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Religion Without Revelation

J. S. Huxley

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DEDICATED TO

THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

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K-B

PREFACE

THERE are many well-intentioned people to-day who will tell you that the conflict between science and religion is over. It is not so. What has been rather loosely called the conflict between science and religion is just reaching its acute phase. Up to the present the fighting has been an affair of outposts; the incidents of Galileo and Darwin were but skirmishes. The real conflict is to come: it concerns the very conception of Deity.

I say that the phrase "the conflict between religion and science" is a loose phrase. It is a loose phrase because the conflict is not really between science and religion at all, but between a certain kind of religion and some particular conclusions of science.

There are in reality several conflicts. One is between a certain religious tradition on the one hand, a tradition so encrusted with sanctity by long association that it is mistaken for something essential to religion, and, on the other, a number of actual facts discovered by scientific investigators. Another conflict is that between the passion for getting at the truth that characterises some great minds, including the highest type of scientific mind, which is indeed a religion of truth, and the tendency to assert and believe what we desire which is found in so many human beings and so many actual religious beliefs. Still a third conflict is between the overcautious or the limited mind, scientific or other, and a certain too matter-of-fact kind of science, which persist in denying the truth or the value of what they cannot see or understand, and that side

of rich human nature which is capable of a deep and vital religious experience.

At the present moment, organised religion happens to be arrayed, on the whole, against organised science. But the real conflicts are between bad, limited, or distorted religion and pure and high religion; and between limited and grudging science and science full and unafraid.

The writing of this book has been no easy task. The chief purpose which I had in mind in doing so was to try to convince my readers of the essentially accidental and temporary nature of the present conflict between religion and science, and to bring them back to fundamentals—to remind them that science is fundamentally a method of interrogating and investigating nature, and religion fundamentally an attitude of mind. Science would still be science if its materialistic or (in the narrower sense) mechanistic views were completely abandoned: religion could still be religion without retaining one single item of any Christian creed.

I am perfectly aware that I shall be attacked on account of this book, and, what is more, attacked from both sides. It has already been my somewhat humorous fate, apropos of a previous article of mine on a religious question, to be reprobated with equal violence by the *Church Times* and the *Freethinker*, and, of course, for diametrically opposite reasons.

I know I shall be attacked, but I hope that I shall find support, not necessarily in detail, but as regards general attitude: industrialism, education, science, and communications, topped by the War, have brought the forces of change to a head, and the

time is ripe. The moment does indeed seem to be approaching when man can and should begin constructing a new common outlook, a new habitation for his spirit, new from the foundations up, on the basis of a scientific humanism. The eighteenth century attempted it, but failed. Reason was not enough; more of brute fact and fact's control was needed. Nor was it enough that Reason should shine in the few; education and social reconstruction were also necessary, and so the age of Reason gave way, through wars and revolutions, to the age of Science and Industry.

There must be a great many who are profoundly dissatisfied with the present state of affairs, in which the spiritual values of religion are in large part still in the possession of the organised churches, while these same churches have lost all claim to the intellectual values. The head and the heart of civilisation are being torn in different directions. Men in whom temperament or accident makes the head the more powerful stay wholly outside the churches, but do not see why the tradition of religion, the hallowed beauty of the buildings, and the solace of religious service should be the vested interest of a creed which is intellectually and socially outworn. Those in whom heart has taken the ascendancy will, in their spirit's need, have become members of this or that church, but many of them are filled with intellectual despair and long for a breath of the spirit of truth, which in the hands of science is transforming the world, to blow through their stuffy retreats.

It is especially to those two groups that I address this book. I am certain that the present impasse

cannot continue. Theology is already rapidly shifting her ground; and science, equally rapidly, is enlarging her scope and at the same time modifying her philosophic outlook. What the future may bring forth it is impossible to say. I find it impossible to say even what I personally would wish it to bring forth. I shall, doubtless, be told that I am purely destructive, and reminded of Edmund Burke's characteristic Tory sneer, "The writers against religion, whilst they oppose every system, are wisely careful never to set up any of their own."

However, I am content to see one step forward, provided I am sure it is in the right direction: and I am sure that the single step at present needed is for those who combine respect for science and intellectual truth with love of what is best in the spirit of religion to leave the particulars on one side and return to the basis of the general and fundamental. Do not let us make the mistake of confusing religion with the particular forms of Christianity with which we are familiar, nor pay the system which we are attacking the unwarranted compliment of assuming it universal or permanent.

Let us get away from theology, and back to religion. My personal feeling is strong that the next step to take is to try to see the problem of religion and religious feeling stripped of all trappings, theological, credal, or ecclesiastical. Only through achieving such vision can we begin to understand clearly the real function of religion in a modern state, and also its equally real limitations. That one step is quite enough to occupy the intellectual and spiritual energies of our generation. The further steps will decide themselves, in their own due time.

Religion has been responsible for a great deal of social as well as individual good. But it has been responsible for an appalling amount of evil. Owing to a universal psychological mechanism, the feelings of sanctity and worship aroused in the religiously minded man make it very difficult for him to remember such facts or to imagine that even his own religion may be capable of achieving a great deal of harm, or even actually doing so at the moment.

Any emotion, fear or hate as well as love or self-sacrifice, can be exalted into first place by religious feeling: any practice of magic, superstition, or hypocrisy, equally with those of beautiful and solemn ritual, self-examination, or aspiring prayer, can be encouraged by it.

Let us not forget that St Thomas Aquinas, in whom more than in any other single man was concentrated the spirit of the Christian theology of the Middle Ages, could write "That the saints may enjoy their beatitude more richly, a perfect sight is granted them of the punishment of the damned."

Let us not forget that the state of affairs in India is far less to be laid at the door of British rule or of native agitators than of religion. Futile and hateful religious feeling between Mohammedan and Hindu kills, wounds, and rapes thousands of people each year, and prevents the progress of the native towards combination for reasonable self-government. Grotesque, obscene, and dark superstitions within the separate religions take greater toll and are an even worse hindrance to progress and a healthy or happy life.[1] We can indeed be thankful we do not live in

[1] See, for instance, *Mother India*, by Katherine Mayo. J. Cape, 1927.

a civilisation thus dominated and permeated through and through by religion.

The trivial will often illustrate a point as well as the important. What gulfs of thought still yawn between the scientifically-minded and the traditionally religious-minded, even to-day in Britain, in spite of all the talk about a rapprochement, is illustrated by a letter I cut out of *The Times* a month or so ago, in which a gentleman, lamenting the omission of various of the prayers for the King from the new prayer-book, writes: "May it not be that we owe the unique position held by our King to-day to the efficacy of our united prayers for generations in the past?"

Religion must choose. It may continue to exert power in its present general form, but as an "opium of the mind"; or it may once again come to be in the forefront of civilisation, but only if it first strips itself naked and becomes as a little child again, new, with new life before it to live.

If I am right in believing, what the bulk of the succeeding chapters will attempt to show, that the sense of sacredness is the kernel of the religious life, and the concept of God as a supernatural personal being is only a stop-gap explanation, advanced to stop the gaps in pre-scientific thought, certain conclusions follow. In this view, the next great step which religious thought must take, and, if the voice of history is not a cheating voice, one day will take, is the liberation of the idea of God from the shackles of personality which have been riveted on it by man's fear, ignorance, servility, and self-conceit. Fear has had its share, since fear is the naïve animal reaction to catastrophe, the naïve human reaction to

the uncomprehended and incalculable; ignorance, since most men have preferred to continue to leave the mysterious uncomprehended rather than take the labour of comprehending it, to accept the uncritical and irrational judgments miscalled commonsense, which are too often only *ad hoc* "explanations" in terms of what we want to see proved, in place of freeing truth from the bias of desire; servility, since the bulk of men have preferred to gain special benefits by propitiating external authority, instead of finding their authority within themselves; and self-conceit, since they have insisted on clothing the power which they perceive outside their own individual lives in garments of personality borrowed from themselves, or, as Voltaire said, creating God in man's image, instead of scrutinising the ground of this reality humbly and with unprejudiced eyes, and so perhaps running the risk of finding that they were not, after all, the pattern of all existences.

On the other hand, running counter to this barrier of static thinking, there can be seen, clearly and unmistakably appearing in the course of history, a current of thought which moves. It has strengthened vague spirits into gods; united many gods into few, and then the few into one God; purged gods and God of unworthy attributes; proclaimed, in spite of all insistence on the personal and transcendent nature of God, that the Kingdom of God, and indeed God himself, is within us, and sometimes emphasised the supra-personal nature (whatever that may imply) of God; linked up the intellect with the religious emotion, and attempted reasoned theologies; and pressed morality and religious belief into each other's arms in a pure

desire for individual sanctity and service to others.

Theology seen under this double aspect, as the resultant of two tendencies of the human mind, shows in a new light. Any particular religion, thus envisaged, both loses and gains something. For those who believe in it, it loses its claims to sole truth or complete value; but those who disbelieve in it, or are actively hostile to it, can no longer criticise its defects or inconsistencies in isolation, but must remember its background, and the direction of the stream of which it forms part. In other words, religion, like every human activity, is always incomplete. Man's organic nature sets bounds to the kind of knowledge which he can acquire and the way in which he can acquire it; religious truth, as well as religious practice, is limited by these limitations, as well as by the mere incompleteness of the knowledge which it is possible for him to acquire.

But it remains to be asked what are the changes which would inevitably flow from making the next logical step and reclaiming from the idea of God that garment of personality which we have put upon it, and at the same time possessing our souls in patience and not asserting that we know when we cannot know. They would be many and diverse. First and foremost, the thinking world would see, with a sigh of profound relief, the cutting of that Gordian knot in which man has tied up the absolute goodness and omnipotence of God with the evil of the world. This has always been a stumbling-block to belief. When natural catastrophes occur and we see thousands of innocent men suffer for no cause,

as in the earthquake of Messina or the Mississippi floods; when diseases strike blindly right and left, like the influenza epidemic of 1918, with its ten million victims, or the Plague in London in 1665, or in India to-day; when we see children born deformed, deaf, blind, or crippled, to a life of suffering or hardship; or an idiot child produced by the best of married couples; when we see the success of men who are cruel, unscrupulous, or definitely wicked, and the hard lot of others who are industrious and upright; most of all when we are confronted with a gigantic catastrophe, like the War, in which not blind outer nature, but our own human nature is involved, and man's best impulses, of devotion, courage, intellect, endurance, self-sacrifice, pity, are all in one way or another employed upon the task of killing other men by thousands and by tens of thousands—then is it difficult for many to believe in a personal God. It is matter of common knowledge that the War had two contrary effects as regards religion. It brought death near, and, in the place of humdrum routine, revealed the mystery of existence, the inexplicability of events: this turned many to religion. But it also raised questionings as to how any all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving God could possibly have permitted such a thing to be; and this turned many away—either, they said, there is no God; or he is not good. What is more, on the whole the emotional and the unthinking were brought in, but the thoughtful and sensitive were driven, or stayed, out.

But if God be one name for the Universe as it impinges on our lives and makes part of our thoughts, then the horror and the contradiction is

lifted. Wars remain; unmerited disease and suffering remain; catastrophes remain; but the problems which they present, which may all be summed up as the problem of evil, are no longer the same. They are no longer problems of a divine morality for which no problems should exist, but of the ultimate nature of the Universe. The Mississippi floods are terrible; but they are not divine vengeance which ruins the innocent with the guilty. Bubonic plague or influenza will not be stayed with prayers: they are appalling, but they may be controlled by taking thought and taking pains. Volcanic eruptions and earthquakes may not be preventable, but they may often be foretold. At least they do not point an accusing finger at Heaven and a Ruler of Heaven responsible for them. Best of all, most stimulating of all, is the change when we come to human evil, the evil which is evil in essence as well as in effect, the evil of those who might have done good.

The European War, the further one penetrates into its history and causes, seems to have been inevitable; but war itself is not therefore necessarily inevitable. It was inevitable when it came, because of the fact that human intelligence, goodwill, and virtue, in 1914 and for all of history before it, were incomplete, insufficient. God did help bring about the War—but God in our impersonal and not absolute sense; a god of which no mean part was human ideals not yet purged of selfishness, greed, and combativeness, a god still partly tribal.

I know perfectly well that many quite sincere men and women, sensitive and noble-minded, can and do take a different view. They can still face a world

full of disease, violence, and catastrophe, even of deliberate evil and unmerited agony, in conjunction with an omnipotent God whom they believe all-wise, all-good. The reconciliation is effected in two ways. For one thing, it is said, God's ways are inscrutable. He is so much above man that we cannot hope to understand his wisdom or see the reason for his plans. Could we but see the whole, and understand it, it would seem at once and entirely good. In the second place, some events they seek not merely to leave piously uncomprehended but to justify. This world is above all else a school for character. Character, the supreme value, cannot arrive at the fullest and richest development without trial and suffering. Misfortune and pain are divinely appointed trials, from which, as gold purged from base metal by *aqua regia*, man's noble qualities may emerge purified and unalloyed.

Now there is sound truth in both these statements. It is true that we do not and cannot comprehend the strange and often almost incredible universe in which we find ourselves. It is true that we often succeed in turning what at the time seemed disaster into success, in compounding pain into a deeper joy, in making failure and sin itself into causes of righteousness. But these are facts: the conclusions as to the plans of God are ways of explaining these facts. They are one possible way of explanation only. What is more, they are not especially demanded by the facts. Indeed, they would never have been advanced if it had not been that for other reasons men had arrived at the idea of an absolute personal God, and that it was therefore necessary to advance some such theories to reconcile this theological

tenet with the facts.[1] Once accept a personal God, and it becomes necessary, if we are neither to despair nor to rebel, "to justify the ways of God to man." Such theodicies are familiar to all.

But remove that personality, stick to the principle of giving agnosticism its due, and the logical and moral anguish which demands these justifications vanishes. Only the facts remain. That the universe is incomprehensible is a ground for humility; that it is mysterious an occasion for awe; that pain and misfortune can often, perhaps always, be turned to good is one of the great lessons which all should learn.

The release of God from the anthropomorphic disguise of personality also provides release from that vice which may be termed Providentialism. God provides for the sparrow, we are told; how much more for man? And so this beneficent power will always provide. Divine Providence is an excuse for the poor whom we have always with us; for the human improvidence which produces whole broods of children without reflection or care as to how they shall live; for not taking action when we are lazy; or, more rarely, for justifying the action we do take when we are energetic. From the point of view of the future destiny of man, the present is a time of clash between the idea of providentialism and the idea of humanism—human control by human effort in accordance with human ideals. If providentialism wins, even if it wins only in the domain of the soul and the religious life, humanity is doomed either to

[1] Cf. Arthur Balfour, *The Foundations of Belief*, p. 318. "Once assume a God, and we shall be obliged, sooner or later, to introduce harmony into our system by making obedience to His will coincident with the established rules of conduct."

stagnation or else to distortion, the material and the spiritual sides of his life being in disharmony. And in spite of the old proverb, " The Gods help them who help themselves," the conception of a personal divine being is the chief asset on the side of Providentialism.

But my preface is outrunning itself and anticipating my book : and I must close it. I cannot omit a few words of gratitude and thanks—to Dr R. R. Marett, of Exeter College, Oxford, for reading in proof part of the chapters on Comparative Religion; to Col. T. C. Hodson, of Cambridge University, for suggestions on the literature of the same vast subject; to Mr E. S. P. Haynes for some helpful advice and criticism; and most of all to my wife, for reading the whole book in proof, and for many valuable suggestions.

LONDON, *August* 1927.

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Science . . . makes impossible any religion but the highest.—Canon B. H. STREETER, *Reality* (1927).

To mistake the world, or the nature of one's soul, is a dangerous error. He that thinks the Heavens and the Earth not his, can hardly use them. . . . Whatever we misapprehend we cannot use, nor well enjoy what we cannot use.—THOMAS TRAHERNE, *Centuries of Meditations.*

A system of dogmas may be the ark within which the Church floats safely down the flood-tide of history. But the Church will perish unless it opens its window and lets out the dove to search for an olive branch. Sometimes even it will do well to disembark on Mount Ararat and build a new altar to the divine Spirit—an altar neither in Mount Gerizim nor at Jerusalem.—A. N. WHITEHEAD, *Religion in the Making* (1927).

If we are to assume that anybody has designedly set this wonderful universe going, it is perfectly clear to me that he is no more entirely benevolent and just in any intelligible sense of the words, than that he is malevolent and unjust.—T. H. HUXLEY, *Life and Letters.*

I am not so lost in lexicography as to forget that *words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven.*—SAMUEL JOHNSON, Preface to his *Dictionary.*

Vox dei revelatur in rebus.—FRANCIS BACON.

Truth can never be opposed to Truth.—Canon BUCKLAND, *Bridgewater Treatises,* vol. i. (1837).

You say there is no substance here,
  One great reality above:
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
  And child-like hide myself in love:
Show me what angels feel. Till then
I cling, a mere weak man, to men.
—WILLIAM CORY, *Mimnermus in Church.*

Every new mind is a classification. . . . But in all unbalanced minds the classification is idolised, passes for the end and not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of their system blend to their eye in the remote horizon within the walls of the universe. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see—how you can see!—R. W. EMERSON, *Essays.*

The fact that a believer is happier than a sceptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one. The happiness of credulity is a cheap and dangerous quality.—G. BERNARD SHAW.

Chapter I

A Preliminary Statement

I HAVE called this book *Religion without Revelation* in order to express at the outset my conviction that religion of the highest and fullest character can co-exist with a complete absence of belief in revelation in any straightforward sense of the word, and in that kernel of revealed religion, a personal God.

This will probably be a new conception to most people. Accordingly I shall have to spend a good deal of my limited space in justifying my case with the aid of evidence and argument. But evidence and argument are too frequently tedious. The average man prefers statements to arguments, conclusions to evidence. There is something in this attitude. We can often make up our minds more readily about a man after we have heard him proclaim his case briefly than we could if we had listened to him make a complete step-by-step logical justification of it.

At the risk of repetition, therefore, I propose at the outset to state my beliefs briefly in their main outlines, without the attempt at full justification by reasoned argument. This will give my readers a preliminary view; if they do not like it, there is after all no need for them to go with the book. Later, after a personal digression, I shall come to impersonal exposition and argument; and, finally, having to the best of my ability disposed of objec-

tions and adduced evidence in favour of my own view, shall again, though in a different form and with a more adequate background, present what seem to me the right conclusions.

What then do I believe? I believe, in the first instance, that it is necessary to believe something. Complete scepticism does not work. On the other hand, I believe equally strongly that it is always undesirable and often harmful to believe without proper evidence. Everything which we believe, except the logical necessities of mathematics and formal logic, is believed on external evidence of one sort or another, although the evidence may have been assimilated so long ago, or so completely, or so intuitively, that we are not conscious of it. To take a simple and trivial example: when we say that a ball which we see in the distance is spherical, we are basing this statement on the frequently repeated evidence of our past experience that objects which appear to the eye of a particular shape and with a particular kind of pattern of light and shade are, when explored by touch, found to possess a particular shape we call spherical; and we had to learn all this very thoroughly (although we have by now forgotten all about the learning process) when we were babies. But even when there is not this necessary interpretation of the evidence of one sense in terms of the experience derived from another, but a direct utilisation of the materials provided by one sense only, we are still believing on evidence. When I feel a marble with my fingers, my eyes being blindfolded, I can judge directly by touch that it is a single spherical object. But everybody knows (or, if he does not, let him immediately try the very

simple but fundamental experiment) that if I cross two adjacent fingers and feel the marble between their crossed tips, it will be obstinately judged to be double, in spite of all knowledge to the contrary. Thus even the simple judgments of sense may be illusions, and when I say that I believe something because I saw or heard it, I am backing the view that I did not happen to be deluded. When we come to more complicated beliefs, such as a belief that so-and-so is really angry with us although he is doing his best to appear friendly, or that someone else is an honest man and will never take an unfair advantage, it is still more evident that we are all the time weighing evidence and arriving at a conclusion (however intuitively) on the balance. And we are often wrong. How frequently it turns out that A's apparent anger was only dyspepsia, or that we were sadly mistaken as to B's honesty!

Apart from intellectual mistakes or sensory delusions, however, there is a still more potent source of error in emotional distortion. It is a perfectly obvious fact, which even serious investigators have not always escaped, to have their conclusions coloured by their desires, to see what they want to see, and even more, not to see what they would prefer to overlook. An angry man is a notoriously bad witness; and the judgments of first love about the beloved object are quite generally discounted, and that not only by cynics.

There is thus a certain practical difficulty. We must believe something, for otherwise we should never act. On the other hand, we must not believe everything, or believe too readily, or we shall act wrongly. Most people would say that they were

completely justified in the certain belief that the sun will rise next morning; on the other hand, there is for this no inherent necessity of the same nature as the inherent necessity for two and two to make four; something might perfectly well happen to prevent it rising; and we might believe in the existence of this something. As a matter of fact, a great many people at one time or another have believed that the world would end on a particular date, and therefore that the sun would not rise one fine morning; and this belief (although always, so far, it has proved erroneous) has often very radically affected their lives. The closing months of the year A.D. 999 were accompanied by the most improbable scenes of orgy, terror, and prayer, owing to the belief that the world would end at the millennium; and even since the War the members of an American sect sold all their possessions very cheap and went to await the end of the world and a translation to heaven on a convenient hill-top.

Experience has quite definitely shown (if only humanity could be persuaded to profit by her !) that some reasons for holding a belief are much more likely to be justified by the event than others. It might be naturally supposed, for instance, that the best of all reasons for belief was a strong conviction of certainty accompanying the belief. Experience, however, shows that this is not so, and that, as a matter of fact, conviction by itself is more likely to mislead than it is to guarantee truth. On the other hand, lack of assurance and persistent hesitation to come to any belief whatever is an equally poor guarantee that the few beliefs which are arrived at are sound. Experience also shows that assertion,

however long continued, although it is unfortunately with many people an effective enough means of inducing belief, is not in any way a ground for holding it.

Neither is a claim to be the recipient of a revelation the least guarantee that belief in the subject of the revelation is justified; for both madmen and false prophets have made the claim.

The method which has proved effective, as matter of actual fact, in providing a firm foundation for belief wherever it has been capable of application is what is usually called the scientific method. I believe firmly that the scientific method, although slow and never claiming to lead to complete truth, is the only method which in the long run will give satisfactory foundations for beliefs. The scientific method is the method which, in the intellectual sphere is the counterpart of that method recommended by the apostle in the moral sphere—test all things; hold fast to that which is good. It consists in demanding facts as the only basis for conclusions; and of consistently and continuously testing any conclusions which may have been reached against the test of new facts and, wherever possible, by the crucial test of experiment. It consists also (and this is not sufficiently recognised by the generality of people) in full publication of the evidence on which conclusions are based, so that other workers may have the advantage of the facts, to assist them in new researches, or, as frequently occurs, to make it possible for them to put a quite different interpretation on the facts.

There are, however, all sorts of occasions on which the scientific method is not applicable. That

method involves slow testing, frequent suspension of judgment, restricted conclusions. The exigencies of everyday life, on the other hand, often make it necessary to act on a hasty balancing of admittedly incomplete evidence, to take immediate action, and to draw conclusions in advance of the evidence. It is also true that such action will always be necessary, and necessary in respect of ever larger issues ; and this in spite of the fact that one of the most important trends of civilisation is to remove sphere after sphere of life out of the domain of such intuitive judgment into the domain of rigid calculation based on science. It is here that belief plays its most important rôle. When we cannot be certain, we must proceed in part by faith—faith not only in the validity of our own capacity of making judgments, but also in the existence of certain outer realities, pre-eminently moral and spiritual realities. It has been said that faith consists in acting always on the nobler hypothesis ; and though this definition is a trifle rhetorical, it embodies a seed of real truth.

Finally, however (and this is a truth which has often been wholly unrecognised, and never popular), there are other occasions on which belief is not only not demanded, but is, in the phraseology of medicine, contra-indicated. When there exists no evidence or next to no evidence, and when the conclusion to which we should come to can have no influence on the facts, then it is our duty to suspend judgment and hold no belief, just as definitely as it is our duty, when practical issues hang on our decision, not to suspend judgment, but to take our courage in both hands and act on the best belief to which we can arrive. This duty

of refraining from belief is often imposed upon men of science in their work, in order that they may in the long run arrive at greater certitude; it is also imposed upon them in other cases in order that they may not encourage false hopes of certitude. When applied to whole problems, this attitude of mind generally goes by the name (first coined by Thomas Huxley) of agnosticism. I hold it to be an important duty to know when to be agnostic. I believe that one should be agnostic when belief one way or the other is mere idle speculation, incapable of verification; when belief is merely held to gratify desires, however deep-seated, and not because it is forced on us by evidence; and when belief may be taken by others to be more firmly grounded than it really is, and so come to encourage false hopes or wrong attitudes of mind.

That is a long exordium, I fear. It must be justified by the fact that our beliefs about Belief are among the most important that we may possess, and this all the more since we rarely stop to give their existence a thought.

I hold, then, that all our life long we are oscillating between conviction and caution, faith and agnosticism, belief and suspension of belief. That neither faith nor agnosticism is in itself the better way, but that each has its right occasions. That beliefs which are well enough for individual occasions of practical necessity may be wholly unjustified and unjustifiable when made general or when taken to dispense from further enquiry. In fact, I hold that beliefs are essential tools of the human mind—no more than tools, but no less than essential. That there is therefore no more sense in

using the same sort of belief to help in solving both problems of ultimate and universal values, and the practical problems of daily necessity than there would be in using a kitchen scales to determine atomic weights, or vice versa, a string galvanometer for the purposes of the job electrician. And that there is no more justification for wasting time and energy and hope in drawing conclusions about subjects on which inadequate evidence exists than in founding a department of State for the breeding of hippogriffs, or inventing a method for crossing bridges before one comes to them.

. . . . . .

Now that all this has been said, the ground is clear for more definite statements. In the first place, I believe, not that there *is* nothing, for that I do not know, but that we quite assuredly at present *know* nothing beyond this world and natural experience. A personal God, be he Jehovah, or Allah, or Apollo, or Amen-Ra, or without name but simply God, I *know* nothing of. What is more, I am not merely agnostic on the subject. It seems to me quite clear that the idea of personality in God or in any supernatural being or beings has been put there by man, put into and round a perfectly real conception which we might continue to call God if the word had not acquired by long association the implication of a personal being; and therefore I disbelieve in a personal God [1] in any sense in which that phrase is ordinarily used.

For similar reasons, I disbelieve in the existence

[1] Under the term *personal* God I include all ideas of a so-called super-personal God, of the same spiritual and mental nature as a personality but on a higher level, or indeed any supernatural spiritual existence or force.

of Heaven or Hell in any conventional Christian sense. As for any pretended knowledge about the Last Judgment, or the conditions of existence in Purgatory, it could be disregarded as what it is, mythology from racial childhood, and left to die a natural death, if it did not require to be attacked as the too frequent cause of unfortunate practical effects, such as causing believers to pay money to priests for the supposed benefit of souls in the other world.

As to the existence of another world or another life at all, there I am simply agnostic : I do not know. I find extreme difficulties, in the light of physiological and psychological knowledge, in understanding how a soul could exist apart from a body ; but difficulties are never disproof. It also seems clear enough that many ideas about a future life owe their origin to the most primitive kinds of speculation and superstition among barbaric or savage races, and have survived largely owing to man's enormous conservatism in regard to tampering with what has come to be regarded as sacred. Further, that many other such ideas are merely the expression of man's deep desire and longing for a continuation of life after death for himself and for those he loves. The desire is real enough, the longing deep enough, but, alas, desire and longing, as we all know in regard to earthly happiness, are not sufficient reasons for the existence of what is desired or longed for : and the existence of a future life can no more be proved by the arguments from human need or the incompleteness of this life, than can the most passionate love, or the most tragic incompleteness of a solitary existence ensure that a woman should

marry the man of her choice or indeed achieve marriage at all.

Finally, there is the so-called evidence from spiritualism. I have seen some of this, and read a good deal on the subject; there seems to be a good *prima facie* case for the existence of such "supernormal" phenomena as clairvoyance and telepathy, as well as plenty of undoubted automatic writing, hypnotic phenomena, etc., but these have nothing to do with spiritualism in the sense of communicating with the spirits of the departed. The evidence for spiritualism itself is for the most part so trivial that it is really necessary to take part in a few séances to be able to appreciate what childish and dubious phenomena are uncritically accepted as evidence by believers in spiritualism. The truth seems to be that such people both wish and are ready to believe, and accordingly come to a decision on what is perhaps the most important and most difficult matter about which we could form a judgment, on evidence far slighter than what is necessary to send a case to a jury, much less to convict a man of a criminal offence.

But when all this discounting has been done, there remains the fact that we do not know; and so I am agnostic on this question. There are others who also say they do not know, but would like to be on the safe side. That is, of course, a common if not always a pleasant human weakness. But personally, I believe, and believe strongly, that if the standards of good and evil by which we ought to live this life are different from the standards by which we may hope to achieve satisfaction or blessedness in a life to come, then so much the worse for the universe

and its governance; but I refuse on that account to modify my standards of conduct in this world, for that appears to me an outrage, and a surrender of the highest part of our nature.

Others believe that their standard of conduct need not be changed, but that they can ensure salvation in another world by special or additional observances or beliefs or offerings. This again I believe not only to involve a false antithesis but to be a denial of the highest religion. More than two thousand years ago a great man said that salvation required no propitiatory rites based on crude and anthropomorphic ideas of God; for the acceptable sacrifice is a righteous and contrite heart. The Christian world is supposed to believe this; but it, or the great bulk of it, still prefers to stick to what is essentially a magical view of the miraculous efficacy of formulæ, or of relics, or the invocation of saints, or of self-deprivation, or of prayer, or rites such as absolution by a priest.

I can hear many of my readers asking themselves what then is left for me to believe in of anything which can possibly be called religious. That such a question can be asked is due to a misapprehension—common enough, I admit, but none the less a misapprehension—as to the real nature and essence of religion. It is frequently taken for granted that religion is essentially a belief in a god or gods. Let me quote but two or three examples. The great pioneer anthropologist Tylor proposed "a belief in spiritual beings" as what he called a minimum definition of religion; and Sir James Frazer understands by religion the propitiation of powers, of conscious and personal nature, believed to control

the course of nature and of human life. Even Thouless, in his admirable approach to the psychology of the religious life, defines religion as "a felt practical relationship with what is believed in as a superhuman being or beings."

And yet such writers, however distinguished in their special spheres, should have remembered that one of the great religions of the world, namely Buddhism, in its original and purest form does not profess belief in any supernatural being; as Renan said, "Buddhism is Catholicism without God" (and, by the way, added, "this atheist religion has been eminently moral and active in good works"). They should have remembered that, as numerous workers on primitive religion testify, feelings essentially and obviously religious may be evoked in reference to an undefined sense of spiritual power or sanctity inhering in objects such as fetishes or events such as death without linking them up with belief in any spiritual being.[1]

What, then, is religion? It is a way of life. It is a way of life which follows necessarily from a man holding certain things in reverence, from his feeling and believing them to be sacred. And those things which are held sacred by religion primarily concern human destiny and the forces with which it comes into contact.

On the other hand, all sorts of things and ideas not in themselves calculated to arouse the religious emotion do, as a matter of fact, come to be held sacred by this or that religion, as cows by the Hindu. The beliefs of that religion in contact with which we

[1] See, for instance, Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*; or Crawley, *The Tree of Life*.

have grown up are apt to usurp to themselves the idea of sacredness; but I wish to emphasise at the outset that I am speaking in the most general terms, and that this specifically religious emotion of sacredness can be felt in relation to any object or thought, within or without the bounds of what we may be accustomed to think of as religion, within or without the bounds of any organised religious system.

The idea of supernatural beings is one of the commonest among the objects, events, or ideas which are thus believed in as objects of reverence; but belief in supernatural beings is not an essential or integral part of the religious way of life, nor, conversely, are the objects of religious feeling necessarily supernatural beings.

I believe, then, that religion arose as a feeling of the sacred. The capacity for experiencing this feeling in relation to various objects and events seems to be a fundamental capacity of man, something given in and by the construction of the normal human mind, just as definitely as is the capacity for experiencing anger or admiration, sympathy or terror. What is more, we experience each of these feelings or sentiments in relation to certain general kinds of situations. There is no specific connection between any given object and a particular feeling, but there does exist one type of situation in which men tend to feel anger, another in which they tend to feel admiration, another in which they tend to feel reverence. But (and a very important *but*) in every case, the type of situation which tends to arouse any particular feeling is always found to alter with experience and education. Many of the

situations which arouse fear in a child cease to arouse fear when he has grown up; many situations which arouse fear in a young savage would not do so in a civilised child of the same age; and vice versa.

So it is with the religious feeling, the sentiment of sacredness. No one expects a child of four to have the same kind of religious life as a boy of sixteen, or either of them as a man of thirty. Nor should any one expect a savage to have arrived at the same religious attitude as a civilised man with different natural endowments and with centuries of developing tradition at his back. The situations which arouse the religious feeling cannot be expected to be the same in the various cases. This elementary truth has, however, not been grasped by many missionaries and missionary societies; and the failure to grasp it has often led to disastrous results.

The history of religion is the history of the gradual change in the situations which, with increase of experience and changed conditions of life, are felt as sacred. It is in the main (like the history of humanity as a whole, or the history of science as a whole) a history of progress—not unaccompanied by set-backs, by side-lines which take a downward direction, by friction and conflict, but, both as regards its highest level and its nett sum, definitely progress. Regarded as progress, the history of religion is a history of the purging of the religious emotion itself from baser elements such as fear, and of the substitution of ever larger, nobler, and more rational objects and situations on and in which the religious sentiment may spend itself.

This change is effected in a number of ways. In

the first place, man reasons about his religious feelings and thoughts, or at least attempts to find reasons by which they may be justified. By this means, in relation to a mainly emotional, non-rational ground or raw material of religion, an intellectual scheme is brought into being, a definite set of beliefs, a primitive theology. The beliefs and their objects are intimately associated with the original pervading sense of sacredness, and so themselves come to be felt as sacred. The precise details of the process, in so far as it can be pieced together from history and from the study of comparative religion, are complex ; I shall try and go into them a little more fully in a later chapter. The main and most essential steps appear to have been, first, the personification of the powers revered and religiously feared as brooding over human destiny ; then the progressive unification of these powers, resulting in the substitution of few gods for innumerable spirits ; and finally the fading of the several gods into one God.

Meanwhile an analogous process had been taking place on the moral side. With increase of physical control and intellectual comprehension, human destiny was seen to be more and more a matter of morality; the acquisition of the sense of personal holiness, less a matter of ritual or propitiation, more a matter of righteousness. Inevitably, in such circumstances, the governance of the world came to appear more concerned with morality, less a mere affair of arbitrary power. And since the idea of supernatural beings was by this time firmly enthroned as part and parcel of religion, moral qualities were more and more ascribed to spirits and

to gods. First of all, this moral ascription was fitful and incomplete, just as the intellectual unification was slow and also for a long time incomplete. The moral character of the great majority of gods is strangely mixed. It has been said that a people gets the government which it deserves; it can with at least equal truth be asserted that a people worships the gods which it deserves. The mixed moral character of gods reflects the mixed moral motives and incompletely unified morality of most men and most societies.

But, just as the logical intellect and the thirst for ever more ultimate causes pushed on the unification of the separate personal gods, and demonstrated them, against the inertia of tradition and so-called common sense, to be but different aspects of a single more ultimate divinity, so the logic of the moral sense and the craving to make out of a disconnected series of acts, moral in different ways and degrees, an organised moral life with all its parts related, led to unification in the moral sphere as well. Moral contradictions were gradually eliminated from the character of god, and different aspects of that character came to be most highly exalted, love, for instance being elevated into the supreme place, above power and above justice.

Once more, since in all these changes morality was brought into ever closer and more constant association with the specifically religious sense of sanctity, it too became regarded as in itself sacred, of its proper nature religious.

A very similar process runs its course in the growing mind of every individual human being who does not merely put on a reach-me-down

religion, but with intellectual and moral effort, often with pain and grief, achieves his own religious development. His ideas are at first little more than states of feeling, experienced perhaps deeply but with vagueness and without comprehension. His reason develops, and he cannot help but try to use it to make sense of the sacred chaos. His moral sense grows, he becomes the prey of moral conflicts; if he is to attain to peace of mind and stable maturity, he must adjust the warring interests, and see that order and unity are masters in his moral house. He must, too, bring his moral and his intellectual schemes into some reasonable relation with each other, and both into relation with his feeling of what is worthy to be held sacred.

The essential of all this, to my mind, is that religion is an activity of man which suffers change like all other human activities; that it may change for the better or for the worse; that if it stand still and refuse to change when other human activities are changing, then the standing still is itself a change for the worse; that as it grows, it cannot avoid coming into contact both with intellectual and with moral or ethical problems; and that with the development and broadening of human experience and tradition, religion becomes inevitably preoccupied with the intellectual comprehension of man's relation to the universe, and with the attainment of a coherent and unified moral life as well as with its more original quest for emotional satisfaction in the sphere of the holy. This emotional quest also shows a characteristic development. If at the outset it concerns itself mainly with putting man right with objects or beings regarded as endued

with sacred power, and with the release of his perplexed spirit from the heavy burden of sacred awe, in later stages its most urgent desire is to gain the quality of holiness for the man himself, and to arrive by one road or another at an assurance of personal salvation. Finally, in its most developed and highest manifestations, this emotional side of the religious life aspires to a sense of communion with the divine, and to the peace and security which spring from the surrender of the individual will to what is usually described as the will of God.

It remains now, very briefly, for me to make some preliminary statement as to how I would interpret the religious view of God, since this, and all its corollaries, seems to me to be the one essential point of difference outstanding between "religion" and "science" to-day—religion in the sense not only of Christian orthodoxy but of all theism, and science not only in the sense of physics, chemistry, or biology, but of organised knowledge and thought based upon a naturalistic outlook.

Once adjust this difficulty, and there remains no conflict of principle. All the vital facts of religious life still remain; they but want re-defining in new terms. The living reality will need to change its clothes—that is all.

But meanwhile the difficulty is there; and it is a formidable one. Humanity in general, and religious humanity in particular, has for so long been habituated to thinking mainly in terms of an external, personal, supernatural, spiritual being, that it will indubitably be extremely difficult to abandon this view and see God, under one aspect as a number of vital but separate facts, some material

and some spiritual, but, regarded as a unity, as a creation of the human soul (albeit a necessary and fruitful one), compounded of the hard facts of soulless nature and the spiritual and intellectual aspirations of the nature of man, the two organised into a single whole by the organising power of the human mind.

This same organising power operates in other spheres, in the same way, and equally fruitfully—it can blend the hard facts of nature's chaos with its own spiritual aspiration for order, into the glorious achievement of a so-called Law of Nature; it can equally blend the hard facts of nature, including the humdrum and the tragic, with its own thoughts and its own aspirations for beauty, into that organised expression of experience which we call a work of art. In an almost more intimate way it can blend the hard facts of life and the aspirations of the human mind for happiness and virtue into the single organised whole which we call character.

In all these cases the processes at work are in their general nature the same. In all, they involve the fusion, in human experience, of outer fact and inner capacity; in all cases they involve—in so far as well and truly carried out—the utilisation of one kind or combination of capacities to the utmost possible extent or in the highest way. Let it, however, be pointed out at once that this fusion of inner and outer is what goes on in all experience, however humble. Even a simple sensation, as of the red colour of a rose, is the product of the external "hard fact" of light waves of a particular range of wave-length, together with the human capacity, brought about through the structure of the retina

and the nervous system and the mind's capacity for sensation, the inner and the outer being inextricably fused in the actual experience, *red.*

It is such elementary considerations as this which take the sting from the cynic's definition of life as consisting in moving matter from one place to another. Granted that that is one aspect, and often a regrettably large aspect of life. But life also, and on a higher level, consists in bringing matter into relation with mind, and so generating experience. What is more, one of the mind's capacities is the capacity for organising experience into forms of increasing richness of content, increasing beauty, increasing truth. Through this organising capacity, the mind creates new and higher values, or, if you prefer, new forms of experience which possess higher value.

Finally, the reconciliation between the two apparently conflicting definitions of life is found in what may be regarded as the highest activity of all, namely the moulding of mere matter in conformity with mental experience—making matter express the vision of beauty, forcing the body to follow the physical or moral laws which the mind has perceived, utilising the pure intellectual experience of the physicist and mathematician to control and harness natural forces in ways which neither nature herself nor human ignorance could do, making the material subserve the ideal. These achievements are represented by works of art, by moral and rational action, by machines like the dynamo or inventions like the aeroplane, by civilisation in so far as it deserves its proud name.

Nor let it be forgotten that one of the most potent

ways of achieving this moulding of matter by and under mental experience is the influencing of other minds so that they shall share in the experience, which is in the first instance always individual. The man who succeeds in organising experience in a new way, whether to perceive *new* spiritual truth like Luther or St. Francis, Jesus or Buddha; or to discover *new* natural law, like Archimedes or Faraday, Mendel or Pasteur; or *new* forms of beauty, like Beethoven or Wren, Wordsworth or van Gogh: his experience dies with him, unfruitful save to himself, if he does not attempt and in some measure succeed in so controlling matter and the material means of communication between men so that others can realise in their degree what the experience was. The mute Milton is both inglorious and unfruitful; he has hidden his talent in a napkin.

On this view man's idea of God, and his expression of it, is on a par with his discovery and formulation of purely intellectual truth, his apprehension and expression of beauty, his perception and his practice of moral laws. There is no revelation concerned in it more than the revelation concerned in scientific discovery, no different kind of inspiration in the Bible from that in Shelley's poetry. That is to say that there is no literal revelation, no literal inspiration; and it is mere prevarication to shift, as is often done, from one sense of these words to the other, from the wholly literal, implying revelation or inspiration by supernatural beings, to the descriptive-metaphorical, implying only the flashing on to consciousness of something new, independent of the will, and carrying with it a quality of essential rightness.

In all spiritual activities we should expect steady change and improvement as man accumulates experience and perfects his mental tools. In art it is a triumph if a Beethoven or a Debussy finds new ways of building beauty; in science it is acclaimed a triumph if an old universally accepted theory is dethroned to make way for one more comprehensive, as when Newton's mechanics gave place to Einstein's, or the assumed indivisibility of the atom was exploded in favour of the compound atom, organised out of electrons and protons; but in the religious sphere, owing largely to this pernicious view that religion is the result of supernatural revelation and embodies divine and therefore complete or absolute truth, the reverse is the case, and change, even progressive change, is by the great body of religiously-minded people looked upon as a defeat, whereas once it is realised that religious truth is the product of human mind and therefore as incomplete as scientific truth, as partial as artistic expression, the proof or even the suggestion of inadequacy would be welcomed as a means to arriving at a fuller truth and an expression more complete.

But even if it should be admitted, as in point of fact it is admitted by an enlightened minority, that religious truth is never absolute, and must never be bound by the shackles of a pretended literal revelation, but is progressively discovered and built up, that would not bridge the gulf of which I have spoken. For it might be held (as it is by most of the enlightened minority in question) that it was a progressive discovery of the attributes and activities of a supernatural being.

What grounds are there for denying that this is so? They are numerous and complex, and can only be fully appreciated after some study of comparative religion and religious psychology. In this chapter I can do no more than state them baldly as I see them. In the first place comes the undoubted fact that man at most levels of culture has a strong penchant for personification. Primitive peoples personify all sorts of natural objects, and the same process continues into quite late stages of culture. There must be very few Europeans who to-day would not admit that river-gods, nymphs, and fauns were not mere projections of personality into non-personal objects, that the sun is not a living being, that the lightning is not produced by the volition of Jupiter or any other deity. The same is undoubtedly true of tutelary spirits and gods. Early Christian Fathers like Tertullian indulged in ironical mirth over the innumerable domestic and other minor deities of the Romans; it certainly seems difficult for us to conceive of worshipping or propitiating separate spiritual beings who looked after (*inter alia*) the household, the door, the threshold, the farm, the child's bed, its learning to walk, and the growth of its bones! And precisely the same difficulty is experienced when we try to imagine separate personal beings presiding over different aspects of life, like Venus, Bacchus, or Mars.

Together with the undoubted fact of wholesale personification in the earliest stages of human culture, there is the equally undoubted fact of the gradual limitation during historical time of the personifying tendency and its results. This occurs in three ways. On the one hand, as man perceives

more clearly the connections between things and events, and comes to see more of the unity underlying the apparently disjointed chaos of phenomena, the number of separate personifications is reduced, but their scale or scope is correspondingly magnified. In the second place, their relation to material happenings is put more in the background: the personified sun, for instance, becomes a supernatural being who controls the sun, the sea envisaged as a god becomes the sea together with a god of the sea. And thirdly, their sphere of activity becomes curtailed. If the rainbow is generated by the refraction of the sun's rays on falling rain, it is not set in the sky as a sign by God. If the plague is inevitably generated by the *Bacillus pestis*, spread by rat-fleas, an outbreak of plague can no longer be looked on as a sign of divine wrath. If animals and plants have slowly evolved through hundreds of millions of years, there is no room for a creator of animals and plants, except in a mataphorical sense totally different from that in which the word was originally and is normally used. If hysteria and insanity are the natural result of a disordered mind, there is no place left in them for possession by devils. And, in short, if events are due to natural causes, they are not due to supernatural causes. Their ascription to supernatural beings is merely due to man's ignorance combined with his passion for some sort of "explanation": they are myths—in other words, sacred versions of Just So Stories. For both these reasons we must at least be prepared to discount any statements made as to the existence of superhuman persons.

There exists also a psychological reason to the

same effect. Personality is the category most easily understood by man, since he himself has personality. The readiness with which he indulges in personification is seen to-day exemplified in various facts of psychology. Many cases of automatic writing and automatic speaking, of visions and auditions, have been recorded and investigated. In almost every case in which the possessor of these gifts has not been an educated and critically-minded person, it is found that he or she tends to think of them as produced from a separate and external personality, although there may be no question but that this is pure illusion. The most remarkable and developed examples of such personification of subconscious, repressed, or partly dissociated portions of the mind are seen in the so-called " controls " or " guides " of mediums. Without doubt in some cases the " guide " is deliberately invented and impersonated by the normal consciousness, because it is considered *de rigueur* for a professional medium to be under control by a spirit guide. But, equally without doubt, in some other cases the phenomenon is perfectly genuine, often occurring only in hypnotic trance, and consisting in a spontaneous personification of certain detached parts of the mental system. For such reasons also it behoves us to be very cautious in accepting assertions as to the existence of other personalities besides our own—simply because the error is so easily fallen into and so obstinately believed in.

And there is, finally, the merely negative but still real difficulty of conceiving personality even remotely like our own, not in association with a material brain.

To those who approach the matter without any prepossessions as to the existence or non-existence of superhuman personal beings, and have taken the trouble to look into something of the history of religions and the workings of the human mind, it certainly seems as if this identical tendency towards personification had been at work throughout the whole gamut of gods, and that there is in this respect only a difference of degree between the simplest animism and the highest monotheism. Between one and the other there has been a great consolidation and unification, much rationalising and much purifying: but underlying both is the same broad and unwarranted assumption, namely, that the forces which affect human destiny and are felt to be sacred are, at shorter or longer remove, the result of the activities of supernatural beings of a nature similar to the natures of our own personality.

