand redundant, and often squalid, public houses have been swept away in thirty years.

The nation has made a great effort to ensure to all

its members, at all times, at least a maintenance. The sick and the aged, widows and orphans, the blind and the feeble-minded, the unemployed and the victims of industrial accident—all these, by one method or another, are assured at all events against the extreme consequences of misfortune.

There has been a sustained endeavour, over a period of more than a hundred years, to conquer the evils of low wages, long hours, irregular work, unhealthy conditions of labour. Collective bargaining has been one means. Trade Unionism, at first persecuted and penalized, has been given full recognition. The settlement of wages and other working conditions through the joint deliberations of representatives of employers and employed, with arbitration in case of disagreement, once regarded by employers as an outrageous invasion of their rights, has now become a matter of course. Great codes of industrial law have provided another means; they deal with hours, health and safety; with wages also in agriculture, and in a few other industries where collective bargaining does not yet obtain.

There has been some movement towards a more equal distribution of property. On the one hand the thrift of the people, and the creation of a vast network of co-operative societies, building-societies and savings-banks, have brought into existence a large class of workers who are also small property-owners; a considerable part of the national wealth is now owned by them. On the other

hand, taxation lops off much of the surplus of the larger incomes. Partly in order to provide means for the social services, partly owing to the exigencies of the War and of national defence, and partly because gross inequalities of wealth do not accord with a democratic constitution, the system of taxation in Great Britain has been transformed during the present century. The taxes upon incomes drawn from the ownership of capital and land are heavier than upon earned incomes; upon the larger incomes than upon the smaller; upon property that passes at death they rise to a high figure. The State takes half the incomes of very rich men during their lives, and again half of the property passing at their death.

The fundamental issue of the ownership of capital has not yet been faced. But there have been experiments. A practical people, sceptical of general theories, yet recognizing that the capitalist system has grave defects and may involve great dangers, has been exploring tentatively the possibilities of change. During the post-War period especially, new forms of ownership have been devised to fit different kinds of property. These, added to the old forms, have given us a strangely differentiated system of ownership, graded from unrestricted private control to full communism. The system is still in process of active development. It may produce in course of time an economic pattern different from any that the theorists of the various schools have proposed, and with results that may prove not only different, but better.

Our roads, bridges, public health equipment and elementary schools, our scheme of old age pensions also, are communal; the community maintains them, and anyone who needs the benefit of them may have it without payment. Our postal services, telegraphs and telephones, most of the electricity and gas supplies, of the ports and harbours, of the local transport systems and of the higher educational institutions, are socialized; they are paid for, wholly or mainly, by those who use them, but they belong to the citizens in general and yield no private profit. Of the various insurance systems, some are national undertakings and some are commercial. The Broadcasting Corporation is neither a State enterprise nor a profit-making concern. By far the largest retail trading organization in the country is co-operative. A number of undertakings belong to shareholders and are under their control, but with statutory limits on the prices charged and the profits made; the remaining gas, electricity and water companies, the passenger transport service of London, and its port, are in this class. Many housing societies and other public utility bodies are also privately-owned and managed, but are limited as to profits. The fares and rates on the railways are regulated by the State. Over the rest, and doubtless the greater part, of industry, private ownership and management remains; restricted only by the general laws safeguarding good government and the welfare of the workers.

The system of land-ownership has changed little from

medieval times. National and local authorities have purchased a small fraction of the area of the soil for various public purposes, including the provision of houses, allotments and small holdings; and there has been some special protection of the interests of tenants as against landlords. But in the main the system of land-ownership is the same as in the Middle Ages.

Very characteristic of the British people is this jumble of varied and apparently inconsistent methods; this irregular and constantly moving frontier between public and private enterprise, between State and voluntary action; all this complex policy of equal opportunity, better environment, guaranteed minimum standard, collective bargaining, industrial regulation, diffused ownership, differentiated taxation.

It has grown up half-consciously, piecemeal, as occasion required. There is nothing here that is logical or symmetrical. There is nothing analogous to the theory of Marx and the measures of Lenin, to Hegel and the policy of the Nazis, or to Italian Fascism. Observers in other countries may watch it with bewilderment. "Socialism", they seem to say, "is a policy; Communism is a policy; even Fascism has an economic policy of a sort. But what is this? It has not even a name." A plea of Guilty must be entered here. Nevertheless the British method of social development—without a name and without a conscious plan, yet with a general aim vaguely perceived—has won a large measure of practical success.

So the British Constitution grew, and so the British Empire, and the Law of England.

I look back, across more than a quarter of a century, to the work of the Ministry of 1906. It is now generally recognized that, during the eight years from its formation to the outbreak of the War, a greater measure of social progress was achieved, along those lines, than in any equal period before or since. We ourselves saw that work, not as something haphazard, but as part of a coherent policy, begun by those who had gone before us, to be continued and expanded by those who should come after. But it is doubtful if the nation so recognized it then; or recognizes even now that it has succeeded in evolving a new social practice of its own. Equally the British nation was unaware that it had a Constitution, or that it had an Empire, until the one and the other had become too obvious to be overlooked.

Up to a point the policy serves. Viewed as a whole and from first to last, we may see that it has reduced ignorance, disease, mortality, drunkenness and crime, has enlarged knowledge, improved health and increased comfort to a degree that an earlier generation could hardly have hoped. Imagine for a moment that all this complex system, gradually and elaborately built up, were to be swept away by some political cataclysm, imagine that the people were thrown back into the social conditions of a century ago, and the extent of the gain will stand clear.

Up to a point it has served. But only up to a point.

Poverty persists. Less wide-spread relatively, and less cruel in its effect, nevertheless it persists. The inequalities of wealth have been softened, but only a little. No one will deny that our social system is still full of injustice. New problems have arisen from the growth of monopolies and semi-monopolies, and the need, in the public interest, of controlling them. In all the other countries which have been proceeding on more or less the same lines as Great Britain the situation in these matters is much the same. The question which now faces us all is whether similar principles of action, carried further, will suffice to remedy the grievances that still remain, vitally affecting millions everywhere; or whether the nations must have recourse to more sweeping measures, carried out by more drastic methods.

On this momentous issue no one can form a considered opinion without taking into account, not only the actual defects of the present system, but the possible defects of an alternative. Necessarily that must be a matter of speculation, except to the limited extent that Russian experience gives guidance. Risks are many and obvious.

On the economic side, it is not safe to dismiss lightly the question of adequate production. It is not enough to say that, thanks to science, the world's productive capacity is already so great, and can so easily be expanded further, that there will always be enough commodities

to allow comfort for everyone. That is so, no doubt, if industries are efficiently managed and if commerce runs smoothly. But those conditions are not guaranteed by the nature of things. It is easy for any industrial undertaking to drop ten per cent. or twenty per cent. in its efficiency. In commerce all kinds of factors enter—the skilful or the unskilful management of public finance, public credit and currency, the freeing or restricting of the channels of trade. It is clear that comfort for the masses of a population is a matter not only of the equitable distribution of the wealth that is produced, but also of a production that shall be efficient and plentiful. If this is not assured, it would be a better choice for the workers to receive two-thirds, perhaps, of present abundance than the whole of future scarcity.

A second factor is the ultimate effect, upon the character of a people, of a monopoly of production, and a monopoly of the Labour-Market. If the State is sole producer and sole employer, can the interest of the individual as consumer and as employee be sufficiently safeguarded? The Russian system sets out to do this, but, as yet, with doubtful success. In the second generation, and the next, what will be the outcome?

A third factor is the need of preserving the cultural heritage of the past. No one will deny that hitherto it has been the well-to-do classes who have stimulated invention, encouraged art, developed other amenities of life and maintained the standards of culture. They have been,

at least in recent centuries, the pace-makers of civilization. It is vital in this to safeguard the future. " Many ", said Matthew Arnold, " are to be made partakers in well-being, true; but the ideal of well-being is not to be, on that account, lowered and coarsened." It may be possible to provide alternatives; they are already beginning to appear; and a culture springing from the people may have distinctive and fine qualities. But a changing order of society would be wise to bring the new agencies into being before destroying the old. Otherwise there would be a gap, and much that is valuable might disappear and be lost.

Any process that was sudden, sweeping and levelling might cause as much injustice as it cured. The Russian revolution has been cruel and bloody. Not only has it brought material ruin upon vast numbers of people, but it has inflicted forced labour, imprisonment, exile or death upon vast numbers more. The cutting-out of the whole class of well-to-do peasants from the social system, " the liquidation of the Kulaks," has meant the ruin of about a million families, the uprooting of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, observers whose judgement is favourable on the whole to the new régime, say of this episode that " the sum of human suffering involved is beyond all computation." A movement on behalf of humanity should not itself be inhumane. " Violence ", said Carlyle, " does even justice unjustly."

These factors are important. They cannot be ignored. It is true that they may be pressed unduly. Self-interest leads many among the wealthy classes in all countries to seize upon considerations such as these as a defence against any large measures of economic change, regardless of need or of merit. The dangers are magnified. Possible risks are represented as certain disasters. But when exaggerations have been discounted, points of substance remain. There is a real risk of deterioration, both economic and cultural. There is the risk of violence and injustice. The conclusion emerges that change should be gradual.

But it need not for that reason be slow or halting. The pace must largely depend upon the degree of opposition that is encountered. That there will be many among the possessing classes who will offer a tenacious resistance to all measures of serious change is probably inevitable. Moved really by the narrowest self-interest, they will no doubt persuade themselves, and try to persuade others, that they are the champions of industrial progress and a stable society. "It is an old observation how Interest smoothes the road to Faith." But it need not be assumed that the propertied classes will be solid in their opposition.

When in Great Britain, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the floods of social discontent were rising, when they found a political channel and swept

forward in the movement for constitutional reform, their final success was due, not only to the enthusiasm and unity of the unenfranchised masses, and not only to the fear among the others that to deny reform might bring revolution, but also to the frank recognition, by many leading men among the aristocracy and the rich, that the reformers were right. In that great crisis, when the whole future of the country, social and economic as well as political, depended upon the outcome, a peaceful decision was reached because those who controlled the Parliament constituted under the old system were wise enough to consent to the enactment of the new. The economic issue now is not unlike the constitutional issue then. The course of events may be similar.

There exists that large measure of agreement, permeating all classes, as to the evil and the danger of poverty and flagrant social injustice. It is remarkable how little resentment there is among the owners of unearned wealth against its taxation at rates unheard of in any previous period. Few can fail to realize that it would be intolerable that, fifty or a hundred years from now, poverty should remain unredressed, that the same wretchedness should still afflict great classes of the populations. So it may be that, without any violent resistance, or even controversy, the many parallel lines of progress that have been pursued during the last few decades, and have carried the peoples far toward their goal, will be followed farther during the coming years, and more

quickly because of the more general assent.

But if not?

Then it needs no great prescience to see that, in Great Britain, in the United States, and in other countries as well, if the social changes that are indispensable do not come gradually and by consent, they will come nevertheless, but convulsively and by compulsion. The owning classes could fall into no greater error than to suppose that if property is to survive, poverty must be accepted also. The opposite is more likely to be true. If poverty continues, the property system will not.

CHAPTER TWELVE

LIBERTY*

ANOTHER ingredient in the seething cauldron of our times is the conflict that has arisen on liberty. At the beginning of this century it seemed as though that were among the settled questions. There might be exceptions here and there; some countries might be laggards in the march to freedom; but all enlightened men everywhere sought the same ultimate goal.

Nations should be free from alien domination: the nineteenth century had seen the overthrow of Napoleon's empire over Europe, the birth of the republics of South and Central America, the Italian *risorgimento*, the liberation of the Balkan peoples. These were illustrious examples of a rule destined to become universal.

Nations should be self-governing: the young democracies of the United States and France had become

* Parts of this and the next Chapter were included in my Presidential Address for 1936 to the British Institute of Philosophy, published in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, February 1937, under the title "Wars of Ideas".

mature; the old democracy of Great Britain had almost completed her system; her great colonies had adopted it eagerly; Germany, Austria, Japan, Turkey, had set up their Parliaments, though with limited powers; even Russia had established its Duma; India and China were on the move. Here was the pattern set for civilized mankind.

Within the nation, the individual should be free: free to think, worship, speak and act as he would—subject to the similar rights of others; free, under the protection of equal justice, to pursue his lawful business as he chose. John Stuart Mill, it was thought, had stated unanswerably, and once for all, the case for personal liberty. In all these rights women should equally share.

And the world was at last beginning to realize that there was also another kind of freedom, not less essential —economic freedom: that men should no longer be bound down, from birth to death, by the hampering restrictions that come from poverty, overwork and bad environment; that freedom consists not only in absence of restraint but also in presence of opportunity; that through their trade unions, or by the help of the law, the workers should be liberated from the oppressions of the industrial system.

For liberty is not, as is usually supposed, a single and simple conception. It has the four elements—national, political, personal, economic. The man who is fully free is one who lives in a country which is indepen-

dent; in a State which is democratic; in a society where the laws are equal and restrictions at a minimum; in an economic system in which he has the latitude of a secure livelihood and assured comfort, and full opportunity to rise by merit.

Not long ago all this was widely agreed. That liberty was a good thing was accepted as a root principle of politics. If national freedom was still incomplete in parts of the Austrian and Russian and Turkish Empires, and in Ireland and India also; if some of the Parliaments had not yet grown into their full powers; if oppressive laws continued here and there; if still in a number of countries trade unions were hampered and employers autocratic—these were merely survivals of a rapidly disappearing past. The course of events would soon carry mankind along the few stages that remained, and liberty be established everywhere in all its fullness.

After the Great War the Peace Treaties did in the main continue the trend. Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, peoples of the Baltic and of the Balkans, Arab territories, were liberated from foreign rule. The three Empires of Central and Eastern Europe disappeared. Parliaments were newly created in some countries, enlarged their powers in others. If in Russia a dictatorship was set up, it was a dictatorship that spoke in the name of the people and worked in their interests. Within the British Empire, not long after the War, self-government was established fully in Ireland, and in large measure in India. Almost

everywhere there was a rapid expansion of personal and economic freedom.

Then, over a great part of Europe, came the sudden reaction. Viewed in retrospect, the causes stand out clearly. There was economic depression; whole classes were ruined through currency inflation; low wages and wide-spread unemployment gave rise to industrial turmoil. Some of the democratic Parliaments and Governments showed themselves incapable of handling the situation. In the countries defeated in the War a revived national spirit rebelled against the harsh economic conditions and the one-sided disarmament that had been imposed. The opportunity was seized by ambitious men, resolute and able. Supported by a great body of opinion which was eager for the re-establishment of authority and order and normal conditions for work and business, they overturned the existing constitutions. Seeking a basis for a different régime, they found it in a political philosophy which had been shaping itself, almost unnoticed, in the previous years, and which was ready to their hand.

This philosophy is intensely national, sometimes racial. It is anti-democratic and militarist. Many thinkers have been drawn upon in its development: Hegel, Fichte, Nietzsche, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Sorel, Croce, Bergson—others as well. It has taken definite shape in the creeds of Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism, and in replicas elsewhere.

Is this movement to be merely a temporary episode

in European history? Or is there here the new model for the future—a doctrine which shall reverse the tendencies that have prevailed for a hundred and fifty years, and reshape the politics of the world?

At the base of this political philosophy, as has been mentioned earlier, is the tendency to depreciate intellect and to exalt intuition. This is the specific contribution drawn from Nietzsche, Croce and Bergson. It encourages political mysticism. A typical example may be found in an utterance of Herr Hitler, in the course of a speech delivered soon after the reoccupation of the Rhineland and broadcast to the world: "I go my way", he said, "with the assurance of a somnambulist, the way which Providence has sent me."

This question of intuition and reason has been sufficiently discussed in a previous chapter. If the general conclusion be accepted that intuitive promptings must always be subject to rational criticism and control, then the Fascist-Nazi creed cannot be exempt from that test.

A second basic idea is the doctrine of militarism. That can be discussed more conveniently in the next chapter, as part of the general question of international relations.

A third foundation is the Hegelian theory of the State, and the subordination to it of the individual.

Hegel held that the State is a living entity, real in its own right, and supreme. The State, he said, "is the

divine idea as it exists on earth . . . It is the absolute power on earth: it is its own end and object. It is the ultimate end which has the highest right against the individual." This metaphysical doctrine has been adopted in Italy as well as in Germany. It is expressed in the first article of the Fascist declaration of principles entitled, paradoxically, "The Charter of Liberty": "The Italian nation, by its power and duration, is an organism with a being, and ends and means of action, superior to those of the individuals, whether separate or grouped, of which it is composed."

The waning of the old theologies has left a spiritual void. In minds where they have not been replaced by a developed conception of Deity, and a faith and practice based upon it, this void gives room for all kinds of strange imaginings. The postulate of a transcendental State and Nation may be one. In Germany a new religion is being developed on those lines. For example, the Leader of the powerful German Youth Movement, Herr Baldur von Schirach, has made this declaration—in reply to charges that his organization was godless: "One cannot be a good German," he said, "and at the same time deny God, but an avowal of faith in the eternal Germany is at the same time an avowal of faith in the eternal God. For us the service of Germany is the service of God. If we act as true Germans, we act according to the laws of God. Whoever serves Adolf Hitler, the *Führer*, serves Germany, and whoever serves Germany, serves God."

Let us examine for a moment this doctrine of the reality of a living State. Visibly the State is nothing but a number of men and women organized for certain purposes of common action. Man is by nature social; human beings have an innate tendency to co-operate; but this does not confer " reality " on the forms which they may adopt to that end. Suppose that a group of young people, living in a growing suburb, come together to form a tennis club; there does not thereupon spring into existence a new metaphysical entity. It is the same if the scale be enlarged. When families organize themselves into a tribe under chiefs, or when the tribe grows into a nation, no such entity arises.

We may be misled by a metaphor or an analogy. The State in some respects resembles an organism. Herbert Spencer elaborated this in a well-known essay. But the State is not in fact an organism. That is a biological term, and the State is not biological.

Or we may be misled by the fact that the behaviour of men in a crowd is often different from the behaviour of the same people separately. It is the fallacy " that since man collectively is different from man individually, the crowd is in itself something apart from its members." The reasons for the difference have been analysed by Le Bon. As one of a crowd, the individual has a feeling of power through the strength of numbers. Not being easily identified, he loses his sense of personal responsibility. Ideas, suggested by a leader, may evoke a simul-

taneous response, a contagious sympathy, that submerges independent and critical thought. There may even be some form of mass hypnosis. But all this does not constitute a new " being ". The next day each member of the crowd must realize that he and his fellows were individually responsible for whatever was done; they cannot shift that responsibility to something other than themselves, for there was nothing other.

We may be misled again by the personification of nations in history. We have been so accustomed to read from early childhood of " England ", " Germany ", " Russia " and the rest, that as a matter of course we attach reality to those abstractions. Remembering that societies make history, we forget that it is individuals that make societies.

Nevertheless the significance of the State is not to be undervalued. Though not an organism, it is an organization, and momentous as such. Did it not exist, the civilized man could hardly exist either. If it were different from what it is, for good or for bad, the community would be different, and his own life would be different. The community is to the civilized man what the atmosphere is to the body. If it is pure and wholesome, he is healthy. If it is close and stifling, he stifles. If he is cut off from it, he dies.

A nation and its institutions are products of each other. Language, laws, customs, developed by the past generations are embodied in the present Society, and

shape the future. Frenchmen make France, and France makes Frenchmen. It is the Frenchmen of yesterday who have made the France of to-day, and the France of to-day that makes the Frenchmen of to-morrow. Yet France apart from Frenchmen would be merely a geographical expression. Just as there can be no flock apart from the sheep, no swarm apart from the bees, no army apart from the soldiers, so there can be no State or Nation apart from the people. The State, the Nation, is a pattern, a grouping, and nothing more. It is not an entity in itself. The Hegelian theory belongs, not to philosophy, but to mythology.

The Fascist-Nazi system is based upon another doctrine, besides intuitionalism, militarism and the Hegelian conception of the State—the principle of personal leadership. The aura surrounding the State is extended to its spokesman. Here the new philosophy pursues earlier tendencies. Frequently recurring in both German and Italian history is the cult of the Hero. The present *Führer-prinzip* is the formulation of old practice.

Dictatorships, it must be agreed, have their advantages, at all events at the outset. There may be speed of action and efficiency of administration such as democracies sometimes lack. But there are factors also on the other side. In the conduct of affairs, differences of opinion as to the right course to pursue must arise from time to time. If those differences are not settled by discussion and voting in elected assemblies, and ultimately

by discussion and voting by the people, they have to be settled in other ways. In a dictatorship, whether Fascist, or Nazi, or indeed Communist, they are settled by the opinion of the dictator; and his opinion is formed under such personal influences as may be brought to bear upon him. No one is free to speak out plainly. If anyone differs, he runs the risk of being dismissed from office, or imprisoned, or exiled, or killed. Incipient opposition is ruthlessly suppressed. Intrigue takes the place of open discussion and decisive vote. Cavour, who had much experience both of Parliaments and of Palaces, gave it as his judgement that " the worst Chamber is better than the best ante-chamber."

The real test of the system of dictatorship comes with the ageing of the first dictator; still more with the succession of the second and the third. Even a Napoleon the Great had his Waterloo; and his heir was a Napoleon the Little with his Sedan. Only once, in all the long records of the history of the great States of the western world, do we learn of a succession of able rulers assuring strong and efficient government, under a personal régime, for as long a period as eighty years; and even the relatively favourable experience of the Roman Empire from Nerva to Marcus Aurelius was followed not long after by a complete collapse.

The surrender of political and personal liberties under the dictatorships is no light sacrifice. Let those of us who are citizens of English-speaking communities, or of

France, Scandinavia or other countries where democracy continues, let us suppose for a moment that we, in our turn, were subjected to the conditions that have prevailed under the other system. Let us imagine that we were only allowed to read in our newspapers what a dominant political party, or a single individual, thought it desirable for us to read; that the events of the world could be reported to us only in part, and with a gloss; that we could hear at meetings or on the radio, see at theatres or the cinemas, only such things as authority might think suitable; that, regardless of any wishes of ours, our sons had all to be trained from earliest youth, in mind and body, to military ends; that at any moment our country could be thrown into war, without any of us being allowed to know the truth about the issue, being able in any degree to influence the course of events in advance, or even to say a word in protest against being made accomplices in what might be a monstrous crime against some other State—imagine that, and then we may have some conception of the sacrifice entailed to-day, upon the peoples of the greater part of Europe, by the system of dictatorship.

If it be said that the populations themselves have surrendered their liberties by their own will, expressed by their own votes, let it be remembered that at the elections which have been held no opponents were allowed to present themselves and no criticism to be uttered. Every form of pressure was used to secure compliance. But

even if the votes had been given freely and with open eyes, that would not outweigh or justify the forgoing of liberty. Edmond About said of France in the middle of the nineteenth century, when a parliamentary system was combined with a rigid centralization and constant Government interference, that " it was the pride of every Frenchman, when he looked into his glass in the morning, to think that he saw there the twenty-seven-millionth part of a tyrant, but he was apt to forget that at the same time he saw the whole of a slave."

In the last resort, the issue is whether or not a high value is to be set upon self-reliance, freedom of the spirit.

Those who hold that personal initiative is of importance, that the power to choose a course for oneself and to follow it of one's own volition is of importance; who hold that even a right action is not rightly done unless it is freely done; that there cannot be a great nation without great citizens—those who hold these things cannot but view the " totalitarian State ", and all it implies, with revulsion and antipathy. That road, they see, leads towards an insect civilization. " ' Consider the ant '—and beware of her! She is there for a warning."

A further element in the Nazi-Fascist system is the emphasis laid on the economic side of life. In Italy this leads to the theory of the Corporate State. Every form of legislature chosen by the general body of citizens having been abolished, some kind of assembly has to be created

in order not to leave too obviously empty the place where Liberty once stood. The idea is therefore adopted of regarding the State as a federation of corporations, each consisting of a group of industries or occupations. An assembly is set up consisting of their representatives. This is one of the many points in which Fascism and Marxism resemble each other. The " materialistic conception of history ", held by the communist, is of the same order of ideas as underlies the Corporate State of the Fascist.

It is a falsification of politics. Life is more than work; a citizen is something more than a member of a trade or profession; human history is more than a mere struggle of appetites for material things. That there is an economic factor in history is certain; that it is always important and sometimes predominant no one would deny. But to see in the evolution of civilization nothing more than a material process, to find in it no spiritual or rational purpose, is to take a biased and distorted view of the record of mankind in thought and action. A legislature has to deal with many affairs that have little relation, or none, to the particular occupation to which a citizen may belong—with education and all forms of culture, with environment generally, with public finance and public order, with national defence and international relations. The citizen, if he is to take part in public affairs at all, must do so as a man, and not merely as manufacturer or merchant, lawyer or doctor, farmer or

craftsman or labourer. The idea of the Corporate State is misconceived from the beginning.

An analysis of the Nazi, Fascist and Marxist alternatives to systems based on political freedom does not lead to the conclusion that any one of them, or any combination of them, offers a basis that is to be preferred for the future politics of the world.

There are the four kinds of liberty, and their claims do not always pull the same way. We may find the key to many episodes in history, and the clue through much of the maze of the present times, when we realize that many of the controversies and conflicts are not between Power and Freedom, but between forces fighting for one form of liberty and forces fighting for another.

The nationalist stands for the freedom and independence of his country; for the sake of that cause he may become militarist; may insist upon conscription; may support dictatorship. The communist stands for economic freedom, for the liberation of the workers from industrial slavery; to uphold that cause he too may become militarist, may favour conscription, may support dictatorship. The democrat puts political and personal liberty in the first place; he may underestimate the need of defending national freedom or assuring economic freedom. Each of the three may see only one aspect of liberty, and may fight to the death against those who prefer the others. The complexity of the politics of our age comes largely

from the fact that there truly are times and places when one form of liberty has to be surrendered, wholly or in part, for the sake of another. The nineteenth century thought that liberty was a simple thing; men were for it or against it. The twentieth century finds that armies are enlisted, conflicts fought, wars threatened, each side claiming to be striving for the freedom of this or of that.

Abraham Lincoln was the staunchest of the friends of liberty; yet in the Civil War, in order to save the American Union as guardian of democracy, and in the cause of the abolition of slavery, he did not hesitate to use the compulsion of law in order to draft recruits for the Northern armies. To take a different example, a race that is backward in civilization may be well advised, at all events for a time, to accept an alien government, if that is necessary in order to stop or to prevent domestic tyranny and misrule; it may be better to postpone national and constitutional liberty for the sake of personal and economic liberty. And in every democracy, at all times, the individual has to accommodate his own will in some measure to the general will, his personal freedom of choice to the decisions of the free political system to which he belongs.

If free government means weak government, freedom will disappear in anarchy and the reaction that always follows anarchy. "Great as freedom may be, it has to rest upon a basis of government." A democratic society must keep a balance between the collective authority of all

its members and the due liberty of each. Alexander Hamilton stated the case cogently: "In a Government framed for durable liberty, not less regard must be paid to giving the magistrate a proper degree of authority to make and execute the laws with rigour, than to guard against encroachments upon the rights of the community; as too much power leads to despotism, too little leads to anarchy, and both eventually to the ruin of the people." He held that the aim should be to "unite public strength with individual security", and esteemed the British Constitution as being, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the only one in the world which achieved it.

The democrat will be ready to accept the Positivist motto, "Order and Progress", recognizing that order is necessary to progress, as in the modern world progress is necessary for order. He will obey the laws, even if he thinks them wrong; for others, whose opinions are equally valid, may think them right; and in any case, if they are wrong, in a democratic system the means are at hand for changing them. He will join in upholding the dignity of the State, since its prestige strengthens its authority and makes for its success. His politics will include elements both of radicalism and of conservatism. There are times and places when the energies of good citizens are needed most for measures of reform; but there may also be times in the history of any country when the chief duty is to prevent the sapping of authority. Post-War experience in Europe showed clearly enough that democracies may

fall through their own fault, through failure to realize this condition and to fulfil it.

Some of them fell through excesses of the party spirit. Parties, indeed, are essential to the working of a democracy. Someone must formulate policies and propound them to the people. Someone must choose candidates for electoral bodies and support them in the constituencies. Someone must organize the proceedings in the Legislature.* The right course is that men and women, who are of like mind on the chief issues of the time, should come together to achieve their ends, and to perform these functions as the means. If people of goodwill hold aloof from political organization, the State will sink into disorder; control will fall into worse hands, and they themselves will be penalized. "The punishment which the wise suffer," said Emerson, "who refuse to take part in the government, is to live under the government of worse men."

Parties are always beset by temptations. They are tempted to adopt repressive measures against their own members, or unscrupulous measures against their opponents. They are tempted to carry their controversies to such a pitch that the State may be paralysed in time of peace, or overthrown in time of war. Yet anyone who

* "I believe that, without party, Parliamentary Government is impossible."—Disraeli—Speech at Manchester, *The Times*, April 4th, 1872.

has had experience of practical politics in a democratic State can see no alternative to the party system; so that the aim should be, not to abolish parties, nor yet to abandon democracy because of their defects and dangers, but rather so to order affairs as to remove the defects and avoid the dangers.

We reach the general conclusion that liberty conduces to welfare, in its widest sense. Happy are the people who are fitted, and able, to enjoy liberty in all its forms together. They will not deny that crises may come when one kind of liberty has to be subordinated for the sake of another. But they will need clear proof of it before they will consent to so great a sacrifice.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE NATION AND THE WORLD

WHEN we enter the province of the relations between States, we seem to be walking into a mist. Men are unable to see things clearly, as they are. Philosophers and historians, poets and politicians, generation after generation have shrouded the whole scene with clouds of metaphysical mystical vapour. Our thought is bewildered. In books, in ordinary conversation, it is usual to speak of the course of events as though it was due, not to men's action or inaction, but to some undefined shadowy " trend ", or " force ", or " destiny ".

To give some instances:—the former Crown Prince of Germany, in his *Memoirs*, speaks of the year 1914 as a time " when the enormous pressure of economic and political forces was uncontrollably driving the world towards the catastrophe of war ". Sir Austen Chamberlain, writing of the difficulties of British politics in the same year, says " Relentless Fate, as in a Greek tragedy, seemed driving us all to a catastrophe . . . The actors were in the grip of forces stronger than themselves, whirled round and downwards like frail craft caught in

the maelstrom of inexorable fate." Lord Grey of Fallodon wrote, in his *Twenty-five Years*, "There is in great affairs so much more, as a rule, in the minds of the events (if such an expression may be used) than in the minds of the chief actors." The same idea is constantly found in literature. Thomas Hardy's great epic, *The Dynasts*, is founded on it. Tolstoi's *War and Peace* ends with the same theme. John Buchan writes in his *Oliver Cromwell*: "The last act of the drama had come, and events marched with a tragic speed. The different protagonists acted according to their types, puppets in the hands of destiny." It is well known that Napoleon's mind was dominated by this belief. At the beginning of the Russian campaign he said, "I feel myself driven towards an end that I do not know. As soon as I shall have reached it, as soon as I shall become unnecessary, an atom will suffice to shatter me. Till then, not all the forces of mankind can do anything against me "—(and, led by that faith, he marched to disaster).

Greek thought was overshadowed by the notion of an all-pervading, all-powerful Necessity. In our own day the notion is resuscitated. Dr. Oswald Spengler, in particular, sets out to revive it, as the basis for an interpretation of history and a philosophy of life. His monumental work, *The Decline of the West*, distinguished by the breadth of its learning and the brilliance of its style, has exercised a great influence in Germany, and some influence elsewhere.

Spengler constantly uses phrases such as " an inherent historic necessity." He attaches prime importance to " what is named by us ' conjuncture ', ' accident ', ' Providence ', or ' Fate ', by Classical man ' Nemesis ', ' Ananke ', ' Tyche ' or ' Fatum ', by the Arab ' Kismet '." He writes, with reference to the expansion of European Powers: " It is not a matter of choice—it is not the conscious will of individuals, or even that of whole classes or peoples that decides. The expansive tendency is a doom, something daemonic and immense, which grips, forces into service, and uses up the late mankind of the world-city stage,* willy-nilly, aware or unaware."

Many thinkers are captured by the resemblance of human institutions to living organisms. It is not only the State which is supposed to be alive, but whole civilizations. And since many civilizations have come to an end, the conclusion is drawn that each one of them passes through the biological stages that are common to all organisms, except the lowest. Spengler, again, is among these thinkers. " Every Culture ", he says, using that word in the usual sense of a Civilization, " passes through the age-phases of the individual man. Each has its childhood, youth, manhood and old age . . . Cultures are organisms, and world-history is their collective biography. Morphologically, the immense history of the Chinese or

* Spengler's term for an industrial civilization.

the Classical Culture is the exact equivalent of the petty history of the individual man, or of the animal, or the tree, or the flower."

Some are attracted by geometrical analogies. This is one of the most usual forms that philosophies of history have taken. Thinkers among the Hindus have envisaged existence as circular—constantly recurring in cycles. Some writers have seen the movement of ideas as a spiral, or as "a circular motion in which the radius grows longer." The optimists of the nineteenth century conceived the story of man as movement along a line, more or less straight and always ascending. Professor Arnold Toynbee, in his great work, *A Study of History*, detects a constantly recurring process of "withdrawal and return". He sees the succession of civilizations as "particular beats of a general rhythmical pulsation which runs all through the Universe." For him the fortunes of various sections of mankind move in a kind of zig-zag.*

It is important that we should form an opinion whether there is truth in the idea which is common to all these theories: namely that, no matter what men as individuals may think or do or not do, there is a mystic force that decides their fate for good or ill, according to some rule—metaphysical or biological or geometrical. This is not the same as the theistic faith that the hand of God guides the fortune of man. It is a claim to have

* Cf. Vico's theory of Reflux.

discovered, usually by an empirical study of recorded history, that there are principles, of one kind or of another, which have determined its course, and which, rightly interpreted, would predict the future.

Is there any substance in this idea, or is there none? I feel convinced that there is none.

Not one of these writers gives any definition, or even the vaguest indication, of the nature of the force that is invoked. Spengler, being an intuitionalist, denies any need to do so. "When in the present work", he writes, "precedence is consistently given to Time, Direction and Destiny over Space and Causality, this must not be supposed to be the result of reasoned proofs. It is the outcome of (quite unconscious) tendencies of life-feeling—the only mode of origin of philosophic ideas." When he speaks of Destiny as "a doom, something daemonic and immense, which grips," he does not describe or define; he merely uses the language of a resounding, but empty rhetoric.

A philosophic historian, having framed a theory which is to serve as a clue to the whole story, finds it easy, from the masses of material at his hand, to discover examples that support it. Without consciously making a selection to suit his purpose, the instances that confirm his ideas leap to his eye; those that do not, are to him less conspicuous and seem less important; every rule has its exceptions, and these may be treated as exceptions. This is the easier if the historian holds the view expressed by Spengler that

"Nature is to be handled scientifically, History poetically."

With regard to the theory that every State, or Empire, or civilization, passes through the morphological stages of an organism—birth, growth, maturity, decay and death —by what acts of historical violence could this be reconciled with, for example, the vicissitudes of the history of China, or the growth of a system like the British Empire? How can it include the effects of such momentous events as the rise of the several world-religions; the development of ocean transit; the discovery of America, or the emergence of Japan?

Among the geometrical theories, what basis, even the slightest, is there for the dogma of Hindu theology that all things move in a circle? Does any impartial student feel convinced by the proofs offered in support of the straight line, the spiral or the zig-zag?

When Grey, with a half-apology, speaks of "the minds of the events—if such an expression may be used," it must be answered that it is legitimate to use it only as the merest figure of speech, without implying any philosophical content. For events do not possess minds. When Spengler uses the word "Destiny" throughout the thousand pages of his volumes, he might as well have written "Abracadabra" for any meaning that the word conveys.

Rather may we see the pattern of human history as

an immense criss-cross of causes producing effects, which are themselves the causes of future effects, and so on continuously. Some of the factors are large and obvious and are recorded in history; most are trivial and casual; but of these some may have momentous consequences.* The complexity of the process is so vast that no single rule or simple image can possibly express it. Here and there we can distinguish particular causes as tending, if allowed to operate more or less in isolation, to produce particular effects. So we may sometimes trace similarities in the histories of the several nations or civilizations, may draw lessons from the experience, and predict for the future like consequences from like conditions. But isolation is rare; the differences are as many as the resemblances. Only omniscience could trace back the innumerable threads as they have come out of the past from this side

* Mr. John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) has published an interesting lecture under the title *The Causal and the Casual in History*. He gives a number of illustrations of trifling occurrences being followed by great consequences. But the casual occurrence is also causal; it is one among a number of causes which have contributed to the event. It could not have produced the consequence by itself; any more than the accidental pulling of a trigger could kill a man unless the gun were loaded and the man in the line of fire. No true distinction is to be drawn between a causal and a casual in history.

or that, twisting, dividing, merging into one another, separating again. Only omniscience could unravel them. But they do not become non-existent because they are for us unravelled.

Running like a warp all through are the physical characteristics of the earth on which we live—its sea and land, climates and seasons; its conditions of weather and harvests, of earthquakes, pests, diseases. There are the qualities of man himself—body, mind and character; constant in the main, but modifiable in detail; with innumerable variations in races, nations, persons. There are the customs, institutions, and laws that he has made, his conflicts and his co-operations. There is the influence of great leaders of thought and action; of lesser leaders; and of ordinary men and women in their own spheres. All this vast complex is moving in space-time, and interweaving the infinitely variegated pattern of occurrence and circumstance.

We cannot grasp it all, so we do not understand why things happen. Because of our ignorance we speak of Destiny. There is a void, and we try to fill it with an abstraction. But ignorance is negative, and you cannot turn it into a positive by calling it Destiny. The positive is the continuous succession of intermingling causes, with effects that are further causes. "Fate", said Emerson, "is unpenetrated causes."

"Mankind" also is an unreality. Individuals make up the real. "Mankind?" said Goethe. "It is an

abstraction. There are, always have been, and always will be, men and only men." The prophets, the teachers, the poets, the warriors, the statesmen—they and those who follow them, citizens or soldiers or workmen, voting or not voting, fighting or refusing to fight, producing things, buying them, using them; the millions of ordinary men and women, unnamed and unknown, forming opinions, one by one thinking and acting, or acting without thinking—they, and they alone, are the " spirit of the age ", " the uncontrollable forces ", " the minds of the events "; they, and they alone, decide the fate of nations and the history of man.

Was it " Destiny ", or was it men, that gave to each of the centuries of modern Europe its special character —Renaissance and Reformation, the Age of Reason and Age of Freedom; that painted pictures, carved statues, wrote treatises, preached sermons, harangued crowds, took up arms; or invented engines and built factories, abolished slavery and established democracies?

Philosophies of Destiny, claiming to be the last word of modernity, are three hundred years out-of-date. They are a throw-back to scholasticism. Francis Bacon, in his *Novum Organum*, cut away, once for all, the very foundations for such systems.

The Marxist interpretation of history is not on the same lines as these. It also speaks of " necessity ", of " the inevitable ", but it rests on nothing mystic. Karl

Marx believed that there were factors at work within the modern capitalist system, visible, growing and certain to grow, which would necessarily bring about an economic crisis, followed by revolution and the downfall of the system itself. Whether his analysis was right or wrong, it was certainly not a denial of the principle of causality; it was an emphatic affirmation.

A prophecy, well-founded or ill-founded, once it is accepted by others, becomes itself a factor in deciding the course of events. History is full of instances of prophecies helping to bring about their own fulfilment; faith in the prophecy is a stimulus to its accomplishment. The strange story of the Jewish people, particularly in relation to Palestine, is a striking example. Recent events in Russia have furnished another. When the socialist revolution announced by Marx did not come of itself, many of his disciples, at the beginning of the present century, became impatient. Stalin, then living in his native Transcaucasia, was among these. One of his biographers says that Stalin felt that " history must be given a shove ", and therefore began his revolutionary activities.* All through the stages prior to the Russian revolution of 1917, during its crisis, and in the years that have followed, the prophecy

* Compare an observation by Georges Sorel—" One could say of Lenin that he wishes, like Peter the Great, to force history—using the word ' force ' in much the same sense as gardeners use it."

itself was one of the chief causes of its own realization.*

In the same way a belief that a war in Europe is " inevitable ", if sufficiently widely held, will itself help to make it so. Those who have once expressed that opinion will no longer strenuously resist such tendencies towards war as there may be. Militarists will say " this is what we always foretold "; anti-militarists will feel themselves in the grip of necessity.

Lord Grey of Fallodon mentions in his memoirs that, in 1893, when he was Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at a moment of severe tension between Great Britain and France over questions relating to Siam, one of the most influential persons in the political world had expressed the view " that it was evident that war between ourselves and France must come, and that it would be better to have it at once." Had Grey and his colleagues shared that view the two countries would have been plunged into a sanguinary and ruinous conflict, on the ground that war was in any case " inevitable ", whereas the actual course of events has conclusively proved that it was not.

* " We suggest ", say Sidney and Beatrice Webb, " that the future historian will attribute to the belief in the inevitability of the proletarian revolution no small part of the remarkable success of the upheaval which Lenin so persistently advocated, and, at the correct moment, so energetically led. In the eighteen years that have elapsed since the seizure of power, it has been, more

Those who are oppressed by the belief in Destiny, in uncontrollable forces driving the world to war, are like a man in a nightmare. He feels himself spell-bound and helpless in the presence of looming catastrophe. Some vague, colossal Shape is advancing upon him. He cannot move; cannot run, or raise his hands; he cannot utter a cry of horror or a call for help. In an agony of terror he awakes—and finds there is nothing there.

When men have rid themselves of this pseudo-philosophic incubus, they see clearly that everything depends upon their own individual decisions and actions. From this the principle clearly emerges that there can be no division between State morality and personal morality.

The Hegelian State stood outside the sphere of ordinary ethics and was held to be free from all customary moral restrictions.* But when that myth dissolves, no room is left for any second morality. State morality is personal morality collectivized. If it is wrong for one man to assault his neighbour, it is equally wrong, and for

than anything else, the popular acceptance of this conception of the inevitability of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' that has enabled the successors of Lenin in the government not only to maintain their power but also to overcome so many of their difficulties."

* Cf. Croce: "Politics, like economics, has its own laws, independent of morals."

precisely the same reasons, for millions of men together, under the name of their State, to assault the neighbouring millions bearing the name of another State.

The peril of the modern world springs largely from the wide-spread belief that it is right for the individual to support action by his country which for himself would be wrong. This belief is dignified as " a sense of realism ". Name it " realism " and any wickedness becomes allowable.

In the monarchical and feudal system of the Middle Ages there was responsibility, clearly resting upon persons. There were Kings and Barons; they had consciences, however faulty; they could be influenced in some degree by the Church, by the hope of divine rewards and the fear of divine penalties. Church and conscience failed frequently enough; but religious duty was at least recognized, and sometimes fulfilled. In the modern world responsibility is so diffused that it often evaporates and disappears. Until a sense of personal responsibility is re-established, among statesmen and among citizens, the world will not be safe. To discard superhuman political fictions is the first step to that.

History may be handled poetically, as Spengler says, but it must be handled scientifically as well. History has value as art, and it has value also as science. It inspires literature with romance; it is a pageant, a drama with real characters; it weaves tapestries, figured with heroes and saints and sages, to cover the bare walls of our habita-

tion, giving us a sense of warmth and comradeship, and stirring emulation. But history is also a record of human experience, indispensable to the statesman, the economist and the moralist. We learn the history of the past so that we may make the history of the future. " History ", said Thucydides, " is philosophy teaching by examples."

The record has to be used with caution. History repeats itself, but only when the conditions are the same; and they seldom are. Nothing is more dangerous than trying to " read the future from the mirror of the past ". Nevertheless history collects materials from which sociology may often draw useful conclusions. It has been well said that these two are indispensable to one another: " history without sociology is ' literary ' and unscientific, while sociology without history is apt to become mere abstract theorizing." Ethics also, as we have seen, must rely on the annals of experience in finding what it is that conduces to welfare and what hinders it, in determining right and wrong.

Accurate records of the past are therefore essential for our generation, and of the present for the generations that will come after us. Without careful statistics and impartial history the peoples have no chance of learning what the results of past experience have really been. Those, therefore, who think it right deliberately to falsify history, and, for the sake of some political or ostensibly religious motive, teach in the schools accounts of the past that are untrue, commit the worst of crimes against humanity. Ignorant

of the facts, misled by distorted evidence, the new generations can hardly fail to form wrong judgements; wrong judgements must necessarily lead to wrong policies; there is no limit to the disasters which wrong policies may entail upon mankind.

The criss-cross of historical causes has woven the pattern of mankind as it stands to-day. The principle of nationality has played a chief part in the process, and plays a chief part now in the politics of the world.

Nationality is to be accepted, not because the principle prevails and is powerful, but because reason may hold it to be beneficial.

The individual needs the support and stimulus of some social unit larger and greater than the family or the neighbourhood, but not so vast and vague as the whole of humanity. He finds it in his nation. He shares in a language, a tradition, a culture, a State. Experience shows that the idea of country can stir the strongest feelings of love and enthusiasm. Rightly directed, it always has been, and is now, a powerful incentive to effort and self-sacrifice.