If we were prepared to admit that the ascription of personality or external spiritual nature to gods were an illusion or an error, our comparison of religion with science or with art would then be complete. Each then would be a fusion of external fact with inner capacity into vital experience (or, looked at from a slightly different angle, each is an expression of that vital experience). There does exist an outer ground and object of religion as much as an outer object for science. The fact, however, that this outer object is by most religions considered to be an external divine being is, philosophically speaking, an accident; it remains real whether so considered or not, just as the outer objects of science remain real whether we consider that laws of nature inhere in them or in the human

mind. Not only so, but the ascription of personal being to religion's external object is best thought of as in origin a natural and inevitable error of primitive thinking, now surviving in highly modified form, a mistaken projection of personality into the non-personal. It is thus an error of judgment comparable (though on a larger scale) to the alchemist's error in superposing on the facts of chemistry, as then known, his belief in transmutation and the philosopher's stone, or the error of early biology in superposing on the facts of putrefaction a belief in spontaneous generation.

If, however, this superposed belief and its corollaries be removed, what remains of the reality? The answer is "a great deal." That reality includes permanent facts of human existence—birth, marriage, reproduction, and death; suffering, mutual aid, comradeship, physical and moral growth. It includes also other facts which we may call the facts of the spiritual life, such as the conviction of sin, the desire for righteousness, the sense of absolution, the peace of communion; and those other facts, the existence and potency of human ideals, which, like truth and virtue and beauty, always transcend the concrete and always reveal further goals to the actual. It also includes facts and forces of nature outside and apart from man—the existence of matter and of myriads of other living beings, the position of man on a little planet of one of a million Suns, the facts and laws of motion, matter, and energy and all their manifestations, the history of life. I say that it includes these; it would be more correct to say that it includes certain aspects of all these and many other facts. It includes them in

their aspect of relatedness to human destiny; and it includes them as held together, against the cosmic background, by a spirit of awe or reverence. If you wish more precision, it includes them in their sacred aspect, or at least in association with an outlook which is reverent or finds holiness in reality.

Finally, it includes them, but not merely disjointedly, as so many separate items: it includes them in a more or less unified whole, as an organised scheme of thought; and as a matter of fact this scheme tends in its higher manifestations to be organised somewhat after the pattern in which a human personality is organised. It is this, among the other causes that have been mentioned, which helps to give this organised scheme of thought the illusion of possessing personality.

I may quote from an earlier essay. "By organizing our knowledge of outer reality after the pattern of a personality, we make it possible for it to interpenetrate our private personality. If, therefore, we have in any true sense of the word, 'found religion,' it means that we shall have so organized our minds that, for flashes at least, we attain to a sense of interpenetration with the reality around us —that reality which includes not only the celestial bodies, or the rocks and waters, not only evolving life, but also other human beings, also ideas, also ideals. This, to my mind, is what actually occurs when men speak of communion with God. It is an organizing of our experiences of the universe in relation with the driving forces of our soul or mental being, so that the two are united and harmonized" (*Essays of a Biologist*, p. 284).

The organisation of this scheme of thought may

be pursued with greater or less degrees of thoroughness, just as the poorly organised mental life which is all that any infant possesses may be organised into a personality of greater or less degree of unity and richness.

This organisation of the external raw material into what is usually spoken of as the idea of God resembles closely the organisation of external raw material by other human capacities into what are usually called Laws of Nature. Both are products of the human mind, but both have their external ground. However, the external ground of the idea of God differs from the external ground considered, for instance, by physico-chemical science, in being partly spiritual. In so far as it includes among the forces affecting human destiny the general ideals of humanity, even so far as it includes one's individual ideals (since those reach out far beyond the limits of personality), it includes spiritual realities.

This, be it noted, is a very different thing from saying that the ground of religious experience is wholly spiritual; or from asserting, with some philosophers, that the ground of all reality and existence is wholly spiritual, which hypothetical ground, then christened Absolute, is inserted from above through the philosophical trap-door as a substitute for the God built up by religion or by quite other methods and out of quite other aspects of reality. I feel strongly that this *deus ex machina* of certain philosophies is a dummy God, no more like the rich, vivid and compelling experience of divinity which is enjoyed by many religious persons than is shadow like substance, or than is a formula like the reality which it partially represents.

Europe has for so long been obsessed with the notion of personality in God that it is difficult to begin thinking along other lines. It is an interesting commentary on this fact, that opponents of the orthodox idea have usually taken one of two courses. Either they have so reacted against the current idea of God that they have thrown the baby out with the bath-water, rejected the whole ground of divinity and not merely the ascription of personality to it, and so been forced into a negativist attitude, compelled to satisfy their natural and normal religious needs in other ways and other spheres, or else they have continued one aspect of the process of refining the idea of God which is to be seen operative during religious history, but continued it in a wrong direction, to a *cul-de-sac*: they have accepted the idea of an external God with an essentially or wholly spiritual nature, but have pushed to their logical conclusions the two processes which we have already discussed—the removal of God further and further behind phenomenal fact and event; and the purging of the idea of the divine nature of human limitations. These two tendencies together have led to a God almost as watered-down as the philosopher's Absolute, a God who has not only been stripped of the limitations of human form and human frailty, and been put above the limitations of space and time, but for whom the type of organisation we call personality is also apprehended as altogether a limitation, and who has been gradually metamorphosed from a divine person into a superperson, and from this into mere spirit, vague and

remote, which in some imperfectly comprehended way pervades or supports the universe.

To me, the first of these two attitudes is like the attitude of a man who should refuse to employ the waters of a river to irrigate a desert because it was currently believed that the river flowed by means of some mysterious indwelling vital power, and he disagreed with this interpretation; while the second attitude is like one which had a theoretical objection to all limitations, and would therefore prefer to break down the river's banks and spread its waters out thin as a flood, instead of still further organising its flow by means of irrigation works.

For my own part, the sense of spiritual relief which comes from rejecting the idea of God as a supernatural being is enormous. I see no other way of bridging the gap between the religious and the scientific approach to reality. But if this rejection is once accomplished, the abyss has disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, and yet all the vital realities of both sides are preserved. The mental life of humanity is no longer a civil war but a corporate civilisation. Within it there will be conflicts, frictions, adjustments; but these are inevitable and probably necessary for full vitality, and if they take place within a whole which is organised for unity and production instead of duality and strife, there will be advance.

If religion be a way of life founded upon the apprehension of sacredness in existence; if, as is the case, the human consciousness be not satisfied with the mere experiencing of sacredness and mystery, but attempts to link this up with its faculty of reason and its desire for right action, trying on the one

hand to comprehend the mystery and to explain the reality which it still feels sacred, and on the other to sanctify morality and make right action itself a sacrament; if this linking up of rational faculty and morality with the specifically religious experience of holiness has resulted in organising the external ground of religion as what is usually called God; and if, finally, there be no reason for ascribing personality or pure spirituality to this God, but every reason against it: then religion becomes a natural and vital part of human existence, not a thing apart; a false dualism is overthrown; and the pursuit of the religious life is seen to resemble the pursuit of scientific truth or artistic expression, as one of the highest of human activities, success in which comes partly from native gifts, partly from early training and surroundings, partly from sheer chance, and partly from personal efforts.

The insufferable arrogance of those who claim to be in sole possession of religious truth would happily disappear, together with the consequences which arise when such people are in a position to enforce their views—consequences such as bigotry, religious war, religious persecution, the horrors of the Inquisition, attempts to suppress knowledge and learning, hostility to social or moral change. The appeal to absolute authority (a product of the race's intellectual childhood) could no longer be admitted, whether an appeal to a sacred book, a sacred founder, a revealed code, or a sacred church. All such appeals would continue to carry weight, but could no longer be considered a court of absolute appeal, beyond the bar of reason or change. No longer could the legitimate affairs of this world be neglected

on the pretext of attending to those of the next, nor unscrupulous medicine-men, priests, or religious organisations feather their nests out of the pretended supernatural power which they wield. No longer would the hideous terror of everlasting hell torment innocent children or distort the lives of men and women, nor the true comfort of religious worship and contemplation be turned out of its course, as the result of belief in a fear of a personal, omnipotent, and exacting God, and forced into the channel of propitiatory sacrifice, the meaningless mumbo-jumbo of certain types of ritual, and what I can only describe as the "begging-letter" type of prayer.

Men will cease to be able to regard religion as a patent medicine of the spirit, but will be forced to see it for what it is, an art to be learnt. It is the art of spiritual health. They will be able to acknowledge the obvious fact that sanctity properly pertains to certain ideas and to certain basic human relations, and that it may come to lodge, through the accident of association, in particular places and events and things, without being thereby called upon to admit that a God exists in or behind the thing or idea, or has given supernatural sanction to the human relation.

To take an example: human love and marriage can possess this sanctity, can be a sacrament, just as well to two complete atheists as to two devout Christians, just as fully if regarded as a human development from animal mating relationships as if supposed to be divinely ordained. Unfortunately, the upholders of the sanctity of marriage too often apply the term sanctity somewhat in the way of the

primitive savage. They prefer to think of the institution as surrounded with a divine sanctity which forbids man to touch or even to discuss it, a negative taboo, instead of leaving the sanctity where it belongs, namely, in the possible beauty of the relationship itself, and therefore welcoming all attempts to adapt the institution to human needs and aspirations. It is really very remarkable to reflect, when one is confronted with certain aspects of Christian morality, that the founder of Christianity himself, nineteen hundred years ago, proclaimed that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Once it is realised that the sanctity that inheres in places or buildings, in ritual or ceremonial, is imparted to them by the human beings who have felt them as sacred, then no-one of religious inclinations will be debarred by credal difficulties or what he regards as dogmatic absurdities from participating in worship. For worship itself will be seen to be not a bowing down before a spiritual idol with supernatural powers, nor a placation of a jealous God, nor organised celebrations and praise in honour of a beloved ruler. It is an opportunity for a communal proclaiming of belief in certain spiritual values; for refreshment of the spirit through that meditation guided by pure desires which alone deserves the name of prayer, and through the sense of contact with spiritual mysteries which disappear or are not thought of in the rush of practical life; for expressing in music or liturgy various natural religious emotions of praise, contrition, awe, aspiration, which otherwise would remain without natural outlet. Creeds are necessary if one is to have an

organised church at all; but far too much stress has been laid by religious bodies on confessions of intellectual faith. With the acceptance of the view here maintained, creeds would automatically have to be adjusted to the new outlook. The test of formal membership of a particular religious organisation would still reside in the acceptance of particular beliefs and ideas; but these different schemes of thought would be all particular aspects of a more general scheme, and matters would be so arranged that intellectual barriers, in the form of creeds and dogma, should no more prevent a religiously minded man from worship in a church not of his own sect than that a lover of art should be compelled to make a profession of belief in impressionism or cubism or pre-Raphaelitism before being allowed to enjoy an exhibition of pictures.

I have sketched some of my ideas so far as I can see them run. Do not let it be supposed, however, that I have any illusions about their range or completeness. They represent to me merely a single step.

We do not know what the future will bring forth. The visions of to-day may be the facts of to-morrow; the scientific truth of a century ago is, much of it, mere lumber to-day; the "self-evident" truths of morality and of social science, such as the sovereign independence of nations, or the unassailability of private property, or the radical indecency of the female leg, are replaced by other equally "self-evident" but quite contradictory truths. The only moral to be drawn is that each generation must do its best, content that its conclusions should be scrapped later, provided only they have helped humanity's advance.

The same is true of religion. A complete monotheism is impossible to the primitive mind: even where it has been nominally accepted, the worship of subsidiary sacred beings has always crept in. The early Jews who pinned their faith to the success of the Jewish people, and were not concerned about a personal future life, could not have foreseen that from their midst would spring Christianity. One can make but a few steps at a time. I have no doubt that the advance of thought and discovery will reveal to us wholly undreamt-of facts concerning the nature of matter and its relation to mind or spirit; when that happens, a new orientation of religious thought will be needful. Meanwhile the one main step that can be taken now, in the light of the present development of thought and knowledge, I have already laboured: it is the reform of theology on the three-fold basis of agnosticism, of evolutionary natural science, and of psychology.

There is little comfort in the assurance that science has been reconciled with religion unless the religion it has been reconciled with is a good religion.—Principal L. P. JACKS.

By the continual living activity of its non-rational elements a religion is guarded from passing into "rationalism." By being steeped in and saturated with rational elements it is guarded from sinking into fanaticism or mere mysticality, or at least from persisting in these, and is qualified to become a religion for all civilised humanity.—R. OTTO, *The Idea of the Holy*.

All problems of religion, ultimately, go back to this one :—the experience I have of God within myself differs from the knowledge concerning Him which I derive from the world. In the world He appears to me as the mysterious and marvellous creative Force ; within me He reveals Himself as ethical Will. In the world He is impersonal Force ; within me He reveals himself as Personality.—ALBERT SCHWEITZER, *Christianity and the Religions of the World* (1923).

The monotheist is apt to overprize the mere unity in his Ideal, forgetful that unity, if it grow too great, is tyrannous. . . . Indeed, more than once in history a divine unity and concord has been attained at a cost of human colour and the rich play of interest and feeling. . . . The Ideal is not merely a unity ; it is quite as much a wealth and a diversity. So that Triune monotheism might be looked upon, perhaps, as a measure of religious self-protection. It is an anchor cast to windward, lest the drift toward unity wreck the very conception of the Ideal.—G. M. STRATTON, *Psychology of the Religious Life*.

He alone is the true atheist to whom the predicates of the Divine Being, for instance, love, wisdom, justice, are nothing.—FEUERBACH, *The Essence of Christianity*.

When their tabernacles are broken down, and the sun in his strength quells at last the unclean fumes of their censers and sacrifices, their eyes are blinded with that splendour, and they cry out that the world is darkened.—Sir FREDERICK POLLOCK.

There are Christians that place and desire all their happiness in another life, and there is another sort of Christians that desire happiness in this. . . . Not the vain happiness of this world, falsely called happiness, truly vain : but the real joy and glory of the blessed, which consisteth in the enjoyment of the whole world in communion with God ; not this only, but the invisible and eternal, which they earnestly covet to enjoy immediately ; for which reason they daily pray, Thy Kingdom come, and travail towards it by learning wisdom as fast as they can.

Whether the first sort be Christians indeed, look you to that. They have much to say for themselves. Yet certainly they that put off felicity with long delays are much to be suspected.—THOMAS TRAHERNE, *Centuries of Meditations*.

In this opposition between the essentially finalistic microcosm and the purely mechanical macrocosm lies the ultimate foundation of the age-long struggle between science and religion, the first constrained by reason founded on facts to deny finality [purpose] to the universe, the second urged irresistibility to affirm it by the imperious demands of feeling.—E. RIGNANO, in *Psyche* (1926).

Chapter II

A Preliminary Interpretation

If what I have said in the preceding chapter is in principle correct, then current theology requires re-interpretation. It is also evident that many differences of detail would be possible in the interpretation, according both to the church or sect chosen and to the individual temperament of the interpreter. That elasticity of framework which has made it possible for Christianity to appeal to men of all grades of culture and to societies in all stages of development is one of the most notable facts about it. God the Father, for instance, must wear very different aspects to a Catholic mystic and a Hell-fire revivalist preacher.

But the broad outlines of the picture were drawn alike for all by the Council of Nicæa, when it laid down the doctrine of the Trinity with its three Co-equal persons. That doctrine, in spite of occasional intellectual revolts from its incomprehensibility, has appealed to the European mind for so many centuries that even the most bigoted opponent of Christianity would have to admit that the doctrine satisfies certain human needs and corresponds in some way with reality.

As I see it broadly, "God the Father" is a personification of the forces of non-human Nature; "God the Holy Ghost" represents all ideals; and

"God the Son" personifies human nature at its highest, as actually incarnate in bodies and organised in minds, bridging the gulf between the other two, and between each of them and everyday human life. And the unity of the three persons as "One God" represents the fact that all these aspects of reality are inextricably connected.

The First Person of the Trinity, on this view, would be the theological name for the outer force and law which surround man whether he like it or not. There may be mind and spirit *behind* these powers, but there is none *in* them. The powers thus symbolised are strange, often seeming definitely alien to man and his desires, or even hostile. They go their ways inevitably, without regard for human emotions or wishes. They constitute the *mysterium tremendum* of religion. On the other hand, they are not always hostile or alien. The spring follows the winter; nature may bring the storm and the flood, but she also blesses with abundance; the powers of nature kill and terrify, but they also bring the sun to shine, the breeze to blow, and the birds to sing; they are powers of generation as well as of death.

In general, the forces and powers personified as the First Person are those which affect human life not only with their inevitability, but also with their quality of being entirely outside man. They may influence and subdue man, or man may influence and control them; they and man's mind may be fused in experience; but in themselves they are not only given, but external.

The realities symbolised in the Third Person of the Trinity, however, if my reading of theology is at all correct, are those which are equally given, but,

from the point of view of humanity as a whole, internal. From the point of view of the individual man, on the other hand, they have the peculiar quality of being felt as partly internal, immanent, belonging to the self; partly external, transcendent, and far greater than the personal self. They are ideals of value, and are inevitable to an organism which like man has reached the level of conceptual thought.

Once general ideas are possible, they come to include abstract ideas or ideals. If I can make use of conceptual thought at all, I can have the general idea of *truth* in the same way as I can have the general ideas of *circularity* or *hardness*. But the general idea of circularity embraces not only the individual circular objects I have known, but includes them all in and refers them all to an abstract idea of perfect circularity, to which only approximations can ever in actual fact be made. So, with even more force, as regards hardness; and so with truth. Truth includes not only all the true propositions I know and their individual if partial trueness, but also the ideal of complete and absolute truth by which every proposition must be judged as to its individual truth. And the same is the case with the moral virtues like mercy or courage or justice, with the ethical virtues of righteousness, with the æsthetic sense of beauty. As soon as we begin to think at all, we perceive there is an ideal beyond every actual; and the more we think, the higher and the more extensive does that ideal become.

As we advance in experience, we find that our own discoveries, however intense, are but a limited and minute fraction of those that are possible; our

knowledge of the actual and our conception of the ideal both enlarge enormously as the result of discovering the discoveries of others. With this the ideal becomes less merely personal, and is discovered as coextensive with humanity, and thus, while losing nothing of its height, acquires new vastness of extension.

The rôle of different ideals within that sphere of reality which has been personified as the Holy Spirit has differed enormously in different ages and in different individuals and sects. It differs according to the scale of values which is adopted.

To take a few extreme cases, partly from other fields, there have been artists to whom æsthetic truth, artistic rightness of perception and expression, have been infinitely more important, more valuable to them, than intellectual truth or any moral qualities. Their contemporaries have generally reprobated them, but posterity has been blessed in their achievements. In precisely the same way the man of science may live mainly and chiefly for the discovery of new truth, and put that at the top of his pyramid of values, neglecting beauty and the more human and domestic virtues. Or, finally, there have been many religious men and women who have found the assurance of salvation, the sense of righteousness, or the delights of religious contemplation, so far more valuable than anything else that they have " made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake " or, in other ways, expressed their asceticism and their contempt for so-called earthly values ; or have given themselves up so completely to the mystic life, neglecting good works and ordinary religious observance as well as secular

values, that they have become objects of scandal even to the faithful.

In general, however, the ideals enshrined in the conception of the Holy Ghost include in the highest rank those of Righteousness with special reference to purity, and of Truth with special reference to the sense of illumination, though they, of course, include many others as well. But it should not be supposed that the reality behind the Third Person of the Trinity consists solely of ideals. It includes also all those "winds of the spirit" which appear to come from some extra-personal region to fill the sails of the mind. We all know well enough that we may perceive an ideal, understand that it should be followed, and yet draw on no interior force which enables us to live by it or through it; and equally that we may be seized and possessed by spiritual forces which we do not recognise as having previously been part of our personality, uprushing we know not whence to drive us onwards in the service of some ideal. This, in some form or another, appears to be the almost universal experience of those who in obedience to their temperament and gifts have devoted themselves to pure art, pure science, pure philosophy, or pure religion: they seem when most successful in their work to be least personal. The same in its degree is true of all of us in our everyday life. General Booth once said that religion was something that came to us from outside: this is a singularly unsatisfactory definition, since it would apply equally well to a dozen other activities of the mind—we have only to recollect what we experienced when we first fell in love, or when we performed some action in obedience to a sense of

inward compulsion, but against all the feelings of our everyday personality.

The reality behind all these cases of irruptive spiritual force is constituted by those parts of the inborn capacities of mind and soul which have not been utilised in the building-up of personality. These inborn capacities of men, theirs through no merit or fault of their own, are given to them once and for all by heredity and early environment. The utmost that we, as individuals and persons, can do is to utilise the capacities which are thus presented for our use; we often do not even use them, but leave them to rust.

The contemplation of our own selves and human nature, the miracle of its existence as a product of natural evolution, the amazing fact that a man is a mere portion of the common and universal substances of the world, but so organised as to be able to know truth, will the contest of nature, aspire to goodness, and experience unutterable beauty—that is perhaps the fullest way in which the givenness of our capacities comes home to us. But it is not everyone who is prone to contemplation. To most people the two chief ways in which this reality which I have assumed to be the basis for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit becomes realised are in the irruption into conscious life of mental powers not at all or not fully utilised in the building up of personality, and in the swallowing up of self or personality in the consciousness of something larger and more embracing. The building up of personality consists in adjusting the wholly or partially disconnected instincts and tendencies with which we are born into a connected whole in which the parts

are in organic relation with each other; to this we are forced by experience, by the outer and inner conflicts which naturally occur but must be adjusted if we are to lead a life worth living, and by the light of reason which confronts the actual with the possible and the ideal.

This organised mutual relation of mental capacities and tendencies, each adjusted in some measure to the rest, and each thus becoming not merely one in a sum of properties, but an essential part of an organic unity, is what we call the personal self. But it is by no means necessary that all our capacities should be early or indeed ever thus organised in mutual relation; and in so far as they are not thus organised, they remain outside the self, outside the personality. On the other hand, it is always possible for some experience to bring any such disconnected portion of our mental and spiritual outfit into connection with the organised part, and for this connection to be not merely a transitory one, but to remain, and to involve the permanent addition to the personal organism of something new. Whether the connection be permanent or merely temporary, it is often experienced as the irruption of something outside the self into the self; it is also often experienced as a recognition of mental forces within the self which had previously been unrecognised—a bewildering sense of powers which seem at the same time immanent and transcendent in regard to the self. Both these ways of experience will be realised to be perfectly natural if the principle which I have outlined of the upbuilding of personality is accepted. There must always be a fringe of faculty only in part and dimly connected

with the strongly personal central core where organisation has proceeded furthest. There may also be wholly untapped regions, or, more frequently, minor systems which are definitely kept apart from the majority by the psychological forces of repression. The more apart or the more unrealised the faculty has been, the more its recognition will come as a sense of an external gift: the more it has been in subconscious connection with the rest, the more will it appear as immanent. But in most cases at least the experience will combine the two at first sight incompatible notions of invasion of the self from outside, and the discovery of powers that are permanently and inevitably immanent within the self.

The other aspect of this problem to which I referred consists in the process, in a sense opposite to that we have just been considering, in which the personality, instead of adding to itself, has the sensation of being swallowed up in something larger than personality. This, however, will occur naturally whenever the pursuit of some ideal comes to dominate strongly over the immediate interests of the self. Any ideal, by its very nature, is beyond the limitations of the individual, beyond the particular of place or time: and yet, of course, the ideal in any actual case is grasped and acted upon by an individual personality. Here again, therefore, there comes in again the double sense of internal and external, immanence and transcendence in combination. Complete absorption in a mathematical problem, complete disregard of danger in the wish to save a child from a burning house, complete neglect of all the ordinary business of life

by the man or woman in love, complete oblivion of the outer world in mystical contemplation, whether religious or artistic—in all such cases the self is forgotten, the ordinary interests of the personality are swallowed up and dominated by a supra-personal interest which yet is organically connected with the personality.

In all cases, in our attempt to translate the terms of Christian theology into terms of our own, we may say that what has been described as the Holy Spirit is that part of human nature which impresses by its givenness, by its transcendence of the personal self regarded as a self-centred mental organisation, and by its compulsive power of driving human nature on towards an ideal.

Finally there remains the second person, the Logos, the Son. In order not to be misinterpreted, let me remind my readers at the outset that orthodox theology, in regard to the Second Person of the Trinity, presents us with a doctrine far from simple, the result of a long process of development. The original idea of a temporal Messiah, destined in his lifetime to lead the chosen people to success, soon gave place to that of a Messiah shortly to come again in glory and bring the end of the world and the justification of the elect. As time went slowly by, and the Second Coming tarried, this idea too faded, and the messianic idea was transferred more and more to the kingdom that is within, to the problem of personal salvation. Here it made intimate contact with various of the existing mystery religions, which, long before the birth of Jesus, were built upon the idea of worshippers obtaining holiness through some form of mysterious

communion with the god, and upon the possibility of transferring sacredness from god to man; Christianity both borrowed and lent to these, on the whole receiving more than it gave. In the first few centuries of its existence it also made intimate contact with the Judaised Greek philosophy of which Philo is the most celebrated representative. Here it encountered the idea of the Logos, and eventually incorporated it, in a way peculiarly its own, with the messianic idea, both of course being linked up with the historical figure of Jesus. But even so, the doctrine of the Second Person was by no means established. As everyone who has an elementary acquaintance with Church history is aware, the full divinity of the Son—Messiah-Logos-Jesus—was long in dispute. For a large and important body, Christ was definitely less than divine, subordinate to God; and it was only after three centuries of theological dispute and development that the Council of Nicæa gave Christianity the doctrine of Christ as co-equal with God the Father, which it has retained with little or no modification to the present day.

When I speak of the Second Person of the Trinity, therefore, I am not referring to the historical Jesus, nor to the idea of Jesus which was present to the minds of the twelve apostles or the early church, but to this complex idea, as presented in the Nicene creed and subsequent theology, deriving from Jewish and pagan religious sources, from Greek philosophy, and from patristic theology, as well as from the man Jesus, the facts of his life and death, and the legends associated with him.

And this, I make bold to say, embodies the

fundamental reality that only through human nature, through personalities with all their limitations, is the infinite of the ideal made finite and actual, is the potential which we have recognised behind the term Holy Spirit realised in the world, is the apparently complete discontinuity between matter and spirit bridged over. Modern science is able in one not unimportant particular to amplify the original doctrine. Through our knowledge of evolutionary biology, we can see that human nature is not as a matter of fact alone in this; but that human nature merely does more efficiently, more completely, consciously, and on a definitely higher plane, what other life had been doing gropingly, unconsciously, and partially for æons before man ever was. We can therefore say that the nature which finds its highest expression in human nature constitutes this bridge; since, however, it is, so far as we know, only human nature which mediates fully, or indeed at all in certain domains, between ideal and actual, between spiritual and material, it is only human nature which need be fully considered, although the evolutionary background lends a richness and a solidity of foundation to all the conceptions involved.

This same conception, of human nature being in its highest aspects divine, is found in many places. It animates the myth of Prometheus who stole divine fire from heaven for man. It underlies the frequent deification, usually after death, of heroes and great men. Even in our own days, there is a definite cult of Lenin in Russia, his picture taking precisely the same place in some households which the sacred ikons do in others; and Mussolini is

known as " the Myth " by the more enthusiastic of his followers. It is at the root of Blake's allegorical mysticism, and Wordsworth's famous " Ode." It made possible the existence and power of such ideas as the divine right of kings or the infallibility and supreme power of the popes as well as the actual deification and worship of the Roman Emperors during their lifetime.

To me it is simply the obverse of the ideas which have already been considered in relation to the Christian doctrine of the Holy Ghost. It is a matter of plain fact that all the faculties of human nature which seem most obviously immanent yet possess in some degree the property of transcendence, in the same way in which the reverse was also found true. And this, as I have already tried to indicate, follows inevitably from the human faculty of conceptual thought, the concept always, by its mere nature, transcending every particular in the general, and automatically providing an ideal goal for every direction and every striving.

Orthodox theology, naturally moving within the bounds of the theistic conception, prefers to interpret these facts by saying that God was incarnated in human nature in the person of Jesus ; and, when both liberal and logical, by admitting also that God is partially incarnated in all human beings.

I prefer to say that the spiritual elements which are usually styled divine are part and parcel of human nature. Thus the reality personified as the Second Person of the Trinity becomes to our reinterpretation the mediating faculty of human persons between the infinity of the ideal and the finite actuality of existence.

Finally, there remains the relation between the three persons of the Trinity—to us the three personifications of three aspects of reality. It has been in one sense the great triumph of Christianity to have built up this elastic and vital doctrine of the Trinity, in spite of its apparent incomprehensibility. This doctrine, for instance, made it clear that the object of worship was not merely external power which must be feared or loved as the case may be, but also internal power, immanent in or at least entering into human nature, and operating through and by means of human nature. In thus combining external and internal, it has been at a considerable advantage over completely monotheist religions like Islam, which inevitably lay too much stress upon external power, and also over non-theistic religions like pure Buddhism, which inevitably lay too much stress upon the inner life and divorce it as far as possible from outer realities. It also, through having the three persons combined into an indivisible whole, has been at an advantage over all polytheistic religions, in which various aspects of reality are inevitably given too great sharpness and independence of each other.

In our task of re-interpretation, we must ask what is the reality which is symbolised by the union of the three persons in one God. It is in this aspect of theology that I think the facts of science may be seen to have the greatest value. Science has gone a very long way towards proving the essential unity of all phenomena. She has at least provided a strong basis for a reasonable belief in this unity and continuity, which, in the way in which it formulates

itself to me personally, I will do my best to summarise here.

I personally believe in the uniformity of nature, in other words, that nature is seen to be orderly once we take the trouble to find out the way of her orderliness, and that there are not two realms of reality, one natural, the other supernatural and from time to time invading and altering the course of events in the natural.

I believe also in the unity of nature. Scientific discovery has tended without ceasing to reduce the number of ultimate substances with which we have to deal. There exist a million different species of animals and plants, each chemically different from the rest; each species contains thousands or millions of chemically different individuals; there exist an almost equally unlimited number of not-living, separate and different substances of non-living, matter. Yet all these, alive or not, work with the same energy, are built up out of the same matter, resolvable into the same few score elements, and these very elements in their turn (so the physicists tell us) are merely so many different quantitative arrangements of two kinds of units, of positive and negative electricity. If the trend of discovery continue, we shall eventually be enabled to see these positive and negative electricities as two modifications of the same final unitary substance.

I believe in unity by continuity. Matter does not appear or disappear, nor do living things arise except from previously existing things essentially like themselves. The more complex matter that is alive must at some time have originated from matter that was not alive, but again by a gradual con-

tinuity, so that only by comparing the last stage with the first could one see how considerable had been the achievement. I believe in this continuity of all matter, living or non-living; and I believe also in the continuity of mind. If, as is the case, mind and matter coexist in the higher animals and man; and if, as seems certain, the higher animals and man are descended from lower animals, and these in their turn from lifeless matter, then there seems no escape from the belief that all reality has both a material and a mental side, however rudimentary and below the level of anything like our consciousness that mental side may be.

In any case, I believe in the unity of mind and matter in the one ultimate world-substance, as two of its aspects. Such a view makes it unnecessary and indeed impossible to ask the question whether matter can have a direct effect on mind or mind on matter. I believe that whenever a thought passes in the mind, it is accompanied by a definite physical change in the brain. That particular physical change could no more happen without the passage of that particular thought than vice versa. When we say that a drug affects the mind, we mean that the drug affects the physical brain-process, and therefore the thought. When we say that the will affects the body, we mean that the body could only be affected in that particular way by a mental process called willing together with its necessary physical accompaniment. Mental and material are thus, to my belief, but two aspects of one reality, two abstractions made by us from the concrete ground of experience; they cannot really be separated, and it is false philosophy to try to think them apart.

This does not, of course, imply that the mental side of one process of reality may not be negligible, while in some other process it overshadows the material; any more than it is impossible for one aspect of the material side—say the mechanical—to preponderate in one process; another—say the chemical—in another.

All reality then consists, as Whitehead puts it, of events. The events are all events in the history of a single substance. The events looked at from outside are matter; experienced from inside, they are mind.

These assurances of unity, uniformity, and continuity, derived from the discoveries of physico-chemical science and evolutionary biology, were not available to the intellectual enquirers of earlier ages, who could thus only guess in the dark. The speculations of the Greek philosophers, for instance, as to the ultimate elements out of which the world is built and as to the evolution of life are in no way comparable to the view of science to-day. The one can rightly be described as a set of philosophic myths, while the other reposes upon tested and organised experience.

Utilising these assurances as part of our background, we can then proceed to envisage the relation between the three aspects of the unity of nature symbolised as the three persons of the Trinity somewhat as follows. The first person represents the power and externality of matter and material law, given and inexplicable. The third person represents the illumination and compulsive power of thought, feeling, will—the faculties of mind in its highest ranges and at the level when it

deals with universals; these also are inexplicable, but must be accepted as given. The second person is the link between the other two; it is life, in concrete actuality, mediating between ideal and practice, incarnating (in perfectly literal phrase) more and more of spirit in matter. This progressive incarnation may be unconscious, as appears to be the case with organic evolution, or conscious, as in the deliberate attempt by man to realise his visions.

And all non-living nature is one matter; all life is constructed of and sprung from this same matter. Further, all thought and emotion, even the highest, springs from natural mind, whose slow development can be traced in life's evolution, so that life in general and man in particular are those parts of the world substance in which the latent mental properties are revealed to their fullest extent. Thus the three aspects of reality, so separate at first glance, are in point of fact genetically related in a single reality.

On the moral side too this unity underlying apparent diversity can also be traced. It may not solve the problem of evil, which is probably insoluble in the form in which it is usually stated, but it does contribute to the idea of a moral unity when it is found that movements and actions which at first sight seem neutral or evil are found on analysis to be inextricably part and parcel of a larger movement towards good. This is quite definitely so in regard to biological progress, and is also a commonplace of the human moralist.

. . . . . .

I have in this chapter made some brief and extremely incomplete attempt at explaining the lines

of thought that are in my mind, and at showing how certain ideas of current theology might be translated or interpreted in terms of this way of thinking. This must not be supposed to mean that I regard those doctrines of Christian theology, even when thus interpreted, as necessarily the best way of presenting the realities behind theology. The remaining part of the book will be largely taken up with justifying the line of approach which I have adopted, and in discussing possible ways of expressing religious realities.

Nowadays, matters of national defence, of politics, of religion, are still too important for knowledge, and remain subjects for certitude.—W. TROTTER, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War.*

The curious and sad fact is that the human mind seems to delight in creating prisons for itself The scientific spirit created a mechanico-materialistic scheme which has ended by becoming the enemy of scientific research. And so with religion. The pride of a pretended knowledge reduces to a mechanical scheme the mysteries of life and death, and provides superficial standardised solutions for the problems of existence. —J. C. HARDWICK, *Religion and Science* (1920).

Though dogmas have their measure of truth, which is unalterable, in their precise forms they are narrow, limitative, and alterable : in effect untrue, when carried over beyond the proper scope of their utility. . . . In Christian history, the charge of idolatry has been bandied to and fro among rival theologians. Probably, if taken in its wide sense, it rests with equal truth on all the main churches, Protestant and Catholic. Idolatry is the necessary product of static dogmas.—A. N. WHITEHEAD, *Religion in the Making.*

We men of science, at any rate, hold ourselves morally bound to " try all things and hold fast to that which is good " ; and among public benefactors, we reckon him who explodes old error, as next in rank to him who discovers new truth.—T. H. HUXLEY, *Life and Letters.*

Your astonishment at the life of fallacies, permit me to say, is shockingly unphysiological. They, like other low organisms, are independent of brains, and only wriggle the more, the more they are smitten on the place where the brains ought to be.—*Ibid.*

A practical man is a man who practises the errors of his forefathers.—BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

" The undevout astronomer is mad," said eighteenth-century deism ; to-day we are more apt to think that the uncritical astronomer is dense. There is a sort of colossal stupidity about the stars in their courses that overpowers and disquiets us. . . . Consciousness itself is essentially greater than the very vastness which appals us, seeing that it embraces and envelops it.—WILLIAM ARCHER, *God and Mr Wells* (1917).

One begins to wonder whether the material advantages of keeping business and religion in different compartments are sufficient to balance the moral disadvantages. The Protestant and Puritan could separate them comfortably because the first activity pertained to earth and the second to heaven, which was elsewhere. The believer in Progress could separate them comfortably because he regarded the first as the means to the establishment of heaven upon earth hereafter. But there is a third state of mind ; . . . and if heaven is not elsewhere and not hereafter, it must be here and now or not at all. If there is no moral objective in Economic Progress, then it follows that we must not sacrifice, even for a day, moral to material

advantage—in other words, that we may no longer keep business and religion in separate compartments of the soul.—J. M. KEYNES, in *The Nation and Athenæum* (1925).

Religion has lost the helm of the State, but not its own mystical power. It has turned inwards. There are more people interested in religion and more religious literature than ever before. Men are regular drunkards of the sacramental wines—in secret. Surrendering their outer lives to the State, they enthrone the Beloved Ego in their own hearts and worship him. . . . Since the State is separate from Religion, and Law from Morality, since Science is divorced from Wisdom, and Credit from real Service, men sever themselves from reality and try to dwell like Gods in their own imaginations. This is an intolerable life.—P. MAIRET, in *The New Age* (1927).

Mythology is the process of reflection which leads to conclusions eventually discarded as false, demonstrably false to any one who compared them with the idea of the Godhead which he had in his own soul. . . . The course of history has shown that religion could continue to exist after the destruction of mythology, as it had done after its birth. But of this the generations to whom myths had been transmitted and for whom mythology was the accepted belief, could not be aware.—F. B. JEVONS, *The Idea of God* (1910).

Chapter III

The Situation To-day

What is the situation to-day? It is common knowledge that the position of the established Christian churches and older sects is not what it was. Their own spokesmen lament the decay in the number of church members; the great falling-off in the matter of church-going; the corresponding spread of a purely irreligious spirit of mind, an untutored and unreflecting paganism veneered with jazz and motor-travel and wireless; the tendency to employ Sunday for general recreation rather than to regard it as a day of religious devotion; the dearth of candidates for the ministry, and, more serious still, dearth within dearth, the dearth of quality within the ranks of those who do present themselves; the extraordinary spread of mushroom faiths, crank beliefs, superstitions, new sects, and indeed new religions, of which the most important in numbers and influence are perhaps Christian Science and Spiritualism, although those which manage to combine what they are pleased to call New Thought with a flavour of Eastern religious thinking and philosophy, and also with some insistence upon vegetarianism or other unusual dietary, are serious rivals.

These are all grave changes for the older Churches, and many of them, though by no means all (since

desire for change in religious organisation may denote a just dissatisfaction with the organisations existing at the time), are serious for religion as a whole, or at least for all the dominant creeds. But by far the gravest change of all is the abstention of a large part of the cultivated and disciplined thought of our time from all and sundry established or organised religions. This point hardly needs labouring; but it is so important and so serious that I must amplify it a little.

If there is one characteristic of our present age by which we may set it over against the Middle Ages, for example, or the Renaissance, it is the growth of scientific knowledge and scientific application. For six or seven centuries, ever since the scientific spirit began to raise its head after the supineness of the Dark Ages, there has been intermittent friction or conflict between the Church and the scientific spirit. There was friction with some of the early anatomists; there was coercion of poor Roger Bacon, that genius born before his time; there was open conflict with Galileo over the question of the earth's central position in the scheme of things; there would have been conflict with Descartes had not that prudent man, with Galileo's fate before him, decided not to publish his cosmology; there was conflict with Giordano Bruno—conflict which ended in his being burnt alive; there was a great pother aboutWilliam Smith and Lyell and the other early geologists when they showed that the Mosaic accounts of creation and of the deluge were untenable; there was (and still is) conflict with Darwin and his followers for maintaining the mutability of species and (most

heinous crime of all !) for showing that man is descended by natural evolution from lower animals ; there was a great outcry when scientific method was applied, in the form of the so-called "Higher Criticism," to the text and sources of the Bible, and especially the Gospels ; there is to-day friction, though of a confused sort, between the usual Christian view and the discoveries of modern psychology.

At the beginning of this long period intellect threw itself most powerfully into logic, philosophy, and theology, much more fitfully and less thoroughly into natural science. As a result the conflicts generally ended, during the first half of the period, in the triumph, and temporarily at least the overwhelming triumph, of the orthodox religious view. By the late seventeenth century, however, matters had changed. Science had become justified ; it was desired ; it became a fellowship, with its own organisation, and later almost with its own orthodoxy. In spite of the earlier temporary triumphs of religious thought when in conflict with science, the scientific view had always in the long run been victorious ; all that was effected was injustice or cruelty to individual discoverers, discouragement and delay to the progress of discovery itself. But by the time of the geological, biological, and biblical conflicts of the nineteenth century, the forces had become equally matched. Those struggles of the nineteenth century terminated by the leaders of religious thought climbing down from their father's untenable position and using the discoveries of science—so recently abominated—to buttress their own new-modified views.

This climbing-down process, however, went so far that the position of the more liberal-minded Christians became vague and indeed equivocal. By some schools of liberal theology the Mosaic account of creation and of the fall of man is not literally believed in, but upheld as symbolic or dismissed as myth. The more flagrant miracles of both Old and New Testament are discounted as inventions of a credulous age, while the rest can be set down to faith-healing. If a census could be taken, it would quite certainly be found that a very large number even of Christian ministers believed neither in the Virgin birth, nor in a physical hell, nor in everlasting punishment for sinners. Earnest Christians have even disbelieved in the actual fact of the Resurrection of Jesus. On the other side, the validity of scientific discoveries are fully admitted—the earth is not flat but round ; it is not fixed or in any way central, but circles round the sun ; the sun is not set in a hemispherical firmament, nor is it in its turn central, but floats with a million brothers in a space of appalling vastness ; the age of the earth is not a few thousand years, but many hundreds of millions ; there is no near " end of the world " in prospect, but a vista of other hundreds of millions of years opens before it and the life it carries ; there was no original golden age, but a gradual ascent of man from the brutes ; the Heavens may " proclaim the glory of God," but it is not in the way that was once believed, as revealing a personal artificer who sees that the mechanism does not get out of order ; where Paley saw, in the adaptation of a bird's wing or a bee's cell to its function, evidence of a supernatural designer, the

modern liberal cleric sees the blind working of natural selection, and stigmatises Paley's idea as "Carpenter theology."

As regards more general principles, the change is equally radical. The liberal theologian, believing in the uniformity of nature and recognising the validity of the laws of nature as revealed by the patient testing of science, inevitably finds the activities of his personal God receding more and more into the background. God does not make the rivers burst out in flood, or release the lightning, or cause the earthquake or the epidemic in the simple and direct causal and personal way which was originally believed. If he causes them, it is in no other way than that in which all events in the world, from the fall of a stone or the boiling of a kettle, are caused: in other words, liberal theology is thus being driven either into the unsatisfactory unorthodoxy of pure pantheism, or else to belief in a God in some way wholly outside or behind the world of existence, who perhaps has set the machinery going, but does not any longer interfere with it, and in any event is thus become much more shadowy, far, and remote than the God of the Middle Ages.

The result, to one observing it dispassionately, appears to be an unsatisfactory mixture. The two components refuse to interpenetrate or combine, and the main effect is a dilution of both. The theistic view has been watered down and lost much of its power and savour, the scientific outlook is not rigorously adhered to, and so loses the severity and compelling force which is one of its great sources of strength. On the theological side

orthodox Christianity has lost its original advantage, and is now on the defensive and slowly yielding ground. Perfectly true that it still commands the faith and adherence of the great majority of the population of professedly Christian countries ; but this depends on other factors than rational grounds of theology. Those we shall discuss in later chapters. Here it suffices to point out that in the theological sphere all sorts of new difficulties have arisen in modern times, and that these difficulties naturally loom largest to those who, like the professional men of science, are forced by training and temperament alike to pay full attention to the claims of knowledge and pure reason, whithersoever these shall lead them.[1]

But this failure to conform to orthodox or indeed to any Christian belief is not the prerogative of science : it is found in greater or less degree among all those who make it their profession or employ their leisure to cultivate the mind. The American psychologist Leuba some years ago published the results of two questionnaires which he had planned and carried out in such a way as to obviate the statistical errors which accompany the improper use of the questionnaire method. They were designed to reveal the extent of belief or disbelief in a personal

[1] To realise how different our outlook is from that of a bare century and a half ago, we may read the passage on the judgment day from Young's *Night Thoughts*, the popular poem of its day :—

> " Now charnels rattle : scattered limbs and all
> The various bones, obsequious to the call,
> Self-moved, advance ; the neck perhaps to meet
> The distant feet ; the distant head the feet.
> Dreadful to view, see through the dusky sky
> Fragments of bodies, in confusion, fly . . . "

Etcetera ; and reflect that this was meant to be taken seriously.

God of the type postulated by Christian theology, and in personal immortality, and were circulated the one among college students, the other among professors of history, science, psychology, and sociology. Both revealed a surprisingly low percentage of believers; but the most salient fact was that this percentage was highest in the students who had just entered college, lower in the latter half of college life, lower again among professors than among students, and lowest among those professors whom, in a previous enquiry by another authority, the votes of their colleagues had pronounced especially eminent in their own work.

Only last year a questionnaire on religious belief was drawn up for the London *Nation*. Not only the readers of the *Nation*, but also those of the *Daily News*, were invited to send in their replies. By far the most interesting fact which emerged was the difference between the two sets of answers Whereas a majority of the *Nation* readers did not believe in the personal God of Christianity, the great majority of the *Daily News* readers did so. The same difference, but accentuated, appeared as regards attendance at a place of worship. On every question asked, the readers of the *News* were more orthodox, and if unorthodox, less radically so, than those of the *Nation*. It requires no proof that the latter will on the average have been privileged to receive a fuller education and to have had more leisure for later thought and cultivation of the mind than the former.

A converse sign of the times is the vulgarisation of Christianity so prevalent to-day in many quarters, especially in the United States, where business men

succeed in feeling a religious glow by proclaiming ordinary commercial morality (which, by the way, would have been wholly repudiated by the Church in the Middle Ages) as Christian service. Those who are unfamiliar with this degradation of the Gospels should read Bruce Barton's *The Man Whom Nobody Knows*. Mr Barton is an American, and head of an advertising business. He tells us that Jesus produced "four Page-One stories in one day"; that the message of the New Testament is "emblazoned in the advertising pages of every magazine," and much more in the same style. And his book has had a very wide sale.

One final instance: a couple of years ago a number of well-known writers were asked to write articles on their religious beliefs for a London newspaper. When these were published in book form under the title of "My Religion," they were so strikingly unorthodox that Father Ronald Knox maintained they should have been called "My Irreligion."

I will quote a couple of sentences from this book as eminently symptomatic. Mr Hugh Walpole writes: "I suppose that if you were to question nine out of ten of grown men and women of to-day as to their religious experience they would describe to you an evolution through three states of discovery. First, the child's acceptance of the dogmas handed over to it by its elders; second, the adolescent's reaction against that acceptance; and, third, the evolution of some positive personal opinion born of personal experience"—which, he later makes clear, generally has little or nothing to do with orthodox Christianity. On the, unfortunately,

crucial side of theology Miss Rebecca West writes: "Ecclesiastics who talk about the Virgin Birth are as absurd as persons would be who, having been visited by the wisest man in the world, stopped repeating his wisdom to an audience longing to hear it, and wrangled whether he had travelled to their house by a 'bus or a tramcar."