The world is too large to be ruled, under existing conditions, as one State. If only for convenience of government it must be divided into political units. That being so, each unit should be of such a kind that personal service is enlisted, and cohesion and stability are main-

tained. Patriotism can accomplish that. Nationality is the basis for patriotism.

Further, variety is good for its own sake. If all peoples were amalgamated into a single type, the world would be the poorer. Different characteristics have developed from different origins and histories, and it is fortunate that they still endure. If not harmful in themselves, they are to be cherished. Nationality is the chief preservative of distinctive qualities and customs, arts and crafts, institutions and literatures, and so enriches mankind.

Since national morality is nothing else than collective personal morality the conduct of nations may only be guided by the same motives as the conduct of persons. It must be guided by both egoism and altruism, in such proportions and so balanced as will best conduce to welfare. The nation has duties to itself, as the individual has duties to himself; it is right to seek its own well-being, and to maintain its own interests. But, like the individual, the nation has duties to others. Neither altruism alone nor egoism alone is the right guide, whether for a person as member of a community, or for a people as member of the comity of nations.

But the notion that altruism should have any place at all in international affairs is often, perhaps usually, regarded as visionary. The morality of primitive man was on a tribal basis, and it persists. Anthropologists tell us that " among uncivilized races intra-tribal theft is carefully

distinguished from extra-tribal theft. Whilst the former is forbidden, the latter is commonly allowed, and robbery committed on a stranger is an object of praise." Even Roman Law, and in its most developed form, took no account of peoples beyond the frontiers. Within the Empire, all men, if they were free, had become citizens and enjoyed their rights; outside it, all were " barbarians and enemies ". Similar ideas, changed in form but not in spirit, survive into the modern world. " All cannot be happy at once," said Sir Thomas Browne in his *Religio Medici*, " for the glory of one state depends upon the ruin of another." And Voltaire expressed the view current in his time when he said, " Such is the condition of human affairs, that to wish for the greatness of one's own country, is to wish for the harm of its neighbours."

This doctrine develops into the conscious philosophy of militarism. " Always without exception," said Fichte, " the most civilized State is the most aggressive." Treitschke, for many years a professor of great influence in the University of Berlin, wrote, " War will endure to the end of history. The laws of human thought and of human nature forbid any alternative, neither is one to be wished for." In recent years Herr Hitler wrote in his *Mein Kampf*: " That this world will in future be subject to the severest struggles for the existence of mankind cannot be doubted. In the end, the urge for self-preservation is eternally victorious. Before it, the so-called humanitarianism, which is merely a compound of

stupidity, cowardice and arrogance, melts like snow in the March sunshine. In constant struggle mankind has become great—in eternal peace it must perish." Signor Mussolini's repeated declarations are well-known: "Fascism does not believe in the possibility, or the utility, of perpetual peace. . . . War alone brings to their maximum tension all human energies and stamps the seal of nobility on those peoples which have the virtue to face it. . . . We are becoming, and shall become so increasingly because this is our desire, a military nation; a militaristic nation, I will add. . . ." So all through the future centuries of human history, armies are to march, young men in thousands are to kill and maim each other, battleships are to be sunk with their crews, cities are to be bombed from the air, men, women and children are to be suffocated by poison-gas, burnt in incendiary fires, blown to pieces—all in order to prove the greatness of the ideals of the nations that are engaged and to stamp upon them "the seal of nobility." If modern civilization goes the way of the Roman, its decline and fall will be due to the attacks, not of barbarians from without, but of more dangerous barbarians within.

Examine the arguments that seek to justify war as a permanent institution of human society, and it will soon be apparent how specious they are.

"Men are by nature fighting animals; there always have been wars and always will be; human nature does not change." That depends upon what is meant by human

nature. If those characteristics which appear not to have changed are termed collectively human nature, and those that have changed are not taken into account, then there is obvious support for the saying. But since many characteristics have in fact changed, it carries us no farther. Essentially we are back at our discussion on the relations between instinct and reason. Reason itself is as much a part of human nature as instinct. Reject reason, and every step from savagery to civilization might have been declared impossible as contrary to human nature. There is no ground on which to believe that international warfare is an ordinance of nature any more than inter-tribal theft.

The perversion of the principle of evolution reappears. General von Bernhardi expressed in clear terms a view that has been wide-spread: " Wherever we look in nature we find that war is a fundamental law of development. This great verity, which has been recognized in past ages, has been convincingly demonstrated in modern times by Charles Darwin. He proved that nature is ruled by an unceasing struggle for existence, by the right of the stronger, and that this struggle in its apparent cruelty brings about a selection eliminating the weak and the unwholesome." It is easy to see, however, that the conflicts between peoples are by no means of the same order as the competition between species. War, in the modern world, does not exterminate. Not even a Fichte or a Treitschke would say that the ideal nation would be one

that set out physically to destroy the others and to replace them. Consider the many wars that have been waged in Europe and Asia during the last hundred years: which of them bears any resemblance to the replacement of one species by another through nature's struggle for existence? So far as war has any biological effect, it is rather to kill off the fittest than to preserve them. Both in the victorious and in the defeated peoples, thousands, or may be millions, of the strongest and bravest are eliminated from the national stock. Let this beneficent process be repeated often enough, and populations of women, old men and weaklings would be left, to prove the value of war in promoting virility. It is well to remember also that co-operation as much as competition plays a part in the evolutionary process. " I could adduce from the writings of Darwin himself," says Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, " and from those of later naturalists, a thousand instances taken from the animal kingdom in which success has come about by means analogous with the cultivation of all the peaceful arts, the raising of the intelligence, and the heightening of the emotions of love and pity."

" War," it is said again, " evokes supreme efforts, unlimited self-sacrifice, great qualities of heroism; it gives an impetus to efficiency and stirs nations out of their sloth." This, no doubt, is true. But what is the cost? The measureless suffering, anguish of mind, devastating ruin, which belong to modern war, far outweigh any such

advantages. We do not set fire to our houses or wreck our ships so that the firemen or the life-boatmen may show their bravery. And is there no alternative way to evoke the virtues? The eras of peace have not been the least fruitful in material and intellectual and moral achievements. "Thanks be to Heaven", said Victor Hugo, "peoples are great apart from the sinister adventures of the sword."

Behind and beneath these justifications of war, many of those who are ardent in the cause of social progress suspect that there lies another, an unavowed motive. Those among the possessing classes who are moved by sheer self-interest may see without regret the energies of the industrial masses diverted from economic questions at home to political questions abroad.

> Therefore, my Harry,
> Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
> With foreign quarrels.

Perhaps this influence, almost unconsciously, may be quietly and constantly at work. Property, needing an ally against poverty, may sometimes see it in a militaristic patriotism.

The enlightened opinion of mankind rejects these pleas and resists these influences. It condemns war as an evil. It seeks to eliminate it from among the recognized

institutions of the civilized world. If that were not so, why should the governments of sixty-three out of the sixty-eight nations, including all the principal Powers, have signed the Briand-Kellogg Pact—the Pact of Paris?* Ten years after the end of the Great War, the rulers of the world made this declaration: "Deeply sensible of their solemn duty to promote the welfare of mankind; persuaded that the time has come when a frank renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy should be made . . .; convinced that all changes in their relations with one another should be sought only by pacific means and be the result of a peaceful and orderly process . . . The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare, in the names of their respective peoples, that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another. The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts, of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, shall never be sought except by pacific means."

Yet, in spite of that pronouncement, so universal and so unqualified, the danger of war persists. Throughout the continent of Europe, and in some countries outside Europe, youth is still being trained to warfare; formid-

* The States which in 1937 are not adherents are—Argentina, Bolivia, Salvador, Uruguay, Yemen.

able armaments are being accumulated at a most oppressive cost; sudden gas attacks from the air being looked upon as possible, civil populations are being taught how to protect themselves against them. There is a sense of constant strain. It is hallucination to believe that statesmen and peoples are paralysed in presence of some irresistible, superhuman force that may sweep them to disaster; but the danger that they themselves are to each other is no hallucination. If "Necessity" is only a nightmare, militarism is a waking fact. The life of our times is overshadowed by the fear of war, so that youth is no longer light-hearted nor old age serene.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONDITIONS OF PEACE

To set Peace against Patriotism, as though they were opposites, would be a wrong policy. Love of country is good in itself, since it serves welfare; and it is a motive so powerful that to antagonize it would be harmful. Rather should we make it clear that peace is an essential part of patriotism. It is not true that " to wish for the greatness of one's own country is to wish for the harm of its neighbours ". On the contrary, the level of civilization anywhere depends upon the level everywhere, and each country prospers best in a prosperous world. Egoism, unbalanced by altruism, reacts to the disadvantage of a State as of an individual. A country which ruthlessly pursues only its own aggrandizement invites a general hostility; " he who makes many afraid of him has himself many to fear "; the statesman who wins friends for his country is the best patriot.

Experience shows that there are three principles, the observance of which has helped to preserve peace, and the breach to cause war.

The first is the juridical equality of large and small

States. "The proposition", says Maine, "that independent communities, however different in size and power, are all equal in the view of the law of nations has largely contributed to the happiness of mankind." It is indeed the essential basis for any law among nations. That the greater States should exercise a greater influence in determining the course of world affairs, proportionate to their larger populations and resources, will be granted. But unless there is equal status in the eye of the law between great and small, as there is in the ordinary courts between rich and poor, justice disappears; and then, as St. Augustine said, "what are your empires but brigandage and rapine?"

The second principle is that each State must abstain from interference in the domestic affairs of others. This also is an application of the rules of personal ethics to the comity of nations. We have found that it is best to tolerate our neighbours' opinions and actions, however much we may disapprove of them, provided that they cause no nuisance. Non-intervention is the equivalent in international politics to toleration in private life.

The force of example, and the influence of general opinion, may have an effect in the one case as in the other. The success of democracy in some States may lead others to become democratic, or its failure send them to a different system. The opinion of mankind influences events within national frontiers; knowledge of it will gradually percolate to the people, however much despotic rulers

may try to shut it out. And such influence is not only legitimate, but necessary. Just as toleration need not imply indifference, so non-intervention need not involve silence. The moral influence of Great Britain and France gave a powerful support to the Greeks and the Italians in their struggles for national freedom, and the present generation has seen other examples.

But when political propaganda is deliberately carried on by the government of one State within the territory of another—whether directly or indirectly, by agents or through subsidies—that is a form of aggression; and not less to be resented because it may be invisible and intangible. While the Bolshevik régime in Russia was being attacked by the White armies after the Revolution, it may have been legitimate for it, as a measure of defence, to try to stir up discontent within the territories and empires of its enemies; but the continuance of the communist propaganda after peace had been restored, under the direction and backed by the resources of the Russian State, has been one of the principal causes of the unrest of the post-War period. The reaction that it evoked helped, not only to defeat its own direct purpose,* but also to bring into

* Mr. and Mrs. Webb write: "We cannot help thinking that . . . the avowed interference of Moscow in the internal affairs of other countries actually militates, by the nationalist resentment that it creates, against the progress of communism itself."

being the anti-Russian militarist bloc, which, in its turn, has become one of the chief factors in the dangerous tension in Europe. Similarly with Nazi or Fascist propaganda designed to influence the domestic politics of other States.

The only safe rule must be that the people of each country are alone responsible for their own internal affairs. If they feel themselves unfitted to work a democratic system with success, or, conversely, if they prefer democracy to Communism or Fascism, that is their own concern. If the choice proves to be wrong, it is the people themselves who will suffer and it is for them to change it. Neighbours will watch and learn. They have the right only to ask that they too shall be left alone to pursue their own course in their own way.

The third principle necessary to peace is the observance of treaties. Nations cannot live harmoniously together unless they are able to trust each other's undertakings; just as merchants cannot trade unless they can rely upon contracts. It is obvious to everyone that the present feeling of insecurity in the world springs largely from loss of faith in the value of treaties. Men say everywhere—" What, after all, is the use of international undertakings, however universal, solemn or emphatic? What does it matter whether diplomatists are able to arrange agreements for this or for that, if, as soon as they become inconvenient to one party or another, they are likely to be ignored? After the lessons of the Great War,

after the experience of Abyssinia, is it safe to believe that, in great matters, there exists any law at all among nations? The only wise course for every country is to protect itself with armaments up to the limit of its resources, since no one can trust his neighbour's word."

This, without question, is one of the central issues of our time. But I do not think that the right moral has been drawn from the lessons of the Great War. It is true that they proved that, under stress, treaties may become mere " scraps of paper ". The outcome showed, however, that that policy may bring to those who follow it, not advantage, but disaster.

Within the British Cabinet, at the end of July and the beginning of August, 1914, it was the German invasion of Belgium which was, for many of the Ministers, the deciding factor. Great Britain was under no legal obligation of any kind to come to the assistance of France against Germany. The British Government had taken pains, in the Grey-Cambon correspondence of 1912, to put that fact upon record beyond possibility of misunderstanding, and to obtain for it the formal acknowledgement of the Government of France. At no moment during the crisis did the French Government suggest that any such obligation existed. On the questions whether some moral obligation arose, or whether British interests demanded, in any case, that the course taken by Germany should be resisted, opinions differed. It may be that in any event, either at the outset or later, Great Britain

would have entered the War. But this much is certain: if Germany had not broken the treaty by which she had herself guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium, and if Belgium had not maintained her own obligation to defend it and appealed to Great Britain to fulfil her share in the guarantee, there would not have been the unity of spirit and the strength of action that in fact prevailed. In the event only two members of the Cabinet resigned, representing no large body of public opinion. Had the Belgian issue not arisen, the Government, which was as a body intensely averse in principle from all war, would have been deeply divided on the particular issue. That division would have represented a similar division in Parliament, among the British people and throughout the British Empire; a violent controversy would have arisen; there would have been lacking the promptitude of action, the enthusiasm of enlistment, the immense effort in the production of munitions, which were displayed; and military events, in Flanders, in France and elsewhere, would have taken a different course. It was the feeling that we were helping to vindicate the public law of Europe, on the sanctity of which, we believed, the whole future welfare of mankind depended, that united, at the crucial moment, the British Cabinet; made the peoples of Great Britain and the Dominions as nearly unanimous as democracies can ever be; and brought to the opponents of Germany that accession of strength in men and resources which, from the beginning, foretold the end.

Again, two years later, it was the fact that, in the judgement of the United States, the rulers of Germany had broken the Law of Nations by the deliberate sinking of merchant and passenger vessels by submarines, that led her, reluctantly, into the War; and it was the despatch of her great armies to the Western Front which made hopeless the valiant efforts of the German people, and brought on the final collapse.

Broadly viewed, the Great War showed in the face of history that the flagrant breach of treaties, while it may not be decisive, can sometimes evoke so powerful a moral reaction in the world as to entail a penalty as heavy as it is just. That this did not occur in the case of the Italian aggression against Abyssinia—or rather, that the penalty incurred was not sufficient to be a deterrent—is indeed one of the chief reasons for the present loss of faith in international agreements, from which the peoples of all countries, Italy included, are now suffering.

World opinion does not seem to view in the same light the German repudiation of the disarmament clauses in the Treaty of Versailles. It is recognized that an undertaking had been given by the Allies that German disarmament was to be followed by a general disarmament—an undertaking, though not in treaty form, that was definite and morally binding. Years had gone by; it was not fulfilled; there was no sign of fulfilment. It could not be expected that a great and proud nation could consent indefinitely to remain unarmed, impotent and without influence, in

the midst of heavily-armed all-powerful neighbours. If, after the Napoleonic Wars, the Allied Powers at the Congress of Vienna had imposed upon France similar terms, for similar reasons and on similar conditions, no one can now believe that they would have held. However much opinion may condemn the method and the manner of the German repudiation, no one can candidly say that it was without justification.

Nevertheless, the events of the Great War, the blunt discarding by Germany of obligations under the Peace Treaty, the Italian aggression upon Abyssinia, together with the Japanese aggression upon China, have profoundly shaken faith in the value of treaties. There have indeed been many instances in which, during recent years, nations have strictly conformed to their obligations, have accepted the intervention of the League of Nations, or the jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice, and have agreed to settlements in disputes, some of which in earlier days would have been likely to lead to war. But these have not been enough to maintain confidence. The question, therefore, now before mankind—vital to all the future—is this: by what means, if at all, can that confidence be restored?

Again and again in the course of human history efforts have been made to establish some system which would prevent or repress the recurring conflicts between peoples, and allow mankind to live decently and in peace. The

Roman Empire was such a system; it recognized, with Seneca, that "every man is born into two communities, the cosmopolis and his native city"; for some centuries the Empire achieved a large measure of success. The Catholic Church, inspired by its religious mission, sought the same end. The Holy Roman Empire sought it too; Dante eloquently propounded its ideal in his *De Monarchia*. In the nineteenth century there was the so-called Holy Alliance; and afterwards the Concert of Europe, which tried intermittently to reconcile conflicting interests so as to preserve the peace. In our own day, goaded into action by the terrible experience of the Great War, the statesmen of the world have made another attempt, more universal in its scope and more elaborate in its methods than any of the others, to end the anarchy that has been so plainly disastrous, and a League of Nations has come to life.

The League has had to confront the most formidable difficulties, owing to the prevalence of the militarist philosophy among the rulers of three of the Great Powers, Germany, Italy and Japan, their scepticism as to the purposes of the League, and their coolness towards its efforts. Not less serious has been the aloofness, for wholly different reasons, of a fourth, the United States. Nevertheless the League, within a period of less than twenty years, has achieved a record of successes, in many spheres, which should earn the warmest gratitude for those who have worked in its service. It would be a tragedy at all

costs to be avoided, if this latest and greatest effort to safeguard the best interests of the human race were to end in the same failure as all those which have preceded it.

In presence of the imminent danger and the urgent need, how is it possible that many of the men in the places of power, instead of seeking with one mind to work together to avert disaster and to open an era of beneficent development, should posture, and menace and revile, should praise war as a bracing exercise, load the peoples with armaments and taxes, and in the name of patriotism—or of destiny—should reject the way of peace and life and choose the road to death?

> Man, proud man,
> . . . like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As make the angels weep.

In order to restore faith in treaties, and so give some chance of establishing order in the world, it is clearly necessary to preserve the League of Nations and to enlarge its membership. But it is necessary also to expand its functions.

The friends of peace have long been accustomed to say that the aim must be to substitute Law for War. Disputes between individuals are decided, as a matter of course, in the law-courts; disputes between nations, unless settled

by negotiation or conciliation, should be decided by arbitration or judicial award. And just as the judgements of the law-courts are enforced by the civil police, so, they say, international judgements should be enforced, if need be, by international sanctions—economic or even military.

The first of these objects has so far been attained that a complete arbitral and juridical system has gradually been built up. It is at the service of any who wish to use it. It is in fact constantly being used year by year. And there has not yet been a single case in which the award of an international court of arbitration or of law has not been accepted and applied.

On the side of enforcement the progress has been small and the prospects are not bright. The Covenant of the League of Nations has its article on Sanctions, but it has been applied only once, and then without success. Whether it is desirable, or would be possible in any near future, to empower the League to call upon its members for armies and fleets and air-squadrons, in order to enforce its decisions when they are defied, is a question on which there is a deep division of opinion. Many believe that, if such a step were taken before the time was fully ripe, it would bar all possibility of making complete the membership of the League; and, further, would be likely, in a time of crisis, to cause such dissension, even among the existing members, as might bring about the dissolution of the League itself.

None the less it is becoming clear that the League is

at present inadequate for its great task; not only because four out of the seven great Powers are either outside it, or in it but not of it; and not only because there is no coercive strength behind it; but also for a third reason, perhaps even more important than either of those.

When we use the analogy of private disputes, and say that, among nations as among individuals, not the will and the force of the parties, but the law and police of the community should decide, we are apt to forget that the judiciary and the executive are not the only organs of a State: there is also the legislature. It is not only a matter of interpreting the law and enforcing it; there is also the making of laws and their amendment. If some class of citizens, who were keenly dissatisfied with some feature in the existing state of things, were merely to be told that the law-courts were open to them and that the police force would enforce any judgement given in their favour, they could not be content with that. Their grievance is against the substance of the laws themselves, and not the interpretation. They need to be assured that, if their view is right and can gain a general support, the law can be altered. But if, whenever a class was dissatisfied, the answer had to be that no authority existed with the power and the will ever to change the laws, then private violence or armed revolution would be left as the only resource. It has been well said that "world-law can never be a substitute for world-policy."

The League of Nations is like a State equipped with

an admirable judiciary, but with neither an effective executive nor a legislature actively discharging the functions that are needed. Of those two deficiencies the last is at least as important as the other. For the consequence is that the League appears as no more than the guardian of things as they are. It can take action to decide disputes on the meaning or the application of existing law, but does not in fact take action in order to make changes in the law itself. So those who approve the *status quo* support the League, and those who disapprove are alienated. By long and intense effort the friends of peace have secured the creation of the great international judiciary; many of them are framing plans for the provision of executive power; but few, as yet, have come to close terms with the question of a legislature.

The Treaty of Versailles bred resentments. Observers who were familiar with the strained conditions in Europe before 1914 must recognize that the Treaty removed far more injustices than it caused; yet some new injustices were created, and they feed the appetites that make for war.

The question of colonies also arises. The Treaty did not lessen, it greatly increased the inequalities, which had arisen in the course of history, in the ownership of the land surface of the globe. Apart from the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and the Italian occupation of Abyssinia, eight countries or Empires now control two-

thirds of the whole;* the other sixty must remain content with the one-third that is left. They are not all content. There is a sense of wounded prestige, where colonies had been won and developed and then lost by war. There are economic anxieties; a feeling of cramped space, of standards of living unnecessarily lowered.

It is not surprising that some of the States, which are not among the fortunate eight, should be dissatisfied with the existing conditions. It is not to be wondered at if they see the League of Nations—applying international law, but showing no readiness to amend it; a judiciary without a legislature—as little more than the guardian of what happens to be the *status quo*. We can understand that, when the Powers in possession denounce those who would

* British Empire —14 million square miles
Soviet Russia — 8¼ ,, ,, ,,
French Empire— 4⅓ ,, ,, ,,
China — 4¼ ,, ,, ,,
U.S.A. — 3¾ ,, ,, ,,
Belgium —930,000 ,, ,,
Portugal —850,000 ,, ,,
Holland —800,000 ,, ,,
Total—37¼ million square miles.

Total land area of the earth—55½ million square miles.

The area of Manchuria is 363,000 square miles, and of Abyssinia 350,000 square miles.

modify the existing conditions as war-mongers, this may appear in their eyes less as a lofty devotion to the cause of peace than as a wish to erect a convenient moral fortification around the vast territories which they have gained in the past by waging wars themselves. So the whole system of international relations is insecure.

How this situation is to be met is a question for practical statesmanship. Whether the solution is to be found by some readjustment of sovereignties, or by an extension of the system of mandates, or by special economic agreements opening new opportunities for development of territories and purchase of commodities, or by a combination of these methods, is a matter for discussion and negotiation. The point of importance is to recognize that a situation exists which needs handling, which cannot be quietly ignored; that the League of Nations has the duty, not only to prevent, so far as it can, the use of violence for the redress of grievances, but also, where grievances are real, to provide other means of remedy.

But this whole process of European expansion—can it be regarded as at all consistent with any ethical scheme? On the principles that have been accepted, can we defend in any degree the continual annexations during the last four centuries, out of which has come the world-picture of to-day?

John Stuart Mill, in the course of his classic vindica-

tion of liberty for civilized peoples, made it quite clear that he thought it inapplicable to others. "We may leave out of consideration," he wrote, "those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its nonage. The early difficulties in the way of spontaneous progress are so great, that there is seldom any choice of means for overcoming them; and a ruler full of the spirit of improvement is warranted in the use of any expedients that will attain an end, perhaps otherwise unattainable. Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion."

This might appear to be a specious excuse for a process in history which has been disgraced by many shameful episodes of cruelty, rapacity and oppression. But on the other hand, can it be contended that the welfare of mankind would have been served if, for example, the whole of America north of Mexico had been left to the half-million of Red Indians, who, before the Europeans came, were the only occupants; or the continent of Australia to the 150,000 Black-fellows who, in the eighteenth century, alone roamed over its vast solitudes?

New ideas of trusteeship, gradually developing into partnership, have done much to redeem the sordid ruthlessness of the early conquests. Quick and safe com-

munications, and the diffusion of knowledge of each other's ways, have made possible a racial policy better than a distant relationship of conqueror and subject. Aristotle held that a State should not be so large that its citizens would be too many to hear the voice of a single herald. In the modern world, the radio-announcer is the herald; and his voice may reach to every corner of the globe. If such be the standard, the "Polis" of to-day may be world-wide.

The growing interdependence of mankind in economic production and trade, in art and science, may gradually transform the old Imperialisms, changing fundamentally their relationships both external and internal, and merging them into a new conception of humanity.

All these ideas, however, are rejected and derided by the militarist philosophy. Even the three root principles—equal status, non-intervention in domestic affairs, and sanctity of treaties—are denied. Interdependence, whether in commerce or in culture, is depreciated, and a self-sufficient nationalism preferred. Peace is not accepted as necessary to welfare; or if it be, then welfare itself is repudiated as the ultimate aim. Typical of the whole school is the teaching of Treitschke. Lord Balfour made an analysis of his doctrine, and summed it up in these words: "The State, says Treitschke, is Power. Of so unusual a type is its power that it has no power to limit its power. Hence no treaty, when it becomes incon-

venient, can be binding; hence the very notion of general arbitration is absurd; hence war is part of the Divine order. Small states must be contemptible because they must be weak; success is the test of merit, power is its reward; and all nations get what they deserve."

So long as these notions are loose in the world—and they are not only let loose but are powerful in deciding the policy and action of great States—civilized people have to take steps to counter them. And since many of those who hold them declare themselves to be pursuing Action for its own sake, to be in revolt against reason and not open to argument, the rational world has to defend itself by other means than persuasion. Hence the lamentable necessity for the peace-loving democracies to divert the energies of their manhood, and the resources so urgently needed for other purposes, to their own armament. It is futile to point to the folly and mischief of the whole affair, and to say that sensible men, religious men, can take no part in it. The facts are there, not to be denied. It must be obvious to everyone that, if there were no force in the world except that which is in the hands of the militarists, the cause of peace would be in a bad way. " It is useless ", says Dr. Inge, " for the sheep to pass resolutions in favour of vegetarianism, while the wolf remains of a different opinion."

A great part of the world being still, internationally, in the stage of tribal morality, it is unavoidable that the peoples who value peace and freedom should accept the

duty of countering aggressive force, if need be, by defensive force. Both the general interest and the individual interest, altruism as well as egoism, require it. For this reason, besides the others, patriotism is to be cherished as a virtue, and military valour is still required of the peace-loving citizens of the peaceable States.

But that cannot be the end. It is impossible for our age to rest there. The enormous burden of great armaments, the chronic anxiety, the danger, sometimes more acute sometimes less, of another general war—all this is so obviously bad that the most active efforts of the best minds everywhere are called for in order to bring about a change. Nor need it be assumed that the prevalence of the militarist philosophy in certain countries must be accepted as something fixed and irremediable. Sooner or later the peoples of those countries also may realize the enormous mischief that these ideas are working to mankind at large and to themselves among the rest. However much their minds may be muffled and their actions stifled, gradually a mass opinion may be formed and make itself felt. If at the same time the democratic Powers show themselves ready to meet the grievances of the others where they are well-founded; if the League of Nations becomes a true World-Parliament, and does not sink into a mere agency for stereotyping the conditions of 1918 as the pattern for all time; if those who control two-thirds of the land area of the earth recognize, not merely in words but in action, that they are trustees rather than

irresponsible owners—then it may be that the present perils can be averted and the next generation be freed from the obsession that shadows our own.

America in these times gives the example to Europe. The work of the Pan-American Congresses, supplementing the long-established and unbroken friendship between the United States and Canada, and stimulated by President Roosevelt's policy of " the Good Neighbour ", has helped to bring an atmosphere of calm and stability to the whole continent. Although friction may arise from time to time here and there, and although it is not long since two of the smaller States were locked together in a sanguinary and futile conflict, taken as a whole the present aspect of America, North and South, is an object-lesson of the falsity of the doctrine that war is natural to man and good sense powerless to control the dealings between nations.

Since the great issue is not " on the lap of the gods ", or to be decided by " destiny " or " the spirit of the age ", but by the thoughts and acts of men—leaders and masses together—all depends upon whether it is the Will-to-Power or the Will-to-Peace that is to prevail among them. A military disarmament, simultaneous and general, is one of the principal objects to be sought;* but it has been

* I heard M. Herriot at a meeting of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva make the observation: " ' to disarm ' appears to be an irregular verb with no first person singular and only a future tense."

well said that it must be preceded by " a disarmament of minds."

Here once more comes in the importance of religion. Pure reason is not enough. The piling-up of defensive armaments is not enough. The emotional appeal of an exaggerated nationalism must be countered by another emotional appeal, of a different kind. This can only be the appeal of humanitarian sympathy—what the Stoics called " the sympathy of the Whole "; and religion may powerfully reinforce it.

There have been times and places, however, when religion, so far from countering, has been a chief support of violence and war. The early histories both of the Jews and the Moslems are examples. Even Christian theology has sometimes justified war as a permanent institution in the comity of nations. Francis Bacon was expressing a view commonly accepted in his day, and often before and since, when he spoke of wars as " the highest trials of right; when princes and states that acknowledge no superior upon earth shall put themselves upon the justice of God, for the deciding of their controversies by such success as it shall please Him to give on either side." We may find in the contradictory voices of religion one of the main causes of the blood-stained character of modern history—" the strange anomaly of Christian Europe, a society of nations all of which had accepted the religion of peace and brotherhood, with its universal ethics, yet which were constantly at war with one another."

The emphasis of religion was first laid upon the salvation of the individual soul; then, when the importance of social morality came to be recognized, it stressed the virtue also of social effort and sacrifice; now that there is urgent need for strengthening the foundations of an international morality, it is upon that as well that the religions are called upon to focus their action. The times demand a simultaneous parallel movement by all the Churches everywhere to promote world-fellowship through religion.

Here again we see the urgency of the need for a reconciliation of the creeds. So long as there is mutual antagonism and acrimonious dispute there cannot be effective co-operation in a cause that is transcendent. Many paths lead to the same conclusion. The rehabilitation of religion, on a basis consistent with present knowledge, and the joint action by all Faiths for common ends —these are essential to the solution of the problems of our age.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ACTION

If the men of these times are to march with clear eyes and sure step into the future, they must first emerge from the mental mists that now confuse them.

It is essential that the religions should frankly accept the facts about the physical universe which knowledge has established, no longer putting orthodoxy into antagonism with truth; while science itself will reveal to us "a world charged with the grandeur of God."

Frankly let both religion and science accept the fact of evil as the necessary outcome of natural evolution and human liberty. A static universe might be free from evils; a race always under guidance might be free from evils; but not a world that changes and men that choose. In choosing we make mistakes, individually or collectively, and we suffer for it. But in the very sources of evil lie the grounds for hope. Because there is change and because there is choice, man has the chance to effect his own rescue, and often does so. Therefore pessimism is bad philosophy.

The individual may not shift his responsibilities on to

" Destiny ", nor yet on to God. Destiny is a figment; and the divine element in the world, as Plato held, is not coercive but persuasive. If God were overtly active, constantly directing, man could be passive and nothing more. Because God is reticent, man has scope.

A belief that evolution ensures human progress is also a delusion. That is optimism, and it is as ill-founded as pessimism. Viewed on a scale of epochs we see that life advances; on the scale of decades or centuries human affairs may stand still or move backwards. Progress is not automatic; it is usually precarious. Yet we need not hold, on that account, that it is illusory or impossible.

All depends upon man's own action. It is right, therefore, to glorify action; but not any action, regardless of aim or method. Action for action's sake—like art for art's sake, or speed for speed's sake—is a creed that reduces life to the level of a game. To move for the sake of moving, without asking whither; to move faster and faster, without asking why; to hold that it is important to be vigorous and victorious, but not important to be right—this is a gospel that leads some men to futilities, others to ambition, violence and war, with disaster as the outcome.

" No one ", it has been said, " can walk backwards into the future." But there have been periods when men have tried to do that. From the time of the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century the leaders of western thought looked back for guidance to Greece and Rome.

Whenever theologians have been dominant life has been retrospective. Always men of cultivated mind are tempted to linger pleasantly with yesterday. We need all the knowledge of past experience, and all the stimulus of past inspiration, that we can get; but it is fatal to identify religion with religious history, philosophy with the classic philosophers, and thought with scholarship.

Let this age, then, take confidence in itself. It is too diffident. Ashamed of the Great War, angered by the course of events that followed it, recognizing its own bewilderment, the age has been ready to plead guilty to any accusation. If a school of economists says that material factors rule events, we all confess ourselves materialists and the pursuit of wealth the aim of our social system. If a school of psychologists lays stress on primeval instincts in the determination of conduct, we see ourselves irredeemably primitive, and develop a crude sculpture and painting and a barbarous music to suit our sub-human characters. If dictators, or would-be dictators, proclaim that we are unfit to govern ourselves, we perceive all around us the faults of our democracies and forget their virtues.

Perhaps a later age may form a different judgement. Perhaps our posterity may see in the Great War, not something sordid and mercenary, but—for all its fundamental folly—an episode that was in essence idealistic; a stupendous event, in which ten millions of men laid down their lives, not primarily for materialistic ends of

any sort, but most of them for duty as they understood it, for patriotism, or liberty, or the vindication of law among nations; in which multitudes of ordinary men showed greater courage and endurance, in the face of greater perils, than had ever been recorded in the annals of mankind. Perhaps posterity may see this time as one of the formative ages in history; when science was effulgent, knowledge was diffused throughout the world and among all classes as never before, and an unprecedented effort was made to rid mankind of poverty and to spread the amenities of leisure and culture. Let us not be so ready to idealize past and future to the detriment of our own age, but rather show ourselves patriots of the present; declaring with Emerson,

> Future or Past no richer secret folds,
> O friendless Present! than thy bosom holds.

Welfare is the aim; and welfare consists not in one thing but in many. Intuition gives us our primary desires; reason confirms or discards, refines, enlarges. Experience tells us what will make for welfare and what will not; example and discussion, persuasion and law, define the ends and point the way. So there is built up, through the generations, a broad conception of welfare, comprising many varied elements, spiritual and intellectual, moral and material, social and personal.

This is the Good, which men should seek. Our

thoughts and acts are right or wrong according to their consequences; the test being whether—directly or indirectly, soon or late—they serve welfare or hinder it.

Bringing these ideas with us, we come down from the heights of philosophy and religion into the broad plains of practical affairs. "To turn events into ideas is the function of literature", says Santayana; to turn ideas into events is the function of politics.

Action must be both individual and collective. As in physics we have the object and its field, and in biology the organism and its environment, so in politics we have the individual and the community, the nation and the world—acting and re-acting incessantly each on the other. Of deep importance, therefore, are our political institutions and our industrial systems—the form they are to take and the use that is made of them.

Nevertheless, in the last resort, it is the individual that matters; for all governments depend ultimately upon their peoples, all industries upon their managers and workmen. Pioneer thinkers and active leaders are no more than individuals, though they are the ones who matter most. They too depend upon their following; unless the units who make up the mass are sensible and competent, bad thinkers and bad leaders will prevail and good ones be powerless.

Welfare is the aim, individual action is the means, and liberty the condition. Liberty by itself is not enough. Men say that they are ready to die for the sake of liberty;

but it is really for the sake of what liberty makes possible. Liberty is a negative concept; it is freedom from something—from alien rule, domestic tyranny, oppressive laws, the bonds of poverty. It is a removal of hindrances; but when the hindrances have been removed—what then? To establish liberty is not the end; it is only the beginning. It is the opening of a door; what matters is beyond.

Peace also is not an end in itself; it also is a condition—an indispensable condition for the pursuit of the aims that are positive. If liberty and peace are assured, then the individual man may seek his own fullest development and the perfecting of his own nature. As part of that he will co-operate with others to build up the great society. If it is asked what are the ends of action, we find them there.

Every age is inclined to think itself unique, but our own age knows that in one respect it is truly unique. Hitherto evolution has been unconscious. The animals, man also, have been the unwitting outcome of preceding conditions and of environment. But now—for the first time in all the millions of years in the earth's history—there exists a race of beings on the planet who have grasped something at least of the evolutionary process that governs the cosmos; looking backward and forward they are able to see themselves as factors in the process, able in a measure to guide it. Men now may modify their environment, change their culture, with a deliberate purpose. "The Man that is to be comes at the call

of the Man that is." Conscious Evolution becomes the principle of our action.

If the mind in a quiet hour would attain a conspectus of things, let it detach itself in imagination from all that is familiar. Let it withdraw from this room, this town, these fields; withdraw from people, institutions, language, all customary thoughts. Let the soul dare to rise from the earth itself, take station out in space, and see this globe as it rolls slowly round the sun.

Then the imagination may look back through the aeons, and watch the planet—molten, cooling, consolidating; the continents and oceans taking shape, living creatures evolving, man emerging. It may scan the course of his history—speech developing, tribes and nations forming, with laws and customs, religions and policies. It may see the stumbling progress of mankind, their successes and their failures, and the reasons for them.

Let the mind's eye survey the two thousand millions of human beings who now occupy the earth, heirs of all that has gone before, progenitors of all that is to come after. View them in their homes, their villages, towns and States; with their beliefs and disbeliefs, their devotions to creeds and causes, nationalities and races. See their conflicts between classes and between nations, their warships and fighting planes, their waiting armies. Then as the globe turns, see how the dawn brings out of dark-

ness, all down the curve of the earth, the domes and spires, towers and minarets of thousands of cathedrals, churches, synagogues, mosques and temples. They are significant. They are the signs of man's perennial striving to transcend his planet, to reach out towards the Spirit that pervades this space, understands these constellations and distant galaxies, and these vibrations quivering everywhere.

Only for a moment can the soul endure the cold and silence of that isolation. It will hurry back to familiar things, to the comfort of the nature that we know and the warmth of human society. But perhaps, if we have once felt that detachment, the problems that surround us—personal, social, international, religious; problems which all seem so momentous and so complex—may afterwards appear in a different light, and simpler.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

REALITY

WHEN I set out to get my root ideas, on religion, ethics and politics, as clear-cut as might be, I would gladly have avoided metaphysics. I was inclined to accept the saying of Michelet, "Metaphysics is the art of bewildering oneself methodically." But I had not gone far before I found that in these matters you must work down to as near the bed-rock as possible if your building is to be firm-based.

A number of the most acute minds of our time have devoted themselves to the philosophy of Understanding and Being; they have brought forward the conclusions of the classic philosophers, and have reviewed them in the light of present knowledge. The task of the student is to pick out the statements of the various positions which seem the clearest, to consider the arguments that support them, and to decide which of them, if any, he will accept.

The schools which questioned the reality of the objective world were long dominant in the philosophy of Europe and America. Their central propositions have been summarized by Dr. Joad with remarkable compact-

ness. " We only know our own ideas and sensations, said Locke, Berkeley and Hume; the external cause of these ideas and sensations is unknown to us, said Berkeley, Hume and (with reservations) Locke, and must be presumed to be God (Berkeley) or non-existent (Hume). We know only the phenomenal world, the part product of our mental categories, said Kant. Things as they are in themselves, if there be such, we do not know." Kantians regarded " the objective world as a construct from subjective experience." Among recent writers, Lord Haldane may be cited as an example. " Excepting for knowledge ", he wrote, " nothing has any meaning, and to have no meaning is to be non-existent."

During the present century the authority of those doctrines has been vigorously disputed. Realist philosophers take up the challenge of the idealists.

When Berkeley declares " esse est percipi " to be a principle fundamental to all thought, realists reply that this is a mere assertion which there is no reason to believe is true. Things may very well exist without being perceived. Mr. G. E. Moore argued that this premiss of Berkeley's " was either an airy conceit or a confusion between ' what is experienced ' and ' the experience of it.' " Professor Alexander says that, while it is obviously true " that an object would not be perceived without a percipient ", it does not follow " that it owes its being and character to that percipient. . . . *Prima facie* there is no warrant for the assumption, still less for the dogma, that

because all experience implies a mind, that which is experienced owes its being and its qualities to mind." An American thinker of to-day, Professor W. P. Montague, puts it thus: "When objects are observed, consciousness is always present," but "the idealist's hypothesis of the dependence of objects upon consciousness" is not a consequence of this. He says again: "There are many who have argued that because an effect in the organism must precede the perception of an object it must follow that the perceived object is itself identical with the effect produced in the organism. . . . We argued that Descartes, Locke, and their followers were guilty of a sheer *non sequitur* in concluding that the object perceived must be identical with the intra-organic means by which it was perceived, and that as the latter was internal the former would have to be equally internal."

When the idealists ask whether it is possible to point to any case of reality apart from experience, the realists reply that it is certainly possible. They give as an example our knowledge that the universe must have existed in space-time for untold ages before the existence of mankind; if it had not, most of the things which we now see about us could not have acquired the characters which they possess. It is impossible to believe, therefore, that the existence of the physical world is in any way dependent upon the existence of human minds.

Realists give as another example the fact that observed processes continue, and produce their results, without the

continuance of perception. If I sit by the fireside and watch the glow of the fire and feel its warmth, the idealist philosopher says that I have no knowledge that there is any fire other than is derived from my perceptions, or other people's perceptions, of its light and heat. But if I leave the room and then return and find the fire still burning, no other influences having operated meanwhile, I have the right to state that a fire has in fact been existing there during that time although no one has perceived it.

It is so obvious that there are, and always have been, more things in the world than are perceived or thought of by man, that the idealist philosophers find it necessary to argue that the perception or knowledge, which their theory requires, resides in God or in a transcendental "Absolute". But this, say the realists, is no more than to support a questionable theory by an unprovable assumption. A simpler course would be to abandon the theory.

When the idealists urge that there is no reason to believe that the sense impressions in human minds correspond correctly with the ultimate nature of the objects to which they relate, realists do not dispute that. But this does not raise the question of the existence, or reality, of the objects; it raises only the question of our interpretation of them. The interpretation may be wrong; as we have found that it was wrong to suppose that material bodies were "solid". But the fact that some of our inferences are mistaken does not prove that

none of them are valid. As Laird says, " It seems pessimistic to conclude that nothing is apprehended as it is because some things are apprehended as they are not."

We say that bodies " possess " weight, colour or odour, or emit sounds; and it is quite true, as the idealists assert, that there could be no weights or colours, sounds or odours unless there were senses and minds to perceive them. But, the realists reply, that is because those words are merely terms which describe sensual impressions and mental effects. It is a fallacy first to invent a term such as " colour ", which designates a mental phenomenon; then to say that there cannot be " colour " without minds; and finally to conclude that, since the " colour " which attaches to an object cannot exist without minds, and since the same applies to all other such qualities, therefore the object itself cannot exist without minds. The electrical resistances, the electro-magnetic radiations of various wave-lengths, the sound waves in the air and the particles that convey what we call odour, may quite well exist, and do usually exist, without minds to perceive them. The idealists confuse these things with the mental processes that they elicit.

Whether our interpretations of the real world are correct is not important in this connexion. It is important, no doubt, in the conduct of our own lives; it is very necessary, for practical reasons, to get rid of errors of interpretation. But philosophy is not greatly concerned with the question whether our impressions of objects are

reliable. The question of importance in this discussion is whether those impressions—of weight, colour, sound and so forth—originate spontaneously within our own minds (or else are communicated to our minds from the "Absolute"). Realists hold that they do not, but are evoked by resistances, radiations and other phenomena. These phenomena are "real in their own right", and independent of percipient minds. They are objective and not in the nature of ideas. Diaphanous as we now find "matter" to be, it is still something different from a purely mental concept.

Nor, in this discussion, is it important to decide whether objects are apprehended by the mind directly; or only indirectly, through copies or mental images, these alone being "real" to the consciousness. That point may be of interest to psychology; but the answer, one way or the other, is of no great concern to metaphysics. The question for metaphysics is not the process by which objects are apprehended, but whether there are any objects at all, actually existent and constituting a universe independent of minds. Idealists urge that only minds have being, only ideas are facts. Most realists will agree that minds have being, and will agree that ideas in individual minds are facts; but they leave out the "only". (It is the materialists who would deny actuality to mind as a distinct entity, and to the ideas within mind; and realists need not be materialists.) Alexander says, "For Berkeley reality is ideas. For us ideas are reality." And

again, "Minds and external things are co-ordinate members of a world. . . . Other existences than mind [have] an equally real place in the scheme of being. . . . Minds are but the most gifted members known to us in a democracy of things."

The judgement of Whitehead is on the same side. For him sense-perception "is our immediate perception of the contemporary external world, appearing as an element constitutive of our own experience. In this appearance the world discloses itself to be a community of actual things, which are actual in the same sense as we are. This appearance is effected by the mediation of qualities, such as colours, sounds, tastes, etc., which can with equal truth be described as our sensations or as the qualities of the actual things which we perceive. These qualities are thus relational between the perceiving subject and the perceived things."

Hobhouse put the essence of the matter into a single sentence: "Nothing exists because it is known, but things are known because they exist."