The general fact is plain. It was the Church which, during the Dark Ages, just kept alight the spark of learning. In the Middle Ages she led the way in the rise of intellect. She contributed more than her share to the rise of the modern world of thought, either directly, or through the contributions which she made in the shape of boys brought up in the atmosphere of vicarage or manse. But in the last half-century she has rapidly lost both influence and prestige in the field of pure thought, for the simple reason that the main stream of thought will no longer flow along the channels provided by the Church's scheme of things. Nor let it be supposed that because I have been speaking solely of things intellectual that I am making the intellectualist mistake of undervaluing other sides of life. The Church has lost influence almost equally in the field of morality. The Christian views of marriage and divorce are being strongly contested. The problem of birth-control and its regulation is already providing difficulties, and may in the near future be expected to cause violent dissensions within the Roman Catholic Church.

As regards social and economic morality, the mediæval Church held perfectly definite views.[1] The taking of interest was, theoretically at least,

[1] See R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.

forbidden. Private property was tolerated, but it was regarded as held in trust for humanity at large, and it most definitely involved duties as well as rights. Great riches were reprobated. With the rise of the State's power and the relegation of most Churches to a place within, not outside or above, the State, subservience to current economic notions speedily followed. The present widespread glorification of money-making and money-makers would have horrified the conscience of the Church in the thirteenth century. It seems incredible, but it is a fact which is worth quoting because so symptomatic, that a London daily paper with an enormous circulation recently held a prize competition in which its readers were invited to select the three "most famous living Englishmen" from a list compiled in the editorial offices, which contained not a single artist nor man of letters, no divine nor man of science, nor explorer nor social reformer. No, it was compiled on a very simple principle—all its members were millionaires!

The Churches take no active steps to reform such affairs. That is left to economic innovators with schemes for super-tax and death duties; to the Bolshevists, whose crusade against property has, or had, as Mr. Keynes pointed out, a religious fervour behind it: to the Fascists, who are overhauling the idea of private property in subordination to the idea of the super-organism, the Fascist State; to social reformers with new views on marriage, guild socialism, or eugenics.[1]

[1] Mr Tawney (op. cit.) has well traced the steps by which the Church came to abandon its social philosophy and to become the prey of Indifferentism, "that most tyrannical and paralysing of theories." The remark

Politically, the decline of the Church may be dated from the first stirrings of nationalism in mediæval Europe; and all the violently nationalist movement of the last century has made churches more and more the appendages of nations, as the Great War vividly showed. In her capacity of beneficiary, as well as in that of giver, the Church has become of less importance. Even in the Middle Ages the Church in Europe did not rival modern Tibet, the theocracy of theocracies, in which a quarter of the revenues of a country nearly as large as Europe and with over five million inhabitants is spent upon melted butter to burn before the images and shrines of the temples, and fifteen out of every hundred of the adult male population are monks. However, the mediæval Church was the greatest landowner in every country in Europe, and was the recipient of enormous benefactions in money and treasure, in works of art, in land. To-day the bulk of charitable gifts, especially the larger ones, go to education, to hospitals, to scientific research, and to lay charity.

But when all is said and done, it is the intellectual cleavage which is the most striking. It is also the most serious, for it is the root of the reason for the

ascribed to Lord Melbourne (I quote from memory), that "Things have come to a pretty pass when religion presumes to inquire into a man's private life," may be apocryphal, but it typifies the attitude of society to an indifferentist Church. Tawney writes of the Church of England in the eighteenth century: "It was, therefore, in the sphere of providing succour for the non-combatants and for the wounded, not in inspiring the main army, that the social work of the Church was conceived to lie. . . . In spite of the genuine, if somewhat unctuous, solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the poorer classes, which inspired the evangelical revival, it abandoned the fundamental brain-work of criticism and construction to the rationalist and the humanitarian." This criticism, especially on the side of intellect and progressive morality, still holds good to-day.

decay in orthodoxy's influence. And in this sphere the contrast between religion and science is at the present moment most worth considering. The thought of religion, even of the single religion Christianity, has become self-contradictory. The liberal wing of various churches and sects has long moved into that half-and-half position of which I have already spoken; the outsider may be pardoned if he compare their attitude to that uneasy but proverbial one of trying to ride two horses at once. The Fundamentalists, on the other hand, are real bibliolaters, who take their stand on the verbal truth of the Bible, and proclaim (unmindful of the mere fact that there exist tens of thousands of devout Christians to whom the fabulousness of Noah's ark or Jonah's whale is a matter of the utmost unconcern), that to admit the error of one jot or tittle is to sacrifice the whole of Christian belief. On the Roman Catholic side the advanced Modernists go so far as to assert that the Christ which their Church worships is essentially a creation of the Church, with little and negligible resemblance to the historical Jesus—but yet, since the product of the need of many generations of pious and inspired men, worthy to be worshipped. Needless to say, the official Roman Church disagrees with this position. One prominent English Churchman has recently advocated the view that the æsthetic truth of a work of art is something quite different from scientific truth; and that the truth of religion is of the æsthetic, not the scientific kind. Another, robbed by Darwinism of the belief that the adaptations of animals to their modes of life are evidence for Divine design and purpose, snatches at the fact

of evolutionary progress (which, of course, is no less explicable on Darwinian principles than is organic adaptation) in support of the idea of a purposeful creator.

Thus part of Christian thought tries to adapt itself to the new systems which have arisen from the discoveries of science; while the rest frankly repudiates the thought of science, and prefers to keep its single seat, although outdistanced in the race for truth. This scattering self-opposition of present-day Christian thought is in sharp contrast with the thought of science. This too is often, at any one time, self-contradictory. However, its tendency is not a scattering but a converging one; the opposing views are not held as final dogmas, but in the belief, which is all the time being realised, that further facts will smooth out the difficulties and resolve the apparent contradictions. Nor does any of the imperfection of scientific thought come from a desire to conform itself to some other independent system; it proceeds on the assumption that the scientific method—of unprejudiced observation and experiment, the framing of hypotheses and theories, and then the verifying of these by more observation and experiment, of putting truth above our desires, and of publishing its evidence in full—that this is valid wherever it can be applied. Professor Whitehead, in his brilliant and profound book, *Science and the Modern World*, has drawn an illuminating contrast between the intellectual methods of religion and of science. He points out that, while a new discovery in science, however revolutionary a change it necessitates in accepted systems of thought, is regarded as an advance and a triumph;

in religion the abandonment of a traditional outlook is almost always looked on as a defeat—a battle lost; and to this more than any other single cause he traces the loss of influence and prestige which the organised religion of the Christian churches lament to-day.

It really is lamentable that genuinely religious people imagine that they are advancing the cause of religion, instead of hindering it, by anti-evolution legislation, persecutions of opinion such as the Dayton trial, or prosecutions for heresy such as that brought by certain Presbyterians against Professor Davey in Belfast this very summer. While the so-called religions thus belabour each other, or tilt at windmills, the world moves ahead, and they are left still further behind.

One of the most urgent needs of humanity at the present time is a common outlook, comparable in its comprehensiveness and wide acceptance with the common outlook, religious and philosophical, which dominated the Middle Ages. Even during the Roman Empire there can scarcely have existed such diversity of incompatible systems of thought, all claiming the complete allegiance of men, as exists to-day. We need take but a few of the contrasts. The present is a time of nationalism more intense than ever before, save perhaps in the decades just before the War: it also is one of the few ages to have taken a constructive step towards super-national organisation, in the form of the League of Nations, and the first to whom that super-national organisation was envisaged as eventually embracing the whole world: and it also—third incompatibility—is devoting itself to class organisation on a

scale never before approached. It is the age, *par excellence*, of science—scientific knowledge has never reached such extension, never grown so rapidly; but it is also an age of rampant ignorance, frivolousness, and superstition, which have never before been able to indulge themselves so openly, nor to exert such power as now. It is the age when the most enormous private fortunes have been made and private money-making most esteemed for its own sake; and also the age when socialism has come into new power and co-operation won its greatest triumphs. Pure materialism has probably never before been so prominent; and yet art and music are widely and deeply appreciated, and poetry actually pays. Just when the idea of a world-state began to take shape in men's minds the problems of race and colour became acute. The War was to "make the world safe for democracy"—and one of the most notable results has been the throwing over of democracy by both Russia and Italy, not to mention other nations. It is the age when information has been most widely diffused—and yet the age in which the sources of information have been most successfully tampered with for purposes of deliberate and one-sided propaganda. Finally, there is the great opposition we have already spoken of between the view of the great religions and the view of science, as to the nature, origin, and destiny of man and his relation to the rest of the universe.

The world is very much in the melting-pot; and it will not be able to jump out until it knows in what direction it wants to jump. But to know this it must have some clear general ideas in its head, not be fed with imcompatible notions until it feels

bewildered and gives up the attempt at comprehension. Neither existing religion nor existing science is equal to the task. All the great religions of the present stick tight to doctrines which science and any educated thought which takes account of science finds difficult or impossible of acceptance. Science, being yet young and having naturally set out to grapple with the simpler facts of nature, is only well-organised on the side of physics, chemistry, and pure biology; on the human side, with its incredible complexities and its great diversities of individual minds, it is yet infantile, and we can still learn much more about some aspects of human nature from poets and novelists, from looking at pictures and listening to music, from a study of religion and mysticism, from history and biography, not to mention from daily intercourse, than from all the text-books of psychology in existence. Religion is based upon a particular emotional approach to life. Science is intellectual, primarily a method for discovering truth and organising knowledge. However, religion always and inevitably comes to involve the whole personality, and invades both the intellectual and the moral spheres, advancing explanations and proscribing modes of action. In the same way science, albeit essentially an intellectual method, is based upon the desire for truth, and if other systems advance explanations which flagrantly conflict with its own, it must do battle with them or be false to itself.

As a matter of historical fact, religion has started at the top and worked downward; its beginning lies in some of the most complex phenomena of the universe, in highly organised states of mind, of

which, so far as we know, man alone among organisms is capable. Science, on the other hand, has begun at the bottom, with geometry and mechanics, and has worked gradually up through the gathering complexity of physics, chemistry and biology, to mind and man.

Is it perhaps the fact that Religion, firmly based in actuality of emotion and experience, but feeling the absolute need of some intellectual explanation, has invented an *ad hoc* explanation, satisfactory enough as provisional hypothesis, but which she has afterwards made the grave mistake of setting up as immutable truth? Is it perhaps the fact that, on the other hand, Science, secure in her firm grounding, has made the error of thinking that destruction of the intellectual scaffoldings of religion would impair the reality of religion itself? Perhaps, too, Science has sometimes made the further error of mistaking firm knowledge for complete knowledge, and neglecting to see the real facts in which religion has her being. True that religion has done her best to make it difficult to discern these facts by covering them up with the clothes of theological dogma until the naked and vital reality is obscured; but also true that, as Emerson said, to *see* is the greatest gift—for a hundred men who can think there may be ten thousand thoughtless, but only one single man who can see new truth.

If that be true—and the rest of this book will be largely an attempt to prove it so—then the chief task of religion in helping to build up the unified thought of the future is to abandon the intellectual arrogance of its theology and to take a leaf out of

the book of science as to the methods by which truth may best be pursued; while the chief task of organised science in the same quest will be to enlarge its bounds, admit that the highest flights of the human spirit are as much realities as the routine activities of the human body, or the doings of the atoms and molecules of lifeless matter, to recognise for what they are the realities on which the religious life is based, to see religion's values.

I will not cease from mental fight,
  Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
  In England's green and pleasant land.
—WILLIAM BLAKE.

We cannot kindle when we will
  The fire that in the heart resides,
The spirit bloweth and is still,
  In mystery the soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
May be through hours of gloom fulfilled.
—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Morality.*

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity. . . .
. . . Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life.
—ANDREW MARVELL.

. . . Not for these I raise
  The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings; .
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised.
—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,
Ode on Intimations of Immortality.

Chapter IV

Personalia

I HAVE hesitated for some time before writing a chapter of the personal nature of the following. It is not without reluctance that one sets down incidents of one's private and personal life in public black and white. Not only that, but I felt that many of my readers might and probably would think that any such incidents were uncalled for in a book of this kind. However, after deliberation, I have come to the opposite conclusion, and this for various reasons. The authors of the other two volumes of this trio are writing as members of churches which are ancient, well-organised, and rich in adherents. I write as one who is not and has never been a member of any organised church. I do not know if any body of men and women share my views in whole or in part. In any case, I have arrived at them by myself. I have been helped, of course, by talk with friends and critics, by books, by the accidents of my life and events of the larger world, by much good fortune, and by much also that at the time seemed and indeed often was bad fortune: but, with all the help, the conclusions are my own and not those of any organisation.

Now religion, whatever else it may be, is certainly a matter involving all sides of the personality. Also religion, even old-organised religion, is in its highest

manifestations a function of the individual, an affair of the single soul, attempting to relieve or to transmute its loneliness, to communicate its joy, or to support its longings.

If I am known at all to my readers, it will be only as a biologist—one who has tried to help in the discovery of new facts about life, and, in conjunction with countless others, in the utilisation of discovery to plan and to build the great building of scientific theory. But that is a purely intellectual pursuit: and to write with any understanding of religion demands more than merely intellect. There is also the fact that the primary realities of religion are what we must call religious experiences, that only secondarily does the mind try to catch up these experiences into a coherent scheme of thought; and that the attempt to analyse the experiences or to construct a suitable organisation of thought into which they may be fitted, must, in view of the complexity of the religious experience and the limits to our knowledge and powers of analysis, be in some degree incomplete and unsuccessful. I therefore felt that to speak, even briefly, of some of my own personal experiences which are religious or bear upon the problem of religion, would be useful. It would in the first instance give a concrete background which might by some be easier of apprehension than impersonal analysis, and would certainly throw light on the analysis. Secondly, it would serve to introduce me, I hope, as someone who at least is not a mere outsider, intruding into an alien field, content to handle the subject of religion solely with the dry instruments of uncommitted reason, but who has felt religion's problems as vital prob-

lems, who has had the course of his life altered and often perplexed by the attempt to find a way out of the religious difficulties that beset him, whose will and emotions as well as his intellect have been concerned in the business.

That is my excuse for this chapter. I hasten to add that it is purely supplementary to the rest of the book, which I have tried to make as complete in itself as is possible in such small compass.

. . . . . .

Both inheritance and family tradition alike made it pretty certain that I should take an interest in religion, and further that my approach would not be an orthodox one. My grandfather, Thomas Huxley, although represented during his lifetime as a prince of infidels and arch-enemy of religion, was in reality (as I have set down elsewhere) [1] a man deeply and essentially religious by nature. His was a puritan and iconoclastic spirit, but one with profoundest capacity for reverence. That capacity he expended chiefly in reverence for truth and for moral virtue; and it upheld him in a life's work almost superhuman in its arduousness. Naturally, that Huxley tradition was in the air I breathed, with its implications of high but hard thinking, plain but fiery living, wide intellectual interest and constant intellectual achievement, great outspokenness and moral courage, and, back of all, this sense of the ultimateness and supreme value of truth and goodness. Perhaps the air of that tradition was a trifle tonic for a diffident and romantic child. It

[1] "Thomas Henry Huxley and Religion—The Modern Churchman," 1925, reprinted in J. S. Huxley, *Essays in Popular Science*, Chatto & Windus, 1926.

may have helped, by the very height of the achievement which it embodied, to encourage the growth of what psychotherapists call an inferiority complex, leading to those oscillations between self-distrust and self-assurance, despair and elation, so familiar to many growing minds. But in any case it set a standard which from very early times was of the greatest value to me.

On the other side of my descent there entered a very different strain and tradition, also religious, also moralist, but of quite other character. My great-grandfather was Thomas Arnold of Rugby, a man often abused or laughed at nowadays, but at all events one of strong religious conviction and great moral force, and a born teacher. He was able to repose his religious life quite whole-heartedly in a mildly liberal and low-church orthodoxy.

Perhaps it was his beautiful Cornish wife, in the lines of whose portrait there can be seen ineffable qualities of human graces and of a tender mystic sense which are lacking in his more rugged face and more straightforward character, but whatever the cause, certain it is that most of his numerous children were endowed with a combination of qualities, which, though valuable and rich, did not promote peace of mind or assurance. The best known of these was Matthew Arnold; and his combination of an aristocratically moral temperament with strong religious leanings, an acute critical faculty, an artistic and mystical capacity which in his case found outlet in poetry, a somewhat sardonic humour, and considerable learning, may serve as typical of the family. His brother, my grandfather, had the same kind of ingredients, but in different proportions.

The result in his case was that he was one of the few men who have not once but twice left the Anglican for the Roman Church. His religious conscientiousness was undoubtedly great, for on each occasion of his leaving one church for the other he knowingly lost his position and means of livelihood. He was a friend of Clough's, who has used him as the peg of reality on which to hang the figure of the hero of his long poem the "Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich"; and the thoughts of that hero well illustrate the conscientious scruples, moral and intellectual, which seem to have tormented him all his life; while his idealism is illustrated by his decision, which was actually put into practice, to cap a brilliant University career by emigrating to Tasmania as a settler in order to be away from the horrors of industrialism and to be able to help in the founding of a new world.

The same moral-religious-literary combination reappeared in many of the next generation too, the obsession with the relation between theology, truth, and conscience, the desire both to teach and to serve either by writing, or socially, or scholastically. This generation was best typified by Mrs. Humphry Ward, her earlier novels such as *Robert Elsmere* and *David Grieve*, and her strenuous work on behalf of the Passmore Edwards Settlement and the play-centres for London children. The influence of her books and, still more, her personality, and that of Matthew Arnold's writings on critical and religious subjects were among the most potent influences among which I grew up.

Any education we had which could be called directly religious was of the slightest. Very simple

prayers introduced us to the mysterious word *God*. We were told the history of Jesus. I vividly remember being shown the pictures in Tissot's *Vie de Jésus* and puzzling my small brains over them and the imaginations they raised. Otherwise we were encouraged to read whatever we liked (I recollect reading most of *Sartor Resartus* at the age of eight, and, though comprehending little, being fascinated by the grandeur and sense of mystery), and had our youthful curiosity encouraged rather than repressed. Moral ideas, particularly of truth and unselfishness, were strongly impressed on us ; and not only that, but I certainly acquired from my early years a sense that certain ideas were, in some not fully understood way, sacred. I do not subscribe to Matthew Arnold's definition of religion as " morality tinged with emotion " ; but that certainly formed part of the atmosphere of my upbringing.

As I search about for definite incidents of childhood bearing upon religious development, I find only disconnected memories, both disconnected in time and unorganised in thought. I had that common childish love of pure speculation, and can remember very well, for instance, the spot where, seeing a rolling fives ball oscillate into immobility, I concluded that, since one could not tell exactly when motion stopped, motion must continue for ever, getting continuously and infinitely smaller and smaller. But such speculation was mostly about things which I could see. I certainly had no special or vivid intuitions about God, nor did I find myself prompted to logical questionings on the subject. The only such ideas which came to me unprompted were very vague, and consisted in the feeling that

there existed a something, call it a power if you like, which came in contact with my life by being responsible for such external phenomena as the weather. I had no picture of this power, no belief that it was personal. On the other hand, I felt about it that it somehow worked by contraries and was concerned not to let poor mortals have too good a time—that same feeling which finds it unlucky to say that a child is pretty, which mistrusts too much happiness, and especially mistrusts the mention of it, the arousing of which in ourselves make us oppose an argument for the mere reason that the other man has put it forward. If, for instance, I was extremely anxious to have a fine afternoon, I would not like to confess it openly, even in thought, but would feel that if I said, or ostentatiously thought, the opposite, I might get what I wanted. This idea of going by contraries is widespread among all races and almost all classes ; and yet, if I may trust my own recollections, it was in my own case a quite spontaneous rationalisation, whose logical implications (of a malicious personal power in control of events) were, however, not followed out : most likely it arises with equal inevitableness elsewhere and equally remains in one of the mind's watertight compartments.

Freud tells us that a Father-complex acquired in infancy is the chief or sole reason for our personification of the forces of Nature as a personal God. It may be so : but even Buddhists have fathers, and even animistic and polydæmonist savages, who see a god in every nook and cranny, have no more than one natural father ! My own case too makes it very difficult for me to believe that this view is generally

applicable, since although I experienced a certain feeling of awe towards the uncomprehended idea of God, I never thought of God as personal. In addition, I have no grounds whatever for supposing that I ever had a father-complex; however, this to a good Freudian is no evidence, since he would assert it merely showed that it had been successfully driven into the subconscious. But I make my assertion for what it is worth.

Although the religious teaching which I received was wholly unorthodox in quality, and, fortunately for any later interest of mine in religion, extremely small in quantity, yet not only it but casually-overheard conversation of my elders and passages in the gloriously miscellaneous reading of a book-addicted child naturally put into my mind many ideas that intuition never did. Naturally also, the contrast between the ideas and practices of our unorthodox household and those of our church-going neighbours did not escape my observation. We children went to church at Christmas, at Easter, and on one or two other special occasions like Flower Sunday or the Harvest Festival (and, it may be parenthetically remarked, enjoyed the infrequent experience largely for the reason that it was not frequent); the neighbours' children went to church once or even twice every Sunday in the year. The fact of this general churchgoing on the part of the British public; the inherent mysteriousness, on their intellectual side, of the ideas one heard in church; the feelings of sanctity and awe which it seems impossible for a young mind not to feel at first contact with the topics of religion (unless they are driven out by means of an opposite feeling, such

as ridicule)—these in unanalysable combination conspired to give me an interior puzzlement, an unsatisfied sense of emotional and intellectual mystery; this remained, an unresolved complex, growing with me and within me like a thought-tumour, part of my being and yet not assimilated into the rest of my mental self.

At this stage, however, these feelings and ideas played no very important part in my life. On the other hand, I very clearly recall various more spontaneous actions related to religious development. One in particular I would like to record, as it seems to me, looking back on it, to be as good an example as one could find of "natural religion."

On Easter Sunday, early in the morning, I got up at daybreak, before anyone else was about, let myself out, ran across to a favourite copse, penetrated to where I knew the wild cherry grew, and there, in the spring dew, picked a great armful of the lovely stuff, which I brought back, with a sense of its being an acceptable offering, to the house. Three or four Easters running I remember doing this.

I was fond of solitude and of Nature, and had a passion for wild flowers: but this was only a general basis. It will not account for my acting thus on Easter Day, and only then: I never went off gathering wild cherry or any other flowers before breakfast on other days; if I did feel prompted by the fineness of the day to get up early, it was to read in a favourite perch in an oak-tree. But somehow, it seems, I found Easter Day a holy day. Naturally I was not at that age concerned to enquire very fully why or how it was holy, whether simply

because other people regarded it as holy, or because of some intrinsic quality in the day; but it was a fact that it was so to me. That mysterious and sacred quality impressed itself on my mind, and had a double effect upon my actions. The holy day became as it were a lightning-conductor on to which could be concentrated those apprehensions which a child may have of something transcendent in the beauty of Nature, that dim and vague sense of what can best be called holiness in material things. This, in everyday intercourse with other children and with grown-ups, is mixed up with so many other sensations and ideas; it is difficult to talk about; the world, even the child's world, inhibits it. But when sanctity is in the air, as at Easter, then it can have free play.

In the second place, the sanctity of the day not only drew out these suppressed feelings. It also lent special significance to the actions I performed; and the beauty of the morning, the flowers I brought back, and indeed the whole pilgrimage, became invested with a special significance. How, in such cases, that significance becomes attached is matter for the psychologist to determine; but that it did so with me is a fact, and it is also pretty evident that the same psychological machinery is at work in the genesis of religious nature-festivals (from one of which, of course, Easter takes its partial origin).

In my childhood, as would seem to be the case in the childhood of man in general, morals, though often a difficult enough problem in all conscience, did not on the whole become early connected up with any religious belief or feeling. The only exception, and that a partial one, concerned those

topics which I may refer to as tabooed. Certain subjects and actions were met by our elders and betters, not with the simple fiat of Authority, but by an atmosphere in which Authority took shelter behind Mystery, or was itself obviously shocked. Childhood is very quick to detect such differences of atmosphere, and it seems probable that any subject whatsoever could have this mysterious horror woven around it as it developed in a child's mind. We escaped the fear of Hell and the wrath of God being invoked in relation to the ordinary delinquencies of boyhood; we escaped, in another sphere, the terror of ghosts and all the rest of the fears generated by superstition. But sex, and in a lesser degree swearing, both came to have taboo-feeling attached to them. Since I certainly, and I think all the rest of the family, were very shy on intimate matters, the mere feeling that a subject was sacred, whether positively like the idea of God, or with what one may call the negative sacredness of taboo, was enough to keep it in any ordinary circumstances from being mentioned, far less discussed. I imagine that this sort of " sacred horror " is a very common cause of undue reticence and undue repression in a very large number of human beings. It certainly was so in my own case, and, not I think by any particular incident but by this general atmosphere, the small beginnings of another possible " complex " were established. The main psychological failing from which I did suffer was a self-distrust and shyness which was often agonising: this deserves mention because so far as I can see some such feeling is frequently a contributory cause of the more specifically religious " sense of

sin " and spiritual incompleteness and unworthiness which is so frequent an accompaniment of adolescence. In my own case, it amalgamated itself with the other complexes which were forming within me to make a considerable and serious bit of mental organisation which was undergoing repression.

This particular weakness was accentuated when I went as a day-boy to a preparatory school, and still more when I went on to a public school and was thrown on my own resources in a society composed almost wholly of other immature human organisms. At least it achieved one thing for me—it helped foster a love of solitude, to which and the meditative habit of mind so engendered I owe a great deal of my intellectual development.

At school, I was one of the comparatively few boys (judging from conversations then and in later years) who on the whole enjoyed the chapel services. This had nothing whatever to do with belief in the ordinary sense, since I decided, on the matter being left entirely in my choice, not to be confirmed. The whole Christian scheme, theologically considered, remained wholly incomprehensible—I could not for the life of me understand how anyone with the background of to-day could come to accept it. And yet there was the patent fact that the great majority of those around me did accept it. Doubtless a great many did so because everyone else did so ; but none the less there were plenty who were not only sincere (which one can quite well be even if one's convictions are ready-made), but had thought hard and deep about the whole question. This made me feel that there must be some difference between me and others, a difference which eluded

me, but, owing to the natural instinct of the young for solidarity, made me feel mentally uncomfortable, and deepened that natural sense of mystery which surrounds religious topics into one which was unnatural.

In spite of this, as I say, in spite of all my intellectual hostility, the chapel services gave me something valuable, and something which I obtained nowhere else in precisely the same way. As I look back, this simple personal fact illustrates, better than could whole reams of argument, the extreme complexity of religion, and the ease with which watertight compartments are established in the religious life, as indeed within the mind in general. Indubitably what I received from the services in that beautiful chapel of Henry VI. was not merely beauty, but something which must be called specifically religious. The flights of Perpendicular Gothic; the anthems and organ voluntaries; the poetry of the psalms or lessons—these doubtless were contributory factors. But, once the magic doors were opened and my adolescence became aware of literature and art and indeed the whole emotional richness of the world, pure lyric poetry could arouse in me much intenser and more mystical feelings than anything in the church service; a Beethoven concerto would make the highest flights of the organ seem pale and one-sided, and other buildings were found more beautiful than the chapel. It was none of the purely æsthetic feelings which were aroused, or not they only, but a special feeling. The mysteries which surround all the unknowns of existence were, however dimly, contained in it, and the whole was predominantly

flavoured with the sense of awe and reverence. In addition there was the fact of the service being communal, and of its long historic past. Just as in childhood I had found Easter already sacred, a day which, regarded from the standpoint of existing society as a whole, and not from that of any single individual only, nor from that of abstract reason or rightness, did have a definite sentiment attached to it, and so was a holy day ; so here in later boyhood I was confronted with a place and a liturgy and a ritual which presented themselves to my mind inevitably as wearing a mantle of reverence, bathed in a special atmosphere, or, to put it most unequivocally, as in some immediate way possessing holiness, through the fact of so many individual people having in that place experienced awe, found in that liturgy an outlet for their desires for righteousness, expressed their inner religious feelings in the physical acts of that ritual.

It is, of course, perfectly true that experience, or reason, or a sceptical temper, may and often does discount these feelings. If not, we could never get progress in religion, and iconoclasm would be unknown. But let it be remembered that iconoclasm, for instance, is only possible because reforming zeal recognises the facts of which I have just been speaking, but is enraged because this garment or atmosphere of holiness has been thrown round objects which to it seem unworthy. True also that maturer judgment may come to realise that in any and every case the atmosphere of holiness has come where it is owing to human mind having put it there. But what is for the moment of importance, and what is too often forgotten by

rationalising enthusiasm, is that when the mind first perceives this quality of holiness in things, it does really feel it inhering *in the things* in a way no different from the way in which, for instance, it finds and feels the quality of beauty inhering in things.

Thus the emotional side of the religious life was in me reinforced by the flowing sap of adolescence ; but the intellectual side, in conspicuous isolation from the emotional, was inhibited, driven back upon itself, and led into a mood of permanent and unsatisfied questioning by the inacceptability, to my growing intellectual interest, of any Christian theology proffered to me, and the failure of any person or any book to come to the rescue with any more intelligible or more acceptable scheme.

Meanwhile, again at the outset in isolation from the other two, the moral problem forced itself upon me with new intensity. There can be very few human beings upon whom adolescence does not force a new intensity of moral problems. Not only is the whole emotional life vivified and new capacities of feeling revealed, but also reason and the growing sense of maturity arouse new ideals or raise old ones to new heights. And yet at the same time the unsuspecting mind finds itself the prey to new impulses of passion generated within the organism by the automatic changes of physiology, only partially comprehensible to most human beings until they receive their highest satisfaction, and yet doomed to remain unsatisfied, or to an incomplete, distorted, or unblessed satisfaction, for a period which to the rapid mind of youth seems wellnigh infinite.

At the same time, or generally a little later, youth wakes to the fact of social inequality, and, if not one of the tough-minded, to remorseful distress of its own privileged position, or envy of the position of others, or both at once.

I did not escape the usual fate; in fact, on comparing notes with others I seem to have taken the complaint in a form more virulent than usual. The contrast between the new-found pure ecstasies of the spirit, whether over poetry or music or in the passion of that romantic love expressed for all time by Dante in the *Vita Nuova*, and the equally new-found insistence of unvarnished animal passions obtruding into and sometimes obscuring the more spiritual part of the mental life, led to conflict and to an exaggerated horror of sex the intruder. Thus conflict was intensified in two of the main departments of my life, the intellectual and the moral, and the two conflicts of course made connections and became one many-sided conflict.

So far as I can see, the main difference between primitive and developed religion lies in the fact that the latter attempts to resolve the conflicts which the former either is content to leave unresolved or simply does not see. Primitive religion is content to accept the sacredness of certain things and events and ideas as given, and to react to each such individual holiness in the way which seems most immediately appropriate. But the reflective mind is not content with this, and demands that its religious life shall be a whole. It must be a whole intellectually, strung together upon a consistent theology; a whole morally, based upon a coherent moral philosophy and a recognised scale

of values ; and a whole emotionally, related to an æsthetic sense which demands the fullest beauty and rejects unworthy feelings. And, if possible, it must be a whole in respect of uniting these three aspects ; the moral scheme must not be incredible, the intellectual scaffolding must not have implications which offend the moral sense, the emotions must not hang *in vacuo*, detached from all relation with practice and with thought.

The conflict can never be resolved once and for all by the mere acceptance of a formula or a cut-and-dry scheme of salvation. It must work itself out in each individual life—whether to failure, to a precarious equilibrium of hostile forces, or to the full equilibrium of activity based on underlying peace. All that organised religion, with its doctrines and practices, can here do, is to proffer the individual help in this task. It is doubtless true that without this help the individual would fail ; but the same is true in every other department of life. Only through the accumulated experience of the race, proffered in daily intercourse, in tradition, in formal education, can the individual, however keen his striving, come to realise the possibilities that are in him.

So it was with me. The next stage in my development was largely taken up with attempts to solve the conflicts which, actively and violently, though far below the surface, persisted in fighting themselves out to a conclusive decision. Looking back on that time, with personal experience as well as some reading of modern psychology to guide me, I see how the battles raged at different levels. That spatial conception, of levels of the mind, though danger-

ous if taken in any stupidity of literalness, is yet a vital one. Perhaps one day some thinker, helping in the great task of " the transliteration of all values," will translate the great vision of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, with its superposed circles of being from the base of hell to the summit of paradise, into psychological terms, substituting for an unreal exterior vastness the equally vast realities of the microcosm. In any case, those conflicts of which we are speaking may sometimes be going on in the sight of others, or sometimes hidden under a blanket of reserve. They may sometimes take place in the full glare of consciousness, at others but dimly perceived, at others below yet another surface, not only below the surface which conceals them from the observation of others, but below that which conceals them from our own. There, in the circle of the subconscious, events may happen which only later obtrude themselves upon our conscious knowledge; there the springs of our energy may be sapped without our knowledge or comprehension, by a constant strife.

I was animated by passionate fervours, beliefs in the supreme value of certain ideas and activities. These in theological parlance are called Faith. They were none the less violent in me because not fixed upon the orthodox objects of religion; they drove me on to austerities of life directed towards the moral perfection which was at once so sacred and so elusive; to concentrated bursts of work towards mastery of the science in which I ardently believed; to withdrawals into solitude in search of illumination, and wanderings through countries and through books on a quest for what to me appeared of

supreme value, the stuff of which great poetry is made, in which both truth and beauty join hands. But this "faith" was not yet grounded in experience or linked with all the potentialities of my self. It was as prejudiced and bigoted (I can say, looking back) as any narrow religious faith.

I do not propose to emulate the unreticent candour of a Barbellion or a Marie Bashkirtseff, interested in self-analysis, nor the Pepysian interest in complete record of all facts centring on self, nor the self-revelation, undertaken for the advancement of a particular creed, of the great St. Augustine. I am only concerned to show that, contrary to the express or implied assertions of many upholders of revealed religion, belief in revelation or in a personal God (let alone in the details of orthodox Christian theology) is in no way indispensable to religious experience, religious struggle, and religious development; and, since at the same time I am concerned to show that I am not writing from the completely detached viewpoint of the man who attempts to discuss what he cannot fully describe or understand, through his having no experience of or sympathy with the inner felt realities which give it importance and life, I have been constrained to combine the two aims in one by referring to what of my own experience seems to bear upon these questions.

I need only say that the conflict existed, that I was unable to dismiss it or suppress it, that so long as it remained unresolved it refused to remain stationary but became more serious; and that, aggravated by outer circumstances, it rendered me profoundly miserable, as well as paralysing my

energies by threatening to tear my mental being in half. Such conflicts are perfectly familiar to nerve-specialists and psychotherapists, and those who, through study or profession, are brought in contact with religious psychology; they are none the less tragic and huge to those in whom they take place. In my own case, as I expect in many cases, things were made worse through the contrast between what by others I was presumed to be and the reality. At the end of my time at Oxford, I suppose that to others I must have appeared a fortunate young man enough, with physical health, a certain talent, lucky in the opportunities of the best that upbringing and education could give, and with enough of juvenile achievement behind me to give me assurance of being able to push forward towards a career. The reality was a young man feeling this all acutely, forcing himself to intense activity of work to make up for the assurance (intellectual as well as, or rather combined with, moral) of which a divided self is robbed, and applying to himself the terrible words of Walt Whitman, which, casually read one day, printed themselves fierily upon his mind as a description of his own state: "Hell under the skull-bones; Death under the breast-bones."

Life would have been intolerable but for glimpses of the alternative state, occasional moments of great happiness and spiritual refreshment, coming usually through poetry or through beautiful landscape, or through people. I had been used, ever since the age of fifteen or sixteen, to have such moments come to me naturally, without effort, in the ordinary course of a full life: and ever since, they had been the

things which seemed most valuable in my existence. But now that they were becoming of more vital importance to that life, as assurances that I was not doomed to a miserable existence through having lost the very faculty of experiencing this kind of rapturous or deep joy that permeates and strengthens the mind, they were vouchsafed in diminishing measure, and (although sometimes with very great intensity) more fleetingly. It was of no use trying to force these experiences of peace, or reconcilement, or rapture, or those in which supreme value seems within grasp; they came at their sweet will or not at all. Such independence of our volition, on the part of those bits of life which we value most, is, I take it, one of the most important of the facts which in the sphere of religious experience has given rise to the doctrine of divine grace as something which is granted from a source wholly outside ourselves.

I also suspect that the great intensity of these experiences of value when they did come was based upon a piece of psychological machinery which is of some general interest in the religious sphere. It is, so far as I can see, a fact that any intense conflict, especially when accompanied by repression, automatically results in far greater intensity of feeling for either of the conflicting tendencies in their periods of temporary victory. Almost all religious mystics have passed through a period of conflict and discipline, in which the body and its desires are to be mortified. This process may eventually be accomplished and the discipline become perfect, but it involves in its earlier stages a great deal of repression; and I suspect that even in the end the

"mortification" of desires is not literal, but that they are repressed from their normal outlet and harnessed in new ways. In any case, the possibility that conflict may be felt to contribute to the intensity of desired states of mind should, I think, be considered in discussing the psychology of mysticism.

But to return to myself. The deprivation of these periods of spiritual satisfaction was to me perhaps most serious in a sphere that at first sight seems remote from the scene of struggle—I mean Nature and natural beauty. But ever since the age of fifteen or so I had found in natural beauty a satisfaction which was not only a rest and refreshment from any distress of every day, but one which was complete, and truly mystical (because irrational, given, and so transcending itself as to cause every highest and deepest fibre of the mental being to vibrate). Many men have experienced such feelings: Wordsworth and Ruskin are two Englishmen who have given it adequate expression, Richard Jefferies another who has cast his expression in a cruder, more pantheistic mould.

And now, just when most needed, this source of comfort was cut off. Wordsworth too has lamented the failing of the radiant experience:

> I cannot paint
> What then I was. The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colours and their forms, were then to me
> An appetite, a feeling and a love . . .
> . . . That time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures.

or the whole opening of the famous ode:

> The things which I have seen I now can see no more.
> Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
> Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

What he laments is a spiritual blindness wholly analogous in the sense of deprivation which it affords to the physical blindness lamented by Milton:

> Thus with the year
> Seasons return; but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
> Or flocks or herds, or human face divine;
> But cloud instead and ever-during dark
> Surrounds me . . .

I lamented it the more since it was not only refreshment, but medicine for a sick soul. Thousands, I know, pass through some such experience every year: but that does not lessen the misery, nor the shut-in sense of isolation, nor the uniqueness to each separate individual.

Meanwhile, it must be emphasised that such experiences are identical in their nature with some of the experiences recorded by the religious mystics, the only essential difference being that those of the mystics are related to and focussed upon definite theological conceptions, while mine (like those of Wordsworth) were not; essentially the same feelings were present in both cases, and were sacramental in their nature; but in the professed Christian they sanctify the spirit which is thirsting to feel some assurance of oneness with the power which it feels outside itself and chooses to worship, while in what we may call the nature-mystic they sanctify

the visible external world and at the same time the mind which can receive the sacramental impression.

Not only this, but the sense of being forsaken, unable to summon back all that one feels of highest value, is common enough too in the realm of theistic religion. Mystics have called it " the dark night of the soul," and describe it as an abandonment of the soul by God. Again, however, it does not matter whether you believe that a divine being who used to visit you now no longer comes, or whether, as with me, there is no reference of the distress suffered to the action of any personal or supernatural being whatever. In both cases the feeling (to judge in the only way in which one can judge, from the writings of those who have been through the experience) is similar. In both cases it is a feeling of terrible blackness, of loss, of loneliness and abandonment, the dark and the loss and the shut-in solitariness appalling the soul through having on the negative side just that same quality of transcendence, of being connected with ultimate reality, which when positive gives to the mystical experience of god or of nature (or of love for that matter), with its radiance and richness and sense of communion, its equally disproportionate but real value.

The only difference of importance is that in the one case the feeling is related in thought to an all-embracing intellectual framework which the mind has thought through for itself or at least accepted ready-made from its religion, while in the other case no such framework exists in the mind, or if it does not such connection is made, and the feeling is experienced untranslated into intellectual symbols.

Whatever the precise cause may have been, the

phase of conflict ended with that crash known generally as "a nervous breakdown." From the standpoint of the psychologist who observes them, most disorders of this type are apparently paralyses of action caused by the mental house being divided against itself, and squandering all its energy in civil war; this is combined, for most of the time at least, with extreme depression, worry, and self-reproach. To the sufferer they are the extremest blackness of the soul's night, a practical demonstration that not only heaven but hell is within us, and that neither the one nor the other need seem deserved. Job, in extremity of external suffering, would have cursed God and died. The breakdown patient has not even the energy to curse; but he knows, or thinks he knows, himself accursed, and finds his thoughts set upon self-destruction, as the only way of removing the cause from himself and the accursed life from being a burden to others.

I do not suppose that those robust-minded persons, full of common sense and practical virtues, who have not only never suffered from any such breakdown of the self, but who regard it as a symptom of radical inferiority of character and nature, can appreciate what it means to return to a normal universe after thus inhabiting the bottomless pit. They have always found the world a comfortable enough place to live in, and so have not troubled themselves to arrive at any real consciousness or how or why life is worth living. But to discover that life *is* worth living when for long months you had obstinately and against all reason been compelled to feel and believe the reverse—that is to be made very forcibly conscious of the

values inherent in the commonest things and acts, and to gain a new sense of life's significance.

For myself, I was content, once the tyranny of civil war within the self was over and the blackness of the night passed through, to accept the variety of the world, to let it flow in upon a mind no longer too preoccupied with its own affairs to be disinterestedly concerned with existence. On the other hand, this same contentment and readiness to be interested in whatever turned up, though it made all life a picaresque adventure, dulled the edge of the desire for external achievement or for internal development, and allowed the seeds of the old conflict to slumber instead of prompting the eradication of the brood. I had learnt humility, but not yet learned to translate humility into achievement or work.

To this period, however, I certainly owe much which either directly or indirectly contributed to eventual religious development. I spent three years teaching in a newly founded University in Texas. Living thus in a foreign country made me realise that all the familiar institutions and ideas of my own country were not the inevitable and permanent things that they had seemed (and that they seem all life long to those who do not make themselves, or are not made to, reflect upon them) but relative, a product of time and place and circumstance interacting with a particular brand of human nature; and this, combining with my biological training, made me see in this kind of relativity—biological relativity, I may call it—an essential and general principle. It also taught me to substitute for the natural intolerance of youth a tolerance which,

from being at first a mere matter of practical convenience, became at length a reasoned principle. Most important of all, by throwing me on my own mental resources among all sorts and conditions of men, it taught me to value Terence's words " nihil humanum alienum a me puto," to feel the bond between myself and, not humanity, but individual human beings of every kind, race, or station; and again, building on this, to come to see as a leading principle that there existed nothing of which we have any cognizance, higher than the individual man, his thoughts, faculties, aspirations, and what these have produced.

Browsing in the public library at Colorado Springs, under the shadow of Pike's Peak, while waiting to go into hospital for an operation, I came across some essays of Lord Morley, in which there occurred the words, " The next great task of science will be to create a religion for humanity." I was impressed that a man of Morley's intellectual power and rationalising tendencies should have been so much interested in a religion for humanity; I was fired by sharing his conviction that science would of necessity play an essential part in framing any religion of the future worthy the name; and I was impressed too with his use of the impersonal word *Science*, as implying that any real progress in religion nowadays would be the slow product of generations of thinkers and workers reacting on the common thought and practice of the times, much more than the creation of a single personality, in this respect reversing the historical process which had seen the traditional and communal religions of primitive peoples give place to the great historical religions—

Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism—with their individual founders.

Other passages in his essay forcibly reminded me of how all great minds—writers, painters, men of science, organisers—all make their contribution to religion, even if one may have to translate their contribution into a different language to fit it to oneself and one's own time. But in spite of the opposition of sects and bigots and of those who fix their eyes only upon the past, religion does slowly change, through great men's thoughts and actions.

Morley's words made the more impression upon me, since already I had conceived some half-hearted idea of attempting to restate the realities of spiritual values which my experiences had forced upon me in terms of an intellectual framework drawn from my scientific training; I was aiming at a harmony which, although only vaguely perceived, I yet felt must exist, and, if it existed, and could be found, would not only bring satisfaction to myself, but might save others from some of the conflicts and pains which I had been through.

Morley's words confirmed me in my resolve to try to contribute to the task he envisaged. The time, however, was not yet. More than tolerance and acceptance, more than interest and good-will was required before I could even to my own preliminary satisfaction resolve either my intellectual or my moral difficulties and see the way clear to unity: and only when I had achieved some sort of unity could I desire or think or act with any confidence.

When as a young man at Oxford I read Goethe's

Faust for the first time, I found the conclusion of the second part very little to my taste. It seemed an anticlimax of the first water that Faust, having run through all human knowledge, sinned on the grand scale and greatly repented, enjoyed supernatural power, and been inducted into the mysteries of cosmic workings, should devote his declining years to the draining of a marsh. But Goethe was not Goethe for nothing. In later years I came to realise forcibly enough how personal experience for the mere sake of personal experience was not satisfying, how sentimental desires to do good might tangle the wings of action in their syrup, how not only did thought practised alone and for its own sake tend to become imprisoned in an intellectual void, but how action was able to help thought to richer life just as much as thought could guide action to better ends. I came round full circle from the intellectual arrogance of youth (my youth as well as Faust's !) which is not content with loving knowledge for its own sake but insists on despising utility and practical considerations ; and came to understand that, at least for minds like mine in a civilisation like ours, the only salvation must include constant work and activity, not by any means necessarily directed to immediate practical ends, but based in the conviction that it is bound up in some way and in the long run with practical results.

It was perhaps inevitable that Faust, with his particularly self-concentrated youth and prime behind him, should have found final satisfaction in action of direct social and utilitarian value : but if he be regarded as a special case, it is as a special

case of a principle of general application, the gospel of work and its obverse, the putting of value and meaning into work for those who must labour at work not of their own choice, whether they like it or no.

Meanwhile public events contributed their quota to my private story. The war came, and with its coming the accepted bases of existence dropped away, and all had to be faced from the beginning again. The war revealed human nature as nothing else could have—human nature in all its supreme of heroism and folly ; cool organised driving force and credulous, prejudiced suggestibility ; self-sacrifice and brutality ; ideal aspirations and savage desire to win and punish. To one who had breathed the international atmosphere of Science, and had lived a considerable part of his active life in foreign countries, forced by circumstances to discount the natural prejudices aroused by different habits and strange ways of thinking, having learnt to consort familiarly and on friendly terms with Italian, German, and American, some of the problems of the war were especially acute. Was there, for instance, one morality for the nation, another for the individual ? I shall never forget the disgust and aversion I felt one day in the United States when I heard quoted for the first time (and quoted with complete approval) the celebrated dictum of an American soldier, " My country, right or wrong "—and the rest of the rigmarole, words which are immortal as the fittest inscription on the pedestal of the golden calf of self-herd-worship.

It seems pretty evident that, if human necessities are to be supplied, and the practical working of the

social machine is to be made smooth and expeditious, international and economic morality cannot be as exigent as individual morality. In any case, they *are* not so exigent and never have been; and it is difficult to see how the three could ever be the same, since a man in solitude is different from the same man with family or friends, or the same man as a unit in a mob or an army, or the same man in his business or public capacity. That is not merely matter of common observation, but must be so, in the same way that "the same" atom is actually in a different state according as it happens to be *solus*, or in this or that chemical combination.