For my own part, coming to the matter without preconceived opinions, I have found the arguments on the realist side convincing. It seems to me that no metaphysic of Being can hold good which would not hold good equally if we supposed man withdrawn from the universe. The idealist philosophy is anthropocentric from its outset; and when, to escape from the patent difficulties of such

a creed, it takes refuge in the hypothesis of a divine knowledge sustaining the whole structure, or in an invented Absolute, it does not satisfy.

The contemporary writers who continue the idealist tradition do not appear to have allowed sufficient effect to the establishment of the principle of evolution. The human mind can no longer be regarded as an ultimate element in the cosmos, separate from the rest, and occupying a quasi-creative position. It is no more than one outcome, among many, of a universe which existed without it. "The human mind", says Laird, "must renounce a position of miraculous privilege."

It is not true that "man is the measure of all things" —except for his own purposes and in relation to his own affairs. The point of view of the ant, or the dog, or the primeval saurian, is as valid as man's, and as much entitled to the consideration of the philosopher. Is the grass not real for the sheep, or the flower for the bee? Is not the soil real for the tree and the rain for the rock? If anything has existence in relation to something else, it must also have existence in its own right.

The philosopher of the idealist school starts by looking into his own mind. The processes of thought are his primary material. He considers the world as object of his thought, and *as such* it cannot exist, it is true, without himself as subject. But it is equally possible to treat the world as "a given reality, from which thought starts and to which it seeks to give intellectual interpretation." And

that in fact is what the human race is doing, and has done, without any untoward consequences, all through its history.

The ordinary man, for that reason, is impatient of the whole discussion. He is inclined to say that "ultimate facts are always inexplicable", and that the world can afford to dismiss metaphysics as not worth troubling about. But this attitude also may be mistaken. It is quite true that ultimate facts are inexplicable, for the simple reason that it is those facts which at the time have proved inexplicable that we call ultimates. As soon as one of them comes to be explained we cease to consider it an ultimate. Solid matter was regarded as an ultimate fact until it was explained in terms of the atom, and the atom until explained in terms of the electron.

Nor will man's craving for knowledge, honourable and persistent, allow him to be indifferent to that which lies outside the world of sense. There are in fact schools of metaphysics, western and eastern; if their teaching is wrong it perplexes thought and so confuses action. Taking a general view of western philosophy, we may see that the idealists, from Berkeley and Kant onwards, have led it into a *cul-de-sac*. Common sense, looking on in a detached spirit, has watched it there, searching vainly for a way of escape, and has wisely refused to follow in. So philosophy in the modern world has been separated from ordinary life and has not influenced it. Now that philosophy—at all events in Britain and America—seems

to be retracing its steps and coming out of the *cul-de-sac*, it will find in common sense an ally, instead of a somewhat contemptuous critic. Then it will be in touch with science, and politics, and all forms of human activity. The gap between pure philosophy and applied philosophy will be closed, and one of the chief causes of the intellectual confusion of our times will be ended.

APPENDIX II

VALUES

A SPECIAL aspect of the problem of Reality is raised by the philosophy of Values. There are some thinkers who, while not necessarily asserting that ideas are the only reality, claim that there are elements in the universe, such as Goodness, Beauty and Truth, which are real factors in it—as real as anything else is real. They find in the existence of these Values the true basis for morality. They identify Deity with them, and so find a basis for religion.

Dr. Inge writes: "If I had to picture to myself how the world may be related to its Creator, I should say that though the innermost nature of the Supreme Being is unknown to us, He has revealed Himself under the three attributes of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. These eternal and ultimate Values are not inactive thoughts; they necessarily produce an eternal world—a sphere of spaceless and timeless existence—in which they live. This is the heaven of the Christian, the intelligible (or spiritual) world of the Platonist. This is the ultimately real world." Elsewhere he writes: "That the attributes of ultimate reality are values, and that they may be classified under

the heads of goodness, beauty and truth, 'a threefold cord not quickly broken,' seems to be generally accepted by the deepest modern thinkers. For example, Mr. Bradley writes, 'Goodness, beauty and truth are all there is which in the end is real. Their reality, appearing amid chance and change, is beyond these, and is eternal.' "

The present Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Matthews, cites, and endorses, a statement by Professor Sorley: "The order of truth which the intellect discovers and the order of moral values which the reason acknowledges are objective characters of reality, and they are reflected in the mind of man."

Professor Lloyd Morgan goes so far as to say: "No one is likely to question the common-sense policy of regarding the external world as existent with its very own proper form, orderly colour-scheme and appealing beauty, quite independently of someone's experience thereof." And Dr. Joad writes: "I believe that the universe contains certain elements or factors which are uniquely and absolutely valuable; . . . and would remain valuable, even if nobody desired them."

Are we to find here a foundation for our practical thinking, for morality and for religion? We must make up our minds, one way or the other.

The school which rejects the independent reality of Values also has powerful advocates. Von Ehrenfels, for example, wrote: "We do not desire things because we

recognize this mystical incomprehensible essence 'value' in them, but we ascribe value to things because we desire them." Bertrand Russell says: "When we assert that this or that has 'value', we are giving expression to our emotions, not to a fact which would still be true if our personal feelings were different." A poet of to-day sums up the matter in a couplet:

No beauty dwells on earth
Till eyes do give it birth.

That is the view which to me seems acceptable.

The world is made up of plurals; philosophy deals with singulars. Philosophers speak of Matter, Life and Mind; but the realities are material things, living beings and particular minds. So with values, such as Goodness, Beauty and Truth. It has been pointed out that "no one can even conceive the Universal Good except in terms of the individual good." There exists no abstract "Beauty", of which the beautiful object is a specimen. And as for Truth, if a definition is to be attempted we might say that truth is nothing else than man's correct understanding or description of events or relationships. That which exists or happens is fact; truth is no more than the recognition of fact. Or as Professor Montague says, "Truth is the special relation of agreement or correspondence obtaining between facts and the judgements about them."

Men approve certain qualities in particular thoughts, actions or things; we term those qualities good or beautiful; next we generalize, for our own convenience, and apply the term Goodness or Beauty to the characteristic that is common to them all; and finally we are tempted to ascribe reality to our own generalizations. But this last step would be a false one. These generalizations have no more actual existence in the universe than had the personifications of qualities in an Apollo or an Athene, the Muses or the Furies, or in the gods of the Hindu pantheon. The doctrine of Values is the mythology of philosophers. " Values " have no more reality than the " principles " —of softness or hardness, hotness or coldness, and the rest—which the medieval schoolmen assumed in order to account for the qualities of physical objects.

In the doctrine of Values we see poetry seeking again to usurp the seat of philosophy. It is the human imagination at play, lending actuality to fictions.

And if Goodness, Beauty and Truth were accepted as realities, absolute and eternal, what are we to say of Evil, Ugliness and Falsehood? Are they to be accepted also, to be dignified by capital letters and surrounded by a glow of rhetoric? Is there to be a nether region in this mythology, in which these are to be the deities? Their claims to authentic existence stand on the same footing as those of the others, and are not less valid. The advocates of the reality of Values have in fact found themselves under the logical necessity of admitting this,

and have added to the theory a class of " Disvalues ". But if these also exist and with equal validity, the doctrine of Values can no longer provide a philosophic basis for religion and morality, as its advocates have claimed. For the Disvalues would give to irreligion and immorality as firm a metaphysical basis. Some of the " eternal verities " would be on the side of divine benevolence and human virtue, but others would be against them.

Further, if the particular things that are held to be beautiful or good, are but examples of real and absolute essences, how would it be possible for our valuations to vary, as they undoubtedly do, from generation to generation, from country to country, from one individual to another. To the eighteenth century the scenery of the high mountains was " horrid " and repellent; it enthrals the twentieth. " The mountains had always been the same; it was a new eye that saw them." A Beethoven Symphony may be deeply beautiful to Europeans and mere cacophony to Asiatics. The soldier in a war of conquest fights and dies in order to win glory in the eyes of posterity, and posterity regards him as an accessory to a crime.

Bradley asks, " Is an object beautiful because it affects me, or is, on the other hand, my emotion the result of its beauty? "

We may answer that because the object affects me, I term it beautiful; and my emotion results from my mind

being of a nature to be moved by objects such as this.

Wildon Carr, interpreting Croce, admirably stated the position: "Physical facts, being aids to the beautiful, come elliptically to be themselves called beautiful, and in this way give rise to the concept of physical beauty. The beautiful is not a physical fact, beauty does not belong to things, it belongs wholly to the human aesthetic activity, and this is a mental or spiritual fact."

Alexander expresses the same view: "The value of the object . . . is not something which is already in the things themselves, but is born along with the act of appreciation. Values are therefore mental . . . inventions, though like all inventions their materials are independent of the inventor . . . Thus in the beautiful object, whether of art or nature, one part is contributed by the mind . . . Values arise out of our likings and satisfy them . . . Values are human inventions."

Reality resides then in the actual world, and also in ourselves as part of that world, in our powers of apprehension, our emotions, and our preferences. Your feeling as you watch the radiant sunset is as actual a fact as the light-waves which cause the sensation of colours in your brain. But there is no "beauty" out there in the sunset. There is nothing out there but the reflection and the splitting of the waves of sunlight by clouds, water-vapour and dust in the atmosphere. Is there "beauty" in the sunset on an uninhabited planet? The element of beauty is subjective. And so with all values.

It is sometimes said that this position is the abandonment of any attempt to reach positive standards of virtue, or art, or religion; that it gives us no scale by which, in the practical conduct of life, we can estimate one activity as against another. What are the things that are most worth while? Reject absolute values, and can we escape an intellectual and moral chaos?

But the doctrine itself gives us no standards. It merely imports a subjective, emotional element and offers it as though it were a principle. It picks out the things that we in fact recognize as worthy, dignifies them with the titles of Goodness, Beauty and Truth, and then tells us that we should pursue them because they possess Value. It picks out the things we regard as unworthy, calls them Disvalues, and says that they should therefore be avoided. But any criterion which would help a man to judge between this line of conduct and the other, to choose between this object and that, it does not give us. We are no farther on with the doctrine of Values than we are without it.

Where the criterion is to be found, in what way intuition and reason, experience and discussion enter in, has been considered in the chapters of this book. I would remind the reader of what was said in Chapter Eight. Here I would only add one more extract from Professor Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*—that great work in which wise guidance is so often to be found. " Values ", he says, " . . . involve relation to the collective mind, and

what is true, good, or beautiful is not true or good or beautiful except as so combined with the collective mind. By collective mind I do not mean a new mind, which is the mind of a group. There is no sufficient evidence that such a mind exists. It is but a short symbol for that co-operation and conflict of many minds which produces standards of approval or disapproval. Appreciation is exercised by the individual mind in agreement with other minds which like him judge well, and in disagreement with minds which judge ill. A mind which judges according to the standard is a standard mind."

This is not to exclude idiosyncrasy, the initiative of pioneers, rebellion, if need be, against convention. But it gives us the normal; it gives us the standards—in religion, morals, politics, art—which the ordinary man accepts; although a time may come when, for reasons that seem good and by the same processes that established them, the standards are changed.

APPENDIX III

MIND AND MATTER

THE proposition, accepted in Chapter Two of this book, that there is an essential difference between mind and matter is rejected by the Mechanist school of biologists. They will not agree that there is any line to be drawn between the jump of the needle to the magnet and the decision of the chess-player or the labours of the dramatist. However intricate and elaborate the process, in the end everything is to be attributed to physical causes. Since biology, so far as it has yet gone, has always been able to find a mechanistic explanation of phenomena, they claim that it is legitimate to infer that the same principle extends to the phenomena that lie beyond.

The Mechanists point to the researches that have been made into the behaviour of the lowest organisms, which have shown that what appear to be conscious and purposive actions can often be induced by changes in the environment, and are really automatic responses to outside stimulus. Pavlov and Watson have shown that many of the actions of the higher animals, including man, can be evoked by appropriate stimuli, and are " condi-

tioned reflexes". Professor Crew gives as a striking example an experiment that has been made with the male guinea-pig. "If one places an electrode to the tongue and another to the skin of the neck and then releases a slight electric shock, the animal will behave exactly as it does during the act of sexual congress, . . . although no female and none of those stimuli which normally call forth sexual excitement are present. The explanation for this behaviour is that the electric current directly excites the motor centres in the spine which normally are stimulated by messages received by way of the sensory arms of this reflex arc, and this leads to exactly the same effect as does the presence of a female. . . . It has also been shown experimentally, that even after removal of those portions of the brain which are known to be concerned with the higher psychical functions, this electrical stimulation produces exactly the same result." He adds: "It follows therefore that [the] phenomena which are the most prominent features in the act of sexual congress, are reflex actions and are not under the control of the brain."

The wonderful achievements of research-workers in genetics during the present century have brought fresh support to the mechanistic school. They have shown that the single fertilized cell of the embryo consists of cytoplasm and chromosomes, that the chromosomes consist of genes —about a thousand in number in the case of man—and that each gene is the conveyer of some characteristic that will ultimately be found in the completed organism.

Professor H. S. Jennings says, in his standard work on *The Biological Basis of Human Nature*: "It is known that each of the thousand genes is a distinctive substance, having a definite function, a particular work to do in producing the new individual; so that if any one of them is destroyed or changed, development is altered in a definite way, and the resulting individual shows a corresponding change in his characteristics; a change perhaps in the colour of his eyes, the shape of his nose, his stature; or in his temper or temperament. . . . Temperament, mentality, behaviour, personality—these things depend in manifold ways on the genes."

When it is asked how it is that mutations arise, so that new species come into being, genetics gives an answer. Professor Hogben writes: "Let us consider the origin of new hereditable types. Thirty years of controlled experiment on the lines suggested by Mendel's work has given abundant proof that from time to time there do arise in pure stocks individuals which have entirely new hereditable properties. Such individuals are called *mutants* or sports." The mutations come from variations from the normal in particular genes or chromosomes. Such variations are very numerous; only a small proportion persist in a completed organism that survives and propagates. The causes of the mutations are hard to detect in the field of microscopical research, but they must exist.

When it is asked what it is that goes on within the

embryo to cause development according to the right pattern, genetics, so far as it has yet penetrated into these recesses, is able to give this answer (I quote again from Professor Jennings): "In the hollow spherical mass of small cells that constitute the gastrula there begins at a certain spot, just in front of the depression known as the *blastopore*, some organizing or differentiating influence, of unknown nature, which passes from cell to cell, causing each cell to alter internally (through the interaction of its genes and cytoplasm, doubtless). Each cell alters in such a way as to fit it to the cells that have altered before it, so that all together they constitute the organized structural pattern of the embryo. The region from which organizing influence passes is called the 'organizer', or the 'organization centre'. On tracing it back, it is found that this arises from the cytoplasmic region of the undivided egg that in the frog is called the gray crescent. From this organizing centre of the gastrula the developmental impulse passes forward and outward in such a way as to cause each successive cell reached to transform into the next required portion of the pattern or structure. At a certain region the cells transform into the spinal cord; in front of these into the medulla, those next into the midbrain, then forebrain; at the sides into the eyes, farther forward into skin."

Physiologists have traced in other departments of biology the connexion between physical laws and phenomena of life. Professor A. V. Hill writes, for example:

" It is now beyond dispute that the principle of the conservation of energy applies just as rigidly to living cells as to the rest of the world."

Taken as a whole, the case presented by the Mechanists is a strong one. But it is open to reply, and cannot be accepted as conclusive.

That there is a connexion between mind and matter in a living organism is obvious enough; no one would seek to dispute it. But that the two are of the same order is a different proposition. It is unquestionable that the individual acts through the mechanism of nerves and muscles and glands, which can be divided into their cells, examined under the microscope, and of which the motions and electrical transmissions can be timed and measured. Parts of this mechanism may be removed from a dissected body, and if properly preserved and stimulated, can continue to perform for a time their characteristic functions. But that is not to say that, in the individual, it is the mechanism itself, and nothing else, which acts.

When Professor Crew writes that the experiment upon the guinea-pig proved that actions of the class under investigation were " reflex and not under the control of the brain ", he is liable to be misunderstood. Once the mechanism has been set going, no doubt it works of itself. But to set it going may be a distinctively mental act. All that has been shown by the experiment is that there is an alternative method of starting the mechanism, namely the

application of an electric current. It has not been shown that the effect is not normally produced by an act of will, conscious or subconscious, " under the control of the brain ". Many people have received electric treatment for a muscle which has been put out of action. The surgeon applies a battery, and passes a current through the muscle at short intervals. The muscle contracts at each discharge; the obstructive factor, whatever it may be, is overcome, and the normal working of the muscle is restored. But it does not follow from this that, when the person decides to go for a walk or to play tennis, and is using the same muscle by an act of will, the initial cause of its contraction and release is on a par with the mechanism of the electric current.

Pavlov proved that dogs could be induced to salivate, not only by the sight or smell of food, but also by the ringing of a bell, which they had been trained to associate with food; it is regarded as only a step from that to the conclusion that normal salivation, or the movements of an animal to seize food, or to search for it, are also of a reflex character. A new-born infant sucks milk when its stomach is empty, and ceases to do so when it is replete; there is some physiological " machinery ", no doubt, which brings this about. It might be within the range of possibility to show that all the actions of organisms connected with alimentation were due to chemical reactions, giving rise to a sensation of hunger and then to the appropriate muscular movements. But suppose we

were to take the opposite example—not of feeding but of fasting. All over the world observant Moslems during the month of Ramadan, Christians in Lent, Jews on the Day of Atonement, Hindu ascetics constantly, abstain from food in various ways and degrees. How could this possibly be accounted for by any kind of mechanistic explanation?

The research-worker, with marvellous patience and skill, has succeeded in detecting and observing the "organizing influence" which governs the development of the cells of the embryo. But he can say nothing as to the nature of that influence. And the crux is there.

The Mechanist contends that the method of inference is to be applied in this matter. The rules which are found to prevail wherever biological research has already obtained results must be assumed to prevail in the sphere which is as yet out of reach. In the next Appendix it will be argued that this is legitimate when we are answering the case for indeterminism in physics, and the mechanists contend that it is equally legitimate here. To this it may be replied that the cases are not parallel. When we come to consider the movements of electrons beyond the range of possible observation within the atom, we shall be dealing with the same subject-matter as the movements of electrons within the range of observation outside the atom. All the phenomena cited as examples of indeterminism are of the same order as those which are recognized to be determined by laws that have been established.

Here the situation is different. The whole issue is whether mental phenomena are, or are not, of the same order as material. To say that we propose to " infer " that they are merely begs the question.

It is equally a fallacy to say that, since biology has been successful up to a certain point through employing the methods of chemistry and physics, the same methods are applicable beyond that point. It may well be that success has stopped at that point for the very reason that beyond it there is a different subject-matter not amenable to those methods.

An examination of the arguments for and against leads, then, to a clear conclusion. It has been expressed, from the side of science, by one of the most eminent of British physiologists, Professor A. V. Hill, in the following passage of an Address delivered at the University of Pennsylvania: " I am not intending to tell you to-day—you have heard it often enough and it is not true—that the phenomena of life could be explained, at least by someone clever enough, in terms of the physics and chemistry of the present time. Whether the future physics and the future chemistry will suffice I will not guess; when the events of physics have become indeterminate, and the physicists, poets and mystics; when chemistry has become physics, and the chemists have become physiologists; then, indeed, the situation may be different. Until that day I shall continue—with J. S. Haldane—to insist that in the

organism regarded as a whole we have a phenomenon of a different kind, one whose unity and fundamental nature are as essential as any of the concepts of physics."

From the side of philosophy, Lloyd Morgan summarized the matter very clearly. He wrote: "In late nineteenth-century discussion much stress was laid by advocates of evolution on the hypothesis that instinctive behaviour is 'no more that compound reflex action.' Is that the interpretation which I still seek to endorse? It is not. What, as biologist, I accept is that the analysis of instinctive behaviour yields reflex acts *as constituents*. What I reject is the doctrine that the compound is 'no more than' the sum of its constituents. My contention is that any instance of instinctive behaviour is an organic whole. Always complex, often very complex (in the most striking examples astonishingly complex), its substantial *unity* as an organic whole is no less a characterizing feature. But this is biological body-story. My further hypothesis is that the sentient mind-story is correspondingly complex with like substantial unity."

As to the assumed evolution of mind from matter, Lloyd Morgan wrote: "I am (to say the least of it) doubtful whether mind, as a distinctive kind of relatedness within the cosmos, has arisen by emergence from the supposedly precedent kind of cosmic relatedness which we designate physical. My belief is that the evolution of mind has advanced in correlation with that of those physical events the outcome of which is the physiological

organization of a living body." His conclusion is that "precedence should now be given to organism rather than to mechanism—to organization rather than to aggregation." Whitehead's philosophy rests on the same foundation.

The ultimate connexion between physics and psychics is so far back that it is right to treat them as distinct. Agriculture, one might say, is based on geology, and geology ultimately on astronomy, but agriculture is not therefore a branch of geology or astronomy. The mental is so different from the material that it is right to use for it a different vocabulary, and to regard it as offering to philosophy a separate subject-matter. Mind has its own place in the universe as authentic as that of the chemical element or the electron.

APPENDIX IV

CAUSALITY AND INDETERMINISM

I

THE argument in this book lays stress on Causation. Again and again we have emphasized the importance of tracing events back to their origins, and learning from the experience of past cases the right rule for the present or the future. In religion, ethics, sociology, international relations, this is taken as the guiding principle. But what is meant by Causation?

It is no more than a statement of fact. There is nothing mysterious or transcendental about it. There is no mystic "law", which compels certain things to follow as the result of other things. We find empirically that certain things do follow upon others, and we choose to call the earlier ones causes and the later ones effects; the fact of the sequence we term causation.

No one event is ever the effect of a single cause, but only of a combination of causes; and the essence of causation is in the combination.

To give an illustration: a man notices a smell of gas in his house at night; he takes a lighted candle and goes

to look for the leakage; he opens the door of a room and there is an explosion. We ask what was "the cause" of the explosion, and we say that it was the man bringing a light into a gas-filled room; if he had not done so there would have been no explosion. But if we analyse the matter we shall see at once that it is not a case of one event following upon one other event, but of one event following upon a combination of innumerable other events. The explosion itself consisted in a volume of billions of molecules of coal-gas instantaneously uniting with billions of atoms of oxygen in the atmosphere, and expanding in the process. This was due to the mutual attractions of electrons in those molecules and atoms, and from secondary consequences of that. The expansion, being confined by the walls of the house, vented itself violently on the windows or doors, or wherever the restraint was weakest. For all this to be possible it was necessary that coal-gas should have been manufactured and brought to this house. In order that the light should have been applied, it was necessary that the man should have had at hand a candle rather than an electric torch, and that he should have failed to realize that it was dangerous to look for a gas-escape with a naked light. Beyond these proximate causes, there was the existence of the house itself, and of the man himself; the fact that coal-gas and candles had been invented; the existence of an agency which manufactured and supplied the gas; the development of coal-mining as part of our

industrial civilization—innumerable other factors, all of which were essential to the actual event; for if any of them had been absent the explosion would not have occurred.

The same kind of picture is presented when we come to analyse anything that happens, no matter what it may be. We are accustomed to pick out, in the first instance, one conspicuous preceding event and to call that *the cause* of what has occurred, or a few proximate preceding events and to call them *the causes*, taking for granted all the other conditions. It is no doubt convenient to do this. But when we consider the matter further we find that such explanations are quite inadequate.

As Whitehead says: "Consider our notion of 'causation'. How can one event be the cause of another? In the first place, no event can be wholly and solely the cause of another event. The whole antecedent world conspires to produce a new occasion." Or John Stuart Mill: "The cause is the sum total of the conditions positive and negative taken together—the whole of the contingencies of every description which being realized, the consequent invariably follows."

The second fact, besides combination, which is of the essence of causation, is that element of invariability which Mill includes in his definition. Like causes always produce like effects. Nature is uniform. This has been tested by the daily experience of mankind through all the ages of human history, and by millions of experiments in

thousands of scientific laboratories during the last three centuries, and never has one exception been proved to have occurred to the Law of the Uniformity of Nature. If a particular combination of phenomena is followed by a particular event on one occasion, then, if all the conditions remain the same, a similar combination will be followed by a similar event on every other occasion.

The Principle of Causality deals with sequences and combinations. The Law of Uniformity is a statement of parallelism.

It is asked how, if all this be true, anything that is new can ever arise. Novelties do in fact emerge. As Professor Taylor puts it: " When we have made as complete an enumeration as possible of the ' factors ' out of which a thing has been developed, it still remains true that the thing itself, once developed, may exhibit a character which was not present in all or any of these factors, and could not have been foretold on the strength of the fullest knowledge of the characters of the factors."

Bergson finds the answer in a metaphysical *Élan* which he postulates. Lloyd Morgan regards " Emergence " as a characteristic of evolution. " If it be asked," he says, " What is it that you claim to be emergent?—the brief reply is: Some new kind of relation . . . It may still be asked in what distinctive sense the relations are new. The reply is that their specific nature could not

be predicted before they appear in the evidence, or prior to their occurrence."

But there is no reason to admit any incompatibility between the fact of novelty and the principle of causality. Causation is a question of the combination of events. The number of events is incalculable, and the number of different combinations that are possible may be regarded as infinite. A novel event is nothing more than the product of a novel combination.

" Sports " appear suddenly and unexpectedly among plants or animals, or genius among men. It does not follow that they are uncaused. Already the science of genetics is indicating the ways in which " mutants " may arise. What seems sudden and spontaneous, according to our standards and viewed from the result, might be seen to be gradual and the outcome of elaborate processes, if judged by nature's own standards and viewed from the standpoint of the prior events. The same mechanism that continuously moves the hands of a clock, suddenly strikes the hour.

In any case, the fact that the novelties may be unpredictable by men is no proof that they are uncaused by nature.*

Lloyd Morgan, at the conclusion of his *Emergent Evolution*, states the case as follows: " The question for us then arises: May we bring emergence itself under the

* See also page 287.

rubric of causation? The reply turns on our answer to a further question: Is emergent evolution itself the expression of an orderly and progressive development? If so (and such is my contention), then emergence itself takes rank, as Mill and Lewes also contended, among the 'laws of nature'. . . . May we, then, say: . . . That, if there be a natural plan of emergence, then every effect is strictly determinate in accordance with the nature of that plan; that novelty itself is thus caught up in the web of causal nexus under suitable acknowledgement; but that such novelty is for us unpredictable owing to our partial knowledge of the plan of emergence up to date, and our necessary ignorance of what the further development of that plan will be?" His own answer is apparently in the affirmative. That is the conclusion to which the facts seem clearly to lead us.

II*

In recent years the whole argument that is based on Causation and Uniformity has been formally challenged from the scientific side. Physicists of eminent authority

* This section was the basis for a paper, read at the International Congress of Philosophy held in Paris in August 1937, with the title "Analyse de l'Indéterminisme", and printed in the Proceedings of the Congress—*Travaux du IX^e Congrès International de Philosophie, VII*, Causalité et Déterminisme, p. 21. (Hermann et Cie, Paris, 1937.)

dispute it, and, if their views are sound, all the philosophy that is founded upon it must collapse.

The challenge originated with Heisenberg, who propounded in 1927 a " Principle of Indeterminacy ", sometimes now called " Principle of Uncertainty ". He has been supported by Niels Bohr, Schrödinger and other physicists. Sir Arthur Eddington is chief among these; in the English-speaking world his writings have been the principal medium for the spread of the theory.

The point is one of fundamental importance. Eddington says very truly that if the " expectation should prove well-founded that 1927 has seen the final overthrow of strict causality . . . the year will certainly rank as one of the greatest epochs in the development of scientific philosophy." We must probe that " if ".

The investigations into the structure of the atom, with the formulation of the Quantum Theory, have shown that it is not possible for scientific research to ascertain with precision both the velocity and the position of an electron—one or the other, but not both. The reason, says Eddington, is that " if by our experimental arrangements we persuade the electron to send us a very sharp signal of its position, its velocity (which it had previously signalled) is altogether upset by the reaction "; and *vice versa*. Or as Bohr puts it: " According to the quantum postulate, any observation regarding the behaviour of the electron in the atom will be accompanied by

a change in the state of the atom." It is therefore not only impossible now to determine these facts, but it will be for ever impossible to do so, by any means of observation known to man. The observation itself must upset the phenomenon that is being observed.

The layman will accept from the physicists this statement of the facts. I am not aware that there is at present any division of opinion among leading physicists with regard to it. But we are not bound to accept the deductions that the school of Heisenberg have drawn from the facts.

Their reasoning is as follows. It has been shown that the nature of certain phenomena is incapable of being determined by observation. Those phenomena are not therefore the effect of any cause which science can discover. Science cannot say that a cause that is undiscoverable does in fact exist. It will not go further than proof goes. There is reason also to hold that the problem of the position-cum-velocity of the electron—which is for ever insoluble—is only an example of a universal rule. " I must make it clear ", says Eddington, " that the scientific doctrine of indeterminism is not that there exist occasional exceptions to deterministic law, but that every phenomenon is to a greater or less extent indeterminate." We are therefore obliged, they say, to accept a Principle of Indeterminacy. Eddington sums up the matter by asserting that " determinism has faded out of theoretical physics."

This involves the conclusion that we have no right to suppose that anything but pure hazard may reign at the heart of Nature. Eddington and Bohr make the further deduction that this conclusion has an important bearing upon various philosophical questions, particularly the problem of Free Will. "If the atom", says Eddington, "has indeterminacy, surely the human mind will have an equal indeterminacy; for we can scarcely accept a theory which makes out the mind to be more mechanistic than the atom."*

I ventured to criticize these deductions in an article which appeared in *The Nineteenth Century and After* for April, 1933. Sir Arthur Eddington was good enough to reply;† but I remain, respectfully, unconvinced.

The reasons to be advanced against the "Principle of Indeterminacy" may be stated as follows.

1. Its advocates use the word "determined" in two different senses. That word may mean "ascertained, detected, defined"; or it may mean "caused, necessitated, decided"; and they use it in one sense in their premisses and in the other sense in their conclusions. The way in which the two are confused

* Cf. N. Bohr—*Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature*, p. 100.

† *The Nineteenth Century and After*, June 1933; reprinted in Chapter XIII of *New Pathways in Science*, by Sir Arthur Eddington, published in 1935.

together may be instanced by this passage from a book which gives a clear outline of present-day physics:* "The principles of quantum mechanics do not permit us to determine the initial state of a micro-physical system to any desired degree of accuracy; and the errors in measurement must satisfy Heisenberg's fundamental uncertainty principle. The possibility of determining the initial state is, however, at the root of deterministic principles in physics. We cannot, therefore, apply deterministic methods of reasoning to the micro-physical world because we can never determine the initial state of the system to a desired degree of accuracy. To put it briefly: the micro-physical world is indeterministic." We are told here that because *we* cannot determine certain things, in the sense of measuring or ascertaining them, it follows that nature does not determine them, in the sense of bringing them about by preceding causes.

The matter is made quite plain by Mr. Bertrand Russell, quoting Dr. Turner: "As J. E. Turner has pointed out (*Nature*, December 27, 1930), 'The use to which the Principle of Indeterminacy has been put is largely due to an ambiguity in the word "determined"'. In one sense a quantity is determined when it is measured, in the other sense an event is determined when it is caused. The Principle of Indeterminacy has to do with measurement, not with causation. The velocity and posi-

* L. Infeld—*The World in Modern Science.*

tion of a particle are declared by the Principle to be undetermined in the sense that they cannot be accurately measured. This . . . is a physical process which has a physical effect upon what is measured. There is nothing whatever in the Principle of Indeterminacy to show that any physical event is uncaused. As Turner says: 'Every argument that, since some change cannot be "determined" in the sense of "ascertained", it is therefore not "determined" in the absolutely different sense of "caused" is a fallacy of equivocation.' . . . Science has quite recently discovered that the atom is not subject to the laws of the older physics, and some physicists have somewhat rashly jumped to the conclusion that the atom is not subject to laws at all."

2. The scientist in his laboratory tests his work by the possibility of prediction. If his researches lead him to believe that a particular process will bring about a particular result, and if, when the experiment is tried, his prediction is verified, then he knows that he is right. If not, his hypothesis is disproved or remains unproved. "Science aims at the power of prevision based upon quantitative knowledge." It is natural, therefore, for all scientific writings to treat prediction as the test of truth.

Eddington constantly uses "unpredictable" as equivalent to "undetermined", and then, through the confusion referred to, regards the "undetermined" as uncaused. Schrödinger defines "the question at issue" as

being this: "given any physical system, is it possible, at any rate in theory, to make *an exact prediction** of its future behaviour, provided that its nature and condition at one given point of time are exactly known?" Bohr writes: "We are here so far removed from *a causal description** that an atom in a stationary state may in general even be said to possess a free choice between various possible transitions to other stationary states."

In answer to this, I would contend that the question at issue is not as Schrödinger defines it. The question is not only what scientists can prove by prediction and verification. And what is needed is not only the "causal description" of which Bohr speaks. Nor is it the case that "uncaused" is an equivalent of "unpredictable". To say that is to confuse the nature of a thing with our human observation of it. As Pascal exclaimed: "Incomprehensible? But because you cannot understand a thing, it does not cease to exist."

There is uncertainty, no doubt; but it may be on the part of the scientist and not of the electron, in the laboratory and not in the universe.

3. The indeterminists are asked how it is that, consistently with their hypothesis, there can be any regularity in nature at all; how it is that science is able to make any observations, or to discover physical laws of any kind. They give the answer, as expressed by Ed-

* The Italics are mine.

dington, that " physics to-day represents [our ordinary] experience as the result of statistical laws without any reference to the principle of causality." He speaks of matter being analysable " into great numbers of independent particles moving at random." Observation deals with the resultant, in the mass, of all these random movements calculated statistically.

Schrödinger writes: " We have learned to look upon the overwhelming majority of physical and chemical processes as mass phenomena produced by an immensely large number of single individual entities which we call atoms and electrons and molecules. . . . The exact laws which we observe are ' statistical laws ' . . . The statistical laws are even more clearly manifested when the behaviour of each individual entity is *not* strictly determined, but conditioned only by chance."

Jeans gives as an example the disintegration of the atoms of radium. Out of 2,000 atoms, he writes, " science cannot say how many of these will survive after a year's time, it can only tell us the relative odds in favour of the number being 2,000, 1,999, 1,998, and so on. Actually there are rather long odds in favour of the number being 1,999; in all probability one, and only one, of the 2,000 atoms is destined to break up within the next year. We do not know in what way this particular atom is selected out of the 2,000." He concludes that every year " fate knocks at the door of one radium atom in every 2,000." This, he says, is the fact with

which science has to deal; it can have no concern with the doings of the particular atom, which are beyond its reach.

The reply here may take the form of an inquiry—what is meant by a " statistical law "? There are statistical processes, methods of calculation, ways for ascertaining the physical laws that are at work. But what meaning, if any, can be attached in this connexion to the term " statistical law " itself?

The position of the indeterminists may be compared to that of some sedentary student of sociology, surrounded in his study by blue-books, with tables of populations, births and deaths, charts of diseases and crimes, graphs of the movements of trade. These, for him, are his raw material. He is not in touch with the millions of individual persons, with the hospitals or prisons, factories or ports. In course of time he may come to think that the human beings, or the commodities, are all " governed by statistical laws ", since he himself is acquainted with nothing else. Physicists are necessarily cut off from the micro-physical world because it is inaccessible to observation on the macro-physical scale, and are obliged to deal only with mass calculations. Some of them seem to have fallen into the same fallacy as my imaginary student.

It used to be thought that the movements of the individual atoms of oxygen and nitrogen in the air were " at random ". Any meteorologist will tell us that they

are not. There is no reason to suppose that the motions of the atoms of any gas in a vessel in a laboratory are haphazard, merely because we cannot reach the factors that determine those motions.

If it is "fate" that selects every year one atom of radium for disintegration out of 2,000, and no deterministic law enters, why is it that the figure is uniformly in the neighbourhood of one in 2,000? Why should there not be a thousand one year, and none the next, twenty the year after and then five hundred?

4. To this the indeterminists would reply that there is such a thing as chance; and that where a number of events take place quite fortuitously, the mathematical laws of probability will show how many will turn out one way and how many another; this is what is meant by saying that statistical laws furnish the subject-matter for physical observation.

But determinists deny altogether the premiss that chance exists in the universe taken as a whole. Relatively to a particular person, or to any single factor, an event may be fortuitous. If a tile falls from a roof in a storm, it may be pure chance, so far as I am concerned, whether I happen to be passing at the moment, and whether the tile strikes me or misses me. But viewed from the standpoint of things in general, the innumerable causes that led to the roof being in existence, to the tile being loose, to the storm blowing, to my being alive and passing at the time—all these in combination determined absolutely

whether the tile would hit me or not.* No "chance" or "probability", nor any "statistical law" relating to the number of accidents in the streets, entered into the matter.

Or take as another illustration, a game of chance, such as roulette at a casino—the absolute type of pure hazard. A horizontal disc, divided into a number of compartments, is set revolving by the croupier, and he launches a ball into it in the opposite direction; when the wheel comes to rest and the ball drops into one of the compartments, the number that it bears is the winner. No one could by any possibility predict what will be the result of a particular throw. Yet, if a record were kept for a year, it would show that the ball had come to rest approximately an equal number of times in each compartment. And the proprietor of the casino would know for certain at the beginning of the year that the rules of the game, combined with the "law of probability", would give him a profit, and not a loss, at the end.

Here the element of "chance" comes solely from the fact that the players cannot estimate the precise degree of force with which the croupier sets the wheel revolving and then launches the ball; nor does he know it himself. If he did, the game would cease to be one of hazard and would become one of skill. We can imagine that a

* Cf. Bergson—*Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, p. 155.

machine might be constructed to start a roulette-wheel and to launch the ball; and if the machine worked accurately, and all interferences were excluded, it might bring the ball into the same compartment every time.

The slight differences in the force used by the arm of the croupier vary indefinitely, within an upper and a lower limit; consequently the point of the circle reached by the ball at the moment when it stops will also vary indefinitely. On each separate occasion, the point is determined from the start by the force that has been used on that occasion. But if the throws are numerous, and the force constantly varying, there is no reason why the ball should come to rest more often in one compartment than in another, and consequently each will win an approximately equal number of times. The same considerations apply in all such cases. Each particular event is determined by its antecedents; but if we do not know those antecedents precisely, we are unable to predict results, and then we talk of chance.

"Chance", said Leslie Stephen, "is a name for our ignorance." "The disconcerting things," wrote Victor Hugo, "which we call, in nature, caprice, and, in destiny, hazard, are bits of Law seen in glimpses."*

* "Les choses déconcertantes que nous nommons, dans la nature, caprice, et, dans la destinée, hasard, sont des tronçons de loi entrevus."

Or we may recall the well-known lines of Pope:

> All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
> All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see.

When we have met, to the best of our ability, the arguments of the supporters of Indeterminism, that does not dispose of the matter. Sir Arthur Eddington challenges those who support Causality, not merely to give arguments against his belief, but a reason for their own, seeing that there are cases in which science cannot supply proof and does not help them. No one can quarrel with that challenge.

The reason is to be found in the legitimate use of inference. Sir Arthur Eddington himself reminds us that "all knowledge of physical objects is inferential . . . Familiar objects which we handle are just as much inferential as a remote star inferred from an image on a photographic plate." We find, he says, that "certain regularities and recurrences are noticeable in sensory experience. We call these regularities of experience laws of Nature. When such a law has been established it becomes also a rule of inference, so that it helps us in further decipherment." Here Eddington has given the answer to his own challenge.

Our experience in ordinary life shows—and scientific research wherever it has gone confirms it—that when any group of physical conditions is followed by some event,

similar conditions will always be followed by a similar event. If I lift my paper-weight a few inches above my table and let it go, it will fall on to the table. The circumstances remaining the same, this consequence will follow whenever the experiment is made. Sir Arthur Eddington would say that there is "an exceedingly high degree of probability" that the letter-weight will fall on to the table, so high a degree that for all practical purposes it may be treated as a certainty. Mankind in general will say that probability does not enter into the matter, and that—the conditions remaining the same—the result is a certainty.

There are two processes by which it is possible to reach conclusions, and not only one. There is the method of observation and experiment, which permits prediction and verification. And there is the method of inference.

No one ever sees the other side of the moon, and unless conditions change, no one will ever see it. Yet we may be quite sure that there is another side. It might conceivably be flat or concave, instead of convex as we suppose; but that there is another side is certain. The fact can be inferred with assurance from our knowledge of all cases that do come within reach of our observation that it is impossible for a material object to have one side only. There are innumerable cases, of course, in which it is more or less doubtful whether the conditions are really the same; inferences then can at best be probabilities. But there are others in which the ratio of probability is one

in one—that is to say there is certainty.*

It may be said, no doubt, that the word "certainty" ought never to be used of any matter which is dependent upon human knowledge. But that raises the general issue of epistemology, and has no special reference to the question of indeterminism. It affects all philosophy and all science; it throws an equal doubt upon the existence of the letter-weight and the table, upon my own existence and everyone else's. All that is meant here is that—taking as given my existence and that of the table and the weight as we know them—the falling of the weight when it is lifted and let go—conditions being normal—is not probable but certain.

Eddington says: Science cannot determine the velocity-cum-position of an electron; you cannot draw a line between that phenomenon and any other phenomena that are inaccessible to observation; therefore all such phenomena—and they constitute almost the whole of the universe—are in some degree indeterminate. We

* Cf. the following passage from Hume, quoted by Whitehead: "The only connexion or relation of objects which can lead us beyond the immediate impressions of our memory and senses, is that of cause and effect; and that because it is the only one, on which we can found a just inference from one object to another. The idea of cause and effect is derived from *experience*, which informs us, that such particular objects, in all past instances, have been constantly conjoined with each other; and as an

would say the opposite. All the phenomena of which we have knowledge are seen to be the effects of combinations of prior causes; you cannot draw a line between these phenomena and those that are inaccessible to observation—such as the velocity-cum-position of an electron; therefore it is legitimate to infer that these phenomena also are the necessary effects of combinations of prior causes.

Not all the great names in physics can be cited on the side of indeterminism. The theory partly originated from the discovery of the Quantum; Professor Max Planck was the discoverer, and Planck is not an indeterminist. It has close connexions with the Theory of Relativity; Professor Einstein was the author of that theory, and Einstein is not an indeterminist. It springs mainly from the results of the experimental investigations into the structure of the

> object similar to one of these is supposed to be immediately present in its impression, we thence presume on the existence of one similar to its usual attendant. According to this account of things, which is, I think, in every point unquestionable, probability is founded on the presumption of a resemblance betwixt those objects of which we have had experience, and those of which we have had none; and, therefore, it is impossible that this presumption can arise from probability." (*Treatise*, Part III, § VI.)

atom; Lord Rutherford has been the leading experimentalist, and Rutherford also is not an indeterminist.

Planck writes: "To-day there are eminent physicists who under the compulsion of facts are inclined to sacrifice the principle of strict causality in the physical view of the world . . . So far as I can see, however, there is no ground for such a renunciation." Elsewhere he puts the question: "Does scientific practice intimate that there are certain happenings in nature where the law of causation does not function, and that there are regions in the mental sphere where the causal writ does not run?" And he gives the answer: "Physical science [i.e. physics], together with astronomy and chemistry and mineralogy, are all based on the strict and universal validity of the principle of causality. In a word, this is the answer which physical science has to give to the question asked."

On the bearing of the Quantum Theory on indeterminism, Planck writes: "One cannot yet definitely say what influence the subsequent development of the hypothesis may have on the formulation of fundamental physical laws. Some essential modification seems to be inevitable; but I firmly believe, in company with most physicists, that the quantum hypothesis will eventually find its exact expression in certain equations which will be a more exact formulation of the law of causality."

With regard to the contention of the indeterminists that what are called laws of causation are merely mathematical probabilities, Planck writes: "In the point of

fact, statistical laws are dependent upon the assumption of the strict law of causality functioning in each particular case. And the non-fulfilment of the statistical rule in particular cases is not therefore due to the fact that the law of causality is not fulfilled, but rather to the fact that our observations are not sufficiently delicate and accurate to put the law of causality to a direct test in each case. If it were possible for us to follow the movement of each individual molecule in this very intricate labyrinth of processes, then we should find in each case an exact fulfilment of the dynamical laws."

Professor Einstein, in 1931, was good enough to send me for publication a letter from which the following are extracts: "I mentioned to you in conversation that I, too, was unable to regard as final the present tendency of theoretical physicists to reject the postulate of causality or determinism. . . . They maintain that a deterministic theory is to be rejected, and that it is merely conservatism based on custom and prejudice to search after such a theory. In this they go, in my opinion, too far."

In more recent statements, Einstein emphasizes this view. Mr. James Murphy, the editor of *Where Is Science Going?* includes in that book the report of conversations between Professor Einstein and himself in which the following passages occur:

"Murphy: It is now the fashion in physical science to attribute something like free will even to the routine processes of inorganic nature.

Einstein: That nonsense is not merely nonsense. It is objectionable nonsense.

Murphy: Well, of course, the scientists give it the name of indeterminism.