But, this being so, what becomes of your Absolute in morals, your *summum bonum*, your Categorical Imperative? They disappear as external rulings or as fixed standards. True that they can be retained in a certain psychological sense—the categorical imperative is the moral need, itself absolute, to act in one way rather than in another in a particular set of circumstances; the *summum bonum* is the highest goal of good which you, a particular individual, can actually set before yourself as guide; to speak of the Absolute in morals may be interpreted to mean that all particular acts can and should be referred to an abstract and general standard. But these senses are very different from the usual sense, and their acceptance implies a relativity of morals which at first blush is to many people very disquieting.

If on the other hand the relativity of morals is a fact, it must be accepted, and its implications worked out. The war forced this problem upon me, and made me complete my ideas of biological relativity

as regards structure and instinct, which had been impressed on me as a biologist through the facts of evolution, by extending them into the sphere of human morality.

Further, the war released an academic person like myself from the grooves of thought in which he was professionally bound. Whereas even members of the learned professions tend to fill their time, outside their actual work, with substitutes for thought, such as dancing, smoking, gossip, or reading; in the war there were not only more occasions of hard thought, but more opportunities (often they seemed too many!) for thinking when no substitute was at hand. The war, itself a senseless denial of thought, was certainly a great promoter of thinking.

Now that my brain was freed from the routine of an intellectual profession I began to use it and my leisure on the religious problems which were still constantly at the back of my mind. There was still in my thought an unresolved mystery over the matter, and I was determined to get to the bottom of this if I could. It was impossible that the problems which for nineteen centuries Christian theologians had been discussing could have no meaning whatever. It was impossible that the considerable number of my friends and acquaintances who had taken Holy Orders should not be describing something which was perfectly real to them in terms of the vocabulary of which they were the heirs. It was impossible that I, brought up in the same age and country as they, in some cases for years in the self-same atmosphere of school and university, should not have had experience of the same reality.

Was the fact of our mutual unintelligibility a mere matter of terms? or of false interpretations on the one side or the other, or of wilful blindness on my part or unjustifiable imaginations on theirs? or of all three blended?

I set myself, in the intervals of military training, to read a number of books of a theological character with the intention of seeing how much of them I could grasp in terms of the evolutionary-naturalistic scheme at which I had then arrived. A great many of them have completely faded out of my recollection; but I well remember reading the essay by Gore in *Lux Mundi* under canvas while stationed near Canterbury, and being at the same time both fascinated by the delicacy and beauty of character which it (and other essays in the same volume) revealed, and repelled by what to me was the sheer intellectual perversity of its attitude and that of the book in general.

Another incident of the same year remains vividly with me. We were doing night exercises between Aldershot and Fleet: the warm June night was scented with broom: the monotony of exercise, enforced silence, and darkness, combined with the beauty of the hour, impelled to an aimless meditation.

Suddenly, for no particular reason, without apparent connection with other thoughts, a problem and its solution flashed across my mind. I had understood how it was that two views or courses of action could not only both be sincerely held as good, but both actually could *be* good—and yet when the two came into contact, the one could both appear and be evil. It can be so when both are

aiming in the same general direction, but the one is moving so much more slowly that it becomes a drag on the other's wheel.

Ideas and facts, particular examples and their general meaning, the tragedy of bitter conflict between two fine realities, two solid honesties, all jostled each other in my mind in that moment of insight, and I had made a new step towards that peaceful basis for action which is expressed by the French proverb " Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner."

It also had that definite quality of being thrown into consciousness, implied in the term revelation, which has been described for purely intellectual discovery by many mathematicians and men of science, notably Poincaré in his essays on Scientific Method. It was an exaggeration of the sense that comes when one suddenly sees a point which had eluded comprehension, but without any accompanying sense of effort. The same general sense in the sphere of feeling one may have when one is suddenly transported to a complete peace and satisfaction by some sudden view of distant hills over plain ; or by a sudden quality of light—" the light that never was on sea or land," and yet is suddenly here, transforming a familiar landscape ; or by a poem or a picture, or a face. But only once before had I had such a complete sense of outside givenness in an experience—the only occasion on which I had had a vision (of a non-hallucinatory but amazingly real sort : such, of a religious cast, abound in the records of mystics such as St. Theresa). This of mine had no connection with morals or religion ; it was a seeing with the mind, a seeing of a great slice of this earth and its beauties, all compressed into an almost

instantaneous experience. Mozart describes something of the same sort with music, when, after finishing the composition of a symphony, he would experience an intense pleasure, the intensest which he knew, in an interior "hearing" of the whole work almost simultaneously.

How, precisely, these experiences are generated, psychology and nerve-physiology must learn and tell us. I can vouch for the fact that the experience is felt as intensely real and intensely valuable. It is, I suppose, a realisation, by means of the intuitive faculty, of a great deal which the conscious mind had been striving towards but had never yet held all at one time, an indivisible whole, in its grasp.

Those two experiences, in two different fields of the mind, made me realise, perhaps incompletely, the quality of mystic vision, whether artistic or religious; they drove me to read a good deal on mysticism and the descriptions given by visionaries of their own experience; and made me realise how stupid it was to dismiss all such happenings with the word "pathological."

Clearly experiences of this general nature may be pathological from the start, or may be over-emphasised and exaggerated into morbidity; but so long as they are beautiful and satisfying in themselves, lead to a strengthening instead of a weakening of the self, are not pursued so that they lead to neglect of other things, and leave no harmful after-effects, it is a mere misuse of words to call them pathological. They are exceptional rather, an experience difficult of attainment but to be desired, only to be attained by a mixture of fortunate endowment and previous discipline of the spirit.

They and my reading also convinced me, however, that the revelation of the mystic vision, about which so much is written, is revelation only in a psychological sense, not literally. There need be no supernatural being or force making the revelation; nor is the revelation one of an external reality. The desires and aspirations of the mind conspire with its organising faculties (which we all know well enough in dream) to organise vital experience on a new level, above that of the ordinary self, above that of all merely discursive activity, in which new intensity is gained through so much more than usual being seen and felt together in a single organised moment of spiritual perception. To me the statement that moral revelations or mystic visions are the result of communication by personal supernatural beings is merely one way, and an erroneous way, of interpreting the undoubted facts.

Most of the war passed in occupations very alien to such experiences and reasonings. After the war came the need to buckle to and refurbish the very rusty equipment of my peace-time profession. It was now, with the young Faust-spirit satiated, the spirit which demands experience for experience' sake, that I arrived (half unconsciously and under the pressure of circumstances and experience) at the "gospel of work," of which I have already spoken, as the only satisfactory practical basis for an active middle life; and I threw myself with all the energy I possessed into my own subject. Two or three years later circumstances decreed that I should take up once more the still-tangled threads of my thoughts on religion, and try to clarify them. I was asked by friends whose judgment I trusted, to write

a paper on *Science and Religion* for delivery at a summer school at Woodbrooke. After some hesitation (since no one knew better than myself what an amount of clarification there still remained to be done in my mind) I consented. The effect, for myself at any rate, was another justification of the gospel of work. I was, through having undertaken the task, forced to hammer at my difficulties, to think out conclusions, to find where loose threads would connect, to examine what I really did mean by this or that casually-used term. The final result was an essay which appeared in a book published in 1923.

The two main conclusions to which I found myself logically driven from my premisses were concerned with the definition of religion and the definition of God. Religion, after trying to see as best I could what various religions and religious people had in common, I felt impelled to define as the reaction of the personality as a whole to its experience of the Universe as a whole. Dean Inge, in a review of my book, quoted this definition of religion as one of the best he had come across. In spite of this approval, however, and in spite of the sense of advance in comprehension which this way of looking at the matter gave me at the time, I now realise clearly that it was both incomplete, and also too vague and general.

Somewhat similar objections I now see to my definition of God. There are three recognised ways of approach towards intellectual comprehension and definition of the term God. One may simply point to the so-called revelation of Scripture. Since this to me and to most educated men and women to-day is simply an appeal to mythology, I did not concern

myself with it. Or one may attempt the philosophical approach, the definition by metaphysics. Here, by close process of abstract reasoning, the philosopher attempts to see what Absolute, or First Cause, or Final Principle, is in his opinion necessary to ensure the coherence or the reasonableness of the universe, and this he (or, sometimes, others for him) call God. One of the latest attempts in this field is that of Professor Whitehead, who, after a brilliant opening on psychological aspects of religion and the religious life, suddenly takes wing for the realms of metaphysics, and concludes that God is the principle of rationality which prevents the world from being chaotic and unreasonable. I quote his own words (p. 90): "The actual but non-temporal entity whereby the indetermination of mere creativity is transmuted into a determinate freedom. This non-temporal actual Entity is what men call God—the supreme God of rationalised religion"; or again (*Science and the Modern World*, p. 250), "We require God as the Principle of Concretion," and (p. 257) "the nature of God is the ground of rationality."

My objection to this, as to all the metaphysical approaches to Deity which have ever been made, is that the God which they claim to reveal (I say *which*, not *whom*, for it is always immensely impersonal) has no relation, so far as can be observed, with the various Gods or aspects of God which humanity in its thousands of millions has actually worshipped. This of course does not say that the metaphysical God may not be the true one; or may even be both true and in reality identical with the God of the common men's religion. But in the first case it would be really better to call it by another

name; and in the second, there would still remain such a huge unbridged gap between the two aspects of the one truth that the problem can scarcely be regarded as much nearer solution than before.

The third method of approach is the humbler, simpler, but perhaps surer method, already adopted in other fields with considerable success, which we call the method of Natural Science, and it was to this that I pinned my faith. This of course consists in the refusal to accept authority as such, in an insistence upon the study of facts, and upon inductive reasoning from the facts as its main method, and therefore in a rejection of all purely *a priori* schemes or those which start with deduction before they are ready with an inductive basis. In our particular example, the method of science is to look round and find what are the types of Gods which actually are being or have been worshipped (or, if you prefer it, what various ideas of God human beings have held); to classify and compare these Gods and these ideas; to analyse them in terms of all available kinds of knowledge—knowledge of sociology, of history, of psychology, of the non-human sciences; and, as a result of all this collection, classification, comparison, and analysis to try and understand, not what man *ought* to have worshipped and felt in worshipping, but what it is which man *has* actually experienced in his religious moments, and what he *has* actually worshipped.

I had already in 1923 come to see to my own satisfaction that, if we proceed in this way, it becomes pretty clear that man has actually worshipped certain aspects of the powers which he sees and feels operating in and through outer nature and

his own life. Some of those powers turn out to be the blind forces of Nature; others the ideals and emotions of his own soul; others are the half-mechanical, half-personal forces of society. Whatever their nature, they bear singularly little obvious relation to the Absolute of the philosophers.

These powers, however, almost without exception, man has chosen to personify as supernatural beings. We are used to discounting the river-gods and dryads of the Greeks as poetical fancies, and even the chief figures in the classical Pantheon—Venus, Minerva, Mars, and the rest—as allegories. But, forgetting that they once carried as much sanctity as our saints and divinities, we refrain from applying the same reasoning to our own objects of worship. It was precisely this step, of stripping divinity (whether a mere *genius loci* or the single being of a monotheist religion) of the personality which man had projected upon it from himself, which I found myself forced to attempt as a logical conclusion from my premises. Once more, the sense of relief in having attained another step in comprehension, and in bringing together whole realms of fact, all equally real, which had hitherto seemed poles apart, was so great that I neglected to observe an incompleteness in my view.

I suppose that these incompletenesses were dimly realised; but it was not until I had been asked to write this present book, and had begun drafting it, that I discovered how great they were. I found myself again in the state, familiar to all who are searching for a comprehension which they know is possible but which eludes them, of feeling plunged into a hole in one's subject, and there being swirled

round and round in a whirlpool of thought without being able to catch on to the one and only possible landing-stage, which one knows is there, but which one cannot discern.

A chance reference in an article by that fine character and teacher, Estlin Carpenter, put me on the track. I had been too general, too much preoccupied only with theology and reason; and had neglected the specific psychological basis of religion. *That* is to be found in the sense of holiness or sacredness. From this as starting-point all religion takes its flight, and only gradually (though inevitably) do the moral and the intellectual become attached to it and fight their battle for completeness and unity.

This conception (doubtless it also incomplete, but definitely giving me the sense of a real further advance in comprehension), together with some of the evidence leading up to it and the conclusions to which it points, I have set forth as best I could in other parts of this book. For intruding this personal chapter, now that it is written and I read it over, I make no apology. Pure generalities in any subject often slip off the mind like water off a duck's back; and if my primary object has been to assert my right to meddle in these high matters, as one who has suffered from their compulsive force, and has for many years been drawn to resolve their problems in his mind, I have in attempting this been able to make the presentation of some of my general case easier, by linking abstract and general ideas on to concrete happenings of a particular mental life, and so, I hope, made them seem less remote, more actual, than might otherwise have been the case.

Our age is retrospective. It bullds the sepulchres of the fathers. . . . Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? . . . The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. Let us demand our own works, and laws, and worship.—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, *Essays.*

Whatever the world thinks, he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind, and the *summum bonum*, may possibly make a thriving earthworm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman.—Bishop BERKELEY, *Siris.*

Incomprehensible? But because you cannot understand a thing, it does not cease to exist.—PASCAL, *Pensées.*

When we review the various forms in which men think of divinity and express their reverence, we involuntarily ask, "Which of these is better, and which worse?" . . . An effort should be made, perhaps, not so much to give a definite and direct answer to the question, as to offer some of the standards for judging rival forms of religion. . . . First would come this, that *the pure and continued expression of any single religious motive is undesirable.* For, indeed, religious motives, like muscles, work best in opposition. . . . Yet such a thought should be supplemented at once, inasmuch as while retaining each and both of two opposing motives, *one motive may well be dominant.* . . . The supreme virtue of thought, however, is not its balance and vigour and richness, but its veracity. Accordingly a third rule to guide our judgment may be that *the assertions of religion, as to what is real, should be true.* And this at once brings us to a distant region where we are met by Pilate's question; and also by the thought that it is not the office of religion to *know*, but only to be loyal, that if there be avenues to truth, they lie not in religion, but in science and philosophy.—G. M. STRATTON, *Psychology of the Religious Life.*

Common sense and a respect for realities are not less graces of the spirit than moral zeal. . . .

. . . They [the Nonconformist Churches] saw the world of business and society as a battlefield, across which character could march triumphant to its goal, not as crude materials waiting the architect's hand to set them in their place as the foundations of the Kingdom of Heaven. It did not occur to them that character is social, and society, since it is the expression of character, spiritual. Thus the eye is sometimes blinded by light itself. —R. H. TAWNEY, *The Rise of Capitalism* (1926).

Like the celestial order, of which it is the dim reflection, society is stable, because it is straining upwards.—R. H. TAWNEY (on the mediæval religious view), *Ibid.*

In so far as it knows the eternity of truth and is absorbed in it, the mind *lives* in that eternity. In caring only for the eternal, it has ceased to care for that part of itself which can die.—GEORGE SANTAYANA, *The Ethics of Spinoza.*

Chapter V

Some Fundamentals

It is my next task to attempt some account of the realities on which religion is based. Obviously, this task is much the most difficult which I shall have to undertake. Theologians and mystics alike, the one group approaching religious reality from the side of intellect, the other from that of intuition and emotion, agree in finding this reality in the last resort ineffable, not to be fully described in words, not to be completely apprehended by the human mind. In passing, let it be noted that this holds good also for other realities than the religious. Even the great poet can only adumbrate his experience in words; and the experience of falling in love should be enough to convince the intellectualist sceptic of the incommunicability and limitlessness of some very real and very common experiences.

But, however difficult, the task must be undertaken. It can only be even approximately successful if reader co-operates with writer by the goodwill of sympathetic imagination. No work of art can be appreciated unless the imagination, even grudgingly, goes out to it; this is all the more so if the poem or picture be difficult, or dealing with unfamiliar things, or with familiar things in unfamiliar ways. When we first travel abroad, the chief feelings are almost invariably those of amusement and disdain, not

infrequently mixed with unreasoning hostility, towards human beings who conduct the business of life in ways so different from those to which we are accustomed. These feelings can be broken down slowly by time and use, or quickly by the sympathetic imagination; and then, though we may still sometimes smile, we no longer are disdainful or hostile without cause. So here I must demand the same co-operation, however unfamiliar or unattractive my way of approach or my conclusions may seem, and ask that my readers take for granted my sincerity, my desire to reach beyond the appearences of the surface to realities below, and an absence of any wish to make debating points or to score a barren victory of mere argument.

It is often stated that the essential of religion is belief in God, meaning by that in a personal or superpersonal Divine being, or at least a belief in supernatural Beings of some kind. This, however, is manifestly not true. There are whole religions which make no mention of God. The most notable example is that of Buddhism in its pure and original form. Not only that, but even in countries where a theistic religion is current, and even among the most devoted adherents of such religions, there exist normally and regularly, acts and thoughts and experiences which most certainly must be called religious, but which equally certainly do not of themselves demand explanation in terms of God. However, owing to the fact that the idea of a Divine Being has already, and on other grounds, come to occupy a foremost place in the religion, these experiences and acts do, as a matter of fact, come to be interpreted in terms of the current theology, although

they could with equal or greater propriety be described in pure psychological terms, as involving the feeling of holiness, no less and no more.

This indeed is and has always been one of the two besetting vices of religious systems, to over-exalt the purely rational and therefore communicable elements of religion at the expense of the non-rational but deeper intuitions and felt experiences which are unique and personal, difficult or impossible of easy communication to others, and yet the true material of religion. It has led to the setting-up of creeds and dogmas as the supreme standard in religion, and to the belief that salvation may be assured by adherence to an intellectual statement of belief.

Two simple examples may be given of the way in which current intellectual explanations, which were later abandoned by general consent (at least among educated men), have influenced the interpretation of perfectly definite facts. In the time of Jesus, and for many centuries afterwards, certain mental disorders were ascribed to possession by supernatural beings, regarded as demons or evil spirits. We can now say with perfect confidence that this was perhaps a natural explanation, but certainly an erroneous one. Or again, it is almost universally found that savage peoples and those in the early stages of civilisation ascribe natural events, and in particular great catastrophes, such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, storms, or eruptions, to the direct activity of supernatural beings, and that much of their religious practice is therefore concerned with propitiation of these beings by sacrifice, offerings, worship, or prayer, so that they may not allow catastrophes to

occur. The old view still lingers in such observances as prayers for rain in a season of drought, and is of course widespread in backward countries — an earthquake shock will bring half the population of Naples down on their knees, and even in the last great eruption of Vesuvius, religious processions headed by priests with relics and sacred emblems marched as near as they dared to the advancing lava-flows in the futile attempt to make them change their course. But any moderately educated person now knows perfectly well that catastrophes differ in no essential way from the humblest and most ordinary natural events, and that both alike proceed according to the routine of natural laws : over these natural processes prayers and sacrifices will have no effect, though patience in the acquisition of knowledge and effort in its application may enable us to control them.

I propose therefore to leave the idea of God on one side for the present, as an interpretation or explanation by theology of certain ultimate and irreducible facts which we may call the facts of religious experience. Let it not be forgotten that our knowledge of the thoughts and inner nature of other men and women, even of those who are nearest to us, is indirect, an interpretation or explanation of their actions, of their expression, of the arbitrary symbols called words which they employ. We know directly no human consciousness save our own.[1] Thus if, in

[1] The only possible way in which direct experience of another's consciousness could occur would be by means of telepathy, should this be proved to exist. Those who assert that we can have a direct intuition of others' personality, apparently not by means of telepathy (*e.g.*, Baron von Hügel), are simply misusing the term and mistaking the faculty of intuition, which is a marvellously speedy and unitary interpretation, for a non-interpretative faculty, mystical in its nature, of direct knowledge.

common with liberal thinkers within the churches, we reject the idea of direct revelation as merely the crude symbolism of an earlier age, our simplest and most direct idea or experience of God will also involve an interpretation, and a very much more difficult and indirect one than that by which we recognise the existence of minds in our fellow-men. It will be an interpretation of facts of outer nature and of the human spirit and its experiences.

One further small digression before coming to the main subject of this chapter, a digression upon symbolism. In matters of religion, symbols have always played a considerable part. The man of science and the pure intellectualist will see in this a foolishness which may become dangerous. He is right about its possible danger. Symbols are, unfortunately, often mistaken for reality. Conclusions are then drawn from this supposed reality, and these conclusions may involve the performance of actions which may be merely laughable (or pitiable—so often the same thing !) in the eye of later reason, or, too often, tragic or cruel. Human sacrifice is perfectly logical if you believe that God is a being who can provide victory if propitiated, and who delights in the death of human victims as a propitiation : but if you have merely symbolised your own low level of moral outlook by ascribing to your God such bloody-minded mercenariness, then your human sacrifice is, in spite of your sincerity, a crime. The cross is naturally the central symbol of Christianity ; but to believe that the sign of the cross will frighten away devils or evil-minded persons, or that a fragment of the true cross could have power to bring miracles to pass, is folly and superstition arising from

mistaking the symbol for the sacred power symbolised. None the less, symbolism plays a legitimate and even necessary part in religion. In one sense, of course, symbolism is the only way of conveying any notions of mind or spirit, since as has just been pointed out, all such knowledge is indirect, and the means by which it is conveyed are either natural symbols, such as the expressions of face and gesture, or arbitrary symbols, such as words. But the symbolism which is here in question is something rather different. It is the utilisation as symbol of something not normally or necessarily associated with the thing symbolised (as is facial expression), and not deliberately selected so to symbolise it in one-to-one correspondence (as is a word like a common noun). It is the utilisation as symbol of something which particular accident or length of time has associated with the thing symbolised, and, especially, it is the utilisation of something concrete by which to focus and catch up the floating and diffuse strands of some abstract and complicated idea.

Flags, originally in the main utilitarian as visible rallying-points in battle, have gradually become more and more symbols of country, through whose medium the mental forces of patriotism are discharged. To what lengths the power of such symbols may go is seen in the present conflict in South Africa, where the symbol is threatening to disrupt the country as radically as could have any hard economic reality.

We now approach the crux of the matter, namely, the question of the reality at the basis of religion. In attacking this question, it will be of service to pass in review a few definitions of religion.

There have been many attempts to define religion; and the number of definitions produced is almost as great as the number of men who have attempted definition. What is more, many of the definitions are mutually contradictory, and many seem to have no common ground at all with others.

Matthew Arnold defined religion as "morality tinged with emotion." Salomon Reinach, that learned and sceptical French Jew, calls it "a body of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties." Professor E. B. Tylor proposes "the belief in spiritual beings" as what he calls a minimum definition of religion.

Max Müller, on the other hand, preferred to say that "Religion consists in the perception of the infinite under such manifestations as are able to influence the moral character of man." Sir James Frazer, who has perhaps done more than any single man since Darwin to change the thought of the world, seeks his definition along wholly different lines. He says that religion is "a propitiation or conciliation of powers [which he elsewhere defines as 'conscious or personal agents'] superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life." Jevons in his *Idea of God* says "the many different forms of religion are all attempts to give expression to the idea of God." It should be noted, however, that Jevons is willing to extend the idea of God to cover the numerous spirits of the animistic stage of religion, and even fetishes.

In a very recent book Professor Whitehead, who embodies in his one person the rare combination of philosopher, man of science, man of letters, and

mathematician, has given us (in spite of great obscurity in his main construction and in his philosophic approach to theology) some illuminating phrases on religion. As a preliminary to definition, he contrasts human activities such as arithmetic with religion. "You *use* arithmetic, but *you* are religious." He then goes on to say that "Religion is force of belief cleansing the inward parts. . . . A religion, on its doctrinal sides, can thus be described as a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended."

In passing, I should like to point out that Whitehead is here making the common mistake of employing for religion in general a definition which can really only be applied (but there with some force) to developed religion. He is substituting his ideal of religion for the actuality, which often not merely falls far short of the ideal, but is of quite another nature.

He later says "Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness," in this again neglecting the highly social nature of most primitive religions.

Two further sayings deserve quotation. "Religion is the art and theory of the internal life of man, so far as it depends on the man himself, and on what is permanent in the nature of things." This again is beautiful and true, but only if applied to developed religions, and to their best side, to boot.

Later he says that religion "runs through three stages, if it evolves to its final satisfaction. It is the transition from God the Void to God the Enemy, and from God the Enemy to God the Companion."

This is pregnant with meaning, both for the student of comparative religion and for the man desirous of developing his inner religious life.

Stratton, in his very suggestive and broad-minded book, *The Psychology of the Religious Life*, gives three tentative definitions: "One might say that religion is the appreciation of an unseen world, usually an unseen company; . . . or perhaps it might better be described as man's whole bearing towards what seems to him the Best, or Greatest—where 'best' is used in a sense neither in nor out of morality, and 'greatest' is confined to no particular region." Finally, he says that religion is "the effort to maintain communion, not with the infinite, but with that which possesses supreme worth—which is perhaps but a deeper kind of infinitude."

All these appear to me to suffer from the same fault as those from Whitehead and many others, of being applicable only to ideal or, at best, to developed religions.

St James wrote: "Pure religion and undefiled before God is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

This of course does not claim to be a general definition of religion; but even as a definition of the ideal in religion it is incomplete, in that it fails to include many aspects of the religious life.

T. H. Huxley, after speaking of "the engagement of the affections in favour of that particular kind of conduct which we call good," continues, "I cannot but think that it, together with the awe and reverence, which have no kinship with base fear, but arise whenever one tries to pierce below

the surface of things, whether they be material or spiritual, constitutes all that has any unchangeable reality in religion." This by its form does not claim to be a general definition: but it is interesting as one of the earlier attempts at psychological definition.

Donald Hankey is stated to have defined religion as "betting your life there is a God." Professor Wallace, in less trenchant language, but perhaps with a not dissimilar real meaning behind his words, wrote that religion is "a belief in an ultimate meaning of the universe." Lord Chesterfield's dictum, that religion was "a collateral security for virtue," can hardly aspire to be considered a definition, but well illustrates the utilitarian statesman's view of orthodox religion's social function. E. S. P. Haynes, in his book *Religious Persecution*, talks of a religious creed as "a theory of man's relation to the universe," which is an excellent definition on the purely intellectual side. John Morley's definition, which applies rather to developed religion than to religion in general, was "our feeling about the highest forces that govern human destiny" (*Rousseau*, p. 278). James Martineau, in spite of his unorthodoxy, had not emancipated himself from the theistic views which surrounded him. He wrote (*A Study of Religion*, p. 1) that religion is "the belief in an everlasting God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and holding moral relations with mankind." Professor M'Taggart, that eminent philosopher, was more cautious. In *Some Dogmas of Religion*, he says "Religion is clearly a state of mind. . . . It may best be described as an emotion resting on a conviction of harmony between ourselves and the universe at large."

These examples could be multiplied: but they will have served to show what diversity of thought exists on the subject. All the definitions so far given are incomplete, emphasising one aspect of religion to the exclusion of others. But the essential religious reality, the experience which seeks to embody itself in symbols and to find intellectual expression in theologies — what is it? Is it not the sense of sacredness? And is not this sense of sacredness, like the feeling of hunger or the emotion of anger or the passion of love, something irreducible, itself and nothing else, only to be communicated by words to others who have the same capacity, just as the sensation of colour is incommunicable to a blind man?[1]

As Estlin Carpenter says: "An encyclopædic account, however, should rest rather on an exterior definition which can serve as it were to pigeon-hole the whole mass of significant facts. Such an exterior definition is suggested by M. E. Crawley in *The Tree of Life*, where he points out that neither the Greek nor the Latin language has any comprehensive term for religion, except in the one ἱερά, and in the other *sacra*, words which are equivalent to 'sacred'"; and he concludes, "we may define, then, the religious object as the sacred."

This central, psychological definition has been adopted, with various modifications, by a number of writers, such as the Swedish Archbishop Söderblom and the American anthropologist Lowie, by Dr R. R. Marett, and Dr Rudolf Otto. I can best amplify the conception by quoting from these last two authors.

[1] In modern psychological parlance, this "sense" or "feeling" should be called a *sentiment*.

Dr Marett, surveying the religions of primitive peoples with the dispassionate gaze of an anthropologist, writes as follows :—" We must admit that in response to, or at any rate in connection with, the emotions of Awe, Wonder, and the like, wherein feeling would seem for the time being to have outstripped the power of ' natural,' that is reasonable, explanation, there arises in the region of human thought a powerful impulse to objectify and even personify the mysterious or ' supernatural ' something felt, and in the region of will a corresponding impulse to render it innocuous, or better still propitious, by force of constraint, communion, or conciliation." Or again, speaking of variations in certain primitive forms of the worship of sacred stones, " underlying all these fluctuating interpretations of thought there may be discerned a single universal feeling, namely, the sense of an Awfulness in them [the objects of worship] intimately affecting man and demanding of him the fruits of Awe, namely, respect, veneration, propitiation, service."

Dr Otto is a well-known German Protestant theologian, whose recent book, *The Idea of the Holy*, was acknowledged in theological circles to be of first-rate importance. He finds in the direct experience of the holy in events, persons, things and thoughts, not only the origin of religious feeling and beliefs in the past of primitive tribes, but the kernel of all that is of value in modern Christianity, as elsewhere in the religious life. He points out with some emphasis, not only that sacredness is in its origin quite remote from any moral associations or intellectual interpretations, but that even in developed religions, like Christianity, in which morality

and intellect have come into close connection with religious feeling, the experience of sacredness is something *sui generis*, a direct experience like that of beauty or logical correctness, and that to substitute for it a rational moral feeling or an intellectual theological comprehension is to rob religious experience of its central core and a well-spring of its feeling.

Speaking of this feeling in a developed religious consciousness, he writes: "Let us consider the deepest and most fundamental element in all strong and sincerely felt religious emotion. Faith unto Salvation, Trust, Love—all these are there. But over and above these is an element which may also on occasion, quite apart from them, profoundly affect us and occupy the mind with a well-nigh bewildering strength. Let us follow it up with every effort of sympathy and imaginative intuition wherever it is to be found, in the lives of those around us, in sudden, strong ebullitions of personal piety, . . . in the fixed and ordered solemnities of rites and liturgies, and again in the atmosphere that clings to old religious monuments and buildings, to temples and to churches. If we do so we shall find we are dealing with something for which there is only one appropriate expression, *mysterium tremendum*. The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, . . . until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its 'profane,' non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to trans-

port, and to ecstasy. It has its wild and demoniac forms and can sink to an almost grisly horror and shuddering. It has its crude, barbaric antecedents and early manifestations, and again it may be developed into something beautiful, pure, and glorious. It may become the hushed, trembling, and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of—whom or what? In the presence of that which is a *Mystery* inexpressible and above all creatures." I have quoted from Otto at some length, because both the non-rational fact of religious experience and its psychological basis are so clearly put.

The power which religious feeling has to transform life is also vividly stated (though not perhaps so vividly as by Victor Hugo when, in *Les Miserables*, he wrote of the old housekeeper Mme. Baptistine, "Nature had created her merely a sheep; religion had transformed her to an angel").

Sir Francis Younghusband's remark in his *Light of Experience*, apropos of the lasting effects of even a transitory religious exaltation, is also worth quoting here:—"In the same way, a man cannot always be 'in love'; but life is a different thing for him after having been in love once."

Apropos of primitive religions Otto says of this feeling: "It first begins to stir in the feeling of 'something uncanny,' 'eerie,' or 'weird.' It is this feeling which, emerging in the mind of primitive man, forms the starting-point for the entire development of religion in history. 'Daemons' and 'Gods' alike spring from this root, and all the products of 'mythological fantasy' are nothing but different modes in which it has been objectified, and all ostensible explanations of the origin of religion in

terms of animism or magic or folk psychology are doomed from the outset to wander astray and miss the real goal of their inquiry, unless they recognise this fact of our nature—primary, unique, underivable from anything else—to be the basic factor and the basic impulse underlying the entire process of religious evolution."

But this feeling, and the supernatural power which is assumed to explain it, are not necessarily good. The actual feeling, the " religious thrill," to borrow Lowie's phrase, is morally quite neutral, and, as Otto points out, may be debased or refined, experienced in relation to things in themselves either evil or good. And the supernatural power assumed to reside in objects thus felt sacred, the " theoplasm " of which gods are later made, is supposed to manifest itself for evil as well as for good ends, to be utilisable for black magic as well as for promoting fertility, to cause plagues and catastrophes as well as human blessings, to be the wrath of God as well as his love.

For this reason, Marett prefers not to call what is experienced " the sacred " or " the holy," since these to us almost invariably connote only goodness, but to borrow the Polynesian word *Mana*, which is actually employed to-day to denote the mysterious power assumed to be resident in all objects, good or evil, desirable or to be shunned, which arouse this *awe-ful* sense. In the same way, Otto feels constrained to coin a word for the experience of sacredness, and uses *numinous*, from the Latin *numen*, a divinity to be worshipped. It is not without significance that these similar results should have been reached by two very different minds, approaching

the subject by wholly different routes. Marett is an anthropologist, trying to make sense of the accounts given by travellers, missionaries, and men of science, of the tangled workings of the primitive mind. Otto is a Protestant divine, attempting to make the theology of Christianity fuller and more accurate. The one is making an external approach to primitive religion, the other is dealing with the highest organised religion, and from within. And yet both alike come to the conclusion that there is an ultimate category of religious experience, which is defined by this sense of mystery and awe. The one important difference between them is that Otto goes the farther of the two. He not only points out that the numinous may be felt in evil as well as good things, but that *normally*, whether in evil or good things or in neutral, the feeling involves both attraction and repulsion, both fascination and fear.

One thing is clear from my list of definitions, that religious feeling and action and belief must be, or at least usually are, involved in religion. Even Reinach's cynical phrase, negative though it be, implies feelings capable of important influence upon action. But without the aid of the psychological key provided by the definitions of Crawley, Marett, and Otto, it would be extremely difficult to see how these three components—emotional, practical, and intellectual—were fitted together in religion, and what common component of all religions there might be to which the term religious could be applied. What makes religious emotion religious and not merely æsthetic? What makes us say that one motive or reaction is religious, another moral? What is it that brings one piece of ceremonial or

ritual within the pale of religion and leaves another outside? Why is it that we call one belief scientific and another religious?

We may put it in this way. The normal man has an innate capacity for experiencing sanctity in certain events, just as (on a lower and more determinate plane) he has for experiencing red or blue, fear or disgust or desire, or as he has for experiencing beauty, or the validity of logical proof, or for feeling love or hate, or judging good and evil. Some have this in an overmastering degree, and will be haunted all their days by their experiences of holiness and the felt need of conforming their life to them. The majority, on the other hand, have it much less intensely. They will, in their degree, understand holiness when it is pointed out to them, but be incapable of the pioneering discoveries or the power of expression of the exceptional few. These few are like the few creators in the world of poetry or music, the rest are like those who can and do respond to the creation of the poets and musicians and value it, while themselves remaining dumb. Finally, there are undoubtedly some who, either congenitally or through their upbringing, are wholly unable to appreciate what is meant by the sacred or the holy, just as there are a few men who are incapable of appreciating music, a few who are born with defect of the retina leading to colour-blindness, a few who are born imbecile, unable to follow a logical chain of reasoning, a few born moral imbeciles, incapable of appreciating what is meant by right or wrong, and many more in whom upbringing or their own mode of life has deadened or wholly distorted this moral sense.

Not only does the normal man have this capacity for experiencing the sense of the sacred, but he demands its satisfaction. This may come through the services of an organised Church, as is shown by the Russian peasants who in many places are insisting on building new churches in place of those official Bolshevism has destroyed or turned to other uses; or through artistic expression; or through a religiously-felt morality, the necessity of which to some minds has been so finely put in *Romola* by George Eliot that I cannot forbear from quoting:—"The highest sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good."

I use the term "sense of the sacred" or "sense of the holy" for want of a better. Had it not been overlain by all sorts of alien and irrelevant ideas, *religious sense* or *sentiment* would have been preferable.

Thus the powers that are behind Nature; the mysteries that confront the inquiring mind; the great moments of man, his birth, his marriage, and his death; the revelations of art and knowledge; the moral ideal and the practice of good—all these and many others may be objects of religion, but are not so of necessity. They only come within the ambit of religion in so far as they are touched with sanctity by the mind, in so far as they are thought of and felt as sacred.

So we may have holy joy and sacred sorrow; sanctified revenge, religious war; sacred rite and sacred art; morality tinged, not simply with emotion, but with this one particular emotion or sentiment of sanctity; intellectual acts which, because

fused with a feeling of awe, are religious ; any and every activity of man, whether cruelty or kindness, love or hate, bigotry or enlightenment, bestial rite or most lovely expression of thought, may be experienced as sacred, tinged with this quality of the holy, and so become and be religious.

The sense of the holy is a highly complex frame of mind. One of its chief psychological accompaniments is awe, which is itself complex, with fear, wonder, and admiration all entering into it as ingredients. Reverence, into which there also enters submissiveness as an element, is a frequent if by no means invariable accompaniment. But mystery may probably be regarded as its real essence, with awe as necessary, and reverence as common, ingredient. The mystery may be merely the vulgar mystery of the unusual or strange. The mysteriousness of this may be wholly removed by education and knowledge. But be it noted, comprehension, in the ordinary sense of understanding the past causal sequence by which such and such an event or organism came into existence, or of analysis of event or organism into its component parts, with an understanding of how they work—this does not by any means necessarily rob the being or thing considered of mystery ; but now it is a mystery which no longer appeals to the untrained but only to the educated sense. Precisely the same thing, of course, is to be seen with art. Many birds and animals are attracted by bright colours ; so are savages and children, who also love the bizarre and the crude, indulging their fancy without reference to any consciously or unconsciously held body of principles. With the maturing of the mind, however, taste changes. It finds raw or

trivial what delighted it before; but, though it may despise that by which it was once captured, it finds new beauties to love, and, what is more, still loves them by means of the same faculty — only new-disciplined, matured and entered into relations with reason, experience, and other emotions—which in childhood loved a bright patchwork of colours or in adolescence the most sentimental of pictures.

Another characteristic of the sense of mystery in the disciplined mind is that it tends to find its objects more and more in the familiar, less in the merely unusual. This, too, has its parallel in art. It is only a temporary and uncompleted phase of art which gives us programme-music, subject-pictures, the purely narrative poem or story, the building which is striking at all costs. The great artist can make a kitchen table contain more beauty and meaning than a second-rate hand can infuse into a picture of the greatest event in history; and the finest works of art deal often with the simplest and most familiar human verities.

So with religion. The gaping spirit which needs to be stimulated by extravagance, miracle, or catastrophe, gives place to the insight which finds in the commonest facts material for reverence, wonder, or love. As Wordsworth put it, describing his wife and his love for her :—

> "She was a phantom of delight
> When first she gleam'd upon my sight."

Later, with full knowledge,

> "And now I see with eye serene,
> The very pulse of the machine. . . .
> . . . and yet a Spirit still, and bright
> With something of angelic light."

When the fact of existence has become itself a wonder, there is no room for miracle in the vulgar sense.

There is still another point in which religion resembles art: good intentions are not enough. A man with a good natural taste, or with one that has been well trained and disciplined, will find certain attempts at artistic expression definitely *wrong*; they are to him not merely crude or immature or incomplete—those qualities can be readily forgiven—but they arouse in him a definite feeling of hostility or distaste owing to their stressing the lower at the expense of the higher, or distorting the whole scheme of values so as to become, to him, without value or even with a negative value. When sickly sentiment takes the place of genuine feeling, when vulgarity takes the place of humour, when unreal motives are exalted at the expense of the strong reality of every day—then the result is intolerable to the man who knows better, in the same sort of way as it is intolerable to hear or see something which to us is supremely valuable greeted with a snigger or a leer.

Similarly, there are some whole religions, as well as the religious views of many individual persons, to which the man who is acute or sensitive in his religious perceptions and emotions reacts simply by a feeling of repulsion, so incongruous or so pretentious do they appear.

Precisely the same is true of their moral aspect; and no amount of sincerity can condone, to those who have higher standards, the sanctification of evil through religion. For one or other of these reasons, many religions and religious actions are bound to

seem repulsive or wicked to the developed religious consciousness. Nothing can make the religious sacrifice of human beings by the Aztecs seem anything but evil to us. We are filled with horror when we find that they took pleasure in representing, in their sacred art, the victim biting clean through his tongue in the moment of agony, presumably since the greater the pain of the victim the more would the God appreciate the sacrifice. On the other side, those who feel anything of the austerity of religion cannot but look with active distaste at the deliberate cultivation, by certain representatives of certain Christian bodies, of a religiosity of sentiment, especially among emotional women, which takes the undisciplined overflow of adolescence and sexual feeling, directs it on to religious objects, and in so doing not only encourages morbidity but degrades the objects of worship themselves.

. . . . . .

The chief ways in which religion has been moulded seem to be somewhat as follows.

In the first place, man demands some sort of explanation of the world and of his place in it. He dislikes to leave a mystery completely unexplained, though he rather prefers leaving it with some mysteriousness, and not wholly explained in a banal way His attempts at intellectual explanation of facts which give rise to religious feeling are theology. First of all, these attempts are either crude rationalisations or else myths — in other words, they are attempts to provide rational support for a desire without having real evidence or reasons at hand. In the case of myths, the desire is primarily the desire for explanation itself; there may also be added to

this, desire to explain in terms which gratify other desires, such as that for immortality. Logic and experience both then set to work on these "explanations," and proceed to improve them. Logic improves by attempting to make them more complete, by trying to remove inherent contradictions; experience tries to mould the explanations into greater conformity with observed facts.

It is true that in origin religion has nothing whatever to do with belief in a God or Gods, or with abstract good as against abstract evil, or with the salvation of souls, or with obedience to this or that revelation. These are all later growths, more elaborate dwellings for the religious spirit.

But it is equally true that, inevitably and universally as man's accumulated experience grows and his logic comes into play, he will find certain things and ideas to which this quality of sacredness seems of necessity to adhere.

The sense of the sacred is only the root of the matter. Religion as it developed—perhaps even from the first—has involved intellect and morals and ritual as well as feeling. Further, it has attached its feeling of sacredness to all sorts of objects and ideas.

Logic and experience do not always tend in the same direction, since logic will very often take certain premisses for granted as self-evident (*e.g.*, that a personal God exists) and then draw conclusions from them. The conclusions may bear no relation to facts, or may even contradict experience; but such conclusions of logic are often preferred by humanity to the conclusions of experience.

One process which from the beginning makes

itself felt is the transference of the feeling of sanctity experienced in relation to certain objects or events, to the explanation later advanced to account for the objects or events. This is due to the principle of association so fundamental in the human mind. So theology becomes sacrosanct, taboo to alterations, in a way not found with scientific doctrines. This accounts for the fact that there is such irrational but strong resistance, on the part of religious people, to theological changes—the proposals made are not weighed on their intellectual merits, but are met by a current of feeling. In addition, the force of authority is introduced. This comes about in two ways. For one thing, the mere fact of immemorial tradition becomes in itself sacred, and the fact that things have been done in one particular way for generations in the past becomes a valid reason for continuing to do so in the present and the future. And, secondly, the desire for reinforcing the sanctity of beliefs lead frequently to the assertion that they have been revealed, directly or indirectly, by supernatural authority. Religious conservatism is thus aided both by the authority of tradition and by that of revelation.

The foregoing shows how two separate bodies of explanation of phenomena can grow up side by side —theology and natural science. The one has grown up round objects experienced as sacred; the other has grown up round common objects, not regarded as worth consideration by religious intellects. But, unfortunately, explanations cannot be kept to localised regions of reality. Conclusions drawn from sacred science or theology overflow into everyday life and demand application to quite ordinary objects, while natural science, pursuing its

humdrum methods, eventually comes to apply them to objects regarded as sacred as well as to ordinary ones.

It is thus probable that in the development of civilisations there will always come a time when science and theology will find themselves in conflict. Science and theology start in different regions of experience; the men who pursue the one are generally of very different type from the devotees of the other; and the emotional backgrounds of the two are quite different. But they inevitably grow, and therefore inevitably invade each other's territory. The only possible solution, save an indefinite prolongation of the conflict, is for religion to admit the intellectual methods of science to be as valid in theology as everywhere else, while science admits the psychological basis of religion as an ultimate fact.

The first point we have made is that the process of association can and does bring intellectual explanation, or at least certain attempts at a certain kind of intellectual explanation, into connection with religion, and so cause these explanations to become invested with the specific religious quality of sanctity.

In precisely the same way, moral ideas can and do become linked by association with religion, and therefore sacred. Morals appear to acquire religious associations in several separate ways. In the first place the " negative sacredness," of which taboo is the developed form, becomes directly attached to actions which are found to shock one's own feelings or those of the community; these will include actions calculated to disturb any accepted sense of

sacredness, like laughing in church, or quarrelling at a graveside; and also actions which run counter to the accepted standards of the community, as when a member of a warlike tribe shows cowardice, a member of a respectable Puritan family obtains a divorce, or a member of an aristocratic clan, in the days before the war, expressed a desire to become an actor or a professional violinist.

Thus a great deal of what we may call tribal morality and custom, merely for the reason that it is generally accepted, traditional, and proscribed by authority rather than reason, comes to have a certain religious sanctity attached to it, although without necessarily being thought of as having any connection with supernatural beings.

Meanwhile, however, the belief in supernatural beings is in existence. If they exist as personalities in any way like us, they too must have their morality—they are responsible for the governance of the world, they cause events to take place in accordance with their wishes.

The more man's reason gets to work on his religious problems, the more difficult does he find it to ascribe low moral motives and insight to his Gods. At any particular time in history the moral character of his Gods comes largely to reflect his own moral ideas; but various peculiarities are added. Logic gradually compels the idea that the moral, like the intellectual and other qualities of God are absolute and complete—that God is not only more powerful, better, and possessed of more knowledge than we, but all-knowing, omnipotent, and absolutely good. On the other hand, evil exists; and its existence is a challenge to the moral

character of God. Two tendencies have, as a matter of fact, resulted from these two aspects of the problem. Either man, in his theology, prefers to see a God of absolute good perpetually in conflict with a Devil or supernatural being of evil nature; or else (which better satisfies the desire for logical unity), he ascribes to God wisdom and kindness infinitely transcending our own, so that evil of all sorts, including pain and misfortune, but especially moral evil, which seems so intolerable to us and so repugnant to our moral sense, is to God's absolute knowledge a necessity for our spiritual development, to his transcendent wisdom an obligatory move in the working out of the cosmic plan.

The two ideas are combined in an extremely curious way in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Satan is a prominent personage of the cosmic drama, but the conflict between him and God is not a fair fight, like that in Persian theology between Ormuzd and Ahriman. We are soon let in to the secret, which the Devils do not know with certainty, that the Almighty is omniscient and omnipotent, and that all the machinations of the Fiend are therefore foredoomed to failure as certainly (though for a different reason) as those of the villain in a good old-fashioned melodrama. It is this hard incongruity which makes Milton's great epic take rank below Homer's or Vergil's or that other great poem of cosmic scope, the *Divina Commedia*.

Freud believes that the reason why the forces of Nature are personified as a paternalist ruler or divine father is to be sought in a universal infantile father-complex. The matter does not, I confess, seem so straightforward to me. On the other hand,

once theistic personification has been accomplished, it would be natural for transference of any ideas and emotional forces which might arise from infantile complexes concerning parents, to the theological sphere. I think it very probable that certain views about and still more certain feelings towards God may owe a great deal to this cause. Thus family relations and the morals of family life are likely to acquire connection with religious feeling in several different ways.

It has frequently been maintained that religious belief is needed as a buttress to both private and still more to public morality. Matthew Hales, a noted judge at the close of the seventeenth century, could write :—" To say that religion is a cheat is to dissolve all those obligations whereby civil societies are preserved."

This idea has been, however, so often exploded that it is not worth while slaying the slain and going over once more the ground so well covered by Lecky, Westermarck, and others. I will content myself by quoting E. S. P. Haynes' dictum, that " if morality did really depend on other-worldly sanctions, the religious changes of the last fifty years would by now have dissolved society at large." But apropos of the question of divine personality it is worth while recalling, with Santayana, that " what makes for righteousness, the conditions of successful living, need not be moral in a personal sense, any more than the conditions of a flame need be themselves on fire." And let us also remember that the undue association of morals with religion has tended to surround morality with such a coat of untouchable sanctity that too often for this very reason

moral progress has been much slower than might otherwise have been the case.

The final upshot is a compromise. By the time morals begin to be thought about instead of accepted as necessary tradition, the idea of a supernatural being in control of religious affairs has come into being. Logic, applied to man's developing moral sense, tends to make this supernatural being a model of moral perfection. On the other hand, the facts of life, including the problem of evil, had long previously claimed attention and demanded, if possible, some explanation; and various theological myths had been invented for this purpose. Very frequently these myths involve actions or ideas of deity which are hardly consistent with a more developed morality. In these cases there is a cleavage between two views of God, a logical and moral difficulty which is sometimes openly acknowledged and discussed, more often simply slurred over. In the Book of Job the difficulty is faced. It is the problem of evil in its simplest form, in the form in which it haunted the practical mind of the early Hebrew, set upon this life rather than the next, upon national success and survival rather than any personal immortality. Why do the wicked prosper, wax fat and kick; why do misfortunes fall upon the innocent or those who have done their best to be upright? Job poses the question as applied to his own plight. His three friends answer, with the simple but crude faith which believes what it thinks ought to be so, "because you have deserved it." But Job knows this is not so. He appeals to Jehovah himself. And he is answered by Jehovah himself. The answer is as simple as that of the three comforters; it is not

much more comforting : but it is sublime instead of puerile, it symbolises a true fact instead of a false hypothesis. The answer is, " Because I am the Lord ; because my ways are not your ways ; because you cannot understand the divine purpose ; because ultimate reality is and always will be a mystery, to be feared as well as loved."[1]

On the other hand, sublime as this idea may be, it still involves all sorts of difficulties on the theistic plane which are avoided if religion does not personify its objects of worship.

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In this chapter I have attempted to advance two main ideas, both of them unfamiliar. One is that the essence of religion springs from man's capacity for awe and reverence, that the objects of religion, however much later rationalised by intellect or moralised by ethics, however fossilised by convention or degraded by superstition or fear, are in origin and essence those things, events, and ideas which arouse the feeling of sacredness. On this point, with the testimony of anthropologists and archbishops to back me, I hope to have convinced my readers.

The other is that the idea of supernatural divine beings, far from being a necessity to any and every religion, is an intellectual rationalisation which was necessary, or at least inevitable, at a certain primitive level of thought and culture ; which was then, the crucial assumption once made, worked on by man's intellect and by his ethical sense to give such high conceptions as that of the God of the Jews from

[1] Cf. Spinoza's words :—" He who truly loves God cannot wish that God should love him in return."

after the Exile, or the God of most modern Christian churches; but which now must be abandoned if further religious progress is to be made. Further evidence for these views will be found in the two subsequent chapters, especially in that on comparative religion.

These ideas, I know, are unfamiliar to the great majority. I know also that when a man has been accustomed to approach a problem from one angle and is then asked to approach it from another wholly different angle, the result is usually bewilderment, or annoyance, or both. The mental constructions we have built up have their foundations and top storey, their roots and branches, their feet and head: to demand a new approach often seems like asking us to turn our house on its side before living in it, or to make our ideas go about standing on their heads. None the less, the history of thought shows clearly enough that thus to turn an idea upside-down may be fruitful and necessary, and that it is of the greatest importance that humanity should now and again take out its beliefs for spring-cleaning. In pure science an example is afforded by Mendelism, which makes the idea of invisible units the starting-point in a study of heredity, instead of thinking backwards from the visible characters of the plant or animal. Darwin's great idea of Natural Selection was another case of reversal of current thought; the delicate adaptation which was previously hailed as proof of purpose in a divine artificer was now approached from the other side and seen to be the necessary outcome of non-purposeful variation and selection. The present position in philosophy, arisen largely through the development of Einstein's

relativity theory, is another case in point. Most people are so used to taking space and time as a necessary and fixed external framework that they feel the basis of their thought shattered when asked to think of them as relative and as a method of thinking rather than as externally real. Or, to take an example from the ethical sphere, to the average barbarian, the average Jew, or the average Roman, at the beginning of our era, maxims such as the duty of loving your enemies must have seemed complete topsy-turvydom. It was the duty of the good tribesman, the good Jew, the good citizen to hate his enemies. The Jew at least had plenty of divine authority for smiting them. And yet even opponents of Christianity would be compelled to admit that the world, however incompletely it has carried out the precept, has found it to contain deeper truth than its opposite.

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But if religion is not essentially belief in a God or Gods and obedience to their commands or will, what then is it? It is a way of life, an art like other kinds of living, and an art which must be practised like other arts if we are to achieve anything good in it.

Religious emotion will always exist, will always demand expression. The ways in which it finds expression may be good or may be bad: or, what seems hardly to have been realised, they may be on the whole good for the individual worshipper but bad for the community. Man's scale of desires and values, his spiritual capacities, dictate the direction of his religion, the goal towards which it aspires; the facts of Nature and life dictate the limits within

which it may move, the trellis on whose framework those desires and emotions must grow if they are to receive the beams of truth's sun, if they aspire above creeping on the ground. It is our duty to know those outer facts truly and completely, to be willing to face all truth and not to try to reject what does not tally with our desires: and it is our duty to realise our own capacities, to know what desires are to be put in command, what desires are to be harnessed to subordinate toil, to place our whole tumultuous life of feeling and will under the joint guidance of reverence and reason.

In so far as we do this, we prevent the man of devout religious feeling from being subordinated to a system which may organise the spirit of religion in opposition to discovery or necessary change, or may discharge its power in cruelty and persecution; and we help religion to help the progress of civilisation. But in so far as we neglect this, we are making man a house divided against itself, and allowing the strong tides of religious feeling to run to waste or to break in and devastate the fruit of man's labour. And the choice is in our own hands.

Tantum religio potent suadere malorum.—LUCRETIUS.

> There's naught, no doubt, so much the spirit calms
> As Rum and true Religion.
>
> —LORD BYRON, *Don Juan*.

The life of Reason alone is free from Magic.—PLOTINUS.

The diversity of the world is natural. Yet not less natural is this liability to accept its own diversity. It is by limitation—the limitation which all art involves—that Nature becomes diverse, fantastic, seemingly artificial. It is by that same limitation that these diverse forms cannot accept each other. I recall the critical, disdainful gaze of a small terrier as he stood still to watch a great goose pass by. Let us, therefore, accept with joy the diversity of the world, and with equal joy its inability to accept its own diversity. For that also is delightful.—HAVELOCK ELLIS (*The Forum*, 1924).

A God, like a man, can only be judged by the standard of the age to which he belongs; for experience seems to show that the ethical code of a deity is seldom superior, and may be distinctly inferior, to that of his human contemporaries.—Sir JAMES FRAZER, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*.

> Peor and Baalim
> Forsake their Temples dim,
> With that twice-battered god of Palestine,
> And mooned Ashtaroth,
> Heaven's Queen and Mother both,
> Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine,
> The Libyc Ammon shrinks his horn,
> In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz morn.
>
> —JOHN MILTON, *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

When I mention religion, I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England.—Parson Thwackum, in FIELDING'S *Tom Jones*.

Chapter VI

Comparative Religion

It will be as well to give some further account of religion from the dispassionate point of view of the student. There are those who have a genius for religion, as others have a genius for poetry, or for lawn-tennis. They will be saints as surely as the others will be poets or champions. But religion differs from the other activities we have mentioned in that it is not exhausted in its own performance, like a game, nor is it even like art, whose direct efforts are confined to its own sphere. For it is not only individual, but social; and it is not only emotional, but overflows in action. In these respects it is like politics, for instance, or science. A man may be a great scientist although his scientific beliefs are in the main erroneous. He will be great in so far as he has seen some new fact or principle hitherto hidden. But the logic of his discovery (sometimes true logic, sometimes false) will be embodied in action by lesser men in ways of which he never dreamed; and these logical principles all the time demand new checking, new facts, new vision. The alchemists were rightly excited over the transmutation of one substance into another wholly different substance in their crucibles under the influence of heat or of mixture with some other material: but the conclusions which they drew

from this—that the elements were indefinitely transmutable, and that materials existed capable of turning any base substance into a noble one—these resulted in an extraordinary waste of human effort and expense. Pasteur was one of the greatest men of science who have ever existed. His full proof that not even microscopic life was generated except from existing life, his discovery that many diseases were produced by the presence of bacteria or microscopic animal parasites, and his further discovery that immunisation against bacterial disease was possible—these opened the door to a vast and beneficent increase of control over human suffering. But time alone will show whether the pushing to their extreme of the conclusions to be drawn from these discoveries, at the expense of other avenues to discovery, may not have led to a very considerable waste of time and energy, and even in some directions have led to loss of health and life instead of to gain. The stressing of the parasite as " the cause " of disease, and of artificial immunity as the best protection or cure, led to the comparative neglect of all other causes, prominent among which are the variations in disease-resistance due to variations in health and physiological state and those which are congenital. At the present moment, for instance, huge sums of money are being spent on a frontal attack upon cancer, inspired in the long run by Pasteurian ideas. It is, however, at least possible that the right solution of the problem will lie in pure chemical physiology, or in the study of heredity, and that dietetics or even eugenics may one day turn the flank of the enemy. Time alone will show.

So (though of course with a difference) in religion. Religion is in one sense an individual illumination; it is a holy and a beautiful way of living one's own life. But the individual illumination can only light up what is there; the bright light in the soul lights up the room in which the soul lives—its time and place, the thought of that time and that place; and the picture thus made, by illumination and thing illumined, is what influences other men. Indeed, it is more than that, for the illumination itself is not something absolute; its very character has in part been derived from its surroundings.

Like science, too, religion is never complete. It advances: and a religious advance is like a scientific advance—the "revelation" is the discovery of something both new and good, but not of all the unknown, or of the complete good. However, the thought of the time, with all its limitations, sets itself to push conclusions to their furthest possible limits; and, just as in science, these conclusions often turn out to be wrong or impossible, simply because they take no account of other truths and other aspects of reality which had not then been discovered or recognised.

Thus, if a religious life is in one way like a great work of art, expressing to others just its own uniqueness and value, in another way it is like a scientific discovery, which compels to further theory and full working-out, and in still another way like a political principle, which must express itself in the organisations and institutions that confine and mould daily life.

And for all these reasons it is imperative that the bases of religion should be dispassionately analysed,

for only so shall we have the hope of utilising the driving-power and the fertilising flow of its current to the best purpose, and indeed without doing positive harm.

The chief ways in which such an analysis will be profitable are by a comparative study of religion in different people at all possible levels of culture: by some attempt at an understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying religious experience; by an examination of theology, which aims at being reason's scaffolding for religion, with reason's fullest freedom; and by an inquiry, in the light of all our experience and our whole scheme of values, of the place which religion ought to take in the life of a community of civilised people. This is a formidable task; and in this little book I can do little beyond introduce my readers to a few leading ideas and lines of thought, and then refer them to the works of the authorities on the several subjects. But so great and so rapid is the accumulation of knowledge, so extreme the specialisation of thought at the present time, that even this twisting together of threads of thought must be of value if it is rightly done. Without it, the threads lie loose, each breaking if even a small load is placed upon it; but if the loose threads be twisted into cords, and one day the cords into a rope, that rope may be strong enough to bear the weight of those who, for lack of any rope of thought, are unable to climb out of chaos.

Comparative religion is the study of the religious beliefs and practices of mankind, conducted in the same spirit as comparative anatomy, which is the comparative study of the structure and plan of animals and plants. It notes the facts; the differ-

ences and the resemblances between one religion and another; it seeks to trace the family history of beliefs and rites, their evolutionary origins; to explain the presence of this or that practice as a survival from past times; to correct the theorisings of those who lay down what religion ought to be by showing them what it actually and in hard fact is.

Taylor and Frazer are perhaps the classical figures in this field; but they have had helpers and rivals too numerous to cite. What demands mention is a few of the main conclusions to which the study leads. In the first place, then, as we have already set forth, to the idea that religion has grown out of, and indeed originally consists in, the activities of mind and body aroused by the feeling of sacredness. Further, that this sacredness need not and does not at the start have the restricted meaning which we give to it, of "good-sacred" only, but may include "bad-sacred" also (*e.g.*, the powers supposed to be invoked in black magic). In other words, that this feeling which we are trying to describe is in its pure original form unattached to moral ideas, may either attract or repel, or both at once, may be either positive or negative in respect of goodness.

Various words exist in primitive languages to denote this sacred power, such as the Polynesian *mana*, the North American *manitou* and *maxpé*, the West African *njomm*, the Moroccan *baraka* (see Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, 1926), and so forth; while we have seen that a modern theologian has coined the word "numinous" to denote all that falls into this category.

An example of how the word *holy* may even in modern English be applied to something morally

neutral is afforded by Coleridge's description of the site of Xanadu :—

> " A savage place, as holy and enchanted
> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
> By woman wailing for her demon lover."

On the combination of admiration and fear, fascination and horror, in the feeling of sacredness, little need be said. We need only remind ourselves that one of the great achievements of Christianity, or rather of Jesus, was to show how this fear could be cast out or transmuted into the nobility of awe—by being dominated by an admiration raised to the higher level of love. True that it has been the perverse triumph of sect after sect to render this achievement of little account by their hideous emphasis on a real Hell of eternal torture ; but this does not lessen Jesus' great discovery.

It is an entire mistake to conceive that the objects of this religious feeling are essentially or primitively beings of the nature of gods. Some things, some events, some ideas are sacred, numinous, full of *mana*: that is all. Their relationship to the later concept of gods lies solely in the fact that something of spirit, in the broadest sense, is supposed to inhere in them : but, so far as we can gather, primitive man prefers to interpret most phenomena in terms of spirit, projecting that nature with which he is most familiar—his own—into all other natures.[1]

One of the best-known examples of " negative mana " is taboo, that sacred prohibition which in

[1] Hartland has coined a suggestive term in this connection. This idea of the supernatural, this mana, this numinous quality in things, he calls *theoplasm*—the stuff of which gods are made. The more the idea is reflected on, the more piquant does it become.

many primitive tribes attaches to various places and actions. Taboo is more than usually prominent among the Polynesians. The sacredness of a chief is such that he was dangerous to touch, being as highly charged with sacred power as is a high-tension wire with electricity. This sacredness even communicated itself to what he had worn or touched or eaten from; a Tongan chief could not give his discarded garments to his inferiors—they would bring disease or danger. In Hawaii, if a man's shadow fell on the King or even on the King's house, he was put to death.

It is of some interest to find that when the Polynesians are converted to Christianity their habituation to a life of taboo shows itself in their exaggerating every possible taboo in their new religion. The Tongans become, for instance, the most virulent Sabbatarians, and they even invent new taboos, ascribing such sanctity to the house of worship that they are frightened to use any water from a church roof.

Very numerous are the food taboos of primitive religion. A number of these are set forth in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

We, to-day, are not without our taboos; and a study of them is not without interest. The greatest of our taboos is on the discussion of sex. The child who begins to ask awkward questions and to display its perfectly natural curiosities on these as on all other matters, is, for the most part, simply told not to, and in a shocked voice. Thus, on the one hand, is the natural desire of curiosity, on the other, repression by authority, and by authority mixed up with ideas of right and wrong. Thus here, in a sense

artificially, are attraction and repulsion combined, and there is generated a mystery which at one and the same time both fascinates and frightens. Later, when inevitably morals and religion become intermingled, this other mystery, of God, will come in to reinforce the first. But there will be a mystery even if the child has been fortunate enough to have parents who have not added ideas of God and supernatural anger to the inevitable burden on his unfledged mind. Even without this a taboo will have been brought into existence.

It would appear that the taboos of early religion range from some such vaguely mysterious social prohibitions as this, up to those which are armed with all the supernatural force of Godhead.

Another constant feature of primitive religion is its belief that man's life is surrounded by powers or forces which can and do influence it for good or evil. The relation of these forces to objects which are sacred is not always quite clear. Sometimes the sanctity or mana is itself the force, which can be made to discharge itself in this way or that. This is so with the sacred stones of certain Polynesians, which, according to them, have power to make crops grow; and, at the other end of the scale, with miracle-working relics, round and on which the supernatural force is supposed to have accumulated. At other times, the supernatural forces are supposed to be hovering round, waiting for the chance of exerting their power; this they can do more readily at certain special times, such as birth or marriage, when the soul for one reason or another is exposed to spiritual danger. A very large collection of facts concerning the supernatural dangers which are

believed to be run at marriage, and the steps taken to avert those dangers, is to be found in Crawley's *Mystic Rose.*

In such cases, it is essentially the event which possesses some mysterious " negative sanctity " (as well, often, as sanctity in our positive sense); and the powers which can at this time do harm may be as neutral, from the standpoint of sanctity, as the bacteria which invade a man when his resistance is lowered. They may be regarded just as we may regard luck, with superstition but without reverence or awe. On the other hand, the powers may be themselves endowed with mana—ghosts of the dead, mysterious nature-spirits, bad luck deified. This whole attitude has its watered-down counterpart to-day in all kinds of superstitions concerning luck, and is based on a very simple psychological reality. The psychological reality is that when we are undertaking an unusual or unique event, or making a decision or embarking on a venture of importance, we are inevitably wrought up in one way or another, unusually receptive to outer impressions and strange inner thoughts. Whatever general system of ideas about our life and its relation to the rest of the world we have allowed to take root in our minds, will influence us at this moment. How many superstitions of good and bad luck still crowd round the wedding-day in twentieth-century England; how seriously some of them are taken; and how difficult it is not to take some of them seriously!

This brings us on to the question of magic and its relation to religion. There are authorities who deny that magic has any real, essential relation with re-

ligion, and see in it rather the prelogical germ of science. Most, however, who have considered the question carefully, although they may be prepared to admit that the fountain-head of magic may reside rather in the region of intellect (however incomplete and distorted) than in that of religious feeling, insist, and I think with reason, that primitive magic and primitive religion were from the first so intertwined, and so gradually did the connection between them loosen, that it is both difficult and unprofitable to attempt their separation.

Most magic is based on the idea of sympathetic influence. No one in attendance on a Moroccan woman in childbirth must tie a knot, or have their clothes tightly laced: to do so would impede easy delivery. In Rossetti's poem, "Sister Helen," the woman makes a waxen image of the lover by whom she has been deserted, and by slowly melting it, brings about his death: this magic method, in one form or another, is extremely widespread both among savages and in moderately civilised societies, such as that of classical Rome or the European Middle Ages. Many of the so-called Nature-Festivals seen to have been in their origin ceremonials for inducing fertility of the soil by sympathetic magic. Quite obviously of this type are many of the rites practised by hunting tribes to secure success in hunting. One of the most remarkable objects left to us by prehistoric man was found in a cave in the Pyrenees. It is the headless body of a bear, modelled in clay: in its neck is a hole, as for a stick, and between its paws lies a real bear's skull; the clay body is marked with gashes from sharp instruments. It can with considerable probability

be assumed that this object originally had the bear's skull attached to it, that the whole was then covered with a bear's skin, and that to the accompaniment of some ritual, the hunters pierced the counterfeit bear with their spears to ensure success in their hunting of the real cave-bear, which was one of their main sources of food, perhaps 20,000 years ago. The Australian natives practise magico-religious rites to-day to ensure the multiplication of their food-animals and success in hunting.

Dr Marett, in his *Primitive Religion*, gives an illuminating discussion of the probable origin of the belief in sympathetic magic and its efficacy. He further shows how, in a world like that of primitive man, magic could not fail to borrow sacred or religious power from the reservoir of mystery and mana which the savage feels all round him, any more than religious feeling could help borrowing the ideas and methods of magic to help it in the task of propitiating the sacred powers. In this way, other forms of magic than that of influence by sympathy have grown up.

So was cemented the alliance between magic and religion, the alliance which is by no means yet broken. Exorcism is magic: the Rumanian poltergeist medium, Eleonore Zugun, whose case was recently investigated in London, was the subject of exorcist rites by Rumanian priests. Belief in the miracle-working power of relics or holy places is belief in magic. Cures of certain types of disease may be effected through such agencies, but this is by means of the suggestibility of the patient, not through any mysterious supernatural power emanating from the objects or places themselves.

The evil eye is magic: a stranger cannot pry inquisitively round the streets of Naples without having the sign of the horns, infallible warder-off of the influence of the evil eye, made at him. Witchcraft is magic: in 1926 a Devonshire farmer so firmly believed that a neighbour had bewitched his beasts, that he assaulted her, and was tried and sentenced for it, protesting the truth of his assertion to the last.

Aulard, in his interesting study of Religion during the French Revolution, states that the more he goes into the history of the time, the more is he convinced that only a small minority of the French nation were either devoted Catholics or devoted adherents of the Religion of Reason or of Patriotism: the bulk of the people, if left to themselves, would simply have relapsed entirely into the beliefs in paganism and witchcraft, a magico-religious system which, even under a veneer of Christianity, they had for centuries chiefly practised and lived by.

I have spoken of one or two general features of primitive religion; but a few particular examples will be the best way of enabling my readers to gain a more concrete view of the subject.

I am forced by the exigencies of my space to give but the bare bones. For the details my readers must look in the original authorities or in larger treatises on the subject, of which a brief list is given at the end of the book. But the very scantiness of detail may serve to make the large differences stand out the more.

The first point to realise is that religions, like living animal and plant species, are the product of evolution. Again, like animals and plants, they have

evolved into a number of bizarre and wholly unexpected and unpredictable forms. The old story of the yokel who, after seeing a giraffe for the first time, exclaimed that he was now confirmed in the belief that there was no such animal, has its real applicability. A giraffe; a deep-sea angler-fish; a giant spider-crab; a stalk-eyed fly; a praying mantis; a matamata Terrapin—these and many other creatures are really very improbable!—much less like fact than fiction. And the same is true of religions. The Toda religion, of which more anon; the whole amazing elaboration of totemism; a revival meeting; prayer-wheels; whole societies dominated by religious magic; monasticism run mad, as in Tibet or Mount Athos; asceticism run mad, as in the Thebaid or in Indian fakerism; human sacrifice; sacred self-mutilation; temple prostitution—these phenomena among many others at first sight seem too strange to be believed. And yet they exist, and, what is more, exist wrapped in the odour of sanctity.

It should, of course, never be forgotten that the selective processes in evolution will not do more than ensure survival in existing circumstances, any more than economic pressure ensures that an object manufactured for sale shall be the best of its kind or even good of its kind. All that economic pressure ensures is that the object shall somehow sell itself; all that biological pressure ensures is that the animal or plant shall survive and reproduce itself; all that social pressure ensures is that a religion shall somehow or other satisfy to a reasonable extent the religious needs of its votaries.

Nearly a million species of animals are already

known. Of these, only a few thousand are endowed with anything which can be called intelligence, only a few tens with high intelligence, and only one with conceptual thought. In the same way, there are hundreds of known religions; it had better be left to more orthodox writers than myself to enumerate those which can be called high religions.

Animal evolution witnesses to a central upward trend of biological progress; it also shows us the retention of low types along with high, the throwing out of blind-alley side-branches of specialisation at every level, and sometimes even degeneration. Religious evolution also shows a central progress—but equally the production of bizarre side-branches, the permanent confining of the religious spirit in low-level embodiments, its projection into every conceivable cul-de-sac, its too frequent bending over from upward to downward growth.

Flaubert, in his *Tentation de St Antoine*, gave an amazingly vivid picture of a thousand-and-one fantastic manifestations of the half-baked religious spirit jostling each other in the morning of civilisation. Frazer's great *Golden Bough* gives a portentous scientific résumé, carefully documented, of similar but, on the whole, more primitive manifestations. Here I can do no more than throw a few head-lines on the screen, choosing as great a variety as possible of racial and geographical difference.

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For my first example I choose the Todas.

The Todas are a tribe inhabiting the Nilghiri Hills in Southern India. They have been repeatedly investigated, notably, and with fine insight and accuracy, by the late W. H. Rivers.

They live in a wooded upland region, and are entirely dependent on their herds of buffaloes for their support. They possess a vague and elastic mytho-theology, which, however, plays very little important part in their religious life. For all practical purposes their religion centres round the milk of their buffaloes. Throughout India the cow is a sacred animal, and there are all sorts of religious prohibitions (taboos) upon the use of fresh milk, which is usually converted into buttermilk and a kind of butter before being used for human consumption. Among the Todas, cows are unknown, and thus the buffalo has naturally taken the cow's place; but the sanctity of the animal itself has been reduced—to be, however, concentrated in its milk.

The Todas believe that to drink the milk from the sacred herds would be to die; Rivers was solemnly assured that a cat which lapped some of the sacred fluid expired in a few minutes. And yet they are dependent upon the milk for their existence.

Their religion has accordingly come to be concerned mainly with a *desanctification* of the holy milk, to render it, in its new form, fit for public consumption. To this end there is a whole network of what must be described as temples—in other words, buildings which serve both as dairies and as places where the holy ritual of lactic desanctification can occur—over the countryside, usually at least one in every small hamlet.

These dairy-temples, like their associated herds of buffaloes, are of various grades of sanctity, and each has its own priest-dairyman. The buffaloes are milked by the priests into sacred vessels, and the milk is then taken into the inner or sacred of the two

compartments into which the temple-dairy is divided. Here also is stored, in a vessel which is the Toda ark or holy of holies, some of the buttermilk from the previous churning, known to the Todas as "pep." Some of this must be added to the fresh milk before it is churned. The pep is thus the substance which assures continuity in the sacred ritual. Each holy ceremony is performed with the aid of pep from the ceremony of yesterday, and so on back into the mists of antiquity. This should not surprise us, for similar methods for ensuring the continuity of holiness, either by material means, or through the transference of an assumed spiritual power by some symbolic act, are to be found at very various levels of culture. The sacred fire of the Vestal Virgins is a familiar example from classical Rome; and the necessity for the ordination of priests by a bishop, and in particular the whole idea of the apostolic succession, are precise parallels to this simple symbolic magic, on the symbolic plane.[1]

The conversion of the not-to-be-eaten sacred milk into the harmless butter and buttermilk is carried out to the accompaniment of a rigid ritual and prolonged "prayer." The prayers consist in adjurations to various spirits or powers to keep the worshippers and their flocks from harm, adjurations by this or that sacred object or sacred formula. It seems likely that these adjurations, even in their origin, were on

[1] Cf. E. S. P. Haynes, *Religious Persecution*:—"There is much vain talk of ecclesiastical continuity, but the Nazarene carpenter would hardly have understood the ideas of any Christian sect after the fourth century but the Quakers . . . And yet we are asked to believe that the medieval inquisitor and the ritualistic priest are, in some mysterious way, more closely connected with the Christian tradition than Dissenters like George Fox or William Penn." A natural symbolism is mistaken for sacred supernatural power—and this is mere magic.

the level of magic rather than true petitionary prayer, based on the belief that the supernatural powers could be coerced to do the will of man by incantations or spells. Even to-day in various Christian churches similar spells are employed, though against evil spirits only, in the rites of exorcism.

At the present time, the Toda prayer-magic has suffered the frequent fate of ritual in hide-bound religions—it has largely degenerated into a rite the original meaning of which has been forgotten, its efficacy now being supposed to depend merely upon its due performance in the precise traditional way. For instance, the appeals to the deities or spirits are now usually omitted altogether; but the long list of magical adjurations which precede them are repeated with the utmost exactitude, although, of course, the one has really no meaning without the other.

Whatever the origin of the rite, whether as prayer or magic, its present status is definitely magical, but by degeneration. It is in the category of meaningless magic, mere mumbo-jumbo.

This, again, is not unknown in other and higher religions. To put your prayers on cylinders and to regard the turning of these by the hand of the worshipper, or even by wind or water-power, as a method of acquiring religious merit, as is done by the Tibetans, is to make the essentially magical assertion that the value of praying is in the form of words, not in the spiritual state of the worshipper; and the same is true, though the case is not quite so extreme, when the mere gabbling of so many Ave Marias or Paternosters is supposed to be a religious act of spiritual value to the performer.

When the milk has been churned in the Toda dairy, the butter and buttermilk are placed in an intermediate vessel which stands on the line dividing the sacred from the profane compartment of the "temple." From this it is later removed into definitely profane vessels in the outer compartment, and in these transported for the use of the villagers.

The dairyman, *alias* priest, in conformity with his function of ensuring the proper removal of a tremendous taboo, is himself hedged round with taboos and prohibitions. He must not marry or even enter a hut which contains a woman (women in their turn being completely excluded from all contact with the dairy and its holy ritual). Any contact or association with a corpse is forbidden; he must not cut his hair or his nails; he must not communicate with laymen except on certain days, and then only according to a specially prescribed form of salutation and conversation. All sorts of taboos are also prescribed in connection with the kind of food he may eat and the way in which it must be cooked.

Here, again, parallels can be drawn from all kinds and grades of religion. The precautions which hedge round the life of the priest-king, on whose sacred safety the safety of so many primitive communities is supposed to hinge, are summarised at length in Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Leviticus and Deuteronomy are strewn with similar prohibitions. The celibacy of priests is a common prohibition, a good example of a religious practice in which taboo is combined with more rational factors, and in the Middle Ages Christian priests were subject to all sorts of taboos on pain of losing sanctity.

Now wherever elaborate taboos are imposed, and religion becomes largely negativist and prohibitory, human nature finds means to evade them. Either evasion is generally winked at, as has often been the case with the frequent evasion of celibacy by Catholic priests, especially in the more decadent periods of religious history; or some elaborate rationalising method of saving face is devised.

The most amusing example of this latter method in Toda religion concerns the injunction against the priest's entering a dwelling in which there are women. Should the priest desire to visit a woman in her home, the ritual prohibition may be evaded by a ritual fiction. The grain-pounder, the sieve, and the broom are put outside the hut by the woman. These are the Toda emblems of womanhood. Consequently, once these are outside the hut, the human being inside is no longer " really " a woman; and the priest can enter without infringing the sacred taboo.

Once more, examples of the same rationalising circumvention of religious injunctions can be multiplied from the life of other peoples. Some of the most extraordinary come from the Pacific, where the Polynesians had built up a religion of which the foundation was taboo piled upon taboo, the whole interwoven with a rigid caste system.

For instance, among the Tongans, any common person who had, even accidentally, touched one of the aristocracy was " infected " with the dangerous spiritual power inherent in the chief: he could not then, for example, use his hands to feed himself without incurring the danger of disease. This is the perfectly logical outcome of their central belief in

transmissible supernatural power. As, however, such accidental contacts must have been not infrequent, and as it would be awkward to have any considerable proportion of the population incapacitated from feeding themselves, a counter-belief grew up to the effect that if the man touched the feet of his chief with the palms and backs of the infected hands, this would remove the sacred infection; and, since the chief might not always be available when wanted, touching one of the chief's feeding-bowls, themselves also sacred, came to be considered sufficient equivalent. The analogies with the charging and discharging of electric power are interesting.

Or, again, in order to be able to rid themselves of unpopular rulers without incurring the taboo-breaker's curse ("there's such divinity doth hedge a king!"), the Samoans had produced the convenient rationalistic fiction that a sprinkling with cocoanut-water effectively washed away the ruler's sanctity, upon which he could be safely put out of the way.

There is a certain high hereditary Mohammedan potentate to-day who is, of course, by his religion debarred from partaking of alcoholic drink. On the other hand, it is indubitable that he consumes it; and equally indubitable that this causes no scandal to the faithful—why? Because he is so sacred that the champagne or what not is changed into water as he drinks it (but not, we may hope, until any agreeable sensations which it arouses in less exalted personages have had time to manifest themselves).

And the same processes may be seen at work in other spheres of religion, as when the slaughter of an animal is substituted for human sacrifice, or water-power made to say the Buddhist's prayers.

What I have here narrated is merely a sketch of the kernel of Toda religion; for, be it noted, there are innumerable details of ritual which I have not mentioned, and many complications consequent upon the grading of dairies and buffaloes and priests in an ascending order of sanctity, with a sort of pope-dairyman, if I may be pardoned the phrase, or dairy-archbishop, at the summit.

I may conclude with a couple of apposite quotations from Dr Marett's references to the Todas in his little book *Anthropology*:—"The reason why it (the milk of the sacred buffaloes) may not be drunk, anthropologists may cast about to discover, but the Todas themselves do not know. All that they know, and are concerned to know, is that things would somehow all go wrong if any one were foolish enough to commit such a sin." The irrationality of pure taboo and yet the firm belief in the sin involved in its infraction and in the dire consequences which in some unspecified way would follow such a sinful act, could not be better put.

Then, after pointing out that the whole of the Toda ritual is "essentially precautionary" and that the general tendency of such a negative type of religion is to pile precautions on precautions, he concludes: "Further, there is something rotten in the state of Toda religion. The dairymen struck Dr Rivers as very slovenly in the performance of their duties. . . . Indeed, it was hard to find persons willing to undertake the office. Ritual duties involving uncomfortable taboos were apt to be thrust on youngsters. The youngsters, being youngsters, would probably violate the taboos; but anyway that was their look-out." . . . and so on.

"Now, wherefore all this lack of earnestness? Dr Rivers thinks that too much ritual was the reason. I agree; but would venture to add, 'too much negative ritual.' A religion that is all dodging must produce a sneaking kind of worshipper." So even primitive religions may have their periods of degradation, in this, too, affording parallels to religions of a higher type.

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From a religion based chiefly on sacred prohibitions we may turn to one which is mainly concerned with the more positive but more evil beliefs of pure magic.

The religion of the Ekoi, a tribe of Nigeria and Cameroon, is typical of many West African religions in its horrible insistence upon sorcery.

The same motives which are to be seen in most primitive religions are present here too—the recognition of mysterious or sacred power, the belief in a host of minor spirits and a few not very sharply defined spiritual beings worthy to be called gods, in magical potency of objects, of spells, of divination, of sacrifice, ancestor-worship, fear of ghosts, belief in visions, in the non-natural causation of disease, the existence of taboos—these and other points are common to a number of early religions. But they are differently weighted in different religions. While visions are especially prominent in North American Indian religions, taboos in Polynesia and among the Todas, "white" magic or magic with socially beneficial aims among certain Melanesians, here in West Africa black magic, with its sinister implications, is the dominant note.

As in many negro peoples, the idea of a natural cause for disease seems to be unknown. All disease and death are assigned to spiritual agencies, either of evil spirits of a ghostly nature, or of magic practised by living persons. This belief is so potent that the whole life of the people is distorted by it. So great is their fear of sorcery that it is no uncommon thing for a man to accuse his own wife or daughter of attempting to bewitch him or his children, and the fear of being bewitched or of being accused of witchcraft hangs over life like a shadow. As with our own miserable lapses into belief in this superstition, witches and wizards are credited with the ability to change their shape at will and to assume the form of a bird or animal.

When a person is accused of witchcraft, the recognised process of trial is one combining two other magical procedures (one of which was familiar enough in Christian countries during the Middle Ages and even later)—Divination and the Ordeal. If the divining witch-doctor accuses one of the people of sorcery, he or she then has to undergo an ordeal, either by having boiling oil poured over the hands, or by drinking a potion made from a poisonous bean. In the latter case, a too small dose is not fatal, a too large dose produces vomiting, and previous boiling prevents a fatal termination; thus, as so often, scope is given to accident or to control of the result by the authorities.

There appears to be no doubt that in general the belief of the people in the whole theory of magic underlying these practices is sincere enough, although, undoubtedly, cases occur where the diviner or some other responsible personage may help out

a result or deliberately practise deceit. either because bribed, or for reasons of personal spite.

We should not forget that a precisely similar combination of general, popular belief combined with partial or total fraud on the part of interested persons was found in Europe in the seventeenth and even the eighteenth centuries with regard to precisely the same imaginary crime—witchcraft.

Belief in witchcraft or black magic bears the same relation to belief in personal supernatural beings capable of interfering with the course of Nature in answer to prayer or sacrifice as does the belief in harmful supernatural power or " mana " to that in good mana or supernatural spiritual virtue. The one is simply the obverse of the other, the minus to the other's plus. So long as religion is intellectually crude, so long does it run the risk, and indeed invite the certainty, of having its powerful forces harnessed to stupid and morally hateful ends, as when belief in the miraculous in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe led to a campaign against witchcraft, the complete lack of whose objective existence did not prevent the most revolting cruelties being practised upon innocent and defenceless women.[1]

But we must return to West Africa. Most of the religious activities of the Ekoi are concerned with this black religious belief, these logical results of following out the ideas of primitive supernaturalism to their conclusions on the side of evil. In addition

[1] I am of course referring here only to the magic side of witchcraft. As Miss Murray (*The Witch-cult in Western Europe*) and others have shown, European witchcraft had another side as well. It was also a more or less organised cult, in which a partly evil deity, usually referred to by the Christian accusers as the Devil, was worshipped. Doubtless this combination of black magic with an anti-Christian cult inspired the persecutors to much greater violence than would otherwise have been the case.

to magic, and the steps to be taken to avert and detect it, much of their religious practice is concerned with the averting of evil spirits. Most of these seem to be conceived as of the nature of ghosts, but the low animistic level of thought also assigns " souls " to inanimate objects, both natural and manufactured.

Finally, there remains a considerable degree of animatism among the Ekoi, leading them to believe in impersonal supernatural power (which they call " njomm ") ; this, as with the Polynesian mana, is apparently conceived to exist as a sort of reservoir of potency, to be tapped by favoured persons or by special charms, and led down into inanimate objects, plants or animals, human beings or ghosts.

But so dominant is sorcery in the negro life that in their case " njomm " is mainly utilised either to facilitate or to antagonise the spells of the sorcerer.

Ekoi theology is mainly myth. It shares with that of many primitive religions which are dependent upon oral tradition a considerable vagueness and fluidity. Disputes or persecutions over details of dogma can hardly arise before there is written language. The two main divinities of the Ekoi are the god of the sky, who is on the whole cruel and maleficent to man, and the god of earth, who is on the whole beneficent. The two deities, however, are not, like Ormuzd and Ahriman in Zoroastrianism, personifications of good and evil indulging in a cosmic struggle. They are not conceived of as opponents at all ; and the evil or the good which they cause men has nothing to do with their morality, but both alike behave thus " for 'tis their nature to."

We are here introduced to a very frequent conception of early religion—the conception of deities

who are mere powers, as little ethical as the " natural man " of primitive societies : morality has at this level not yet become linked with the idea of God.

This primitive idea of God as non-moral power tends to survive in the background of more developed religions, and to peep out in this or that attribute of divinity, this or that story of divine behaviour. Westermarck in his little book, *The Goodness of Gods*, and his large work, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, has collected a number of examples of this from various religious levels. Belief in the existence of hell, and in particular the dooming to eternal torment of unbaptised infants or of the most virtuous men who happen not to be Christian, is an obvious example of the persistence of belief in God as an arbitrary, revengeful, and powerful being, in spite of its gross inconsistency with the higher ideas of God as loving and all-merciful. The inconsistency is to-day more and more being realised, and with the gradual fading of the belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible and of primitive ways of thinking in general, belief in eternal torment is happily diminishing. But the fact that it can have persisted through nineteen centuries of Christianity is a good example of the power of logical and moral contradictories to persist side by side in religious belief.

In addition to the two main tribal gods of the Ekoi, there is a goddess who is mainly worshipped by the women—a cruel goddess, sometimes woman, sometimes crocodile, who demands sacrifice, even human sacrifice.

The most interesting feature of Ekoi ritual is the existence of numerous religious or semi-religious

societies, which give dramatic and dancing performances on various ceremonial occasions—at funerals, for instance, or during tribal gatherings, or merely on their own ceremonial days. The most powerful and the most religiously important of these is the Egbo, a secret society combining religious, legal, and state functions. It contains seven grades of membership, each grade having a higher entrance fee than the one below. Every village community has a special house built by this fraternity. In these Egbo houses secret cults with complicated ritual are practised; and special performances are given from time to time in public by the various grades, with the deliberate object, it would seem, of inspiring supernatural terror of the organisation in the lay breast. The central performer in these dances is got up in fearful guise, masked, or with only eye-holes in a flowing robe, to impersonate a terrifying deity. At these ceremonials the Egbo emulate the Fascists by administering a good beating to those with whom they have chanced to disagree.

If Toda religion is chiefly a matter of ritual prohibitions and irksome taboos, that of the Ekoi, apart from a few of the dances, is almost wholly a thing of fear. To the more enlightened Christians, it must seem religion turned inside-out. This obsession with fear, whether of sorcery or of an arbitrary deity or deities on whose caprice good or evil fortune depends, is only too frequent a form of religion. Many of the popular cults of early Imperial Rome had degenerated to this level; their preoccupation with fear and the base motives of the worship which they practised led philosophically-minded men like Lucretius to outbursts against religion in general,

the only religions that he knew having "so often perpetrated criminal and impious acts" that he could hurl back the charge of impiety with interest.

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The North American Indians, bred in a climate which favoured energy and to a life which necessitated bravery and hardiness, have developed a type of religion which, though in many respects primitive, is not hampering like that of the Todas or sinister like that of the Ekoi.

There is a good deal of difference between the religion of the Indians of different regions, such as West Coast and Plains for instance, and even between different tribes of the same region; but certain common traits run through all. A brief summary of the religion of the Crow Indians, chiefly derived from the investigations of Lowie, will serve as example.

Most of the elements which we have already found characteristic of undeveloped religion in general are observable here; but, once more, the emphasis is different. The chief religious experiences of the Crow are associated with solitary visions, both of youths when they are desirous of becoming initiated to manhood, and of adults.

The man who sought a vision repaired to some lonely place, such as a mountain-top, and fasted for four days (four being the sacred number of the Crow), invoking the spirits. In most cases some propitiatory self-torture or self-mutilation is practised, the commonest being cutting off one of the fingers of the left hand. Lowie found that only a small proportion of the elder men of the tribe still had all their ten fingers. (In passing it is interesting

to note that not only do various Australian tribes practise finger-lopping, but that it seems to have been prevalent even in Paleolithic times, fifteen or twenty thousand years ago. In the Pyrenæan caves men held their hands against the walls and then painted round them; and these ancient imprints very often lack one finger.)

Those to whom visions are vouchsafed usually report that a spiritual visitant in human form appears, talks to the visionary, adopts him as his child, and gives him good advice or definite directions for achieving success in his affairs.

Although most men succeed in seeing a vision, there are some who, even after repeated trials, never do so. One such regretfully said to Lowie: "All who had visions become well-to-do. I am destined to be poor; that is why I had no visions."

It seems certain that (as the foregoing quotation testifies) the majority of the tribesmen fully accept, in all good faith, the genuineness of the visionary experiences. When, in addition, it is remembered that Crow religion is one of those few in which no organised priesthood exists, it is further clear that the exploitation of a confiding laity by unscrupulous priests for private or ecclesiastical gain in no way helps to account for the facts. The four days of abstention from food and drink, together with the solitude and the worshipper's expectation of a visionary experience, undoubtedly combine to put the mind into a state in which hallucinations or visions might well be expected; for there is on the one hand a state of suggestibility and receptiveness, on the other an exalted physical state, combined with a weakening of the normal controlling part of the

mind, which will allow full play to lower-level activities of the mind. We all know how these latter tend to work by means of symbols and stories instead of by means of conceptual thought and logic; we have proof of it every night in our dreams, and the whole science of abnormal psychology bristles with examples of other types.

There remains, however, the possibility of what we may call benevolent fraud. The receipt of a vision is, in one way or another, almost necessary to success in Crow existence; further, the whole religious life of the tribe (and therefore its social and military life and general vitality, since at this level of culture religion is so intimately bound up with all other activities) hangs on the experiences vouchsafed in visions. It has been asserted that relatives of the worshipper, anxious for him and his future, may repair to his place of vigil and there impersonate supernatural visitants; or that the same trick may be played by elders of the tribe so concerned for its spiritual welfare that they do not scruple to do evil that good may come, and to help out the visionary experience by deceit. The fact that the visionaries sometimes produce feathers or other objects which they say were given them by the supernatural visitor argues strongly in favour of this view. It may be impossible to prove the fact in this case; but there is nothing improbable in it, the world abounding in every grade of this apparent self-contradiction, benevolent fraud, from the slight helping-out of a miraculous rite which does not quite come off (or of a lecture-experiment in a science class, for that matter !) to complete self-delusion on the one hand or complete fraud on the other, through various

degrees of admixture, one of the lower levels of which Browning has immortalised for us in "Mr Sludge, the medium."

However, whether or no fraud of any sort occurs among the Crow, it seems certain that in many, probably the majority of cases, there is a real vision; and further that these visions are the culminating experiences of life for many of the Indians, and have a remarkable effect both upon individual behaviour and upon tribal life and customs.

If, for instance, the vision promises invulnerability in war, the worshipper (as in a definite case known to Lowie), though not previously much of a warrior, would become recklessly brave and establish a great reputation for his daring and his success in battle. Or the vision might reveal the uses of some herb, upon which the worshipper might set up as a physician and achieve riches in this way. Or the worshipper might be shown some new form of ritual, which he would then introduce to the tribe. This would be a source not only of power but of profit, since the Crow ritualistic organisations demand heavy entrance-fees from their members.

It should not be supposed, however, that all visions are taken by the tribe at their face value. Just as in Christian mysticism the adepts declare that only certain visions and experiences are from God, but others, especially those of ambitious novices, are from evil spirits—in other words, that a vision, just because it is a vision, is not therefore necessarily good—so the Crow are often sceptical about visions. The proof of the pudding is in the eating; and if a vision promises the finding of horses, or success in war, the Indians often prefer to await the event

before accepting the genuineness of the experience. In other cases, however, the personality of the visionary seems to play the main part in deciding whether he can impose a belief in the truth of his vision on others.

There is thus here a loophole by means of which the rigorous validity of the religious system may escape unimpaired in spite of failures of particular religious manifestations. Such loopholes are familiar enough in every system of thought. They are indeed necessities for any incomplete system, whether true or false, for without them it would collapse as its incompleteness was made manifest; and they are of course still more necessary for a system built on false bases.

In systems based on a belief in sorcery, the failure of a spell is reasonably enough set down to a stronger counter-charm having been pronounced by some hostile magician. When prophecies, like that of the Delphic oracle, are in vogue, apparent falsity of the prophetic deliverance is ascribed to faulty interpretation. I have myself heard an Italian peasant, who was telling how branches blessed on Palm Sunday and kept in the house would preserve the vines from hail, explain (in answer to my query why, then, they also insured the grapes against hail) that the sacred branches were only efficacious if every one in the house possessed complete faith—another loophole, not uncommon in various forms in Christianity, and of course having a true basis when applied to the so-called miraculous cures of faith-healing. In modern spiritualism, if results do not come, it is because one of those present exerts a disturbing psychic influence; in Christian Science, if the prayers

of the healer, though duly commissioned and paid for, do not cure the patient of " error," it is because some one has been indulging in evil thoughts about him ; and so on, *ad libitum*.