Einstein: Look here. Indeterminism is quite an illogical concept. What do they mean by indeterminism? Now if I say that the average life-span of a radioactive atom is such and such, that is a statement which expresses a certain order, *Gesetzlichkeit*. But this idea does not of itself involve the idea of causation. We call it the law of averages; but not every such law need have a causal significance. At the same time if I say that the average life-span of such an atom is indetermined in the sense of being not caused, then I am talking nonsense. . . . When you mention people who speak of such a thing as free will in nature it is difficult for me to find a suitable reply. The idea is of course preposterous.

Murphy: You would agree then, I imagine, that physics gives no ground whatsoever for this extraordinary application of what we may for convenience sake call Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy.

Einstein: Of course I agree."

Lord Rutherford, in 1933, wrote to me as follows: "While the principle of indeterminacy is of great theoretical interest as showing the limitations of the present wave-theory of matter, its importance in Physics seems to me to have been much exaggerated by many writers. It seems to me unscientific and also dangerous to draw far-

flung deductions from a theoretical conception which is incapable of experimental verification, either directly or indirectly."

Fortified by these authorities we may conclude that the year 1927 did not, after all, create a new era in science and philosophy by seeing "the final overthrow of strict causality." Such a claim on behalf of indeterminism may prove to be no more than a temporary aberration—and the Principle itself only a short-lived eddy in the river of thought which disappears as the stream flows on.

It is of practical importance to recognize that this is so. The issue is not so remote from the ordinary affairs of life as may at first be supposed. And for this reason. There are great numbers of people in all countries who are trying, according to their lights, to make a world that is largely bad a little better. They are striving to carry into effect fundamental measures of social reform and to bring peace and order into international affairs. They are trying to persuade the peoples to do what is sensible; to persuade them that if they sow folly they will surely reap disaster. The task is very hard. The progress is painfully slow.

Into a world so struggling, and in an age which is already one of intellectual confusion, there is projected a new doctrine. It is heralded as the latest conclusion of modern knowledge and is announced on the authority of eminent scientists. The doctrine is found to be this—

that at bottom there is no reason to think that the things that happen are the outcome of what has been done before; at the heart of Nature hazard rules. The implication is drawn that human conduct also is wayward, arbitrary and quite unpredictable. This doctrine supports cynical and superficial judgements such as that which Frederick the Great expressed to Voltaire: "The older one becomes, the more one is persuaded that His Sacred Majesty Chance does three-quarters of the work of this miserable Universe." If that is true, why should we strive to improve our conditions and to better our lives? We shall have little ground for thinking that, at the end of all our striving, things will be any different from what they would have been without it.

Experience proves that that is not so. Ameliorative forces have, in fact, brought an increase in human welfare. We may hold that they will do so again, if the conditions are the same. But immense effort is needed; the inertia of indifference is ponderous and hard to move. Whether the effort will be forthcoming depends upon the willingness of millions of individuals; it depends upon their resolution, their enthusiasm, their faith. If the faith is undermined that results always follow from causes, good results from right action, bad results from wrong, immense harm will ensue. That is why this discussion has actuality. To no one can it be a matter of indifference.

APPENDIX V

FREE WILL

Does causation apply universally in the sphere of mind as it does in the sphere of matter? Or is there room for freedom, for spontaneity—at least so far as the human will is concerned?

It is often assumed that materialism and determinism stand or fall together. And it is plain that if you hold that mind is different from matter then you must hold that the laws that apply to matter need not necessarily apply to mind. But it is a case of " need not " apply, not a case of " cannot " or " do not " apply. You may reject materialism, and yet not reject causality in its application to mind. To say—mind is different from matter; causality applies to matter; therefore causality does not apply to mind—would be an obvious fallacy. Causality is not excluded from the mental sphere merely because it is present in the material sphere. It may, or it may not, apply invariably to life and mind as well as to purely physical phenomena. I would offer reasons in support of the position taken in the chapters of this book, that it does invariably apply.

No one will dispute that at least it applies sometimes.

Every farmer, when he breeds cattle or when he sows a field of wheat, every gardener when he sets bulbs, manures his plants or prunes them, sees causation at work

in the sphere of life. He finds that the same combination of causes will produce the same effects. If results are different it is because some of the antecedents are different.

Every schoolmaster sees causation at work in the sphere of mind. We know that if, in one country, the children go to school and get knowledge and training of character, and in another country they do not, there will be found certain qualities and tendencies in the people of the one country which will be absent, or less marked, in the people of the other. Every lesson in a school, every sermon in a church, every speech at a political meeting assumes that actions are open to influence; in other words, that causation applies, to some extent at least, in the sphere of mind.

Some may say that material factors are more important: unless children are well-nourished, the schooling will be futile; if a proletariat is poverty-stricken it may not trouble to be virtuous. But this is not to deny causation. It merely gives more weight to the causes that are physiological and less to those that are psychological. Few will doubt that, in some measure and in some proportions, both are at work.

That the choice of actions, whether by men or by animals, is conditioned by the character of their bodies needs no proving. " The bill of the bird ", said Emerson, " the skull of the snake, determines tyrannically its limits." No man can do anything beyond the conditions

set by his body, aided perhaps by appliances which are themselves conditioned by his body.

The body, as it is at any moment, is the product of pre-natal and post-natal causes—of breeding and shaping, nature and nurture. Different individuals start with different sets of genes; " the way a given individual develops, what he becomes, what characteristics he gets, what peculiarities he shows, depend, other things being equal, on what set of these substances he starts with. . . We know that such matters as dullness, stupidity, and their opposites, various diversities of temperament, and the like, depend on the genes. For they are known to depend on the nature, quality and quantity of certain of the internal secretions or hormones; and these latter in turn depend on the genes." " Just as the colour of the hair and eyes descend to us, so do powers and thoughts, fancies and tendencies."

Upon the individual as fashioned by pre-natal causes, the post-natal causes operate. Environment, training—a great variety of factors both mental and material, mould the body and character. These may " change the behaviour that would without them result from the genes present in the individual. In some of these matters the effects of genes and environment are inextricably intermingled. Behaviour is bound to be relative to environment, it cannot be dealt with as dependent on genes alone."

Professor Jennings, from whose summary of the con-

clusions of modern genetics most of these quotations are drawn, gives as an example that "a given set of genes may result under one environment in criminality; under another in the career of a useful citizen." Everyone knows that in the same country there may be many fewer crimes, in proportion to population, in one generation than in the previous generation. Since the physical stock of the people is substantially the same, the change must be due to post-natal influences.

The example of criminality throws an interesting light on this matter. It is remarkable how uniform, for instance, are the statistics of murders. No one can predict whether any particular person will or will not become a murderer in the course of a year. Yet we know that nowadays, in the population of forty millions in England and Wales, not fewer than one hundred persons and not more than one hundred and thirty persons will be the victims of murder in any given year.* Combinations of

* The following figures of murders committed are taken from the Criminal Statistics, England and Wales:

1914	172	1921	174	1928	107
1915	161	1922	144	1929	116
1916	166	1923	170	1930	112
1917	159	1924	154	1931	106
1918	146	1925	174	1932	112
1919	218	1926	171	1933	111
1920	204	1927	137	1934	125
				1935	101

The fluctuation in the years immediately following the War is to be noted.

causes, some due to inheritance, some to environment, will result in murder that number of times in each twelve months. If causation did not apply in the sphere of human conduct, what possible explanation can there be of the fact that, for example, in each of the years from 1928 to 1933 the number of murders was never more than five above or five below the figure of 111? Why was it not in some years fifty above or fifty below? Why are there never five hundred murders in one year and five in the next?* The conclusion must be that causality applies; and the same conclusion may be drawn from sociological statistics of every kind.

When a man becomes famous and his biography is written, pains are taken to trace and to describe his origins. The biographer will give an account of his family and surroundings, the characters of his parents, his schooling, his friendships, the books he read, the ideas he absorbed; "these were the influences", he will say, "which helped to make him the man he was." The qualities so formed enabled him to do the things that made him famous. If causation does not apply in the sphere of human mind and action, the first chapter in most biographies becomes meaningless.

All this will be generally admitted. The argument is recognized to be conclusive. Causation applies not only

* Cf. The disintegration of the radium atom.

in the material sphere. The issue, then, is narrowed. Does it apply universally? Or is there some central point in the human mind or soul in which there is freedom, spontaneity, independence of causation of any kind?

After all, it is said, although "influences" may be brought to bear, it is not the influences that decide; it is the man that decides. Lessons, sermons, speeches, may have an effect—or they may not. One man will become famous and the hero of a biography; his brother, with the same parentage, the same environment, the same opportunities, will remain insignificant. It is the self that matters primarily; the "causes" matter only secondarily. "The self", wrote Professor Sorley, "is not merely a set of qualities, tendencies, or dispositions; it is a new centre of conscious life, a new source of conscious activity." He added "no approach has been made to a causal explanation of the core of selfhood which marks it off as the centre of its own world and the source of its own activity."

Appeal is made to our daily experience. We do in fact decide every moment between this and that. The individual mind perceives, reflects, chooses and wills. We make our decision and act upon it. We are certain that—causation or no causation—if we had wished, we could have decided differently and done the opposite. No one can persuade us otherwise.

That again is true. But this "core of selfhood" may also be caused. Sorley may be mistaken in doubt-

ing the possibility of a causal explanation there also.

If, indeed, it were possible to take a cross-section in the flow of events at a particular moment, we should see the people who were then alive as millions of " selves ", each spontaneously choosing and acting. But the cross-section would be only a supposition; it would be assumed for the sake of the argument. In the actual universe the succession of events is continuous and indivisible. Nor would it assist the argument to imagine a cross-section; on the contrary, it would spoil it. It accepts the man, as he is at the moment of choice, as a given fact; it takes as a starting-point the individual self, choosing between this and that. But it is not permissible to take the man as " given ". To assume that is to evade the whole issue. The true starting-point is further back. " I am the captain of my soul "—but what is the " I ", and how has it come to be?

Lord Balfour wrote: " An ' I ' must have character quite apart from the experiences, active and passive, which fill his conscious life. He must have (or be) a soul—a soul which is something more than an organized collection of capacities, or a procession of psychical states—a soul which is not merely substance, but has an individuality which is unique and indescribable." That may be accepted; but still this soul, this individuality, although unique and indescribable, may be the result of causes.

The self can only act in accordance with its own nature and character, and its nature and character are the

outcome of causes. The chess-player is free to move this piece or that; but an experienced player will make one move, an inexperienced player another.

It is constantly assumed that causation means the operation of influences only from the outside and not from inside. This is not true even in the inorganic world; in physics and chemistry any phenomenon depends upon the constitution and behaviour of the object which is acted upon, as well as upon that of the substance or force which is acting. Still less is it true in the organic world.

It is possible to grade causation according to the degree of autonomy. Dr. J. E. Turner differentiates four main types:

"A. Predominantly External Causation, in Physical phenomena.

B. Partially External, combined with Partially Internal, in Vital phenomena.

C. Increasingly Internal, combined with proportionately decreasing External, in the lower levels of Mental phenomena.

D. Predominantly, and constantly expanding, Internal Causation in the higher Mental levels which constitute Personality.

"But though thus distinguishable, these types must never be conceived as separate; on the contrary, they are essentially continuous; finally, it is obvious that the advance

from A to D is accompanied by a marked advance in complexity of structure or organization."

We speak of the human will being "spontaneous". The word is a dangerous one. Samuel Butler said that it ought to be "cut out of every dictionary, or in some way branded as perhaps the most misleading in the language." If "spontaneity" means that an exercise of will starts from nothing at all, appears suddenly in the universe, unconnected with any antecedents, independent and self-created—then it is an irrational idea. It is no more to be accepted than the conception of "pure chance". But "spontaneity" may mean something different from this. It may mean that the combination of causes which results in a particular choice and action is effected within the mind of the agent. The human will does indeed choose and act; but the process is internal. And the will itself, with its decisions, is as much the product of causes as anything else.

Lloyd Morgan wrote: "Of any man I should say: 'He is a body as a centre which is recipient of physical influence from a material world of which he is part, and influences some of the physical events therein. He is mind as a centre of experience from which there is reference to the physical world and to other minds. He is also a centre of active Causality.'"

Viewing the flow of events as a whole, we may see that everything is effect first and then cause. Each object, thought, act, movement, is an effect of everything

that has been related to it in the past, and is a cause of everything that will be related to it in the future. All the past may be seen as cause; all the future as effect; all the present as both effect and cause. The present is nothing else than the moving plane in space-time in which combinations of events result in their effects, and those effects begin their career as causes. In this conspectus our own selves, minds, wills, are included. The problem of free will has commonly been regarded as an insoluble mystery, beyond our comprehension, involving an irreconcilable conflict between logic and experience. But it need not be so regarded.*

* The following extracts may be of interest in this connexion :—

Spinoza : " Man thinks himself free because he is conscious of his wishes and appetites, whilst at the same time he is ignorant of the causes by which he is led to wish and desire, not dreaming what they are."

Schopenhauer : " A man can surely do what he wills to do, but he cannot determine what he wills."

T. H. Green : " Given the man and his object as he and it at any time are, there is no possibility of the will being determined except in one way, for the will is already determined, being nothing else than the man as directed to some object." (Green takes, however, in the main the Kantian position.)

" Is it then a mere delusion that we act as we choose? Is the human soul nothing more than a passive link in an unending chain, receiving impulses and transmitting them? Is moral responsibility to fade away? Why should we take pains to achieve anything, if all things are determined in advance and will be as they must be? "

None of these consequences follow from this doctrine.

Human personality is recognized to be a fact, fundamental and vital. The power of choice is no delusion; it is real and incessantly in action. " If it is asserted ", says McTaggart, " that the universe would be intolerable

McTaggart: " I cannot see the least ground for the conclusion that the belief in determinism makes choice unreasonable . . . The determinist believes that, while the event may well be determined by his choice, his choice is in its turn completely determined."

Max Planck: " All studies dealing with the behaviour of the human mind are equally compelled to assume the existence of strict causality. The opponents of this view have frequently brought forward against it the existence of free will. In fact, however, there is no contradiction here; human free will is perfectly compatible with the universal rule of strict causality." " Looked at from outside (objectively) the will is causally determined, and looked at from inside (subjectively) it is free."

if human actions were completely determined, analysis may reveal that what is meant is only that it would be intolerable if they were completely determined from outside." The will is not in the grip of alien forces, prenatal or post-natal, pulling it this way, pushing it that, denying it responsibility for its decisions, reducing it to a puppet that strangely imagines itself autonomous. The person is a living, conscious cause of the event that follows his choice and action; what he does is that which he himself has willed. The fact that he is body, mind and character, and that body, mind and character have been created and moulded by antecedent causes (including his own previous decisions and the habits he has formed) does not make it an illusion that he himself, as he is, chooses his actions and is responsible for his choice. If he were to think that his own self, exceptional in the universe, was not the product of causes, that indeed would be illusion.*

So the criminal cannot escape the penalty for his crime by pleading that he is nothing but the result of inheritance and environment; that he did not make himself; and that his crime was the inevitable consequence of his birth and upbringing. If prior causes have given him a character inclined to crime, they have also given

* Cf. Carveth Read—"Philosophy of Nature"—in *Contemporary British Philosophy*, edited by J. H. Muirhead, Vol. I, p. 352.

him, if he is sane, a conscious will that could resist the inclination. Many others, with the same origins, have resisted it and do resist it. Besides, the existence of penalties is itself part of the complex of causes which affects potential criminals. Abolish the criminal law and the police force, leave any man free to assault or rob as it may suit him, without risk of arrest and punishment, and it is certain that more people would commit crimes. Although this man is a criminal in spite of the penal law, that man is not a criminal; and the existence of the penal law may have helped to deter him. The principle, therefore, that causation applies to mind and conduct casts no doubt upon the justice or the necessity of praise and blame, reward and punishment. On the contrary, it gives them a rational place as part of the causal scheme.

Nor does this principle in any way support that doctrine of fatalism, the wide-spread prevalence of which has perpetuated many of the greatest evils that have afflicted mankind. The Stoics laid stress on the belief that " what will be, will be." They would say to a sick person " if it is your fate to recover, then you will recover whether you call in the physician or not; and if it is your fate not to recover, then you will not recover in either case. But it is your fate either to recover or not to recover; therefore it will be useless to call in the physician." Islam has held much the same view. Among the Buddhists the doctrine of Karma has sometimes been

interpreted in the same sense. The mischief that this perverse and illogical creed has wrought to millions of men through thousands of years is beyond imagination.

Fatalism can derive no support from the principle that has been defended here. Fatalism assumes that events are already determined by causes of which man's choice is not one. Our principle holds the opposite; that events at any moment are in process of determination, and that the influence which we may exert, in accordance with our own nature and character, is as integral a factor in this process as anything else. "Fate" is a fiction, and the physician has at least as good a status as the microbe.*

"But after all", it may be answered, "you must admit that, on your principle, an omniscient mind would be able to foresee everything that is going to happen—could in fact have foreseen all history from the beginning of the universe. If that is so, then it is not untrue to say that 'things will be as they must be'; and that is fatalism."

We may agree that an omniscient mind could so predict now, and could have so predicted from the beginning. Those who are Theists may believe that such is

* Cf. Carveth Read—op. cit., p. 354; Westermarck—*The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, Vol. I, p. 325; S. Alexander—*Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. II, p. 330.

the mind of Deity. It is certain that such is not the mind of man. We are ignorant, and our sense of freedom comes largely from our ignorance. By no possibility can we trace the microscopic arrangement and development of the inherited genes which are the basis of a man's character, or the innumerable events which have helped to form it; and if we could, we should be utterly unable to construct the enormously elaborate combination that has produced the man's personality and given rise to his actions. Consequently we are bound to treat our neighbours and ourselves as new facts. We do not say of anyone—here is the living product of such and such a race, nationality, class, family, education; consisting of so many billions of protoplasmic cells united into an organic whole. We say—" here is John Smith ", and we deal with him on that footing. The possibility that omniscience may have been acquainted with all the factors and may have precisely foreseen John Smith, is beside the mark.

Nor does this theoretical omniscience involve that " things will be as they must be " in the sense that the individual is powerless to choose. Among the things that must be are the things that he himself chooses. " This " must be, or " that " must be, according often as he decides; his decision depends upon his own will; and his will depends upon his personality. The possibility of prediction by omniscience does not cancel the previous argument.

The critic still may say, "Your determinism, applied to mind as well as to matter, would rob us of the unexpected, of the sense of the unique; it does not allow for sudden emergences in nature, for genius or for beauty." But this is plainly a misunderstanding. Every human being is unique, but he may nevertheless be the product of a combination of causes. The number of possible combinations is so great that all the generations of men that have passed have not exhausted more than a small fraction of them. The emergence of a novelty, the appearance of a genius, is nothing else than the effect of a combination that varies markedly from the average. As to beauty—when a sunset, or a fine poem or symphony, is recognized to be the outcome of a complex of innumerable factors, it does not become the less beautiful on that account, nor less potent to evoke emotion.

Finally, it may be objected that the possibility of divine intervention in human affairs, which had previously been regarded, philosophically, as an open question, would now be excluded; it might seem to be incompatible with an eternal and all-embracing sequence of causation. This objection would indeed be valid against a determinism that was combined with materialism; but not against the position that has been taken here. The principle we have been discussing neither supports the belief in the intervention of Providence, whether constant or occasional, nor precludes it. The determinist who believes in intervention may hold that,

into the chain of normal causation, there are inserted exceptional factors of divine action. Whether the belief is right or wrong, there is nothing in the principle of causality that conflicts with it.

So far I have been seeking to answer objections. Turn now to the other, the positive aspect. See the service which this principle can render to thought and conduct.

Determinism—disentangled from materialism—furnishes a firm and stable foundation for ethics. It is the principle of causation that gives us the test of right and wrong—the test of consequences. The clearer is made the sequence of cause and effect, the clearer becomes the connexion between good conduct and welfare, bad conduct and the existence of evil. Once let the rule be recognized that—subject to the physical conditions of the planet—as we sow, individually or collectively, we shall surely reap, and man will be definitely set upon the road that leads to his own well-being.

We can never trace the whole intricate process of causation; we often cannot trace even a part of it; but sometimes we can. All social action rests on this fact; all social science is a matter of tracing effects to their causes, and, by modifying causes, obtaining better effects. The earlier we can intervene in the chain of causation, the more successful our action is likely to be. As Dr. Inge has said, "the proper time to influence the character of a child is about a hundred years before he is

born." We are led to see the deep importance of social institutions and political action; we are given the best incentive to effort and the best antidote to fatalism.

The ways in which theistic religion may help welfare and may exalt mankind have previously been discussed. Causality is the rational foundation. If we see Deity as origin, the sequence of events as its handiwork, the human personality as an integral part of the sequence, then we see ourselves both as parts of the work and participators in the working. "We feel that the soul of the workman streams through us", and our lives take on an added greatness.

TABLE OF REFERENCES
AND
INDEX

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TABLE OF REFERENCES

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PAGE

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PAGE

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PAGE

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PAGE

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PAGE

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PAGE

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PAGE

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PAGE

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PAGE

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INDEX

n. refers to foot-notes.