In these examples the " explanation " is usually a mere rationalisation, which cannot be tested. It should be noted, however, that similar explanations of failures may be true reasons. When, for instance, Sir William Ramsay, in his work on the analysis of atmospheric air, found that he could not account for certain minute residues, he (if you like) invented a loophole by asserting that these represented various hitherto undiscovered elements. But this " loophole " could be tested ; and the test showed that Ramsay's assertion was perfectly true. In general, the loophole of the scientific system, when fact does not agree with theory, is to assert either that the observation or the experiment was badly conducted, or else that the discrepancy is due to the existence of some hitherto undiscovered substance or process or property. The only difference between this loophole and the others we have mentioned is that the assertion can be, in any individual case, tested ; and that the test will give a definite answer.

But we must return to the Indians.

Any objects which happen to have been associated with the vision acquire sanctity. Lowie writes: " Never shall I forget how an Indian once prodded my curiosity by offering to show me ' the greatest thing in the world ' ; how he reverently uncovered one cloth wrapper after another ; and how at length there lay exposed a simple bunch of feathers—a mere nothing to the alien onlooker, but to the owner a badge of his covenant with the supernatural world "

(though in all probability presented to him by an Indian masquerading as a spirit).

Exactly the same nothingness to the alien onlooker, but the same "everythingness," if I may coin a word, to the worshipper steeped in the traditions of his cult will, of course, apply to any apparently ordinary object which may have acquired extraordinary sanctity through the "infection" of association—whether the charge of sanctity has become accumulated through symbolism, or through actual association with the specially sacred event. The Crow Indian in his primeval state, though thus capable of deepest reverence, would naturally find the symbol of the cross, or even a fragment of the True Cross, "a mere nothing."

One other psychological aspect of the visions is well worth a moment's consideration; and that is the striking uniformity of the type of vision and even of its details. There are, to be sure, numerous interesting variations. While most worshippers report true visions, others experience auditory experiences, others *feel* things happen, others again find themselves acting a part in a drama; these differences are doubtless correlated with differences in mental make-up, and are exhibited according as the man is of a predominantly visual, auditory, tactual, or motor type.

But apart from this, we find all sorts of details recurring with curious constancy. The Crow visions are mostly seen by youths or young men. The great majority report receiving a vision on the fourth day of their fast; and four is the Crow sacred number. In most cases the supernatural visitant adopts the worshipper, and does so, moreover, in the same

form of words. Almost every visionary includes the hearing of a song among his experiences. Trees or rocks often become transmogrified into enemies; a vision symbolic of one or other of the four seasons of the year (which is taken to denote that the visionary will live at least to that season) is also very frequent; and so on.

There can be no doubt that this common form for the visionary experience is the result neither of coincidence nor of fraud but of suggestion. These are the sort of things which a man is expected to see in a vision; he grows up from childhood in an atmosphere of this expectation; and when the time comes, he sees them.

Other Indian tribes have a tradition that visions should be seen in childhood, or postponed till adult life; and the fact duly follows the expectation. Where the Great Bear with its seven stars is a prominent object of reverence, either it, or the number seven, or both, frequently figure in visions.

A very interesting analysis made by Starbuck, of conversion in Protestant sects in the United States, shows how precisely similar factors may be at work in higher religions. There are some Christian churches and sects which more or less demand an experience of conversion during adolescence as a prerequisite to full church membership; others, on the contrary, lay no stress on conversion. Not only do we find that in the one case conversion is almost universal, in the other very rare, but where it does occur, the broad lines and even the details of the experience follow the accepted tradition of the sect in a striking way. This, of course, is not to say that the experience of conversion (or the Crow vision) is

not of spiritual value. It does, however, warn us to be cautious about the interpretation which we give of the cause of such so-called supernatural experiences.

One or two other points demand our notice.

As so often in primitive religions which lack sacred books, their theology, if the word may be used of the sacred myths which are current, is vague and often self-contradictory, and the supernatural beings concerned in it are not of a very high moral order. The Sun is their chief spirit; and "Old-Man-Coyote" is the chief hero of their folklore, these playing the part which is taken by Uncle Remus' Brer Rabbit in the legends of the Southern negro, or by the Spider in the Jamaican negro's folklore. But there is a constant tendency to identify these two prominent beings, and this in spite of the fact that the Sun is on the whole thought of as a high type of being, while Old-Man-Coyote is the successful buffoon and trickster dear to folklore.

This tendency to identify originally separate beings is constantly to be found in the history of religion, though it is of course most prominent when, by migration of peoples or diffusion of culture, one religion comes in contact with another. A large part of the early Old Testament history concerns the attempts by some to identify, by others to keep distinct, the Hebrew tribal God Yahveh and the Canaanite tribal God Baal. Religion in the early days of the Roman Empire was a welter of cross-currents of such identification, partial or total, between Greek, Roman, Syrian, Persian, and Egyptian deities. In various cases pagan deities were not overthrown on the introduction of Christianity, but

their worship was simply fused with that of personages of Christian theology; near Naples, for instance, there still exists a local cult of the Madonna which has grown directly out of the worship of Artemis.

Apart from visions, the most interesting feature of Crow religion is their ritual societies. The most prominent among these is the so-called Tobacco Society. The tobacco after which this is named is not the one which we and the Indians smoke, but another species which is grown solely for religious purposes. The whole Society originated from a vision; later, new visions were vouchsafed to others, and led to modifications of the old rites, or the founding of new Chapters of the Society. As already mentioned, novices must pay heavy fees to the original visionary or to the Chapter; and are then instructed for several months in the songs and rites.

The special rites are first, a dance, the Tobacco dance, which is performed for long hours on end; and, secondly, the planting of the sacred seed.

In addition, there is the Sun dance, the most impressive of the Crow ceremonials, danced before the whole tribe by a votary desirous of vengeance. I have no space to describe this here, but must refer my reader to Lowie, only mentioning that extremely interesting features are to be found in it, such as the dancing before a sacred doll or idol until a vision of the enemy's downfall is granted; and the fact that the dance is so sacred and religiously exciting that many young men will seek visions or mutilate themselves in public on the occasion of a Sun dance being held.

If we are to emphasise some of the chief points of

interest in the Crow religion, they would seem to be as follows. First, the importance accorded to individual vision and to social-religious ritual, and secondly, the unimportance of creed or dogma, together with the absence of any organised priesthood.

As is usual in primitive religions, little attention is paid to the life to come, and it is a matter of very little emotional interest to the living. All ideas of a moral retribution or judgment in the next world are absent.

Morality and ethics are in part, but only to a slight degree, associated with religion. Most of the commandments proscribed in visions, and for the most part implicitly obeyed by their recipients, are either irrational taboos or ritual injunctions. What we should call the sense of sin attaches much more to the infraction of one of these commands than to any ordinary moral transgression.

Finally, in spite of the importance of the individual vision and the ease with which, in obedience to new visions, ritual may be changed, this individuality and plasticity really moves within very narrow limits. The scope for individual initiative is probably greater than in most primitive religions ; none the less, it is rigidly confined, and all its details are dictated by tribal usage. I cannot sum up better than by using Lowie's words : " Thus even the most extreme subjectivism may merge in abject servility, not to the authority of a personal dictatorship, but to the impersonal, though none the less real, dominance of folk-belief and folk-usage " ; I would merely like to add that these words do not hold only for Indian tribalism, but are too often applicable in our modern civilisations.

Thus men forgot that all Deities reside in the human breast.—WILLIAM BLAKE.

Many people . . . have been extremely religious and extremely wicked. —R. H. THOULESS, *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion* (1922).

It is the attempt to punish as God is supposed to punish that largely accounts for the hideous record of religious persecution.—ANON.

A religion which personifies unworthily the Power behind things will do far more to retard than to advance the highest welfare of the race.— Canon B. H. STREETER, *Reality.*

Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst.—GOETHE.

> The Vision of Christ that thou dost see
> Is my vision's greatest enemy.
> —WILLIAM BLAKE, *The Everlasting Gospel.*

The longing of the individual for infinite happiness rests upon the belief that this infinite happiness is attainable by man. But this belief, in its turn, rests upon the individual's Romantic conviction of his own infinite importance. The doctrine of immortality itself is only a result of belief in the cosmic importance of the individual, and this belief in the infinite importance of each separate individual is genuinely mediæval.—GEORG BRANDES, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Thought*, vol. ii.

The children of the mind are like the children of the body. Once born, they grow by a law of their own being, and, if their parents could foresee their future development, it would sometimes break their hearts.—R. H. TAWNEY, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926).

Chapter VII

Comparative Religion—concluded

As a picture from a wholly different region and level, we may look briefly into Greek religion during the historic period. This is of great interest owing to the rapid intellectual changes which were then going on ; and also owing to the anticipation, by many of its later cults, of practices and ideas which we are accustomed to look on as solely Christian.

The close of Greek pre-history may be put at about 1000 or 900 B.C. Our chief sources of knowledge on this period are Homer and Hesiod, with some works of art and inscriptions. The early Greek civilisation of this time seems to have been a blend, arising from the southward immigration of fair-haired " Nordic " tribes into a land already inhabited by people of Mediterranean race with a well-developed culture which we may call Minoan-Mycenæan. Dr Farnell comes to the conclusion that the northerners' religion was mainly concerned with Gods, such as Zeus, Apollo, and Poseidon, who were already of more than local or tribal significance ; and that the worship of these became fused with the typical goddess-worship of the Eastern Mediterranean (from which probably spring Athena, Artemis, and Aphrodite) to give the first truly Greek polytheism. This, if we take Homer as our guide, was soon organised on an advanced plane ; the

separate divinities preside over different departments of life and are themselves under a head, the high God Zeus. The clear-cut humanism of the Greeks tended (as against the Mediterranean culture) to represent the Gods in ideal human form.

Numerous contradictions still survive, however. The gods and goddesses reveal various human frailties; they dispute with each other; they are at one moment spoken of as omniscient or omnipotent, while at another even Zeus may be portrayed as in ignorance of important facts. They are on the whole upon the side of morality, though by no means always so, at other times being merely selfish, or jealous for ritual.

In addition to the heavenly pantheon, there existed the Chthonian powers of the underworld, who were largely concerned with the sanctity of oaths, and punished sinners, and breakers of oaths or ritual, even after death; and also a host of minor spirits (also usually conceived in human form), such as nymphs or oreads. Places might be sacred (like the hearth) without any special personification; or local sanctity might end in the dedication of a town (as in the case of Athens) to a particular deity. Civic and religious life was inextricably intermingled—no question of what we should call separation of Church and State had arisen. On the other hand, although professional priests existed, sacerdotalism was markedly absent. The ritual of worship consisted largely in the making of animal and plant sacrifices at an altar, sacrifice being probably derived from a primitive communion-meal with the deity, with the idea of propitiation superadded. More gloomy rites were practised in sacrifice to the earth-deities, although

the classical Greek never seems to have been obsessed with ghosts or with evil spirits.

The cult of ancestors, especially in the form of the partial deification known as hero-worship, was definitely in evidence. The taboo feeling of ritual impurity arising from association with birth, death, etc., was also present, but seems to have quickly begun transforming itself into ethical impurity, giving rise to the sense of sin, with need for purification.

As is almost universally the case, all sorts of very low, primitive, or degenerate manifestations of religion survived alongside of this fairly advanced polytheism. There seems no doubt that superstition of the nature of magic and of fetishism was prevalent enough, and that human sacrifice was regularly though not very frequently practised. In addition, the cult of animal deities or monstrous compounds of animal and human were not uncommon ; and also the mention of vague spirits associated with particular types of action recalls the " functional " spirits (miscalled deities) of the early Romans, and represents an animistic stage of thought, as do the records of sacrifice being offered directly to thunder or to a river.

Certain conceptions, such as humility (as opposed to moderation), self-sacrifice, faith in the Christian sense, God-fearingness, or the belief in a bright personal immortality, seem to have been almost wholly absent.

In the early historic period, say to about 500 B.C., the chief tendency to be noted is the firmer establishment of the polytheism, with the elevation of the religious ideas concerning the separate gods.

The anthropomorphising tendency of the northern invaders won the day, and the visible image became the chief object of worship.

The artistic spirit of the Greeks, working on this, was able to raise the image of divinity to unsurpassed heights, and so to take purely anthropomorphic religion to levels of humanism not elsewhere equalled. The defect of pure anthropomorphism, of course, is that as thought develops, many objects of religious veneration are seen to be of the nature of general ideas or eternal principles, and so utterly to transcend the single individual. Once this is realised, the image becomes an idol, and hampers religious development.

Another remarkable phenomenon was the constant introduction of new cults. This is much easier in a polytheistic than a monotheistic system, and became very prominent in the Græco-Roman period, when Persian, Syrian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and other divinities so overcrowded the religious stage as to make it impossible for a philosopher, or indeed any one with a craving for unity or an aptitude for clear thinking, to take religion very seriously.

But so early as about the tenth century B.C. the first of these new cults invaded Greece—the cult of Dionysus or Bacchus.

This introduced various somewhat new tendencies into Greek religion—a tendency to pantheism or at least towards the idea of immanent divinity; the aiming at achieving communion with the divine by a ritual devouring of him, primitive prototype of the Holy Communion service; the idea of death and rebirth of the God, primitive prototype of the belief in the Resurrection; and the deliberate introduction

of orgiastic rites to encourage religious frenzy. The ritual was in early times barbaric enough: at best, the God was symbolised by a goat or bull, which was rent limb from limb and devoured in order to achieve sacredness; at worst, a human boy seems to have been killed and devoured, a ritualistic cannibalism having been thus in existence.

This religion or cult steadily extended its influence during the succeeding centuries, shedding many of its primitive barbaric features in the process; and Dionysus was definitely adopted into the official pantheon. The chief contribution which this cult made to official or public religion was the sacramental idea, which, with the strong emotional tone of Bacchic ritual, was largely absent from the ordinary Greek polytheism.

On the other hand, an even more potent influence of Dionysus worship was exerted through private or esoteric brotherhoods. These worshipped Dionysus under various secret or mystic names, and called their worship Orphic.

Here I cannot do better than quote Farnell's words. "The preachers of the Orphic doctrines are the first propagandists or missionaries that we can discover in the pre-Christian Mediterranean world. For they had a definite message, and ignoring the Gentile and civic barriers of the old political religion, they preached it, if not to all mankind, at least to all the Hellenes. . . . It [early Orphism] proclaimed a theory, unfamiliar to native Greek mythology and religion, that the soul of man is divine and of divine origin; that the body is its impure prison-house, where it is in danger of contracting stain; that by elaborate purifications and abstinences the soul

might retain its purity, and by sacramental and magic methods the pure soul might enjoy in this life and in the next full communion with God. Preoccupied with the problem of the life after death, the Orphic mystics evolved the concept of Purgatory, a mode of posthumous punishment, temporary and purificatory."

These new ideas first made themselves felt in the seventh or sixth centuries, but came into full prominence in the fifth century. As will be seen, they bear points of resemblance to the doctrines of Buddha, which were spreading in the East at the same period; and also anticipated a great deal of Christian belief. It seems possible that there was actual diffusion of Buddhist ideas from India to Europe; and certain that Christianity later borrowed from Orphism.

The Eleusinian mysteries had some points in common with Orphism, for they too were concerned with the fate of the soul after death, and offered a happy immortality to the initiated. Their ritual is obscure, for their secret was well guarded. But it seems sure that their kernel was the performance of what must have been comparable to a very impressive Mediæval Passion Play, representing various episodes from the lives of Demeter and Persephone (themselves symbolising earth and the seasonal cycle of Nature), and probably portraying also scenes expressing the mysteries of birth, death, and marriage, and their spiritual counterparts, mystic union, sin, and rebirth.

While these cults of sacrament, initiation, and mystery were spreading, another tendency was altering Greek religious thought in a different direction. That was Greek philosophy, which first

introduced the atmosphere of truly free speculation into Western civilisation. In general, and without going into detail, it may be said that philosophy was either hostile to current religious views, or, perhaps more often, tended to enlarge those views and place them on a loftier if more remote and intellectual plane. In their speculations the Greek philosophers often adumbrate those of modern philosophy, tending to think of God not as a person but as a name for the First Cause, or for the spiritual principle at work in the universe. But these speculations suffered from the same weakness as later metaphysical approaches to religion: they were too intellectualist, and all the vitality of the actual religions of the time and the warmth of the religious emotion experienced by the common man tended in them to evaporate, so that they often killed where they sought to liberate, and were on the whole either neglected by the people at large and by the organised cults, or else regarded as hostile to religion.

On the other hand, they could not but leave a powerful impress upon all thought. Since there were no sacred books in Greek religion containing old myths fossilised to dogma under the deposits of the sacred feeling of generations, the philosophers' speculations about the physical universe met with no such opposition as confronted Galileo or Lyell or Darwin. At least they had discovered one of the master-keys of man's life, the free use of the intellect and its employment upon the most general problems possible; and after their time all Greek thought was always aware of new and vast horizons, to which all primitive cultures and religions are strangers.

In the fifth century, however, the polytheist

religion reached its highest point, fostered by the pride of city-states and ennobled by a great and pure art, its vitality as yet untouched by the scepticism deriving from civic or national disillusionment or from scientific or philosophic speculation. What is more, the Persian danger and the triumph of the Greeks consolidated the national spirit, even more in the religious than in the political sphere.

However, in spite of the triumphs of classic art, of philosophy and science, of free interest in political theory, of literature and the drama, and in spite of the interpenetration of all these with a sane, humanist, and ennobled polytheism, even the fifth century presented, behind the glorious façade which is all most of us are told about at school and college, a strange and often barbaric medley of thought and practice. Infanticide was regularly practised; civilisation was based on slavery; the primeval beliefs and practices of animism and magic continued through the countryside, and in the towns superstition was rife and various emotional and speciously stimulating cults commanded their worshippers; not only phallic worship, but even human sacrifice, of victims who were regarded as scapegoats for society, was still to be found. Greek science was for the most part what we should call scientific speculation. The second great master-key of intellectual progress, experimental testing accompanied by publication of the evidence, had not yet been discovered, so that no organised body of knowledge comparable with modern science had come into existence. Nor had a moral code come to dominate ritual.

In the event, the marvellous edifice could not

endure : there was too weak a structural framework —political, intellectual, or moral. In the absence of such a framework, intellectual freedom was apt to engender scepticism and to prove a disintegrating force. That it was so felt is shown by the fate of Socrates : Euripides, too, reveals a blend of noble humanism and baffled questioning.

After the exhaustion of Hellas through the Peloponnesian wars and the later triumph of Macedon, one of the chief trends to be noticed in religion, as might be expected in days of intellectual enlightenment but political failure, was the growth of the personal element. The tribal, local, and political ideas associated with, say, the cult of Athena in Athens waned in their influence ; the private brotherhoods, dedicated to some particular deity, with sacred practice usually centring round a ceremonial meal, became increasingly important ; and the barriers between citizen and foreigner or slave, between Greek and barbarian, tended to break down.

By the end of the fourth century a marked cosmopolitanism of spirit had invaded Greek thought, as is exemplified by the fragments of Menander which have come down to us. On the ethical side, many notable anticipations of the teachings of Jesus are here recorded, in spite of the fact that the current polytheist theology is still accepted.

As we approach the Christian era, we find ever stronger the tendency to Syncretism, in other words, the introduction of originally distinct cults from all the points of the compass into the religion of the land, accompanied frequently by an actual fusion of two deities and their cults into one. This was doubtless a broadening influence, but also one

tending to lower the general level of religious thought to a lowest common denominator of the various cults or sects. For instance, the worship of Aphrodite was undoubtedly sensualised by the introduction of elements from the worship of oriental goddesses, and the occasional identification of Zeus with Jehovah must have diluted both the Jewish and the Greek religious spirit without conferring any corresponding new strength.

Meanwhile, the regular schools of philosophy, such as Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Cynicism, were becoming stronger. At first they did not have any much greater influence on popular thought than did the early philosophers: but gradually the itinerant sophist came into being, and seemed to fill a popular need.

It would seem that while the orthodox religion of those days tended to remain on the primitive level of mytho-theology, of elaborate ceremonial of propitiation, and of magic-mystic sacramental rites, the more educated, feeling the need to connect their religious feelings with ordered morality and intellectual speculation, sought refuge in a moralising philosophy. This tendency did not culminate until the Alexandrian age, but the public debates on philosophy initiated in the public places of Athens in the fifth century were the first beginnings of a steady growth in this direction. It is worth noting, perhaps, that the only private library hitherto excavated at Herculaneum consists almost entirely of second-rate but morally edifying philosophical works.

One interesting new worship deserves mention, as it is in one way so purely Greek, while in another it recalls many of the modern religious cults which

centre largely round physical health. This was the cult of Aesculapius, the healer, who combined the functions of patron saint of medicine with those of a mystic saviour of the Orphic type. Associated with his worship were not only sacramental mysteries, nor only miracles of the Lourdes types, but, at Epidauros, an important true school of medicine.

The interest to comparative religion of a study of Greek religious thought and practice is manifold. The student assists at one of those comparatively rare phenomena of history, a period of rapid unfolding of the human mind. He sees religious development accompanying the development of art, science, philosophy, and political theory; but whereas all these other activities of the Greek mind have continued to be potent influences down to the present day, Greek religion, in spite of certain contributions to Christian thought, may be said to have collapsed in ruins and to have left little posterity. Its fate is thus very unlike that of early Hebrew religion, which we can trace in the same way, making painful steps upwards from a barbaric level; for Hebrew religion has not only survived in strength to the present day, but has been part parent both of Christianity and of Islam.

The reasons for this are not easy to determine; but one of them, and I should say probably an important one, is the vigour of Greek polytheism, with its strong tendency to anthropomorphism. This made it difficult for abstract and general ideas, both intellectual and ethical, when in due course of Greek development they came on to the scene, to become linked up with the orthodox religion. Further, the existence of numerous not too abstract

deities made it fatally easy for other divinities from other regions to be introduced into popular favour; in the absence of any written tradition or of a central supreme God, this had as inevitable result the dilution and transmogrification of religious belief, and a lowering of its general level.

We may perhaps conclude that a strong tradition, based upon a sacred book, and a belief in a single supreme principle, whether conceived of as a personal God or other spiritual being, or, as in Buddhism, as impersonal, is necessary for the raising of religion fully from the primitive level to its next position of stable equilibrium. Once that is attained, quite other methods may be desirable for further progress; but that is another story.

In case we may go too far in denying permanent influence to Greek religion, it should be emphasised once more that without certain currents of Greek religion which had been incubating and developing in the Eastern Mediterranean for several centuries, the development of Christianity would have been quite other than it was. It could never have spread among the Gentiles as it did without the preparation of Orphism and other mystery religions, nor could the ideas of personal redemption and happy immortality or of the value of purity have so taken possession of its doctrines. It would have lacked the idea of the Logos, and would never have been able to achieve the intellectual heights of its later theology without Greek philosophy. In all probability the Lord's Supper could never have become the central feature of Christian ritual without the numerous similar Greek rites that were its forerunners. In the words of an authority on the subject:

" It has been the result of much modern research to reveal the truth that the indebtedness of Christian dogma and ritual to the later Hellenic paganism was far greater than used to be supposed."

. . . . . .

Although it is manifestly beyond my capacity, as well as beyond my space, to give even a brief account of the religion of the early Jews in this chapter, I cannot refrain from touching upon a few points.

A study of Hebrew religion is perhaps the most intellectually interesting which can be undertaken. One reason is its intrinsic importance, as one of the main channels through which the idea of pure monotheism entered the world. Another is, of course, its historical importance, as affording both the soil out of which Christianity sprang, and part of its background until the present day. Finally, it is interesting as providing to us of Western Christianised civilisation the most forcible example of the various ways in which particular creeds or sacred books impose themselves upon a civilisation, for reasons largely independent of their intrinsic merit, and refuse to be shaken off.

I may perhaps deal with this last point first. The fact that the Old Testament is still in regular use throughout Christian countries is one whose familiarity alone saves it from being regarded as extremely curious and unexpected. If an intelligent observer could be found who should discover this fact for the first time, he might well be pardoned for asking what the inhabitants of modern Europe or America could find of such special import in the religious history of a primitive Semitic tribe, in its passage from barbaric nomad life to the establishment of a

small pastoral-agricultural kingdom, during a period from about 4000 to over 2000 years ago? Neither the social nor the economic condition of that tribe, nor its intellectual, artistic, or moral outlook during any part of the period, was at all similar to that of any modern nation; what is more, even the religious spirit was radically different. He would find that many leaders of thought, even of religious thought in those same religious organisations which employ the Old Testament in their services, repudiate large parts of this scripture. Its accounts of creation are by those religious teachers thrown overboard as myth, the history of its patriarchs and the accounts of later miracles largely dismissed as legend; most of the anthropologically interesting but otherwise incredibly tedious prescriptions and proscriptions of Leviticus and Deuteronomy are recognised as the irrational taboos and equally irrational ritual of the primitive religious spirit; the bloodthirsty sentiments ascribed to the Hebrew God are repudiated as the outcome of savage mentality. Why then, in God's name, our hypothetical inquirer might well ask, does this body of writings continue in the twentieth century to be used in Christian churches?

The simple answer, and the one given unhesitatingly by most men until recently, was that which asserted that the writings were inspired by God, and that the Hebrews claimed our special interest, not only because Jesus sprang from among them, but because they were, in a literal sense, the Chosen People of God.

But both these statements would again be refused literal acceptance by the majority of educated people, both within and without the Christian Church,

to-day. The true answer is that so much sanctity has gathered round the scripture in the course of centuries, and so much has been said about the uniqueness and sacredness of the Bible, that it is at present almost impossible to remove this almost idolatrous regard for the Bible, even the Old Testament, from a central place in the Christian scheme. The whole is cemented together by this mortar of sacredness ; and to remove one large part would be to run the risk of bringing down the rest.

Historical research and the study of the text of the Bible has made two very important facts evident. In the first place the whole account of the early history of the Jews, as embodied in the Pentateuch, was not only not composed by Moses, but is the work of several hands, all of them of much later date. The same is true for other parts of the scripture, both narrative books and prophetic (for instance, Isaiah).

The different narratives were woven into more or less coherent wholes by various compilers working at different times, but probably none of them before the eighth century B.C., and several of them after the Exile. What is more, these compilers did not hesitate to remodel the early narratives so as to make them harmonise more or less with the ideas prevalent in the compiler's period, nor to tell the story with their own religious bias, prophetic or priestly as the case might be. Thus the whole of the early history of the Jewish people, from the time of Abraham (about 2000 B.C.) to after 800 B.C., is distorted in the Old Testament, and their religion is there given a false veneer derived from the more developed ideas of later ages.

The social and religious life of these early centuries of Jewish history was, as a matter of fact, very primitive. What we can safely deduce about the period before Moses (*i.e.* probably before the thirteenth century B.C.) is limited. We can regard it as probable that the various races and tribes of Hebrews and their near relatives of Moab, Edom, and Ammon had each separate deities of their own, deities which were regarded as purely tribal, and even in the case of the Jews, not universal; and that the intercourse between the tribes tended towards polytheism, against which, however, the patriotic leaders regularly inveighed. The Teraphim were probably images connected with ancestor-worship; and there is abundant evidence of sorcery, divination, and other forms of magic, and the attribution of disease to evil spirits. The original significance of the passover rite, with the smearing of lamb's blood on the doorpost, as a safeguard against the Lord smiting the first-born, was doubtless a magic precaution against pestilence; very similar rites, as Westermarck assures us, are still practised in Morocco to-day. Taboos of the same nature as that on drinking milk which has not been de-sanctified among the Todas, existed with regard to the ark of the Covenant. For instance, the *mana* or dangerous sanctity of the ark was so great that when Uzzah (2 Sam. vi. 6) touched it in a praiseworthy attempt to prevent it from falling, he immediately died.

Circumcision was a sacred rite with an import both religious and national. The Hebrews shared this with other Semitic tribes and with the Egyptians; it is practised by various African tribes to-day, and probably originated in Africa.

A tendency to concentrate on Yahveh as the only true tribal God led on to the more definite monotheism associated with Moses. This, however, far from being a divine revelation vouchsafed only to the Jews, or even their exclusive discovery, seems undoubtedly to have been adopted by them under the influence of the monotheistic tendencies (perhaps of separate growth, perhaps mutually reinforcing each other) which we now know to have been operating both in Babylonia and in Egypt.

In Egypt, Akhnaton, Tutankhamen's father-in-law, a strange character who combined pacifism with ardent monotheism, ruled in the earlier part of the fourteenth century B.C. Babylonian influence over Palestine was very strong from 2000 to 1400 B.C., and various inscriptions testify to the tendency among the more advanced minds of Babylon to interpret their polytheism in a more or less monotheistic way, by explaining the various deities as so many manifestations of a single more permanent, more real divine essence.

Let us, in passing, remember that all these events took place in the Bronze Age. Perhaps that one fact more than any other will help us to remember what a vast gulf divides them from our own times.

It is impossible to do more here than mention a few striking points in the subsequent history. Settling as agricultural people in Canaan after the Exodus, the Jews came under new influences. With their mode of life, their outlook was altered. There was a tendency (seen commonly all over the world when one primitive people comes into intimate contact with another) to take over the local Gods. The sacred shrines and rites of the Canaanite Baal

(a term which merely signifies " Lord ") and of Ashtaroth were largely taken over by the Jews. The two most prominent features of this local ritual were worship before stone pillars, which were anointed with the blood of the sacrificial animals ; and the worship of trees (" groves "). The Canaanite worship was accompanied by various pagan rites, of which the most extraordinary were those associated with sex, including temple prostitution. The long struggle against " idolatory " then began, the more intellectual and ethically-minded among the Jews setting their faces against these undoubtedly more primitive modes of religious expression. It is curious to note how, during this struggle, war, although it degraded the character of Yahveh by intensifying his purely tribal aspect and ascribing to him ideas of cruelty and vengeance, was yet the main purifying force, while peace permitted free-and-easy amalgamation of religious beliefs, and the turning of the Jews towards other Gods than their own.

It is strange to see how Solomon and his Temple have been admired ; if the luxury and virtual polytheism of Solomon had continued, with the essentially pagan spirit which built the glories of the Temple, all the qualities for which we value Jewish thought would never have come into existence, and it is safe to prophesy that, without the subsequent wars and national humiliations, the religion of the Hebrews would have become a hodge-podge polytheism like that of Imperial Rome, and have gone the way of forgetfulness with all other such systems.

The reason, of course, for this oscillation between pure but cruel monotheism and kindly but over-primitive polytheism was that Jewish thought had

not yet reached that high level on which Yahveh could be considered not merely as the sole God of the little Jewish nation, but as a God of universal significance, who might have chosen out the Jews as his own people, but who was first and foremost the God of righteousness, only in second place the God of Jewish fortune.

It can no longer be maintained that the Jews were the only or even the first people to whom this noble idea dawned, any more than it can be maintained that the Greeks were the only or the first people to whom came the idea of freedom of intellect or of art. None the less, just as the Greeks are our type, in the Western world at least, of the first great actual achievement of intellectual freedom and of the fullness of artistic expression, so the Jews are, in that same world, the people who first achieved a full linking of ethical values with religion. And this could not be properly accomplished until they had successfully achieved the idea of a single God, even if that single God was at first parochial and far from any heights of morality.

The most important agency both in the triumph of the single God idea and in its later ethical purging was constituted by the so-called prophets, whom to-day we should more accurately call Dervishes. They first came into prominence in the eleventh century B.C., and seem to have existed in guilds or organised bands ; they were not confined to the Jewish nation, but, of course, as the Old Testament repeatedly testifies, existed also in connection with the Phœnician and Canaanitish religions. They practised rites conducive to the attainment of religious ecstasy or frenzy, as do Dervishes to-day, and also the

"Medicine-men" of various North American Indian, Negro, Eskimo, and other tribes; and combined this with intense patriotism. In parenthesis, it should be remembered that all the religious fervour which in, for instance, Mediæval Christianity was expended on the idea of a future life, was in early Jewish times lavished on the idea of national success; immortality in our modern sense was not aspired after, and the dead (as is usual in early religions) were conceived to lead a shadowy and unsatisfactory if not miserable existence in a dim limbo of an underworld.

Even Elisha, although his message was shot through with high ethical ideals, did not, as we may see from the story of Naaman, escape the tribal view of Yahveh, with the accompanying notion that foreign success in battle meant not only temporal defeat, but the overthrow of the national God by another God of the same kind who happened to be more powerful.

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and their successors, however, succeeded in introducing a new conception—that Yahveh was a name for the one true God, and that temporal defeat implied that the Jews had not fulfilled their part of the bargain, which was righteous living. As natural corollary, these later prophets denounced the formal ritual of sacrifice, and exalted the claims of justice and righteousness and of a contrite and humble spirit. Once this idea began to burn through the dark covering of merely patriotic religion, defeat could become an earnest of ultimate hope instead of only despair; for out of defeat could and did emerge the Messianic idea.

On the other hand, the increasing level of culture

led to the codifying of the legends, beliefs, and practices of the Jewish religion. This appears to have been first attempted in the eighth century; and in the seventh century a further step was taken by the compilation of what we call Deuteronomy. This was put together more from the standpoint of the priest than of the prophet; and the existence in book form of the mass of rules and enactments which it contains was the beginning of the excessive attention to ritual which ever since, in varying degree, has characterised Hebrew religion. The scribe was added to the priest and the prophet.

In spite of the fact that the Psalms are still officially allotted to David, there is no doubt that they were not written until after or at earliest during the Captivity; and they reveal to us what joy in pure worship the religious spirit of the Jews, driven in upon itself by the external disaster, could achieve.

The Book of Job, dating from about the same time, shows us a people concerned with the great problems of suffering and of sin; and, on the return from captivity, the raising of the purely ceremonial idea of expiation on to the ethical plane, typified in the great stress laid upon the Day of Atonement, shows us how this far-reaching idea of spiritual purgation had taken permanent root among the Jews.

In the Greek period, from the middle of the fourth century onwards, new ideas emerge. The deity becomes more remote; the idea of a final but far-distant day of judgment comes into prominence; the Messianic hope became stronger, but more and more interwoven with the apocalyptic ideas of the

day of judgment; the reverence for every jot and tittle of the now elaborately codified and annotated Law became fantastic; belief in a world of angels and devils grew strong; and the conception of the Divine Wisdom, the Holy Spirit, the Shekinah or Divine Glory, and other semi-mystical, semi-materialistic manifestations of God, paved the way for Philo and his doctrine of the Logos, and so for the philosophico-religious ideas embodied in the Fourth Gospel.

This necessarily brief and most inadequate summary of some of the chief changes of two thousand years may at least serve as a reminder of a few important facts.

As everywhere, we find even in highly developed theistic religion the survival of legends, practices, and superstitions from cruder times, which have become embalmed under a coating of sanctity so that the higher conceptions of a later age were unable to shake them off. In addition, we can see how even upward steps may involve certain downward consequences. It is a good thing to have a code of morals and of laws; but if we are not careful, codification will bring formalism, and formalism is a kind of idolatry. If it is true that certain of the extremer Protestant sects have merely substituted the worship of a book for that of a graven image, it can with equal justice be said that an important section of religious Jewry has obscured the vision of God by giving the place of honour, in their actual practice, to the worship of a code of ritual.

We find that the Jews, far from being the recipients of a unique and sufficing revelation, had to achieve a slow progress, and shared many of their

religious ideas with other peoples. Sir James Frazer, in his *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, has given us a measure of this sharing of ideas; we find that not only myths and legends, like that of the creation and the flood, but many superstitions, taboos, and rituals of Jewish law were common property to many tribes on the same level of development.

The Jews succeeded in raising an ethical monotheism to be the central point of their theology; but they received the necessary impulse to this from Babylon.

The doctrine of the Messiah, "the Anointed One," grew, under the force of adverse fortune, out of the primitive notions, common to so many early civilisations, of a holy priest-king. During the Exile the idea would seem to have been projected by hope into the future, and to have been applied to that pre-eminently holy one who would again become a sacred king in a restored Israel. This idea became sharply-defined at the time of the Maccabees, present politics and past history conspiring with the Jewish religious temper to raise up the idea of a personal deliverer, sprung from the line of David, as the future saviour of the nation.

The chief interest of early Jewish religion to the present-day world is an historical one; we can witness the emergence of a noble religious idea from the swaddling-bands of barbaric thought, and then see it, instead of continuing its progress, become in large part hidden again under new wrappings of legalism and tradition. But even to obtain a true view of this process we have to supplement the Old Testament with an impartial history, partly because much of the Old Testament is national propaganda,

still more because the early narratives have been remodelled as late as the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. to suit the more developed thought of a later time, so that from the scriptural canon alone we cannot realise the full primitiveness of the ages from the patriarchs to the fall of the kingdom of Israel.

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One of the facts which emerges most clearly from a survey of our own and others' religious life is that crude beliefs and superstitions with their attendant practices may survive alongside of the highest and purest developments of monotheism and religious morality. This, interestingly enough, has its close parallel in the world of life. In organic evolution we find that in spite of general upward progress, all grades of living creature, advanced, primitive, and degenerate, manage to exist perfectly well side by side.

In both cases, however, the balance of the picture is changed by evolution, and the low-level types which were once dominant in later ages become subordinate.

We should therefore not be too discouraged at the fact that in spite of nearly two thousand years of Christianity, in spite of the labours of the Scholastics and other religious philosophers, in spite of the broad-mindedness of modern liberal theology, the present age, even in countries like England or the United States, France or Germany, let alone Italy or Hungary, is still permeated with superstition, bigotry, intolerance, and crude religion of all kinds.

Every advanced religion must experience some hostility towards religions at lower levels of de-

velopment, whether intellectual, moral, or emotional; it is impossible for it to remain neutral. The ideal of religious tolerance is probably the best which the State can adopt, but even where it has been adopted it has only been between certain limits. England to-day permits freedom of religious belief and practice—but if a religious sect which practised human sacrifice or ritual prostitution were to attempt to establish itself in the country, it would receive short shrift. As a matter of fact, Britain has in the last few years been engaged in putting a stop to head-hunting in certain parts of Burmah, although this practice was based on religious grounds; we can all remember the unfortunate end which overtook the Rev. Smith-Pigott and his "Abode of Love," and the prohibition of polygamy to Mormonism both in this country and the United States; while the difficulties of Russia and Canada with the anti-social but extremely religious Doukhobors have been by no means light.

To take a final example on a more exalted plane, the State could not give full freedom of action even to those who during the war, however genuinely, had a true religious objection to fighting. It demanded that they should do something useful, or be shut up.

So long as States exist, it is clear that religious toleration cannot, or at least will not, be permitted in cases where religious belief aims at or tends towards the overthrow of the State or the principles on which its existence is grounded. When, however, we come to the upholders of this or that religious system, the possible grounds for hostility to other beliefs become much greater. In the same way

democratic States (though not the present Fascist or Bolshevist States) find it both necessary and desirable to tolerate diversity of political party; but the political parties themselves must be in some degree hostile, or politics would degenerate into a game of log-rolling.

Religion being of necessity a spring of action, and also bound up with a scale of values, no man of genuinely religious feeling can be perfectly indifferent towards religions which to him seem based on turning his values topsy-turvy, and so inevitably in the long run must lead to actions which to him seem *wrong*. He may even see clearly that other religions have very good points, and yet be forced to judge them adversely because, in his opinion, they move less quickly towards the good than his own. But in all questions of toleration the old though too frequently disregarded principle of tolerating the man but attacking the ideas should at least be adopted.

In conclusion, I would like to try some comparative analysis of separate features of religion. To continue the parallel from animal life, the evolutionary zoologist may not only describe outstanding divergent types of animals as examples of what evolution can and does bring forth, but he may also attempt an historical analysis. Here he may either try his hand at phylogeny, when he will discuss the ancestry of different actual types and their relationship to each other; or at evolutionary comparative anatomy and physiology, in which he takes one by one the different aspects and functions of life, describes the structure and working of the various kinds of organs which subserve these different

functions, and attempts to discover the main progressive trends to be discerned in the evolution of each and in their interrelation one with another.

These are matters of considerable difficulty for religion, and I must refer my readers to anthropological works for a treatment of the subject. However, even if it is difficult or impossible to trace the precise early evolution of particular religions, it is practicable to distinguish a number of main religious levels, and to arrange them with a considerable degree of probability in their evolutionary order.

At the base comes the stage in which the main object of religious feeling is mysterious or supernatural power, not usually personified, but conceived of as residing *in* particular objects and events. Thought is in this stage pre-scientific, and is content to remain in a number of more or less watertight compartments. The logical faculty may be well developed, in particular instances or fields, but is not concerned to be complete or to apply itself to the whole field of thought, so that beliefs may often be mutually contradictory. The theological side of religion is therefore represented by mere rationalisations in the form of myths, often of a vague and fluid nature. At this stage magic is inextricably mixed up with religious belief and practice. This is the stage of animatism and early animism.

A certain school of writers, prominent among whom is Levy-Bruhl, claim that savages think in an essentially different way from civilised men, and would characterise their thought as pre-logical or a-logical. It is, however, generally admitted that this is an error. Their thought may be extremely

logical, but often gives us the impression of illogicality because it is founded in wrong premisses. Apart from this, the chief difference between savage and civilised thought is in the completeness of logical attack, the lengths to which it is pushed, and its use to break down the barriers between different compartments of experience. The main differences between this low stage and our own consist in the primitive man's failure to have grasped the value of scientific method, and his failure to unify the different aspects of his mental life; otherwise the differences are mainly differences of emphasis and of premisses.

The next main level is one on which the mysterious power is generally conceived of as not *in* but *behind* objects and events. This is almost always combined with the personification of the different aspects of the power as supernatural but more or less man-like beings. The further personification proceeds, the more will rites of propitiation, sacrifice, prayer, and worship come to overlie the more primitive rituals based upon magic, although of course the two sets of activities long remain interwoven. At this level, there is still very little unity apparent in thought, religious or other. A multiplicity of sacred beings exist, their attributes often overlap, the mytho-theology which professes to give an account of them and their relationships to each other and to the world of things and men is frequently self-contradictory. In particular, the relation of religion and its Gods to morality is at this stage almost always very feebly defined.

At the next level, general ideas have begun to make morality reasoned and to link this reasoned

morality firmly with religion. At the same time the pure logical reason begins to play over the rationalisations of mythology, to attempt the sweeping away of self-contradiction and the achievement of coherence; it tries to complete and strengthen the intellectual side of belief, and to link this also more firmly with religion's central core of feeling.

This stage is one of conflict and transition. Both reason and the ethical sense, once pursued with thoroughness to whatever goals there may appear in the quest, reveal a host of intellectual and moral inadequacies in accepted religion. On the other hand, the theological chaos of the lowest levels is often in this stage replaced by an ordered hierarchy of Gods.

This period of transition, familiar to us in two very distinct examples, the religion of classical Greece and that of the early Jews when Jehovah was still a mere tribal God, gives place to a more stable phase in which these general ideas, in one form or another, have become dominant, and religion accordingly becomes definitely unified. The most familiar result to us is the emergence of monotheism from cruder religious views.

The religions of classical antiquity show tendencies in this direction, by elevating one of a hierarchic pantheon of Gods—Zeus or Jupiter—to a position of supremacy over the rest; the same is true of the old Scandinavian religion, with Wodin as head God over the other Gods and Goddesses. From this, it would be not a great step to elevate the head God to the sole God, while degrading the rest to the position of saints or angels or other subordinate spiritual beings. As a matter of fact, however,

the transition to full monotheism in Europe was mainly effected in another way. The early Jews had already arrived at an approximation to monotheism, but it was a local and tribal monotheism. Jehovah was the Jews' one, or at least main, God, but he was one among a number of other somewhat similar Gods belonging to other primitive tribes. The transition here came through the spiritual logic of the Hebrew prophets; they perceived that if Jehovah was a true God, he must have attributes which would make him true universally, and not only for the Jewish nation. The nationalism of the Jews, however, resisted the implications of this view, and it was left for St Paul to rescue early Christianity from similar narrowness, and proclaim that its God and its salvation were universal, for Jew and Gentile, Roman and barbarian, free and slave.

Buddhism in its pure theoretical form has adopted a quite different method of arriving at the same general level; it has aimed at the merging of the personal soul in an impersonal flood of spirit. But it, too, has arrived at the idea of a universal spiritual ground of things.

The emotional side of religion meanwhile, of course, persists, but it too becomes transformed and often harnessed in new ways. The desire for the mere acquisition of magic power becomes transformed into a desire that some of the holiness of the divinity shall become transferred to the worshipper, or into a desire for pure righteousness, which, however, is still supposed to be obtainable only by supernatural means. The preoccupation with taboos, ceremonials, and rituals, which are more or

less meaningless, but must be adhered to for fear of offending supernatural power, gives place to a preoccupation with an ethical morality which is regarded as sacred. The Decalogue is three parts of the way towards the achievement of this; while Leviticus and Deuteronomy represent a back-sliding towards the multiplication of magico-religious or purely ritual morality.

Finally, the preoccupation with morality and personal religion leads to greater importance being attached to the ideas of salvation and of a future life. Immortality as conceived by all primitive peoples, including the early Greeks and the early Jews, is a very second-rate existence: the departed spirits lead a life very like their life on earth, but are encumbered with various disabilities, and their survival is often not even permanent. Frequently only certain privileged men can expect to survive death. The idea of salvation in a modern sense is unknown; in so far as the ideas which underlie it exist, they are equated by worldly success or by the acquisition of supernatural power in this life. Even to the writer of the Book of Job, through whom primitive religion receives its highest expression, the idea of a blissful eternal life as the reward of righteousness is wholly unfamiliar.

But with the arrival of universal or general ideas as dominant in religion, there comes a change. The logical reason (as opposed to science, which is concerned primarily with "brute fact," as Whitehead puts it) pushes on to complete all possible conclusions from the premisses provided her. If Nature is a unity, there are not many Gods but one God. If he is really God, he is all-powerful, all-wise,

and all-good; if he is all-good, he cannot permit evil to triumph and good to go unrewarded; if he is fully supreme he is eternal, and can grant eternity to others, and so forth. By this sort of process, the notions of an eternal life which shall be the reward or the punishment for actions in this life grew up, and the idea of salvation became transmuted from the present attainment of supernatural power or the immediate thrill of the experience of grace, holiness, or communion, to the acquisition of the privilege of admission to a future paradise.

This was the main trend of events in Europe and the near East, culminating in the Christian and Mohammedan schemes of salvation. In India, on the other hand, the trend was different. Here, too, the acquisition of sanctity and the rewards of religiously right living were in the forefront of ideas; but while this life with its burden of sin, trouble, pain, and imperfection is despised by both Eastern and Western religions at this stage, yet the East went further than the West, and envisaged all personal life, in this world and the next, as always and inevitably a limitation, and not only what we call evil desires but all desires as bad. The most sacred end of life is therefore the suppression of desire, which will permit the soul to cease its transmigrations and the personal being to return to the impersonal and greater reality whence it was derived. Both systems are alike in advancing their main spiritual concern from the present to the future, from the particular and present to the eternal and the general, but they seek to achieve their end in opposite ways.

This comparatively stable period was in its turn followed by another period of transition, which is that of Western civilisation to-day. This transition was largely effected by the rise of the scientific spirit to dominance.[1] No human society of course exists which does not manifest the scientific spirit in some form; every consciously observed sequence of cause and effect, every attempt to check the flights of logical reason or illogical desire against brute fact, and to understand and control fact by the aid of reason, is in its degree science. But the rise of the scientific spirit to play a dominant or even an important part in thought and affairs dates back only some three hundred years. With the Greeks there was a dawn of science; but the Greek spirit was much more the spirit of pure reason, philosophy, and generalisation than of science; the idea of a growing body of solidly-tested knowledge, based primarily upon induction, as the kernel and foundation of thought and practice, did not emerge until the seventeenth century, with Bacon and Galileo as its two first pillars.

Just as the generalising properties of man in the fields of reason and ethics revealed all sorts of inconsistencies in the accepted religions of the time, so the acquisition of scientific knowledge and the application of the scientific spirit, with its incessant demands for tests of verification and its insistence on the need and virtue of humble agnosticism if

[1] Social and economic changes, of course, also played their part, though they too were themselves largely the product of the fundamental change of outlook. "The great basis of all civilisation is the calculability of the average citizen. . . . It was not until the nineteenth century that men began openly to surmise that they might rely enough on each other's sense of mutual benefit to dispense with imposing conditions of creed on citizenship" (Haynes, *Religious Persecution*).

verification is not possible, have revealed other inconsistencies in the new level of religious thought.

The chief ways in which it is making its influence felt are its uncompromising hostility to all the magical, semi-magical, or superstitious elements in religion; its insistence upon natural law, both in inorganic and organic nature, with the consequent relegation of supernatural power (long previously banished from a position within phenomena) to a position even further and further removed behind objects and events; its achievements in controlling Nature, which are being more and more taken as an earnest of greater and more general control to come, with a consequent greater emphasis on the rôle of religion in this life to the detriment of concern in another life; its successful appeal to the authority of fact in opposition to all other authoritarianism, which has naturally weakened all religious appeals to the authority of sacred books or revealed codes of conduct or miracles and of traditionalism in general; and, finally, in its narrowing down the field of the supernatural towards a vanishing point.

If the process continues—and in spite of conflict there is every appearance of its so doing—religious thought is due to enter on a new phase of relative stability, based upon the naturalistic and humanistic outlook brought in by the scientific spirit.

The great achievement to be hoped for from this would be the achievement of unity. At present we are the slaves of a dualistic system of thought which continually produces false antitheses, as between soul and body, or between natural and supernatural. The savage's animism or animatism was a crude attempt at a unitary view; philosophic idealism and

materialism are one-sided efforts which achieve apparent unity by leaving out half of the picture; science is now providing the basis for a single-minded naturalism. Its immediate aim would be the husbanding and harnessing of man's spiritual forces, its twin goals the development of the individual soul (development as from a grub to a free winged creature) and the ultimate good of the community. Scientific knowledge would provide the necessary firm soil in which the airy growths of spiritual values may root themselves, and the scientific outlook would prevent the religious imagination from the excesses to which, unguided, it is too prone.

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O soul, thou actual Me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of space.
Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth.

—WALT WHITMAN, *Passage to India.*

We judge the acts of others by our own sympathies, and we judge our own acts by the sympathies of others, every day and all day long, from childhood upwards, until associations, as indissoluble as those of language, are formed between certain acts and the feelings of approbation or disapprobation. It becomes impossible to imagine some acts without disapprobation, or others without approbation of the actor, whether he be one's self or any one else. We come to think in the acquired dialect of morals. An artificial personality, the " man within," as Adam Smith calls conscience, is built up beside the natural personality. He is the watchman of society, charged to restrain the anti-social tendencies of the natural man within the limits required by social welfare.—T. H. HUXLEY, *Evolution and Ethics.*

(*The Mystic*)

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire. . . .

—R. CRASHAW (on Saint Teresa).

The spirit can for the time pervade and control every member and function of the body, and transmute what in form is the grossest sensuality into purity and devotion.—THOREAU, *Walden.*

Nothing but habit could blind us to the strangeness of the fact that the man who believes that morality is based on *a priori* principles, and the man who believes it to be based on the commands of God, the transcendentalist, the theologian, the mystic, and the evolutionist, should be pretty well at one both as to what morality teaches, and as to the sentiments with which its teaching should be regarded.—ARTHUR BALFOUR, *The Foundations of Belief* (1894).

Religion has no doubt already at the savage stage begun to influence moral ideas even in points which have no bearing upon the personal interests of Gods; but this influence is known to have been not nearly so great as it has often been represented, and it seems to me to be a fact not to be doubted that the moral consciousness has originated in emotions entirely different from that feeling of uncanniness and mystery which first led to the belief in supernatural beings.—E. WESTERMARCK, *The Goodness of Gods* (1926).

Men were thought of as free—in order that they might be judged and punished; but consequently every action had to be regarded as voluntary, and the origin of every action had to be imagined as lying in consciousness. In this way the most fundamentally fraudulent characteristic of psychology was established as the very principle of psychology itself.—F. NIETZSCHE, *The Twilight of the Idols.*

Chapter VIII

Psychology and Religion

The next point to be discussed concerns the relations of psychology to religion. Here at the outset a warning is needed. It is perfectly clear to those who have eyes to see that the progress of psychology is to-day putting the final storey on the great edifice of naturalism. First the heavenly bodies; then the everyday operations of Nature or the earth; then the surface of the earth, its construction and modelling; then the organic kingdoms in their diversity; then the working of the human body and its development; —one after the other came to be comprehensible without reference to supernatural agencies. The human mind and its products have come last. To-day, thanks to men like Stout and James, Shand and M'Dougall, Charcot and Janet, Freud and Jung —to mention but a few—we are acquiring a knowledge of the laws of the mind and the conditions of its working which are bringing it too into line with the rest. This new knowledge is giving us an entirely new insight into the meaning of the phenomena we have been used to describing under the names of revelation, conversion, grace, salvation, demoniac possession, miracles of healing, prophecy, communion with the divine, and many others. It is showing us that the phenomena thus described, though perfectly definite facts of experience, need

not be interpreted in the traditional way. They do not require us to postulate supernatural beings outside ourselves as their cause; they can be accounted for by the natural workings of the individual human mind.

But — and an important but — this need not diminish the value of the phenomena. There exists one class of people who by some strange perversity always maintain that to explain anything is to diminish its intrinsic value. In part they are the childish minds to whom *omne ignotum pro magnifico* remains a permanent attitude. In part, they fall into the error of mistaking the parts for the whole, and judging a result by its origins. For everything, no matter how complex, can be analysed into parts; no matter how proud, it has had its humble origin; no matter how vital or how effortless, it must have its underlying machinery. But the parts alone, or their mere sum, are not the whole. The parts, complete to the last bolt, of a motor-car might be presented to the Dalai Lama (or for that matter to me or to you, dear reader!); but they would be very far from being a motor-car, and very little likely to become one without expert help: the parts need arrangement and adjustment before they become a whole.

The oak grew from an acorn; birds evolved from reptiles; the greatest man in the world was once a slobbering baby and before that a microscopic speck of viscous semi-fluid matter. But even if, with Samuel Butler, we like to think of the oak as the acorn's biological device for producing more acorns, it is an oak, and not an acorn. The bird *is* a bird, it pulses with warm blood and can fly through

the air, while the reptiles which have remained reptiles unevolved are still cold-blooded and terrestrial; and a man's a man for a' that.

The young lady who sits at the steering-wheel of her car as it rushes effortlessly along at forty or fifty miles an hour, may, and often does, know nothing (or nothing worth knowing) about the details of its machinery or the principles of internal combustion. But the explosions go on inside the cylinders whether she knows or not, and the more deliberately planned the more delicately tuned and adjusted is the engine, the smoother and more effortless is its running. In precisely the same way the machinery of our own bodies for the most part escapes us altogether. But the more physiology looks into it, the more complicated in its construction and the more astoundingly regulated in its adjustment does it turn out to be—and, also, the more complicated and mechanically automatic the adjustment, the less are we aware of the machinery.

All this applies with equal truth to the mind. The unitary act of feeling or will is composed of parts in a particular and adjusted relation in precisely the same way that the single act of reaching out the hand and picking up a pencil is compounded out of the balanced actions of a score of separate muscles, guided by a rain of sensory stimuli upon the controlling nerve-centres in the brain. The highest flower of the spirit is based on lower activities no otherwise than a tower upon foundations. The most powerful minds were once feeble and childish. The most highly-organised scheme of scientific knowledge can be traced back through simpler and less satisfactory stages to the dimmest and most mistaken

notions; but the value of the knowledge is not thereby impaired—it remains precisely the same as it would have been if it had been communicated all in a piece by a celestial messenger.

Besides this class of mind, whom we may style the thoughtless analysers, there exists that of the denigrators or professional blackeners, who, whenever they are confronted with anything unusual, persist in taking its character away by the simple expedient of calling it pathological. O blessed word pathological! Comfortable philistines cheer their souls with it when confronted by artists—real artists, who are unusual enough to live on a pittance, if by so doing they may paint what they want and as they want: such abnormal fellows are of course degenerate. When a philosopher or a prophet or a scientific man comes along to whom Truth as he sees it is more important than expediency, the same or other comfortable philistines call him crank, fanatic, unstable, visionary. In the same way there is a widespread tendency (especially among hard-headed and successful specialists who make it their business to put those who have gone off the mental rails into the way of leading once more the ordinary respectable life of ordinary respectable citizens) to describe every mental experience or system of thought or soul's deep desire which is outside the frame of this healthy, ordinary life as pathological.

But the abnormal is not by any means necessarily the pathological. The abnormal is that which is not normal, whether maladjusted or unhealthy, or merely rare or unusual. Imbecility is abnormal; but so is genius. Even leaving great genius on one side, if the average human being (as is not in the least

impossible) were of the mental calibre represented by a successful barrister, a fine orator, a reasonably talented man of science or business or affairs, then what we call a rather backward child, who, to-day, is unfortunately quite usual and "normal," would be as abnormal as is a certifiable mental defective in our present state of civilisation. And if we look back into history, what do we find? That almost every advance which men has made has been greeted by no negligible fraction of other men as in some way abnormal, or worse. They may call it impious, or impracticable, or odious, or unnatural: in every case they mean either that it is, or that they think it ought to be considered, abnormal. And time after time the abnormal and the outrageous and the impossible of one generation have become the everyday, the respectable, and the normal of the next.

Even when we penetrate down into the regions of anatomy and man's prehistoric evolution, the same difficulty of even classifying the normal and the abnormal presents itself. As the anatomists tell us, man's upright posture has brought with it the need for all sorts of adjustments in his construction. The adjustment, however, is by no means perfect, and as a result many undoubtedly pathological states result, of which rupture and various female diseases are the most familiar. The upright posture is abnormal for organisms originally constructed to go on all fours or to climb about trees; so abnormal that much suffering and actual disease is still the result of its adoption. But however that may be, it would be difficult to maintain that it was not now normal for the human species.

A very similar difficulty is found with regard to developed mental life. Man has become what he is through the achievements of exceptional minds. And yet the activity of mind on a high level, whether of intellect or creative art or any other mental power, is so "abnormal" that it is pain and grief to most great men to carry on with their task. There come into my mind Charles Darwin, always unwell under his self-imposed burden; or Joseph Conrad, bitterly lamenting in his letters the tremendous toil and grind of writing a book; or Beethoven, who had to be wrought up to a pitch that was half madness before he could compose what is so gloriously more sane than most of our humdrum sanity; or Michelangelo, whose description of the pains his painting cost him is awe-inspiring.

In general, indeed, it can be said that prolonged mental concentration of the type required in the higher reaches of science, art, literature, or affairs, puts an undue strain upon the mind of the great majority of men, even of those who yet are successful in such walks of life. Although such activity is necessary for the very existence of civilisation, it is still abnormal for most individuals.

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Modern psychology, like so much of science, has given man reason to feel humbler and less self-assured than in the "good old days." On the other hand, again like other scientific advances, it has shown him how, if he takes its lessons to heart and disciplines his mind in the light of the new knowledge which it has given, he may attain a more limited but more secure confidence, a less ambitious but also less dangerous outlook. It would be

presumptuous to attempt a full attack on religious psychology in a single chapter. I shall therefore content myself with a discussion of a few special points of interest, followed by a brief attempt at some general conclusions.

First and foremost come the consequences of evolution and its acceptance. If man's body has evolved, then so has his mind. Our mental powers are not only relative, developed in adaptive relation to the world around us, but there is no reason whatever for supposing them in any way complete. I do not mean theoretically or logically complete—all are agreed upon their incompleteness in this view; but practically, from the standpoint of evolution, there is no inherent reason why the average or the best present human minds should represent the limit of possibility. The mind even of a stupid man can grasp and deal with problems entirely out of the range of a cat's mind; and the problems with which the mind of a great mathematician, or indeed of any genius, deal are at least as high again above those which our stupid friend can tackle. Even if we leave genius on one side, the world would be a very different place if the average inborn ability of men were as high as the average of the most able ten per cent. of the population to-day. But there is no reason to leave genius on one side, nor to refuse to face the possibility that mind could be developed by selection to a pitch which would bring its owners to the same height of incomprehensibility to us at our present level of mind, as is our present level to the cats and dogs who sit by the fire and hear us talking, but cannot comprehend.

The relativity of our mental faculties should also

be remembered. It was Bergson who first pointed out that on evolutionary principles we must think of reason as being adaptive, that it was a mental organ developed *ad hoc*, for the convenient handling of that kind of reality, those sorts of relations, which most commonly occur around us, and not necessarily for handling any and every reality or dealing with all kinds of relations. It is an organ adapted to its functions, as a limb to locomotion or an eye to sight.

Then again, in a different outer world, our eyes would have been different. Our eyes are only sensitive to one octave of light-waves; but that is the octave in which the sun is emitting the greatest energy. Without a doubt, had the sun been older when life evolved, and emitting rays of longer average wave-length, our eyes would have been attuned to those conditions.

The evolutionary history of our sense-organs is worth a little further consideration. It is at first sight a very curious fact that we possess no sense-organs capable of detecting X-rays, or the presence of strong electric currents: a live rail, for instance, appears the same to our senses whether the current is passing or not, although if we touch it the difference is one of life or death. The biological answer is simple. Powerful X-rays and strong electric currents are very modern features in man's environment: apart from civilised man (and one or two electric fish), they do not exist in Nature. There has therefore been no biological advantage in possessing sense-organs for their detection; and the sense-organs have not been developed. Had strong electric currents been common events in life's environment,

we could safely risk long odds in prophesying that current-detecting sense-organs would have been evolved.

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A recent and much talked-of achievement of psychological science has been the discovery of the subconscious. This has been to psychology what the discovery of the New World was to geography. Just as rumours of Atlantis prompted to westward exploration across the ocean, so the land of the subconscious had been sighted by many before it was actually reached, later hastily touched at before being properly explored and mapped.

The easiest way of understanding what is meant by the subconscious is to take an example from hypnotism. What is called post-hypnotic suggestion is one of the most spectacular and at the same time one of the simplest ways in which the hypnotist can demonstrate the power of suggestion. The operator gives to the subject, during the hypnotic trance, some order which is to be executed only after the lapse of a certain time; he then brings the subject out of the trance, after having also told him not to remember any of the actual events of his trance. At the stated time, the subject will perform the command, but without knowing why he does so. Just before the time for the execution of the command, the subject generally feels uneasy, and will often make up some reason on the spur of the moment for doing what he is really doing under the compulsion of the order of which he has no conscious knowledge. The hypnotiser may, for instance, say to the subject in trance: "In seven minutes' time you will go to the piano, take the silver vase off it, and

put it in the centre of the mantelpiece. You will not remember my giving you this order" ; and will then wake him. The subject will talk and laugh with the rest ; but after five or six minutes will begin to look restlessly about, and then get up and wander across the room, often looking at the vase on the piano. Very possibly he will suddenly say, " I don't like that vase there, do you ? I think it would look much better on the mantelpiece" ; and with this will take it across to where he has been told, after which his restlessness will leave him.

Such an example demonstrates a number of points. In the first place, the order of which the subject is not conscious has somehow determined his behaviour. Secondly, it is much more reasonable to suppose that the order has continued to operate in some mental sphere than to imagine it disappearing wholly from the subject's mind to reappear at the correct moment. We are therefore justified in saying that it was operative in a part of the mind which can best be described as subconscious.[1] In any case, though not itself in consciousness, it influenced the conscious part of the mind.

Thirdly, when the subject gives some reason or excuse for executing the command, he is providing us with an excellent example of rationalisation, that is to say, the finding of intellectual reasons for an action which is really being performed under the compulsion of feeling, because we want to or feel we must. Reason is here merely an accessory after the fact ; or is reduced to the still more futile office

[1] Other authors use the term *unconscious* ; or *co-conscious*, which however can only be applied to certain cases. See Bernhard Hart, *Lectures on Psychopathology*, 1927, for a discussion of these terms.

of showing why the stable door should be locked after the horse has been stolen.

In post-hypnotic suggestion, the command is in the subconscious and cannot be brought into consciousness. Many other processes, however, may be subconscious, but can be called into consciousness at will. Perhaps the most important of these are habitual acts. When you first begin learning to play the piano, or to use the pen or the typewriter, or to study arithmetic, every step must be, often painfully and toilfully, taken in the full light of consciousness. Practice makes perfect, however; and the chief way in which it makes perfect is by relegating the steps which have been duly learnt to the realm of the unconscious, leaving consciousness free to deal with any new, unlearnt situations that may arise. Perhaps the most startling example is that of reading. The child first has to employ all its conscious powers in learning the shapes and associated sounds of single letters. Then he puts the sounds laboriously together in his mind to make words: C-A-T—cat. Then he begins to read short words as wholes, though slowly; then longer words. At this stage in children, and in many grown-ups, reading must still be done aloud or with silent movements of the lips. The ordinary educated man, however, leaves this behind, and passes as quickly and unconsciously over most words as the bright child of six or seven over the letters within the words. Finally, the really quick reader reads whole phrases at once, devouring a sentence in a flash, and often paying so little attention to anything but the general impression that a misprint or misspelling remains quite unnoticed.

Finally, many mental processes may remain in the unconscious merely for lack of attention. Suppose you are writing with a clock in the room. The ticking of the clock is being registered automatically in your brain, but you are not conscious of it. If some one were to ask you what sounds you could hear, attention would change its focus, and you could at once hear the clock; further, if the clock were suddenly to stop, you would probably be aware of the fact, showing that the ticking noise, though subconsciously, had made part of your general state of mind.

In these two latter cases the subconscious could, by attention or will, be at any moment brought into consciousness. From the biological point of view, we may say that consciousness appears to be needed for dealing with the unforeseen and the complex; accordingly it must not be distracted by being employed upon what is unnecessary or irrelevant to the purpose in hand. A mental organisation has been evolved which enables us to focus consciousness by means of attention on one particular activity, other activities being temporarily left in the dim light of the subconscious; it also enables us to relegate what has been thoroughly learned to the unconscious domain, for only so is consciousness left free to build upon what has been learnt, or to learn new types of lessons.

In our first example, however, the subconscious activity could not be brought into consciousness at all: some special machinery prevented the light of attention from reaching it. It is the merit of the last half-century of psychological research to have given us some insight into this process. The French

psychologists, with Binet and Janet at their head, introduced the idea of *dissociation* of one part of the mind from the rest. The two both continue to work, but there is no conscious communication between the two. The one part of the consciousness is therefore cut off from the other. This line of work has been especially continued by American psychologists like Morton Prince. Sometimes we find the two dissociated parts of the mind of approximately equal "size," if we may borrow a word of material connotations to help describe what is immaterial; and then usually the two alternate in control of the body, and we have a case of dual personality. But the one may be slightly more important than the other, or a good deal more so, and so on till the state of affairs is reached in which one small tendency or bit of thought-organisation is cut off from the main body of the mind's life. Post-hypnotic suggestion represents the extreme in this direction, a single idea being cut off from the mind for a few minutes.

Meanwhile Freud took the matter a stage further. It may turn out that the majority of Freud's detailed conclusions are false. None the less, as even his opponents agree, he hit upon an idea of the greatest value, which converted the older static psychology of the unconscious into a going concern. He pointed out that painful thoughts and painful events might, through the very intensity of their painfulness, come to be banished from consciousness into the unconscious, and held there, like the Titans under Etna, unseen, but capable of disturbing the face of the world with their uneasy movements.

Some of the most clear-cut of such cases are familiar to us through the war, and are often mis-

called shell-shock. A number of them will be found set forth in M'Dougall's *Abnormal Psychology*.

A soldier has been through some peculiarly harrowing experience. He loses his nerve, sleeps badly, is visited by horrible dreams, and is without all memory of the experience itself and the time just before and after; often, in addition, one part of the body is paralysed, or else indulges in involuntary movements in a distressing way.

When such a man is put under hypnosis in hospital, and an attempt made to lead him to remember the incident, great resistance is usually encountered. Frequently he comes to, out of the hypnotic state; or he may become violent in his language or in his actions. With patience, however, the lost memory can generally be re-elicited; usually when it comes back the man acts it all over again, or in some other way testifies to the violence of the emotional shock; but once the memory has been established, many of the symptoms at once subside, and a process of "re-education," in which the broken mental organisation is helped to build itself up again, is usually all that is needed to restore health. At the same time the paralysis or involuntary movements disappear.

It would appear that the pain and distress of the awful experience is so great that, every time its memory begins to rise into consciousness, the suffering and horror are at the same time aroused, and succeed in shutting out that compartment from participation in the general life of the mind.

The precise nervous or psychological machinery by means of which the split is effected need not concern us here. As a purely symbolic way of picturing it, we might say that the horror aroused causes the

whole consciousness to shrink away from the memory; though the reality is undoubtedly much more subtle. What is of importance is the discovery that very frequently the mere physical pain and direct and obvious horror is reinforced by a moral motive. The man has been afraid of being afraid—and an explosion has filled him with real panic; or he has, half against his feelings, butchered an enemy who has surrendered to him. It is indeed possible that such dissociation never occurs without involving some conflict of emotional or moral nature, and that mere pain or shock is not sufficient. In all cases, however, the dissociation, involving repression of the painful memory, is what Rivers has called *unwitting*—performed by automatic process of the mind, not deliberately.

In civil life, the same repressions occur, and for the same essential reasons. The conflict may arise over fear, or, very frequently, over sex. In other cases it is the egoistic instincts which may be repressed. Invariably, however, some incident or train of thought has been painful; to bring it full into consciousness and try to link it and its associations with the rest of the mind would involve distress and conflict; it is accordingly, though not deliberately, cut off or dissociated in whole or in part from the rest of the mind. In civil life, such repressions usually date from childhood, and may differ markedly from the clear-cut war cases by gradually growing and changing as the individual develops, the repressed complex gathering round itself all kinds of experiences, ideas, and fancies which are naturally or accidentally associated with its central core.

A very interesting case, bearing on religious

psychology, of a partially-split personality is quoted by Thouless (op. cit., p. 214). A drunkard was converted by a religious organisation. He gave up drink, and worked zealously in the cause of religion; but he abandoned to destitution and misery his wife and family, with whom he had previously lived on affectionate terms. Two years later he relapsed into his old drinking habits—and into being an otherwise good husband and father. On reconversion a few months later, the same sequence of events as with his first conversion. In this case some of his good desires and activities became repressed together with his evil ones. It would be a pretty problem in casuistry to know in which of his two phases he was to be considered more virtuous.

In all cases of repression, the repressed tendencies, shut out from the light of personal consciousness, and from participation, through normal action, in the affairs of the world around, continue to make trouble below the surface. They may influence conscious thoughts; they may dictate courses of action at variance with the ideas of the dominant part of the mind; they and their opponents fight their battles in the darkness of the subconscious, and sap the energy of the soul. When selfish or sensual tendencies are repressed, they may objectify themselves as the prompting of the devil; when it is the altruistic tendencies or the desires for righteousness which are underdog, they may suddenly burst through as the voice of conscience and "make cowards of us all," or be even imagined as the utterances of angels or gods.

To achieve a life approaching the healthy, the two parts of the mental being must come to an

understanding. Either the nettle must be gripped, the unpleasant, the terrifying, or the disgusting must be faced, in spite of pain and suffering, and dismissed; or else in some way they must be sublimated, swallowed up in a more exalted and more consuming emotion, as when fear is swallowed up in love of country, the instincts of sex used as the basis for love, the selfish desire for achievement made part of the desire for achievement in unselfish ways, or all three, as in some notable saints, secular as well as religious, merged and utilised in what is usually called loving submission to the will of God.

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Recent psychological work also makes great play with the notion of psychological types. The existence of different types of mind is a fact of observation as old as the hills: but it is also true that the idea has not been systematically worked out and generalised until very recent years. Jung has been the pioneer in this field. The two extreme types which he distinguishes are the introvert and the extrovert—the mind turned in upon itself, and the mind directed outwards upon the world. The extrovert is interested in things, in immediate experiences of the outside world, in action; the introvert more in his own thought about things, things in their relation to each other and to himself, the bearings of his experiences. The extrovert tends to be social, enjoying the simple expressions of feeling; the introvert has a penchant for solitude, and is concerned with moods and trains of thought more than with direct emotional expression. Thus the introvert tends more to split up his experiencing of the world into neutral outer reality on the one hand, and his own mental life, intellectual

and emotional, on the other; while the extrovert tends to keep experience unanalysed, and to leave his thought fused with the outer object which has aroused it.

As M'Dougall puts it, the extreme extrovert is like a patient under alcohol, he " expresses freely all his emotions, and his affects [states of feeling] pass over immediately into action, each affect in turn finding full expression with but little check from any others." The state of the extreme introvert, on the other hand, is like that of a man under opium: he " dreams rather than acts, and his dreams seem to him more real than the outer world."

Dementia præcox, comprising a large group of cases of insanity, is in the main an abnormal exaggeration of the peculiarities of the normal introvert, leading to the patient's becoming shut off from all normality of contact with the outer world in the prison of his own dreams and delusions. The extrovert is protected from any such self-confinement by his sociableness and his interest in the outer world, which in turn is made possible and necessary through his not freeing his thoughts and emotions fully from the objects which arouse them. But the exaggeration of the tendencies which give extroversion can also lead to insanity. In this case, however, the insanity is of a quite different type, being that known to physicians as *manic-depressive insanity*, in which exaltation and melancholia, wild excitement and deep depression, follow each other in cycles. This is made possible through the lack of the normal control of impulsive tendencies by reflective thought, which when exaggerated leads to introversion. In the absence of this, whatever main impulse is in

command has full play; and, since there is no "internal friction" due to the checks and counter-checks of reflective thought and balanced impulse, the patient, in his state of mania or exaltation, disposes of a portentous amount of energy. Neurasthenia is also a disease of introversion, hysteria one of extroversion.

It would take us out of our way to go further into the psychological problems involved. It remains only to add that apart from the extreme types and their pathological exaggerations there can not only be distinguished intermediate types, but, as one would naturally expect, a set of variations on each type. Further, although it is clear that predisposition to one or the other type is largely and usually due to heredity, yet circumstances, too, may have a strong moulding force, and may, for instance, push a man who is of middle type by heredity over from a state of introversion to one of extroversion, or vice versa.

The bearing of these facts on the psychology of religion, however, is what here concerns us.

First and foremost, they bid us be tolerant. Men of the two extreme types may get along well enough together, and transact the ordinary affairs of life between themselves; but the one type will never really comprehend the other. The same object will mean something different to the two. To certain of the extroverted type, especially if they have not received much close intellectual discipline in education, the object is vivid, but remains part of their experience, still clothed with the associated feeling; to an introvert, especially if he has not disciplined himself to overcome his tendencies to shrink into his shell away from hard fact and social contacts, the

object is indifferent except as it interests the microcosm of thought or dream which his inner activity is constructing. The extrovert's constant spending of himself in action will seem to the introvert a frittering away of life; while the practical objective extrovert will despise the dreaminess of his counterpart.

In the religious sphere, we are familiar with the type of man who is always pursuing, on and on, his thoughts about the universe, about God's nature and his relation to man, about human destiny and salvation; he is the type who constructs the theologies and philosophies which are barely in contact with the solid ground of reality. We are familiar, too, with those whose sole dominant interest is their interior life and the raptures of mystical experience; they construct a whole world of feeling within themselves and are content to leave the world of fact unfelt.

On the other hand, we are equally familiar with the hard-headed and energetic religious administrator, who trusts in proper organisation of the Church and its activities to achieve the aims of religion, and is concerned not with the niceties of theology but with a clear-cut, accepted creed; with the violent revivalist who pins his faith without reflection or analysis to the experiences of the revival meeting, such as sudden conversion, seizures, "speaking with tongues," finds in them objective proof of the existence of the action of a supernatural being, and must be always up and doing in the midst of crowds of people and crowded emotional activity.

The first two types are introverted, the other two extroverted; and one of each type has a predomin-

antly rational or intellectual bias, while the other has one predominantly emotional.

The religious danger of extreme intellectual introversion is that it leads to hair-splitting dispute, and to the pursuit of theology into regions entirely divorced from reality; extreme emotional introversion, on the other hand, tends to become merely selfish indulgence. Extreme extroversion has its religious dangers too. It belittles thought; it tends to idolatry (in the extended sense of the word) by failing to distinguish properly in religious experience between the object of worship and the feelings which it arouses, with the inevitable result that the feelings, cut off from their true base in the worshipper's mind through his failure to analyse and reflect, become objectified and personified in and behind the object of worship; it tends not only to shallow and noisy revivalism, but also, in other circumstances, to exaggerated ritualism. Remedy in extreme cases there is probably none; but it seems clear that good education (not in the narrow sense of stuffing with facts, but in learning how to use the critical intellect on the one hand, and on the other to have some understanding of the practical handling of objects and of playing a part in social life and organisation) is the most valuable corrective against slipping too far in either direction.

As several psychologists have pointed out, education (at least present-day higher education) on the whole suppresses exaggerated extrovert tendencies, and may over-emphasise tendencies to introversion. A statistical proof of this was the much greater tendency, in war disorders of the mind, to hysteric disorder among private soldiers than among officers,

with a corresponding greater tendency to neurasthenic disorder in the officer class.

The fact that the untrained mind tends to be extroverted is further illustrated by the fact that savage people seem, on the whole, more extroverted than civilised. It is clearly of great importance for the history of religion; for it means that the real facts of religious experience will in early religions inevitably tend to find interpretation in a belief that supernatural powers inhere in objects or supernatural beings exist behind them, through the extrovert's failure to disentangle the feeling aroused by an experience from the object which arouses it. In this view, only a raising of the general level of education could bring about any general relinquishing of the belief in personal supernatural beings.

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A word is due on the remarkable tendency of primitive thought to express itself in images rather than in concepts, in forms which appeal to the senses and emotions rather than to the intellect, by means of symbolic rather than rational representation. This is combined, very frequently though by no means always, with that other tendency of low-level thought to give free rein to its wishes instead of checking them up against hard fact and ethical standards.

These are matters of very familiar experience in dreams, when the higher centres, which attempt to deal with hard fact by means of conceptual thought, are fatigued and out of action. They are also very familiar to those who have studied hypnosis and so-called mediumship. In genuine trance, ideas almost always "come through" in the form of

pictures or stories; and the same is often true of day-dreaming and reverie.

The amazing power of these lower centres of the brain to produce a scene complete in every detail, to fuse it with the most intense emotions, and to pass from scene to scene with incredible swiftness, is familiar to every dreamer.

The modern theory of dreams and visions is far from complete, but it may at least be said that these faculties of imagery, when released from control by higher centres, have the power of taking an idea presented to them and translating it into imagery, symbolic or otherwise, which is usually loaded with a profusion of detail and charged with a strong feeling of conviction.

Furthermore, it may also be safely said, without committing oneself to the details of any of the rival theories such as those of Freud or Jung or Adler, that in the passage of the idea towards expression in the guise of imagery (a passage which is entirely in the realm of the subconscious) it may make contacts with various emotional tendencies, some favourable and some hostile. Further, as a result of the impact of these associated ideas and tendencies which are thus called into action, the idea may get distorted in its passage, and become symbolised in quite a different guise from what would otherwise have been the case. To these distorting and modifying agencies Freud has given the very unsatisfactory name of the censor.

All the religious mystics, whether they be Christian Europeans or Indian Yogis, seem to stress, in the same general way, the need for putting the intellect to sleep before the mystic experience, of whatever type, is vouchsafed.

The vividness and directness of visions and symbolic imagery gives this method of thinking, if thinking it can be called, an advantage over the more laborious methods of conceptual thought, which can only attain its greatest triumphs by cutting down the fringe of undefined meaning round its words and ideas to a minimum, making them mere counters instead of pictographs, substituting an efficient machinery of thought to grind out its results, for the imagery which aspires to be intellectual method and emotional expression all in one.

This psychological advantage is all the more reason for being very careful to restrict the scope of imagery within its own proper sphere, and for mistrusting it whenever it claims to usurp the functions of the intellect.

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I may now pass to some of the specific psychological experiences of the religious life.

Suggestion is always of great importance; and correspondingly religious ritual and service is often so arranged so as to promote suggestibility. The dim light, the familiar words, the fixed postures, the isolation from other influences, the general sense of awe—the whole atmosphere is such as to promote a receptive or suggestible state of mind. Authority itself helps to suggest the truth of what it so firmly asserts, and, the receptive state once induced, the words of the prayers tend to be impressed upon the mind and themselves to exercise some authority there after the fashion of a suggestion given in hypnosis. The fact that religious instruction is usually begun very young, buttresses it with all kinds of alien strength and makes certain religious

feelings and ideas take root so deeply and so unconsciously that it is extremely hard for the growing mind to break away from them without great difficulty, and often indeed a profound sense of sin. This depends partly on the greater suggestibility of the child, partly on the fact that impressions made in childhood gather round themselves all sorts of strong emotional associations.

Suggestibility is also increased by whatever tends to weaken the natural control of the higher centres of the brain. Thus, fasting and long vigils will prepare the mind to receive unquestioningly what at such a time may enter it.

This brings up a second important set of facts, namely, those depending on the graded organisation of the mind into what has been called a hierarchy of different levels, with the degree of dominance of the higher levels varying from time to time. When the control exerted by the higher centres is weakened or removed, the lower centres have free play in ways which are not possible when they are acting in subordinate capacities. On the intellectual side, the highest type of thought is conceptual, using words and abstract ideas tied together by logic and reason; when this is in abeyance, the mind tends to think in a succession of images or symbols, connected only by the loose bonds of association. On the volitional side, conscious purpose is on a higher level than mere impulse. As regards morality, the actions, often painfully learnt, which take in the claims of others, are on a higher level than those based on primitive desires; and coping with reality is on a higher level than indulgence in phantasy or giving rein to one's wishes. In the field of perception and

intuition, the conscious act which grasps and comprehends a great many facts and aspects of reality together and at once, is on a higher level than the crude faculty which can only deal with them one at a time.

The commonest result of the relaxing of the higher centres' control is for conceptual thought to give place to imagery, and for the imagery to express the fulfilment of some normally inhibited desire. The imagery is often distorted, owing to conflict of higher and lower in the mind, so as not to express the desire in too crude and stark a form. All these features, as we have seen, are frequently met with in dreams.

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The same sort of thing, but naturally with many differences, occurs in many so-called mystic experiences—hallucinations of sight or hearing, interior visions or auditions, or ineffable sense of grace or communion. In certain ways it may be said that the mystic experience is on a lower plane than logical thought or moral effort—for it generally substitutes images for concepts, and is also in many cases a wish-fulfilment rather than a wrestling with fact. On the other hand, it is only fair to say that the gradual perfection of the mystic experience, which so many of the mystics record, represents a raising of the level in regard to another aspect of mental life, namely, the embracingness of the experience, the comprehension of many aspects of reality in one mental act.

All agree in general that meditative prayer is a preliminary stage: this passes over with practice from a state when it is accompanied by normal,

directed thought (a " prayer of understanding ") to a state known technically as the " prayer of simplicity," in which connected or logical thought is in abeyance. After this, visions and auditions often make their appearance, and the worshipper usually goes through an experience known generally as mystical conversion, in which the struggle between the individual's " natural " will and all those other tendencies described as the Will of God comes to resolution through the total submission of the individual. In later stages, so far as can be judged from the mystics' descriptions, the experience becomes more ineffable, more and more one of being *possessed by* some knowledge, or of directly feeling and perceiving what is felt and perceived as divinity, less and less one of its perception at a distance or of thinking about it, however clearly. It is interesting to note that many mystics record a sense of " blackness " or " night " as they first approach this stage, and find themselves giving up their familiar and clear processes of thinking to an as yet unpractised, confused, and fitful faculty of this direct perception.

The earlier stages after mystic conversion are sometimes called the prayer of quiet. As the sense of direct perception and the emotional intensity of the experience grows, voluntary control over the mental state diminishes. The mystic experience can no longer be relinquished by a simple act of will as formerly ; it so fully possesses the mind that it has to be dispelled, if necessity arises, by active bodily movement. This is the stage described by St Teresa as the " prayer of union." Some mystics finally lose even this control, since during the experience they cease to be able to move their limbs at all, and may

be wholly oblivious to the ordinary impressions of sense. This is the state technically known as true ecstasy, in which the body is in a cataleptic state, but the mind is caught up to full and deep experience. A further state is sometimes attained in which the soul is in a permanent state of illumination, the inhibitions on sense-impression and bodily movement are removed, and, on the contrary, an extraordinary impulse to activity in ordinary work is experienced; this is described both by St Teresa and Madame de Guyon.

It would seem thus that more and more of the mental life comes to be involved in the experience with its dominance of the ideas of divinity and love, until finally even the activities of everyday life, which at first were completely hostile to the mystic experience, themselves too become subordinate to the same dominant system of thought.

In passing, as emphasising the strange interrelations of body and mind, it may be remarked that Madame de Guyon, one of the celebrated mystics, records not only considerable changes in her capacity for mystic experience with her monthly periods, but also a marked intensification of the blissful sense of peace when she was pregnant.

Many symptoms of undoubted hysteria can be directly paralleled from the lives of the great mystics, for instance St Catherine of Genoa. A good discussion of this point is to be found in *The Mystical Element in Religion*, by that remarkable character, himself a mystic, Baron von Hügel.

Mysticism makes one of the most interesting chapters of religion. The mystic's private certitude and frequent disregard of all outward conformity

and of good works has often been a great stumbling-block to the ordinary devout but non-mystical churchman. In addition, where mysticism is valued, a regular epidemic of it tends to spring up by imitation and suggestion. Religious authorities themselves assure us that much so-called mystic experience is dangerous or even, in their terminology, from the Devil instead of from God; even St Teresa, throughout a long period of her life, met with great opposition from her religious superiors.

The mystic experience clearly may be of extraordinary beauty and value to those who experience it; and may also be the truest refreshment of the soul wearied with conflict and with work.[1] But with it are involved two dangers—the danger of spiritual selfishness, of prizing the experience at the expense of all else; and the danger of distorted mental development, of forcing the soul into pathological, low-level, or one-sided activities, if the thoughts and desires back of the experience are themselves undisciplined, crude, or feeble.

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The reader will have noted that the mystics themselves and religious writers in general apply the term *prayer* to all kinds of experiences to which its ordinary use in the sense of petition could not be applied. This brings us to some consideration of ordinary or petitionary prayer such as is prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer and is habitual morning and evening with most Christians. On reflection, it will be seen to have two functions;

[1] "What fruit dost thou bring back from this thy vision?" is the final question which Jacopone da Todi addresses to the mystic's soul. And the answer is: "An ordered life in every state." (Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 23.)

one which only has meaning if the worshipper has a real belief in a personal deity who can influence the course of events; and another which only has meaning in so far as the worshipper has a real desire for his own spiritual alteration; or for experience of those attributes which he associates with this deity, attributes of sanctity and awfulness, of power and tremendous mystery, of goodness and love, of beauty and wisdom. These two motives are inextricably mixed in the prayers of Christian churches and indeed of most theistic religions.

Without some of the second element, prayer is in itself valueless as a spiritual exercise, and tends, by a natural psychological process, to degenerate. For if prayer is a mere petition, nothing should matter so long as it is in due form, and reaches its destination. All the other functions of prayer, however, are in reality functions of contemplation and meditation rather than petition. The contemplation may be of some intense desire of the worshippers, such as the desire for purity, and so be cast in the form of a petition; but the psychological machinery will not operate unless the idea permeates the mind. Prayer of this contemplative type is one of the central kernels of developed religion. It permits the bringing before the mind of a world of thought which in most people must inevitably be absent during the occupations of ordinary life: it allows the deepest longings of the soul, driven down below the surface by circumstance, to come into action: and it is the means by which the mind may fix itself upon this or that noble or beautiful or awe-inspiring idea, and so grow to it and come to realise it more fully.

It is thus partly a method of auto-suggestion, partly a means of refreshing the spirit. It differs psychologically from the banal methods of auto-suggestion as described by M. Coué and his followers, in that it insists on attempting to contemplate some spiritual fact or idea in all its glory. In so far as the soul succeeds in this, it will be tapping sources of spiritual peace and vitality which cannot be gained by the mere repetition of a formula.

In what I have been saying, I have spoken of contemplative prayer at its best. Like every other religious activity it may fall short, be deflected from its true aim through the distorting power of false reasoning, or become secondarily degraded. If the worshipper's earnest desire is not fixed, either directly or indirectly, upon spiritual beauty and truth or his own improvement, but upon some material benefit or some change in the course of nature, then his theology is deluding him and his effort is vain. Or he may fix his thoughts on revenge or some other desire of low spiritual quality, and thus degrade instead of elevating his soul. If he allow prayer to become simply a ritual of agreeably familiar words, the mere recital of which is felt to exert some mysterious power, then he is allowing both the petitionary and the contemplative aspect of prayer to sink to the level of magic. It should also not be forgotten that art and literature help nowadays for many people to accomplish many of the functions of meditative prayer. Good music to many listeners brushes away all the cobwebs of everyday, and opens the ivory gates of meditation, while at the same time "taking the mind with beauty," imposing a dominant loveliness and reverence upon the spirit. Tol-

stoy's description, in *War and Peace*, of the effect of music on the troubled mind of Nicholas Rostow, is an admirable instance of this effect in its simplest and most immediate form. Good literature, among other functions, brings both dormant and wholly new ideas to the mind's front door, and helps to comprehension. It also often provides a means whereby the mind works off its own repressions of fear or desire through imaginative participation or realisation of them as portrayed in the doings of others. In fact, it may be safely said that the frank discussion and portrayal of every side of human nature in books and art, so often lamented by strait-laced moralists, on balance even now does more for promoting a healthy and assured moral life than it does towards encouraging immoral tendencies; and if pruriency and taboo-fears were removed, the balance on the good side would be much greater.

With all this, however, prayer of the type I have described will always retain a vital and important function; for it is the product of the individual himself, a mode both of self-discipline and self-expression in relation to the problems which immediately beset him. Only actual creation in the field of art has this kind of value; and thoughtless people who contemn the average second-rate man or woman for painting or writing verse have simply neglected to think of the spiritual value, akin to that of the best type of prayer, which may be gained by the individual himself from his work.

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One other very frequent psychological moment in religion is what may be called the desire to escape

from self. The psychological basis of this would seem to be fairly easy to comprehend, although details will obviously differ at different levels of culture. On the one hand, the feeling of the self or ego builds itself up gradually out of the chaotic mind-life of the infant; and in the process some activities and thoughts are closely woven together into the texture of the "I," others remain outside or are repressed or but loosely connected, and when they irrupt and make connection with the ego, they are frequently felt as belonging to some external power or being. Meanwhile, of course, the "I" is set off more and more sharply in thought against the "not-I" of the outer world. But the outer world is bound to the individual soul through all sorts of ties, and these are strongest when, as in primitive thought, the emotional qualities, like sanctity in the case of religion, are felt as inhering in the outer objects, not projected into them from the mind; and the unorganised fringe of mind-life outside the boundaries of the ego is, of course, connected by all kinds of psychological channels with the central ego-core. The "escape from self" on the primitive level generally has as its basis the desire to identify the self with the not-self, either with some aspect of the outer world, or with the god worshipped. In both cases, the objective outer world and the subjective un-self-organised parts of the mind are usually interwoven in what is felt as "not-self."

Any one who has played a part in a play knows how the attempt to take on another's character does actually enlarge the mind, and how for the time being one's own individuality is in large part given up or blended with the imaginary personality; and the

"let's pretend" games of children show, on a simpler level, what satisfaction is achieved through the method of temporary identification of the self with some other person or object. At the cultural level of undeveloped religions, these universal motives are strengthened by belief in magic. Thus, masquerading as animals, when performed in special ways to the accompaniment of particular rites, may be believed in as a means of ensuring the increase of the animal, or of achieving success in its chase. Various methods are also in vogue of combining dramatic or symbolic ritual with the ideas of magic, in order to obtain communion with the deity. Sometimes the deity is supposed to be incarnate in a human being or an animal, and is then sacrificed, and communion with the divine spirit ensured by partaking in a solemn and ritual way of the flesh: this appears to have been the rule in the Orphic religion as well as many savage cults. Later, some object is often substituted, and communion ensured by partaking of this, as in Christian ritual. Or the ritual meal may be omitted, and the sacrifice continued.

The rites of Thammuz or Adonis, in which the personified or symbolised God was each year sacrificed, to rise again as the expression of the next year's new-gained fertility, constitute a case in point, and have been fully analysed by Frazer. Miss Murray believes that a similar need for periodic sacrifice of a human being embodying divinity was one of the central tenets of the pre-Christian religion of Western Europe, which, driven underground by Christianity, came to be known as the witch-cult. Here the sacrifice had, it appears, to be voluntary, which

would account for the numerous cases of voluntary confession, leading to inevitable death, by men and women " witches " in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ; and this voluntary sacrifice on the part of one of the adherents of the religion would give the sense of communion in the sacrifice to the whole congregation.

D. H. Lawrence, in his *Mornings in Mexico*, has recently described the Deer dance of one of the Indian tribes. Mr Lawrence is a novelist, not versed in anthropology ; but he has a sensitive mind ; and it is interesting to find how the sense of " communion by identification " has impressed him in watching the rite.

" Everything," he says, " is very soft, subtle, delicate. There is none of the hardness of representation. They are not representing anything, not even playing. It is a soft, subtle *being* something.

" Yet at the same time it is a game, and a very dramatic naïve spectacle. The old men trot softly alongside, showing all their wrinkles. But they are experiencing a delicate, wild inward delight, participating in the natural mysteries. . . . You have it all, the pantomime, the buffoonery, the human comicalness. But at the same time, quivering bright and wide-eyed in unchangeable delight of solemnity, you have the participating in a natural wonder." As a reviewer of the book puts it, Lawrence finds the Indian " merging all forces and himself in the mystery of creation, a drama that cannot be judged or rationalised because there is nobody to judge it from outside."

The other root of the desire to escape from self is the desire to be rid of the burden of sin. I have not

the space to embark on this formidable topic. But I can perhaps throw out a few hints towards its better consideration. Two important facts meet us at the outset—namely, that the sense of sin is often much more strongly developed in what the opinion of the world would class as quite virtuous people than in genuine criminals. Indeed, modern psychological study makes it clear that a considerable proportion of criminals become criminal because they are endowed by heredity with a subnormal moral sense, an insufficient capacity for experiencing the sense of sin at all. In the second place, we often find that the sense of sin may be strongly aroused by infringing apparently neutral, stupid, or meaningless injunctions, much less so by the transgression of universally-recognised moral rules.