A

About, Edmond, on French liberty, 187
Absolute Good, 120
Act of God, 85
Action, 240
Actions, recoil of, 140
Alexander, Prof. S., on idealism, 250
——, on reality, 254
——, on values, 265
Altruism, 127 ff., 141, 209
——, insufficiency of, 136
—— and philosophy, 133
America and Natural Rights, 112
—— and Peace, 236
Ancient creeds and Governmental authority, 46
——, vitality of, 42
Anti-Clericalism, 47
Appendices, subjects discussed in, 23
Aquinas, St. Thomas, on sin, 139
Armaments, 234
Arnold, Matthew, on God, 76
——, on well-being, 172
Asceticism and authority, 67
Authority in religion, 70
Authors quoted, *see* Table of References, 323
Auto-suggestion and mysticism, 60

B

Backward races and liberty, 190
Bacon, Francis, 202
——, on philosophy, 41
——, on religion, 41
——, on wars, 237
Bahaism, 87
Balfour, Lord (A. J.), on the ego, 309
——, on Treitschke, 233
Beauty, 260 ff.
Belief, primitive, modern dangers of, 85-6
Bentham, Jeremy, on conduct, 122
Bergson, Henri, 179
——, on custom, 115
——, on the *élan vital*, 34-35 n., 280
——, on the recoil of actions, 140
Berkeley, Bishop, 250
Bernhardi, General von, on war, 212

Bevan, Edwyn, on Hinduism, 48
Biography and causation, 307
Biological aspects, 17
Biologists, Mechanist school of, 267
Biology, present stage of advance, 274
Birth and death, 99
Birth-control, future consequences of, 144, 149
Bohr, N., on causation, 288
——, on free will, 285
——, on Uncertainty, 283
Bolshevik propaganda, 219
Bradley, F. H., on beauty, 263
——, on religion and reason, 92
——, on values, 260
Briand-Kellogg Pact, the, 215
Browne, Sir Thomas, on international relations, 210
Browning, Elizabeth, on God, 78
Buchan, John, on the causal and casual, 200
——, on destiny, 195
Buddha, 48
—— and miracles, 69
Buddhism, 47
—— and fatalism, 315-16
Butler, Bishop, on reason, 89
Butler, Samuel, on memory, 19
——, on spontaneity, 311

C

Cairnes, on *laissez-faire*, 154
Carlyle, on violence, 172
——, on virtue, 141
Carr, Prof. Wildon, on beauty, 264
——, on reality, 17
Carrel, Dr. A., on humanitarian legislation, 155
——, on miracles, 66-7
Causation, definition of, 277
—— and Deity, 76
——, grades of, 310
——, Law of, 25
—— and uniformity, scientific challenge to, 282
Causality, examples of, 303-4
——, laws of, 16
——, the rational foundation of theism, 320
Cavour, Count C. B., on parliaments, 185
Chamberlain, Sir Austen, on fate, 194
Chamberlain, Houston Stewart, 179
Chance, 291 ff., 302
Character, formation of, 127
—— and motive, 120
Christianity and miracles, 69
—— and Puritanism, 48
Church, the, and revelation, 70, 74
Civilization, structure of, 10
Collective bargaining, 165
Colonization, 229 ff.
Common sense, sphere of, 20

Common sense and the idealists, 257-8
Communism, 160-2, 219-20
—— and freedom, 189
Conduct and consequence, 118 ff., 137 ff.
Conduct, human, complex factors in, 122-3
—— and idealist philosophies, 122
Confucius, on knowing, 33
Confusion, main causes of present, 41-2
Conjugal life, opposing philosophies, 150-1
Conscience, 57, 62-3, 74
Conscious evolution, 244-5
Consciousness, nature of, a theory sought, 36
Conway of Allington, Lord, on mystic experience, 55
Corporate State, 187 ff.
Creation, God and, 77
——, processes of, 39-41 n.
Credal divisions, 42-6
Creeds, ancient, and modern knowledge, 39 ff.
——, antagonisms of, 42 ff.
—— and conduct, 91
——, differing ethical precepts of, 71
——, modification of, 86-8
——, position of women in, 49
——, reconciliation of, 93, 238
——, risks of immobility of, 88
Creeds, ancient, separative effect of, 42 ff.
Crew, Prof. F. A. E., on reflexes, 271
——, on sensory stimulation, 268
Criminality, 306-7, 314-15
Croce, 179
——, on beauty, 264
——, on morals in politics, 205
Crowd, psychology of the, 182
Crown Prince, German, on cause of war, 194
Culture, preservation of, 171-172
Custom and the ethical code, 115

D

Darwin, Charles, on co-operation in nature, 213
——, on death, 101
Da Vinci, Leonardo, on laws of nature, 38
Death, 97 ff.
——, Charles Darwin on, 101
Democracy, reaction from, 179
—— and freedom, 189
Democracies, post-war experience of, 179, 191-3
Descartes, 251
Destiny, 194 ff., 240

Destiny, philosophies of, 202 ff.
Determinism, 25
—— and emergence, 318
——, the positive aspect of, 319
—— and theism, 318
Dhammapada, the, on misery, 48
Dictatorship, early advantages of, 184
——, philosophy of, 179
——, the test of, 185
Discontent, prevalence of, 9
Disraeli, on party system, 192 n.
Disvalues, 265
Divine responsibility, 95
Divine right of kings, 46
Divorce, 148
Dogma, 49, 51
—— and rational judgement, 111

E

Earth, national divisions of the, 230
Economic policy, 154, 163
Eddington, Sir Arthur, on causality, 294
——, on free will, 285
——, on overthrow of causality, 283
——, on Uncertainty, 283
Education, 48, 164
—— and causality, 304, 319
Egoism and altruism, 127 ff.
——, balance between, 132, 147, 209
—— and the modern trend, 130-1
Ehrenfels, von, on values, 260-1
Einstein, Prof. Albert, on causality, 299
——, on free will, 300
Electro-biology, 33
Embryology, 19, 149
Emergence and determinism, 318
Emerson, on determinism, 304
——, on creative spirit, 320
——, on fate, 201
——, on the present, 242
Emotion and intellect, 92
Environment, adaptation of, by man, 102, 244-5
——, efforts to improve, 164
Epictetus, on the gods, 78 n.
Ethics, practical, author's book on, 111 n.
—— and welfare, 116
Eugenics and heredity, 150
Europe, conditions under dictatorships, 186
——, movements to relieve poverty, 152
Evil, corporate responsibility for, 106
——, the fact of, 94-6
——, problem of, 79, 239
Evils, industrial, 152 ff.

Evils, industrial, amelioration of, 104
Evolution, 244-5
—— and civilization, 102
—— and death, 97
——, emergent, 281-2
——, Law of, 114
—— and nineteenth-century ethics, 113
—— and progress, 240
—— and war, 212
Experience the test of welfare, 117
Extra-terrestrial messages, possibility of, 55 ff.

F

Faith, 10 (*see* also s.v. Creeds, Intuition, Mysticism, Religion)
—— and force, 63
—— and the intellect, 94
Faiths, evolution of, 87
Family, problems of the, 142 ff.
—— life, communal value of, 146 ff.
—— —— and national character, 145
Fascism, 179 ff., 211, 229
Fascist Corporate State, 187-188
—— system, 184 ff.
Fatalism, 11, 194 ff., 315-16
France and Natural Rights, 112
Frederick the Great, on chance, 302
Free will, 13, 303 ff.
——, consciousness of, 314-315
Fichte, 179
——, on aggression, 210
Führer (*see* Hitler, Adolf)

G

Genetics, achievements of, 268-70
German politics and Nietzschean doctrine, 131-2, 180
German Youth Movement, 181
Germany, economic policy in, 162
—— and the Great War, 221-2
Gibbon, on history, 11
God and causation, 76
——, differing assessments of, 77-9
——, theologians' descriptions of, 76
——, views on relationship to world, 77 ff.
Goethe, on mankind, 201-2
Golden Rule, the, 130
" Good and Evil," author's presidential address on, 94
Good and evil, balance of, 107 ff.
Good will and morals, 136
——, innateness of, 134

Gore, Bishop, on scriptural infallibility, 70
Great Britain, entry into the War, 221-2
Great War, effects of, on liberty, 109, 178 ff.
——, genesis of, 221
Green, T. H., on free will, 312
Grey of Fallodon, Lord, on force of events, 195, 199
——, ——, and inevitable war, 204
Growth, phenomena of, 19

H

Habit, 139, 140
Haldane, J. S., on human organism, 274
Haldane, Lord, on being, 250
Hamilton, Alexander, on authority, 191
Hardy, Thomas, on destiny, 195
Hazlitt, on the heavens, 39
Heaven and hell, belief in, 84
Hegel, 179
——, theory of the State, 180
Heisenberg, Prof. W., on Uncertainty, 283
Heredity, 149-50, 269, 319-20
Herriot, Edouard, on disarming, 236 n.
Hill, Prof. A. V., on life and physics, 270-1
——, on the phenomena of life, 274-5
Hindu mysticism, 59
Hinduism, 47-8
History, Gibbon on, 11
—— and prophecy, 60-1
—— and religion, 86
——, sociological value of, 207
Hitler, Adolf, 180, 181 (*see* also s.v. Fascism, Fascist Corporate State)
——, on international relations, 210-11
Hobhouse, L. T., on morality and altruism, 128 n.
——, on reality, 255
Hogben, Prof. L., on heredity, 269
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, on worship, 81
Homer and Greek religion, 50
Honesty, incentives to, 125-6
Housman, Laurence, on miracles, 68
Hugo, Victor, on chance, 293
——, on war, 214
Human, good, some factors in, 117 ff.
—— history, pattern in, 199
—— nature and war, 212 ff.
Hume, 250
——, on inference, 296-7 n.

Huxley, Aldous, on family custom, 143
——, T. H., on religion and conduct, 135
——, ——, on survival of the fittest, 114
Hypnosis, mass, 183

I

Idealist philosophy, 249
Idealists and the Absolute, 252
Ideology in political movements, 56, 180 ff.
Immortality, 79, 98, 134
Imperialism, St. Augustine on, 218
——, transformation of, 233
Incredible, example of the, 64-5
Indeterminacy, principle of, reasons against, 285 ff.
Indeterminism, Quantum Theory's bearing upon, 298
Individual, the, and the nation, 208, 243
Individualism, 154
Infeld, on micro-physical world, 286
Inference, method of, 295-6
Inge, Dr. W. R., on armaments, 234
——, on causation, 319
——, on development of faiths, 86
Inge, Dr. W. R., on heredity, 319-20
——, on Pacifism, 234
——, on rationality of faith, 89-90
——, on signs and wonders, 69
——, on truth, 83
——, on values, 259
Inspiration, sources of, 58
Instincts, primary, of the individual, 127
Intellect and intuition, 56-7
Interdependence of mankind, 133
Intuition, 55 ff.
—— and conscience, 57
——, an integral of mind, 73
—— and mystical revelations, 57 ff.
—— and reason, 54 ff., 180
—— and the subconscious, 56
——, a summing up, 74
—— and ultimate truth, 73
Islam, 47, 69
—— and fatalism, 315
Italy, economic policy in, 162
——, Fascist principles, 181 (*see* also s.v. Fascism, Fascist Corporate State, Mussolini, Benito)

J

James, William, on habit, 139, 140
——, on inspiration, 58

James, William, on mysticism, 63
——, on visions, 60
Jeans, Sir James, on disintegration of radium, 289
——, on duration of human existence, 29
——, on position of man, 27
Jennings, Prof. H. S., on genes, 269
——, on genetics, 270, 305-6
Jews, 45-6, 48-9, 71, 87, 95, 145, 203
Joad, Dr. C. E. M., on philosophies, 249-50
——, on values, 260
Job, Book of, 50
Judaism, Liberal, 87
——, Orthodox, rigidity of, 48

K

Kant, on knowledge, 250
——, on morality and altruism, 128 n.
Kantians, 250
Karma, 315-16
Keynes, J. M., on *laissez-faire*, 154
Kulaks, elimination of, 172

L

Laird, J., on apprehension, 253
Laissez-faire, doctrine of, 154
Land-ownership, 167-8
Law and God, 90
——, relation to liberty of, 155
Laws and customs, evaluation by consequences, 116
League of Nations, 225 ff.
Le Bon, on the crowd, 182
Lenin, 168
Liberal Judaism, 87
Liberal Ministry, 1906, 169
Liberty, 11, 189 ff., 243-4
——, economic, 177-8
——, international aspect of, 176-7
——, personal, 177-8
—— and the post-war treaties, 178
Life and faith, 135-6
—— and mind, phenomena of, and science, 17
Lincoln, Abraham, and liberty, 190
Lippmann, W., on morality and altruism, 128 n.
Literature and modern drama, effects of, 144-5
Locke, 250, 251
London, Bishop of, on God and the Devil, 95 n.
Luther, on miracles, 69

M

Machine age, 157
McTaggart, on free will, 313 and n.

Maine, on equality of States, 218
Man and machinery, 157
—— and myths, 85
—— and the social unit, 106
Manichaean duality, 95 n.
Mankind, survival of, 28
Manu, Laws of, on custom, 115
Marcault, Prof. Émile, on Yogi consciousness, 59-60
Marriage, stability of, 148 ff.
—— and the family, 144
Marshall, A., on factors in efficiency, 153
Martineau, James, on God and nature, 91
Marx, Karl, on Capitalism, 203
——, on religion, 47
Marxist view of history, 188
Material values, 156
Materialism and determinism, 303
Materialistic aspect of universe, 17
Matthews, Dean W. R., on values, 260
Mechanist school, 24, 267
Mendel, Abbé, on heredity, 269
Messiahs, false, 61 n.
Metaphysics, 249
—— and the ordinary man, 257
Michelet, J., on metaphysics, 249
Militarism, 210 ff.
Mill, John Stuart, on backward races, 231-2
——, on causation, 279
——, on morality and social opinion, 137
——, on personal liberty, 177
Mind, its place in the universe, 276
——, relation to matter, 22, 271
——, significance of, 30-1
Minimum standard in Great Britain, 164
Miracles of healing, 66-7
—— and confusion of thought, 68
——, Luther on, 69
—— and psychic origins, 64
—— and revelation, 63
Mitchell, Sir Peter Chalmers, on co-operation in nature, 213
——, on heredity and breeding, 149
Modernism, 87
——, in Christianity, 87
Mohammed and miracles, 69
Montague, Prof. W. P., on idealism, 251
——, on truth, 261
Moore, G. E., on Berkeley, 250
Moral codes, evolution of, 46

Moral standards, development of, 121
Morality, national, essentials of, 209
——, religion, its support, 135
——, the sanctions for, 126
——, sanctions for, a summing up, 140-1
Morals and dogma, 91
——, evolution of, 122
——, practical, development of, 116
Morgan, Prof. Lloyd, on causation, 311
——, on emergent evolution, 280-1
——, on evolution, 275-6
——, on organism, 275
——, on values, 260
Motives and conduct, 125-6
Murders, statistics of, 306
Murphy, James, on free will, 299-300
Mussolini, Benito, on war, 211
Mysticism, 54 ff.
Mystic force in history, 194 ff.

N

National histories, similarities in, 200
Nationalism and freedom, 189
——, nature of, 184
Nationality, value of, 208
National-Socialism, 179
Natural instinct and right conduct, 62-3
Natural Rights, 112
—— ——, American Declaration on, 112
—— and supernatural, 90-1
Nature, standards in, 30
——, struggle in, A. Russel Wallace on, 101
——, uniformity of, 16, 64, 279
Nazi system, 184 ff.
Nietzsche, 179
——, on good and evil, 131
Non-intervention among States, 218
Novelty and the principle of causality, 281

O

Orthodoxy, changes in, 86-7
Otto, Dr. R., on expressions of religion, 61
——, on miracles, 69
Oxford Group, the, 55 n.

P

Pacifism, 234
Pain and animal life, 100-1
——, value of, 99-100

Pan-American Congresses, -236
Pantheistic idea of God, 77-8
Party system, 192
Pascal, on comprehension, 288
Passfield, Lord (*see* Webb)
Patriotism, 217
Pavlov, Prof. I. P., on biological phenomena, 24
——, on conditional reflexes, 267-8
——, experiments by, 272
Peace, 244
——, conditions of, 217 ff.
—— and patriotism, 217
Pessimism, causes of, 27
Pessimists' indictments, 104
Pestilence and modern preventive measures, 103
Philosophy, Idealist school of, 24, 249
——, Mechanist school of, 273
—— and the ordinary man, 9
—— and poetry, 82
—— and practical morals, 112
——, prospects of influence, 258
——, Realist school of, 250
—— and religion, 81
—— and truth, 82
——, Utilitarian School of, 120 n.
Physical science, world of, 14 ff.
Physics and psychics, ultimate connexion between, 276
Planck, Prof. Max, on causality, 298
——, on free will, 313 n.
——, on statistical laws, 299
Plato, on divinity, 240
——, on evil-doing, 140
——, on motive, 133
Poetry and philosophy, 82, 262
—— and religion, 82
—— and science, 82
Pollock, Sir Frederick, on Spinoza, 22
Pope, on chance, 294
Population and birth-control, 149
Poverty, 152 ff., 163 ff.
——, causes of, 163
Prayer, 80
Pre-natal and post-natal causes, 305
Present-day problems, 12
Principle of Uncertainty, 25
Progress, 240
—— and effort, 109
Proletariat, modern, genesis of, 153
Property, equalization of, 165-6
—— and patriotism, 214
Prophecy, 60-1, 203-4
Prophets and healing, 67
Providence, differentiation of, 84

Providence, scope of, 79
Psychical aspects, 20
—— science, present stage of, 33
Psychology, 33
——, experimental, 36
Public opinion, power of, 141
—— and conduct, 137
Puritanism, 48

Q

Quantum Theory and Uncertainty, 283

R

Radhakrishnan, Prof. Sir S., on religious experience, 71
Rāja Yogi, 60
Realism, 250, 255 ff.
Reality, 261
—— and experience, 251 ff.
Reason and instinct, 127
—— and intuition, 72 ff.
——, retreat from, 56
References to other writers, *see* Table of References, 323
Religion, categories of, 83
—— and daily life, 10, 52-3
—— and dogma, 86, 89-90
——, future type of, 88
—— and humanity, 80
Religion, modern world's need for, 51, 135, 246
—— and morals, 51
—— and the ordinary man, 75
—— and peace, 237-8
—— and philosophy, 81
—— and poetry, 82
—— and science, 52, 71, 83, 239
—— and self-sacrifice, 130-1
Religions, ancient, components of, 75
——, rise and development of, 38
Religious sense in intuition, 61-3
Revelation, 57 ff.
—— and the Church, 70
Right and wrong, 111 ff., 124 ff.
Roman Law, limitations of, 210
Roosevelt, President F. D., 236
Russell, Bertrand, on Creation, 39-40 n.
——, on impermanence of universe, 28
——, on indeterminacy, 286
——, on values, 261
Russia, 172
——, activity in diminishing poverty, 154
——, the revolution in, 160-162
Rutherford, Lord, on indeterminacy, 300

S

St. Augustine, on imperialism, 218
St. Joan, 58
St. Thomas Aquinas, on sin, 139 n.
Sanctions, 227
Santayana, G., on ideas and events, 243
——, on the poetic philosophers, 82
——, on social instincts, 136
Schirach, Herr Baldur von, and religion, 181
Schopenhauer, on evil, 104
——, on free will, 312 n.
Schrödinger, E., on mass phenomena, 289
——, on predictability, 287-288
——, on Uncertainty, 283
Science, physical, achievement in, 32
—— and the Deity, 39
—— and poetry, 82
—— and reason in relation to religion and intuition, 71 ff.
—— and revelation, 57
—— and the spiritual view, 40
—— and the supernatural, 57, 90
—— and worship, 90, 239
Scientific conclusions, validity of, 32
Scripture and authority, 70
Selective breeding, 149
Self, the, and causation, 308-310
Self-government, 176-7, 190
Self-interest, 129 ff.
—— and self-sacrifice, 134
—— and social good, 129
—— and social progress, 173-5
Sense impressions, 252
Shaw, G. Bernard, *St. Joan*, 58
Sherrington, Sir Charles, on brain and mind, 33
Social aspect of evil, 105
—— customs, evolution of, 119
—— environment and natural causes, 155
—— evils and democracy, 105
—— science, aims of, 319
—— services, 166-7
—— units, 133
—— unrest, causes of, 158-159
Socialism, 170 ff.
Sociological experiments, 159 ff.
—— perspective, 108
Sorel, Georges, 179
——, on Lenin, 203 n.
Sorley, Prof. W. R., on the self, 308
——, on values, 260
Souls, transmigration of, 84
Soviet (*see* Russia)

Spencer, Herbert, on the unknowable, 37
Spengler, Dr. Oswald, 195
——, on culture, 196
——, on history, 206
——, on necessity, 196
Spinoza, on civic education, 127 n.
——, on egoistic motives, 129
——, on free will, 312 n.
——, on understanding of Deity, 76
——, on unity of nature, 22
Spontaneity, definition of, 311
Stalin and inevitability, 203
State, the, 183
—— as organism, 182
——, Hegelian theory of the, 180-1
—— morality, 205
—— socialism, Russian development of, 160 ff.
States, morphological theory of, 199
—— and non-intervention, 218
Statistical laws, 290
Stephen, Leslie, on chance, 293
Stoics, on non-existence of evil, 96
Struggle for existence, 100-1
Subliminal, the, 58
Supernatural, the, 63 ff.
—— intervention, 49-50
Supernatural and natural, 90-1
Survival of the fittest and economic competition, 114
Sympathy, 127

T

Taylor, Prof. A. E., on emergence, 280
Tertullian, on belief, 52
Theism and determinism, 318
Theology and rational judgement, 76
Thomson, Sir Arthur, on mentality, 19, 34-5 n.
Thought and action, liberty of, 11, 177 ff.
Thucydides, on history, 207
Tolstoi, on destiny, 195
Totalitarian States, implications of, 187-8
Toynbee, Prof. Arnold, on rhythmic civilizations, 197
Trade Unionism, position in Great Britain, 165
Transmigration of souls, 84
Treaties, observance of, 220 ff.
Treitschke, on power, 233
——, on war, 210
Truth, 83
——, definition of, 261
——, unifying power of, 93

Turner, Prof. J. E., on grades of causation, 310
——, on indeterminacy, 286-287
Tweedsmuir, Lord (*see* Buchan, John)

U

Uncertainty, principle of, 25, 283 ff.
Understanding and being, the philosophy of, 249 ff.
United States (*see* America)
——, entry into the War, 223
Unity of religions, 93, 238
Utilitarian School of Philosophy, 120 n.

V

Values, opponents of the theory of, 260 ff.
——, philosophy of, 24, 259 ff.
——, subjective element in, 264 ff.
Variety, value of, in mankind, 209
Versailles Treaty, 229
Vico, theory of reflux, 197 n.
Violence, gospel of, 131-2
Voltaire, on international relations, 210

W

Wallace, A. Russel, on struggle for existence, 101
Wallas, Prof. Graham, on mysticism, 60
War, 210-16
——, the Great, 241
——, ——, moral of, 221 ff.
" Wars of Ideas," author's address before British Institute of Philosophy, 176 n.
Watson, on " conditional reflexes ", 267
Wealth, distribution of, 157-159
Webb, S. and B., on Communism and religion, 160 n.
——, on Kulaks, 172
——, on Lenin, 204-5 n.
——, on propaganda, 219 n.
Welfare, 242 ff.
——, definition of, 116-17
——, effect of poverty on, 152-4
——, liberty a factor in, 193
Westermarck, on morality and altruism, 128 n.
Whateley, Archbishop, on truth, 83 n.
Wheeler, Prof. W. M., on ants, 100
Whichcote, Benjamin, on the rational, 89

Whitehead, Prof. A. N., on causation, 279
——, on individualism, 154
——, on nature of reality, 32
——, on organization, 276
——, on the present age, 12
——, on reality, 255
Whitman, Walt, on miracles, 68
Will and purpose, 76-7
Winnington-Ingram, A. F. (*see* London, Bishop of)
Women, emancipation of, 49, 143, 177
Wordsworth, on God, 78
——, on the Universe, 12
Work and wages, inequalities of, 158
Worship and science, 90, 239

X

Xerxes, on death, 98

Y

Yih King, the, on rewards and penalties, 137
Yogis, Hatha, 59
——, mystic experiences of, 58-9
Younghusband, Sir Francis, on mystic experience, 55