The first depends upon the psychological fact that there cannot be a sense of sin without a conflict. In general, the stronger the conflict, the stronger the sense of sin. This is well illustrated by the records of those who have experienced sudden conversion; they almost invariably exaggerate, often to a ludicrous extent, the sinfulness of perfectly ordinary worldly activities, or of trivial moral lapses which occurred before their conversion. The second depends upon the power of taboos to acquire a formidable charge of sanctity.

The doctrine of original sin is a theological perversion of natural fact. It is a fact that all human beings begin life with an equipment of instincts, impulses, and desires, at war with one another and often out of harmony with the realities of the physical, social, and spiritual world. A child is like an animal or a bird in that one impulse at a time comes

into full possession of its mental life, only to be replaced by another in a flash when the time comes. Rational self-restraint, altruism, and control, the uniting of the separate impulses into a unitary mental organism, and the moulding of this in adaptation to reality, can only come with the growth of reasoned reflection and emotional illumination.

Further, it is also a fact that, while the majority of human beings attain in their normal mental development to a reasonably balanced and adapted state, which may be called that of the reasonable natural man, yet a few here and there reach a further condition, sometimes called illumination, or grace, or faith, or salvation, in which they reach a devotion to an ideal and an inward certitude which is out of the ordinary.

But to assert the dogma that this latter state is due to supernatural grace, and that the former fact implies that we are all conceived in sin, born damned, by nature evil, is an unwarranted addition, the outcome of the theological necessity of linking up the story of the Fall with the supposed unique redemptive powers of Jesus, although the former had been believed in for centuries without *arrière pensée*, and precisely the same type of redemptive power had been ascribed to divinities, in Orphism, Mithraic worship and elsewhere, without involving the idea of original sin.

Sin and the sense of sin will always be with us, to torture and weigh down; but, as I have said elsewhere in this book, the religion of the future will try to prevent men being afflicted with the sense of sin, rather than encouraging it and then curing it.

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So far, I have said little about what is often spoken of as the kernel of religion, namely, faith. This has been because faith can hardly be considered without some study of its psychological basis. As a start, I may quote from Thouless, who writes on religious psychology from the standpoint of a psychologist who is also a professing Christian. "The method by which our beliefs are influenced by other people is not, on the whole, reasoned demonstration. The child does not have the existence of God proved to it in its religious lessons. It is still true in later life that the simple affirmation of religious doctrines by a person for whom we have respect, or the mere fact of the holding of such doctrines by the persons amongst whom we live, may have an authority over us compared with which the influence of the most convincing chain of reasoning is negligible. The method by which beliefs are transmitted to us otherwise than by reasoned demonstration is *suggestion*."

Professor M'Dougall, discussing the matter on purely scientific grounds, writes that suggestion is "the imparting of a proposition in such a manner that it is accepted with conviction, independently of any logical grounds for such conviction."

Further, all authors are agreed that suggestion in the ordinary waking state differs only from suggestion in hypnotic trance in that the effects observed are not so extreme.

The precise methods by which suggestion is brought about need not concern us deeply. M'Dougall, in his *Abnormal Psychology*, summarises the psychological theories on the subject, while Pavlov, in his *Conditioned Reflexes*, brings us nearer

to the possibility of an explanation in terms of nerve-physiology.

In all cases, however, there comes in the feature, noted both by Thouless and M'Dougall alike, that an idea obtains authority over our mind, and becomes accepted with a powerful sense of conviction, quite apart from its appeal to reason, logic, or experience. In some way or other, that is to say, the part of the mind concerned with the acceptance of the idea is more or less completely dissociated from, switched off from connection with, that part connected with the power of making rational judgments on the basis of past experience. In a good case of hypnotism, the dissociation is practically complete. A man may be persuaded that he is some one else; that he cannot unclasp his hands; that the back of a playing-card is a photograph of his father; that two out of five similar objects on the table under his eyes are not there at all; and so on;—and will act in full accordance with the induced belief. In ordinary suggestion, where the individual in his waking state accepts statements made by some authority without bothering about their logical implications, the dissociation is only partial. We may say that the control of experience and reason is weakened but not removed. The confidence trick and the gold brick swindle both depend upon successful suggestion. The procedure adopted in either case is hardly in accordance with common-sense or ordinary business experience; yet by suggestion the swindlers generate a belief which every year overrides the common-sense and business experience of dozens of "hard-headed" fellows—and leaves them poorer in consequence. The Christian Scientist can believe that pain has no

real existence: the fundamentalist can believe in Noah's ark or Jonah's whale: the be-propaganda'd patriot in the war could believe that all Germans were, not human beings, but fiends incarnate: the Mohammedan can believe and feel that it is shocking for a woman to show her face; while we can find it shocking for her to show her leg above the knee—at ordinary times, though we do not find it so on the bathing beach: those who are told that ghosts and witches exist experience no difficulty in finding evidence of them.

In most cases of waking suggestion, however, the fact suggested is either not too unlike ordinary experience to be impossible; or it has a basis of real truth; or the logical and rational reasons against its truth are unfamiliar or difficult of comprehension. The success of the confidence trick depends on the actuality of real confidence between friends; the belief of the Christian Scientist reposes upon the real fact that much pain can be made to disappear by not brooding over it; the suggestion that a particular garb or lack of garb is indecent depends upon the fact that indecency exists; the belief in witchcraft or in a flat or a central earth is possible because the chain of reasoning which excludes magic or demands a spherical circling globe is comparatively complex.

It might be thought, if suggestion always depended upon a partial disregard of our mental watch-dog, rational experience, that it must always be undesirable, and that it was very difficult to understand its origin on evolutionary principles. On the contrary, suggestibility can, on a little reflection, be seen to be a biological necessity,

particularly in the early stages of man's evolution. If it is necessary for certain types of action to be performed in strict accord with the dictates of reason and experience, it is equally necessary for other actions to be performed unquestioningly at the behest of authority or of communal feeling. We all know that only one man can be captain aboard ship; and that what counts in war is victory. There must have been thousands of men and women on both sides in the great war who hated the idea of war, but who, once war was there, acquiesced as a necessity, though not without a feeling of nausea, to the unleashing of the forces of propaganda—in other words, of national suggestion—in order to enlist more of the will of the country.

But even apart from emergencies like war, suggestibility and suggestion are necessary for any community. To take the scientific sphere alone, it is probably quite impossible to-day for any one man, however brilliant and hard-working, to master the main evidence in all fields of scientific knowledge. How much more impossible, then, for the man with limited leisure to do so. This means, however, that many of the ideas of science must either be taken on trust by a great number of people, or else not accepted at all. In education, even the most ardent advocates of the child's finding things out for himself admit that, life being short and knowledge infinite, it is impossible to apply the principle radically, but that the child must be told some things and must believe them.

We may sum up by saying that on the one hand the concerted relation of leadership and subordination would be impossible without some

suggestibility, and also the diffusion of knowledge.

On the other hand—and this is a vital point—suggestibility need not be abject, nor faith blind or misdirected. The educated man need not be able to follow all the evidence on which the modern theory of the atom or the hereditary constitution is based; but he can have a basis of scientific training and knowledge and an understanding of scientific method which makes his acceptance a reasonable one. The sailor need not understand the reasons for the order given by his superior officer; but he can understand why obedience on shipboard is necessary, and not merely obey like a dog.

We may put it from a slightly different angle. Suggestibility and its results, obedience or faith, irrespective of logical reasoning, are characters of the human species, mental properties which exist whether we like them or not; and they can be employed, like any other of the raw materials of human mind, either well or ill.

The mind will employ them ill if it takes the bit between its teeth and allows the dissociation between suggested idea and rational experience to remain as unbridged as possible. It will employ them well if it does its best to test the irrational possibilities of suggestion against its store of reasoned knowledge. In this way it will acquire for its use the forcefulness of suggested convictions, but prevent them from leading the personality astray into actions not only non-rational but opposed to truth. Here, as everywhere else in the mental life, reason and experience, though they can do little to initiate, can do everything to guide and control.

Once it is properly appreciated that faith rests upon precisely the same basis as hypnotic suggestion, religiously-minded people should be the first to see that the faith which they have should not be purely arbitrary, the result of authority alone, but rational. The day has gone by when a saying such as "*Credo quia impossibile est*"—I believe because it is impossible—could be regarded with approval. Nor will the saying, "Faith is the evidence of things not seen," meet the outlook of to-day. "Faith is belief in the nobler hypothesis" is too reminiscent of such rhetoric as Disraeli's "I am on the side of the angels" to be satisfying.

Is not faith rather the sum of our beliefs as they predispose us to thought and action, whether these beliefs are purely reasoned, or purely suggested, or based on suggestion tempered with reason; and ought it not be a reproach instead of a boast that faith can be upheld in opposition to reason, and human nature, here again, divided against itself?

It will be objected that I have throughout been using the term faith on its lower level of meaning, simply as belief in certain propositions or acquiescence in the commands of certain kinds of authority, and have neglected that higher (and, it is often claimed, specifically religious) kind of faith which is powerful to remove mountains, inspires steadfastness unto death, and is indeed a passion of the soul and not mere assent. This is in truth an amazing phenomenon of the mind. It is a complex state of the soul, in which complete conviction, such as is obtained by suggestion, is combined with the deepest and most powerful desires. It is not, however, true to say

that it is solely a property of the religiously-minded. The choice of Regulus, or the behaviour of thousands in the European war, show that it may be generated in relation to patriotism; the fantastic exploits of true lovers (in which overpowering, but by no means necessarily rational or correct, belief that the loved one is of supreme value is combined with profoundest desire) that it may be generated in relation to individual human beings. On the other hand, it will be found that its highest manifestations are those in which the sense of sacredness is involved, and where other religious motives too, in the shape of concern with general ideas of human destiny, also play their part. That faith at this highest pitch has a vital part to play in life, few would deny. But its passionate certitude carries with it the danger to the individual of self-delusion, the danger to others of intolerance and persecution. If the men whose business it is to think and to carry the burden of perplexity towards intellectual solution, the Marthas of the mind, can whole-heartedly admire the rare Mary whose spiritual passion of faith forces the soul into an inevitable rightness of growth and lovely flowering, they have also the right both to point out the all-too-numerous weeds which this same faith may generate when growth goes astray, and to demand consideration and respect from faith for their activities and the spiritual plants that grow from them.

The two are complementary; each has its sphere, its triumphs, and its failures; alone, both the one and the other tend easily to evolve into the incomplete or even the monstrous.

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Ritual also deserves some consideration. This does not, so much as theology, become attached secondarily to the religious emotion, but rather grows directly out of it as its immediate expression. In some cases, even, non-moral actions (such as those performed in a state of exaltation) may be regarded as in themselves sacred, and here ritual, in the form of these actions, may make a primary contribution to the sum of religion.

On the other hand, so soon as intellect and morality have been roped in to become part of the field of religion, conclusions can be drawn from them which demand fulfilment in ritual.

The simplest forms of ritual are those actions which are the natural accompaniments of a sense of awe or reverence:—obeisance, kneeling, or prostration; exclamations; great care for the object of reverence, and a desire to adorn and beautify it. But there are certain actions and their accompanying feelings which are almost universally regarded as sacred by primitive man owing to the sense which accompanies them of being possessed by some fresh and external power—the various states of exaltation.

Exaltation may come in connection with epileptic fits; with intoxication; with the taking of various drugs; with dancing; with the communal frenzies, recorded even at many modern revivals, of "shaking" and of "speaking with tongues." In so far as the sense of exaltation can at all be obtained by deliberate performance of certain actions, the ritual of these actions may be embodied as an integral part of a religion.

Some of the most curious feelings of exaltation are those associated with the taking of anæsthetics,

like ether or "laughing gas." A number are mentioned by William James. The interesting thing is that just before becoming unconscious, the subject often has a thrilling sense of having solved the riddle of the universe, accompanied by both peace and exaltation. On waking, however, the "revelation" turns out, apparently invariably, to be either meaningless or banal. Colonel Blood, for instance, one of James' correspondents, records having been vouchsafed an anæsthetic revelation which, in his remarkable style, he describes as having seemed like "nineteen centuries of brain-sweat crystallised into a jewel five words long." The jewel, however, turned out to be merely the not very illuminating proposition: "The Universe has no opposite." Oliver Wendell Holmes, the writer and medical man, in his *Mechanism in Thought and Morals*, records a good example of the commonplace type, which he himself experienced after ether. "The veil of eternity was lifted. . . . Henceforth all was clear; a few words had lifted my intelligence to the level of the cherubim. As my natural condition returned, . . . staggering to my desk, I wrote down the all-embracing truth still glimmering in my consciousness. The words were these (children may smile; the wise will ponder): 'A strong smell of turpentine prevails throughout.'" As he rightly says, the wise will ponder.

Eskimo and Indian priests (medicine-men) are often chosen on account of epileptic tendencies: certain Dervishes produce a state of religious exaltation by violent dancing, as do various negro tribes; Rivers records how among the Todas of India divination may be accompanied by a species

of hysterical "possession"; the automatism known as "speaking with tongues," or in later psychological parlance, as *glossolalia*, was highly prized by the early Christians as part of their religious life; the Bacchanals combined wine and the dance to produce a mystic frenzy; the modern sect of Shakers live up to their name; and extraordinary scenes of the sort are recorded of revivalist Camp-meetings in America.

In such cases the ritual imposes itself directly as a part of the religious life. But when, for instance, belief in a powerful supernatural being prompts the adoption of rites of propitiation by sacrifice or offering, the ritual is added consequentially.

The highest forms of ritual are those in which the two aspects are united; ritual at its best is like a good work of art in that it both expresses and generates emotion and thought.

The difficulties which have grown up concerning ritual in the last few centuries are on the whole secondary difficulties, the necessary consequence of primary difficulties in the sphere of theology. Many of the Puritan and Protestant difficulties (like the difficulties of the great controversy about image-worship in the eight century) about "idols," visible images and pictures, the virtual worship of saints, and so forth, have a theological origin. If God is essentially a *purely* spiritual being, then it is logical to worship him by the aid of pure spirit alone, and any material representation is a degradation of this spirituality. But common sense has usually triumphed over this logical point, and allowed a reasonable symbolism.

Other difficulties are largely a matter of taste, such as that over vestments and elaborate ceremonial

—though here, of course, the echoes of historical cleavages are still powerful, the Protestant often not judging such practices on their merits, but seeing in them the scarlet shadow of Rome.

In general it may be said that for a common service, some form of ritual, however non-formal, is a necessity; but that the precise form of the ritual will inevitably depend partly on historical causes, partly on the taste and mental temper of the worshippers, the Quaker finding both Salvationist and Anglo-Catholic "busied about vain things," the ritualist finding the revivalist vulgar and the Quaker devoid of savour, and so forth. The chief psychological danger of ritual is that too much sanctity may become attached to its precise performance, and so the means become an end. As a result, in the sphere of morals, rigid ritual taboos are substituted for true morality, as in later Jewish religion; while on the emotional or expressive side, reverence is swamped in what seems to the outsider at least a childish love of dressing up and of gorgeous mumbo-jumbo.

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Another important point may perhaps be considered here: I am thinking of the satisfaction of religious feeling in ways which are outside the domain of religion as ordinarily understood and as organised in a church. Do not let us forget that in the Middle Ages the Church extended its sway over many more departments of life than it does to-day. The church building had not yet been cut off by the Puritan spirit as a bare House of God to the exclusion of all else. As a place for the exhibition of sacred and natural rarities, it served as a museum: it

was usually the only approach to an art-gallery : as stage for the mystery plays it was a theatre, as place of plain song and chanted mass a concert-room : the reading of the Bible stories in the lessons was half the average man's chance of literature.

The church porch is still used for many official notices : in old days it was much more both of a social and a business centre. In addition, before the rise of the universities, monasteries were among the chief centres of scholarship and of medical knowledge as well as of various arts and crafts. That is all gone. There is now a division of function, and we have our museums, our art-galleries, our concert-halls, libraries, theatres, our secular universities ; and the functions of the Church, both as organisation and as edifice, are narrowed down.

From the point of view of the diffusion of thought and ideas, man has passed through four main stages and is now entering upon a fifth. He began with speech alone. He proceeded to the invention of writing, and so to the greater permanence and accuracy of his tradition. Then came printing, with the possibility of multiplication of the written word. With the industrial era there came the substitution of the machine-power for man-power, with consequent new multiplication of the multiplying capacity of the printing-press, and therefore the possibility of the dissemination of ideas literally to everybody, in every place, owing to the cheapness of mass-production.

Finally, in the last half-century or so, we have entered upon a new era, whose implications and whose possibilities we have hardly yet envisaged. This is the era of new modes of spreading human

thought and human achievement. Even if we leave out photography and telegraphy, there remain the invention of the gramophone, the invention of the cinema, the discovery of wireless, and the perfection of cheap colour-printing. All these, in their several ways, are completely altering the whole problem of the diffusion of culture, and so of the growth of culture and civilisation itself. Not only is the spread of ideas and knowledge, already facilitated by writing and printing, now again facilitated and speeded up, but the achievements of the human spirit in music and painting can to-day be spread and enjoyed in ways previously impossible.

What, it may perhaps be asked, has this to do with religion? It has a good deal to do with it. Before the perfection of writing, religion could not but be mainly a social affair; its social ceremonials and professed belief were the chief way of expression for the religious spirit. With the introduction of writing, it was possible for those who could read and write to find an outlet in writing for the expression of their own personal ideas, and, in reading, to commune with the thoughts of other individuals, in addition to participating in the un-individual, socialised thought and feeling of organised religion. This process was accelerated by the introduction of printing, but so long as books were dear and education restricted—that is to say, even in the most civilised countries, until the middle of last century—organised religion was bound to remain socialised if it was to affect the bulk of the community.

But now industrialism, universal education, improved transport and communications, and the progress of invention are putting a different com-

plexion on affairs. You remember what Milton once wrote: "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." If the spiritual life-blood of the great masters of thought is available to everyone, why go to church and listen to familiar prayers and to a prosy sermon, when you could stay at home and receive new knowledge and deeper thoughts from a book? Goethe, Emerson, Wordsworth, Blake, Carlyle, Dante, Sir Thomas Browne, Shelley, and the rest of the assembly of immortal spirits—they jostle each other on your shelves, each waiting only to be picked up to introduce you to his own unique and intense experience of reality.

The *Origin of Species* is to-day a good deal more profitable as theology than the first chapter of Genesis, and William James' *Principles of Psychology* will be a better commentary on the Decalogue than any hortatory sermon. The poetry of Herbert or Donne or Vaughan, of Francis Thompson or Walt Whitman, will introduce you to new ways of mystic feeling; Trevelyan's *History of England* is likely to be a more salutary history lesson, because nearer home, than the historical books of the Old Testament; Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* is more likely to help the perplexed mind of a twentieth-century Englishman than the apocalyptic visions of Revelation or the neo-Platonic philosophy of the Fourth Gospel; to sacrifice a score of Sundays to making acquaintance with the ideas of other great religions like Buddhism would be very much preferable, even from the purely religious point of view, to continuance in the familiar round and the familiar narrowness of one's own church.

And the same is true in other spheres. You may get much more spiritual exaltation and joy out of a Beethoven concert, or even out of Beethoven on the gramophone, than by listening to your local organist play Mendelssohn or the "March of the Priests." You may exercise your highest faculties by travel, now that travel is easy and cheap, or you may stay at home and discipline your mind with reproductions of what the great artists and sculptors and architects have imagined and expressed. If you are primarily in love with morality and character, you may obtain a fuller insight into them by reading the great novelists and playwrights, and the biographies of great men, than by confining yourself to the Bible and the saints.

What is more, there is no reason whatever why in all such activity you should not in your degree be participating in the religious life. All philosophy and science, all great art, all history, all lives of men—one and all may inspire to reverence or exaltation, or be made the subject of reflection which, being concerned with great problems in a grave and reverent way, is more truly religious than any pietism.

It might be said that if this is the case, there is no room left for organised worship. I do not think this is so. There will always remain the religious satisfaction of plunging the mind in a common, social act, and always a satisfaction in familiar ritual hallowed by time and association. There is also to many people a satisfaction in symbolism; and to others in finding, in the combined privacy and publicity of the church service, a simultaneous release from the world and from the individual self.

On the other hand, it seems clear that the more opportunities there are for satisfying this or that aspect of the religious life outside a set service and a church building, the less important will service and building become.

Perhaps, if organised religion would relinquish its false theological position, and the happy time were to dawn in which one common basis of thought were to be generally accepted, perhaps then a double way out of the difficulty would be found. On the one hand, the set service could be reduced; the old-fashioned sermon be more and more replaced by an address or lecture, or by a reading from some good book; and what are usually called secular activities, in the way of music, intellectual discussion, plays, lectures, etc., be introduced into the church. I say introduced—I had better say re-introduced, for it would be in a sense a return to mediæval practice. There is in some quarters a tendency in this direction already manifest to-day. Religion has to realise that she has fallen from the autocratically dominant position she held for centuries; that the most she can do, after pure science and pure art, discovery and invention, business and organisation have all broken away, and are making their own approaches to reality, is to help these other modes of life, on whom the burden and heat of the day is now mainly falling, by whatever of goodness and strength, of peace and refreshment, she can find in the religious spirit.

On the other hand, activities like art and music and affairs, now that they have torn themselves from the apron-strings of their mediæval nurse, and demonstrated their independence, can perhaps afford to re-

member that a little of the best side of the religious spirit is like salt in cooking—it improves most things.

There is no need for a performance of Bach's famous Mass, or for that matter of a Beethoven concerto or quartet, to be performed in a tawdry, frivolous, or irreverent atmosphere. As a matter of fact, almost all good music demands some reverence, however critical, for its appreciation; and so, for that matter, does any other work of art, and many intellectual achievements too. But I need not labour the point. Once it is acknowledged that the essence of religion is the sense of the sacred, the rest follows.

As matters stand to-day, we have the cleavage between orthodox religion which has hitched its waggon—the sense of the sacred—not to a star, but to a traditional theology; and a large body of educated people who, rejecting the theology, are forced to stand outside religion too. And as one of the minor curious and unforeseen results of this state of affairs, we have the exaggerated deference and homage paid by a large section of the public to the artist and the imaginative writer. With them, the artist and the writer have taken the place of the prophet and the priest. Owing to their usual extreme individualism and lack of deep grounding in any common basis of knowledge, the artist and the writer on the whole very indifferently fulfil the rôle which has been thrust upon them. But the situation is more the churches' fault than theirs. It can only be remedied when the view of religion has come to be more limited in its ambition, but more catholic in its sweep; and great men and great art come into their due place in the religious outlook.

. . . . . .

One of the most vital things is to have singleness of heart. If religion be an art, it must be unified, like a good work of art. The artist learns (or knows without learning, if he is a good artist) that it is not variety, or size, or quantity of objects represented which make a great picture, but its inherent quality — something which only comes through seeing it as a whole, with a single vision, and uniting in the single expression all kinds of ideas, hints, formal beauties, reticences, conflicts. So it comes about that a single figure may contain far more, be much nearer infinity, than a vast scene—as indeed is the case with Michelangelo's Sybils in the Sistine Chapel when compared with his Last Judgment there; or a picture of a bedroom chair, like that by Van Gogh in the Tate Gallery, bring us nearer to something absolute than any Coronation scene by the most fashionable of Court painters.

The same principle indeed works in other spheres. To love one woman fully is to wish not to love any other woman fully. If a philosopher existed who was both purely rational and had also never fallen in love, this would doubtless seem to him very absurd—how could one limited human female, when so many and such diverse types exist, satisfy the mind's craving for variety? The answer is that it is so; but also that as a matter of fact this complete giving of the self in one way to one person makes it possible—so is the mind constructed—to give and to receive more freely, but in a different way, to and from other beings; whereas the attempt to love many completely is impossible in practice, and with no single one does the love attain fullness.

In these and other cases, what counts, what brings

us nearer the absolute, is quality not quantity, unity overpowering diversity, not merely diversity itself. This, if in somewhat other terms, was fully and finely stated by the great Spinoza; to whose *Ethics* the reader is referred for much both true and sublime on these hard subjects of freedom, eternity, and the absolute.

So it is with religion. All religions which have passed the primitive stage demand this singleness of approach; it may be necessary for personal religion to achieve intensity at the cost of limitation, in this again resembling artistic expression.

If this be so, then a difficult problem remains, as between personal and organised religion, since, as we have repeatedly seen, limitation of organised religion recoils onto life and means that organised religion will sooner or later come into conflict with expanding life on its road to progress.

The problem is how to organise religion so that the Church's creeds and ritual shall be comprehensive (and yet not colourless and general), while permitting freedom for the individual worshipper to make his own religious life intense and personal (and yet not bigoted or obscurantist). Luckily it is not for me to suggest a solution.

Had space permitted, many other interesting applications of psychological method and discovery to the interpretation of religious experience could have been adduced. However, they may be studied in a number of valuable works such as those of Thouless, v. Hügel, Underhill, M'Dougall, Selby, etc.

For the purposes of the present study, a brief recapitulation and summary of one or two salient points is all that remains for me to do.

The mind is not static; it grows like the body; but its transformations after birth are much more considerable than those of the body in the same period, and are comparable in extent to prenatal bodily changes. In addition, the range of transformations possible to it is very great, unlike the narrowly-determined development of body. Like the body, it must be adapted to its environment; but unlike the body, it is not given us with its adaptations automatically prepared, but adaptation has to be achieved by each individual during his lifetime. The adaptations may be on a low and incomplete plane, permitting only limited control, or on a high plane and far more complete, permitting much greater control and also much greater freedom and creative power: on either high or low plane they may be beautifully adjusted, or there may be maladjustment and friction.

The great problems of mental adaptation are twofold—to adapt the inner urge of instinct and impulse, longing and desire, to the actualities of the environment, social and natural, in which the individual has to live; and to discover means for achieving greater conscious control over the environment, and greater independence and freedom for the individual and the expression of his individuality.

All that the individual is provided with in infancy are certain broad innate tendencies or instincts, certain capacities of sensation and perception, and certain capacities of remembering, learning, and profiting by experience. There are no such things as innate ideas: the mind is a blank slate, not yet written upon. On the other hand, differences in the qualities and strengths of the innate tendencies,

differences in the capacities for observation, attention, and learning, help largely (together with the environment) to determine what shall be written there.

Thus the development of the mind is a gradual organisation of the several separate and often opposed instincts and impulses, with the separate and often contradictory lessons of experience, into some sort of unity.

As Santayana writes, commenting upon Spinoza: "Given the propulsive energy of life in any animal that is endowed with imagination, it is clear that whatever he finds propitious to his endeavours he will call good, and whatever he finds hostile to them he will call evil. His various habits and passions will begin to judge one another. A group of them called vanity, and another called taste, and another called conscience, will arise within his breast. Each of these groups, in so far as they have not coincided or co-operated from the beginning, will tend to annex or overcome the others. This competition between a man's passions makes up his moral history, the growth of his character, just as the competition of his ruling interests with other interests at work in society makes up his outward career. The sort of imagination that can survey all these interests at once, and can perceive how they check or support one another, is called reason; and when reason is vivid and powerful it gives courage and authority to those interests which it sees are destined to success, whilst it dampens or extinguishes those others which it sees are destined to failure. Reason thus establishes a sort of resigned and peaceful strength in the soul, founded on renunciation of what is impossible and co-operation with what is necessary."

The foundations are laid in early childhood, but the memory of this period fades before a continuity of remembered mental life is attained. The other great critical period for the mind's development is and will always remain that of adolescence, because then new and powerful instinctive impulses come into prominence, and also because the individual is then leaving the sheltered life of childhood and being confronted with the problems of the environment in more serious form. The consciousness of self grows with the degree of organisation of the mental life, but is present from an early stage.

These elementary facts are basic for all psychology. More specifically important for the psychology of religion are certain further facts. There is in the first place the capacity for experiencing the feelings to which we give the name of sacred, uncanny, mysterious, holy. There is next the capacity for experiencing the sense of impurity, transgression, or sin. This may be aroused just as strongly by infraction of ritual or taboo as by moral transgression. The converse sense is that of spiritual regeneration, justification, or forgiveness. In achieving this, propitiatory sacrifice or renunciation of something dear to the self is a frequent method; another is the flooding of the mind with a sense of grace which wipes out the sin.

There is further the sense of the isolation of the self, its incompleteness, or its feebleness. This sense of isolation and dependence can be overcome in various ways. One is by transgressing the bounds of the everyday self and tapping activities and sources of power not usually available; another is by establishing, in one way or another, a sense of

communion with some power outside oneself; still another by surrendering the personal will to some greater and external power.

The faculty known as suggestibility, though of course it plays a part in every part of social life, is also a very important basis of religious faith; while rationalisation, or the urge to give reasons, is still an important basis of theology.

The repression of experiences and impulses which are painful, and especially those which generate painful conflict, seems to be a necessary preliminary to conversion. On the other hand, there is the necessity, again and again during the process of organising the mind, not to take refuge in repression, but to bring the conflicting impulses in to the open and face the pain involved in so doing, if it is desired to reach a higher level of mental adjustment; and this is the psychological basis for the stress laid upon suffering, especially moral suffering, as a forwarding principle in religious development.

The chief psychological alternatives to repression, which seems to be invariably harmful, are suppression by conscious control, and sublimation. The word sublimation has been rather mishandled; but the essential point about it is that the growing mind, in its progressive self-organisation, can build instincts and impulses into the machinery in extremely various ways. The instincts and other more complex impulses are tendencies to action. Certain stimuli arouse particular emotions and give the motor machinery an impulse to action. In lower animals, both the type of stimulus which arouses a particular instinct, and the type of action in which the instinct, once aroused, will issue or attempt to issue, are

relatively (though by no means absolutely) fixed and invariable. But in man, both the kind of stimulus and the kind of action may be altered within very wide limits. To take the end of action first, fear may be made to issue not in flight, but in greater alertness or prudence; the sex-instinct may be operative in the writing of a poem or the building of a business; or parental affection may be harnessed to work to pay the cost of education. On the other hand, by various processes, a different object from the normal may come to arouse the instinct or impulse—by association, as when a piece of the clothes worn by a holy man is believed to be sacred enough to work miracles, or by substitution, as when a childless woman lavishes her affection upon a pet. Finally, simple instincts can be built up into complex, and the instincts or innate dispositions to action can be combined with habit and the results of experience to produce the more complex dispositions to action which the professional psychologist, for lack of a better word, calls sentiments. The religious sentiment is one of these, and it is not inherited as such, although certain inherited capacities, like fear and reverence, enter into it.

The long and the short of it is that human dispositions to action are very plastic, and may be altered at either end, both where they are sensitive to the outer world and where they act upon it, and in the middle, which decides the kind of action. The sublimation of a repressed impulse implies the utilisation of the impulse for new ends of action; or its utilisation in conjunction with other impulses for a higher mode of action; or both.

Another point is the faculty of the human mind

for projecting its emotions and ideas out of itself and leaving them fused with the external objects which have given them birth: but this I have dealt with elsewhere.

From the point of view of religious psychology it is important to remember that probably *any* intense emotion, whether fear, wonder, horror, disgust, sex-love, admiration, is capable of becoming the basis for religious sentiment, belief, and action; it is so capable because all really strong emotions come with such a feeling of externality, "a sense of something given," as Wordsworth puts it, and are, in the literal sense of the word, so extraordinary, such mysterious visitations, that something of numinous quality hangs about them. It is through this fact that such curious objects can become objects of religious worship—the snake which inspires horror; the wild beasts which generate fear; the human sex-organs; and so forth.

What, in later development, remains within the bounds of organised religion depends largely upon the way reason has worked upon the original raw "theoplasm," and upon social and historical accidents. But it should always be remembered that any particular religion will always be incomplete, and that many potential religion-arousing objects will not be utilised in it.

They may be forced into opposition, so to speak, and acquire negative sacredness, become taboo or sinful, as has been the case with sex in Christianity, in striking contradiction to many religions in which sex and its emblems are part of worship; or it may be simply left out, as with the sacredness of tribe or country in mediæval Christianity. As a result, with

the growth of nationalism and the revival of this religious motive, patriotism has in reality become a subsidiary religion side by side with the other organised religious motives to which we usually restrict the name of religion.

What I have been enumerating is a tedious enough catalogue. But if my readers have had the patience to follow it and, still more, to verify each dry item by thinking out some tangible example as illustration, it will have served its purpose.

It will have shown that man, inheriting as he does certain instincts and mental capacities, and born into the physical environment of this planet and the human environment of a social life and tradition, is bound to have some religious life; though it is by no means necessary that this religious life shall be religious in any narrow or conventional sense.

It also will have shown that the raw materials of religion will always tend to be worked upon by the logical and classificatory reasoning passion of man, and also by the moral tendencies, so that out of crude *mana* there appear gods and creeds and moralities and churches.

One or two conclusions, as it seems to me, emerge clearly enough from even a brief consideration of this difficult subject.

In the first place, all sorts of the strangest experiences are neither supernatural nor pathological, but are natural though uncommon possibilities of the human mind. Trances, visions, or locutions, whether hallucinatory or of the type known as interior; mental ecstasy; the reproduction of marks on the skin, such as St Francis' stigmata, by the power of suggestion; instantaneous cures of certain types of disease

by faith; the imposing of one man's will on another through suggestion, whether in or out of hypnosis; the splitting of a personality into two; automatic writing; obsessions; impulses which act with compulsive force—all these are among the strange crops which may grow from the soil of human mind. Many of them may be pathological, but the majority are in themselves neutral, and whether they lead to disease or to fuller powers depends upon the objects towards which they are directed, and whether or no they are duly balanced and held in place in the system of checks and counterchecks which makes for sane mind or for good government. To be always seeing visions is often a sign of a disordered mind; and yet a vision may not only condense into concrete form the aspirations and ideas working within a personality, but may refresh and reinforce them to new vigour. In partially-dissociated personalities, automatic writing may reveal the existence of the subordinate personality and lead, under treatment, to a linking up of the two into one. Suggestion may be employed for good ends. The noblest faith, inspiring martyrs to die or saints to live, is an obsession, but an obsession with what is highest and strongest.

In the second place, to understand the machinery of this or that experience of the religious life is not to strip it of value. At first blush it may seem as if to accept the psychological account of inspiration, for instance, to believe that inspiration represents the inflow into consciousness of thoughts and feelings that had been fermenting in the subconscious, instead of believing that it was the authentic voice of God, was to disvalue it. On reflection, however, it is seen that the sense of disappointment

is due only to the intellectual views which you may have previously held about theology. If you interpret reality in the dualist terms of, on the one side, a supernatural being who is power and love and truth, and, on the other, poor mortals who are of no account without divine assistance and grace, these views will have so coloured your thoughts that you cannot quickly adjust them to a new scheme of ideas ; but if you believe that the desire and capacity for love and truth and beauty and right action do reside in the human mind, and that inspiration is a name for one of the ways in which these desires and capacities become manifested and actualised, it does not, even under strictest psychological analysis, lose one jot or tittle of its true value, though it may be stripped of false trimmings. Not only that, but the psychological interpretation has one great advantage over the theological—it does not puff up men or churches with a false assurance of certitude.

The feeling of forgiveness and grace to a soul struggling with the sense of sin; the poignant experience of the value of others' atonement or of one's own suffering ; the sense of communion with and peace in the realities that are around us—not only do these remain facts of psychological experience whatever interpretation or explanation of them be offered, but their value is not in the interpretation, but in themselves.

It is, of course, true that a false interpretation may give a fictitious value to this or that fact or experience, as when the false interpretation which we call magic gives fictitious value to various incantations or rites ; or a false belief in the literal inspiration of the oracle at Delphi led to a fictitious value being

attached to the oracle's deliveries; or a false theology leads to fictitious value being attached to scriptures supposed to be literally inspired, and so to irreconcilable disputes and even to wars. What I am concerned to show is rather that there are many experiences belonging to the religious life which are of value in and for themselves, and that neither does their supernatural interpretation add to them anything essential, nor the naturalistic interpretation strip them of anything vital; and my last point is that a patient study of psychology is essential if we want to have a religion which will do more good than harm. Without that study we shall always be prone to accept at too high a value the dogmatic assurances of those who believe themselves inspired; we shall continue to be misled by the blind certitudes of feeling; we shall fail to call the sense of sanctity to heel within our own souls, but shall allow it to enwrap powers and creeds and books and customs and ethics until they become idols immune from criticism, and healthy progress is made difficult; we shall help to perpetuate the dualism which means one set of ideas for Sunday, another for the rest of the week, and also, by making religion supernatural, keeps it remote from ordinary life.

Perhaps most important of all from the religious point of the view are the strange facts concerning self-delusion and unacknowledged compulsion. It is perfectly easy for a reasonably healthy mind to feel entirely confident of being in the right, and yet to be in the wrong; buried instincts and repressed tendencies, which are not only unacknowledged by but actually unknown to the conscious part of the mind, may yet dictate to action and even make the conscious

self find what it considers the best of reasons for the actions. Desire and suggestion between them will override reason and experience every time they come into conflict unless the power of conscious reflection and deliberation is kept very wide awake. Psychology will help us in the comprehension of others, and even in the comprehension of ourselves.

The mind is capable of the most unlikely performances, the grossest errors. We are not likely to be able to set it right, to adjust it when it goes wrong, to keep it tuned up to its highest spiritual and intellectual efficiency, unless we take the trouble to know more about its machinery. We should not expect a motor mechanic to be able to repair our car unless he knew how the engine worked, nor, still more, a motor designer to design or make a more efficient car without not merely the empirical knowledge of how the engine works, but also a good deal of the general scientific principles, mechanical, electrical, and thermodynamic, which underlie its working. The human mind is a far more complex and intricate bit of machinery than a motor-car ; and yet religion is for the most part not concerned to know how it works before it sets out to repair it, nor to get a grasp of the physiological and psychological principles underlying that working before it seeks to raise it to new levels of efficiency and well-being.

" Know thyself " has always been a valued injunction to the individual. It is still more important for an organisation like a religious body, whose views and decisions reverberate down the centuries. Through comparative religion and psychology, religion can come to know herself, her limitations, and her capacities.

The consciousness that something in life is sacred, worth living and dying for, is one of humanity's moral indispensables, and religion is the fruitful mother of it.—Rev. H. E. Fosdick.

It is very strange; want itself is a treasure in Heaven; and so great a one that without it there could be no treasure. . . . You must want like a God that you may be satisfied like a God.

. . . . . .

Love is deeper than at first it can be thought. It never ceases but in endless things.—Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditations.*

The decay of Christianity and Buddhism, as determinative influences in modern thought, is partly due to the fact that each religion has unduly sheltered itself from the other. The self-sufficient pedantry of learning and the confidence of ignorant zealots have combined to shut up each religion in its own forms of thought. Instead of looking to each other for deeper meanings, they have remained self-satisfied and unfertilised.

Both have suffered from the rise of the third tradition, which is science, because neither of them had retained the requisite flexibility of adaptation. Thus the real, practical problems of religion have never been adequately studied in the only way in which such problems *can* be studied, namely, in the school of experience.—A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (1927).

As I stood behind the coffin of my little son the other day, with my mind bent on anything but disputation, the officiating minister read, as a part of his duty, the words, "If the dead rise not again, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." I cannot tell you how inexpressibly they shocked me. Paul had neither wife nor child, or he must have known that his alternative involved a blasphemy against all that was best and noblest in human nature. I could have laughed with scorn. What! because I am face to face with irreparable loss, . . . I am to renounce my manhood, and, howling, grovel in bestiality. Why, the very apes know better, and if you shoot their young the poor brutes grieve their grief out and do not immediately seek distraction in a gorge.—T. H. Huxley, *Life and Letters.*

I cannot but say that I believe that some day our conception of God will have become independent of nearly all that has come into it from the primitive Jewish tribal and other pagan conceptions of God which have passed into Christianity, and that our conception will be constantly renewed and growing from all human knowledge and experience, from all science, philosophy, and psychology.—Canon J. M. Wilson, in *The Modern Churchman* (1924).

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When Love is an unerring light,
And Joy its own security.
—William Wordsworth, *Ode to Duty.*

Chapter IX

Developed Religion

The future remains. What is it to bring forth? Religion, if it is to be vital not only to the individual but also to the community, makes three demands. It must be a deeply-felt personal way of life—"what a man does with his solitariness," is how Whitehead puts it: I should prefer to think of it rather more specifically, as a way of life based on a particular emotional and spiritual approach, certain beliefs, and certain preferences in the realm of values.

In so far as definite religious communities or churches exist, these must have some sort of organisation of their own. Organisation is as necessary to any body important enough to merit the name of a church as is a skeleton to one of the larger animals; and the organisation will be as necessary on the intellectual and moral sides as on the purely material and social side.

But finally—and this has been much lost sight of in the past, owing to the unfortunate dualism underlying most religious thought and popular philosophy—the religious communities and the lives of individual religious people must have some organic relation with the community as a whole, their thought with its thought, their morals with its morals, their feelings with its feelings. We are apt to forget that the world is really growing up. Man

as organism is still a young species, and civilisation, if we date it from the twin discoveries of metal-working and agriculture, is a mere day in the biological centuries. But so rapid, during that negligible period of less than 10,000 years, has been the evolutionary advance made possible by speech and tradition and the other new properties of the human organism, that we are now justified to say that civilised man is in his adolescence, and has the chance of attaining maturity. I say "has the chance," for a species or a society is not pinned down like an individual among the higher animals to an inevitable development; it is plastic, and, like some of the lower organisms, may reverse its differentiation, grow backwards, and revert to a simpler stage.

Whether, as in the Dark Ages, the civilised world is going to undergo such a process of dedifferentiation, it is impossible to say. It can be asserted, however, that it has at least the chance of maturity. As H. G. Wells pointed out in the *Outline of History*, every civilised community in the present age knows more about the general conditions of the human race in any and every previous age, than did any single individual or community at the time. As for our perspective of knowledge in time, our continuity of historical outlook, it has never been even remotely approached. What could an historical outlook achieve to which 4004 B.C. was the date of the world's creation, or one to which classical Greece was the remotest horizon of antiquity, or human and animal evolution were a sealed book, undreamt-of?

The same is true for our knowledge of Nature. It was impossible, before the later nineteenth cen-

tury, to have any properly-grounded idea of the unity of the natural world. Such ideas had been indulged in, but were rightly treated as hazardous speculations: now, they are forced upon our minds by the irresistible body of tested knowledge. In the same way, there is the sense of solidity given by the mere detailed knowledge and comprehension of the facts of Nature—how the wind blows and the clouds arise; how valleys and mountains obtain their forms and gradually change; how the sun shines and the earth and moon circle round it; why earthquakes and volcanic eruptions take place; the how of chemical combination and the knowledge of the composition and properties of familiar substances; the way in which we and animals breathe, digest, move, feel, reproduce; how diseases are caused by bacteria, parasites, definite poisons or lack of definite food-substances—in all these and a hundred other ways civilisation has an assured sense of acquaintance, a foundation of knowledge built in the world of external nature, which was impossible to any previous age.

Equanimity and foresight used to move on a much thinner crust over the abyss of fear and mystery, acquiescence or despair. The solid Romans themselves directed their campaigns by augury from the flight of birds and the entrails of animals. The Plague of London must have acquired an enormous addition of horror from the complete ignorance of the cause of the disease or any methods by which it could be combated. How could even the highest religious outlook expect any full achievement when, as in the Middle Ages, it found itself in an atmosphere of widespread superstition, belief in miracles

and in frankly magical ceremonies, when the most enlightened and influential rulers regulated their actions according to astrological calculations? How could morals, even the sternest, not become immoral when, as in the seventeenth century, knowledge had not banished the belief in witchcraft and the irrational fears and hates that naturally arose therefrom?

The same, *mutatis mutandis*, is true for our control of Nature. For a society founded on tradition, where discoveries were made only by accident, alteration was gradual and unconscious, stability seemed natural and man's main concern to make the best of what was inevitably given. The application of scientific knowledge has produced a very different outlook. Civilised man is beginning to realise that he can, if he so wishes, in large measure model the world in accordance with his desires. He has for some time realised this pretty thoroughly with regard to inorganic nature, and has now reached the same point in his outlook on organic nature other than himself—noxious insects and parasites, tropical diseases, afforestation, agriculture, fisheries. He is beginning to see its full implications in regard to social development—witness the recent outburst of activity in promoting town-planning, nature reserves, and the conservation of wild life, in preserving beautiful buildings from destruction, in saving the country-side from vandalism, in national education, in the concerted appeal for playing-fields for poor children, and in a hundred other ways. Finally, there is the extension of the same outlook to his own nature. That has hardly as yet got a foothold; but it is coming. This will bring profound

changes of practice. Psychology and education between them are revealing what can be done in helping the individual to control himself; the study of heredity and population-growth, and the knowledge of eugenics and of birth-control are pointing the way to wholly new aims—to a conscious control by man of his own nature and racial destiny. Medicine is ousting the idea, common to all primitive societies, and accepted by all early religions, that disease is due to supernatural causes, whether magic or the will of a god, and pointing the way to man's achievement of health. How can the twentieth century, grounded in this outlook, which is not only actually but inevitably new, be content with the same religious outlook which satisfied it when the natural world was uncomprehended, appeared chaotic as much as orderly, and the ideas of control and conscious change had not yet been born?

Bearing this in mind, we may feel it natural and even desirable that a religion such as Christianity, for instance, should at its origin have set itself up as definitely hostile to the whole outlook of the world into which it was born; that when science was almost non-existent, morals chaotic, cruelty rampant, force the one great arbiter, and religions of every complexion, including those of barbaric crudity and beastliness, were jostling each other, all tolerated, in the imperial city, Christianity should have proclaimed itself not merely as a way of salvation, but as the only way.

But to-day humanity is facing the possibility of attaining its maturity. We cannot really think it tolerable that it should be faced with perpetual con-

flict at the central heart of its being. If its maturity is to be stable or fully fruitful, it will be necessary for any religion of the future to be an aspect of its unitary and interconnected thought and life, not one of two opposing tendencies.

I feel that any such religion of the future must have as its basis the consciousness of sanctity in existence—in common things, in events of human life, in the gradually-comprehended interlocking whole revealed to human desire for knowledge, in the benedictions of beauty and love, in the catharsis, the sacred purging, of the moral drama in which character is pitted against fate and even deepest tragedy may uplift the mind.

Nor must it be narrow-minded, but it must admit that this same high sense of sacredness and transcendent value may be vouchsafed in many ways and in many objects. Some may find it in poetry. Shelley was an avowed atheist and a hater of Christianity, but he was obviously of religious temperament. This could hardly be claimed of Keats, but to him beauty was certainly a sacrament. It may come through art or music; it may be vouchsafed through love. It may be found in the pursuit of pure truth—think of Lucretius, Galileo, Pasteur, Thomas Huxley. It may be found in the practice of a life devoted to the service of humanity's suffering, as with Father Damien, or Mrs Elizabeth Fry, or Dr Schweizer. Still others, like Richard Jefferies or Wordsworth or Thoreau, may find it in the solitudes of Nature; or, again, like born patriots, in a sanctification of their country.

Let me give a couple of quotations to illustrate my assertions. Sir Henry Newbolt speaks of poetry

as "a transfiguration of life, heightened by the home-sickness of the spirit for a perfect world." That well describes the sacramental effect of great poetry. John Donne, one of those rare souls in which poetical, intellectual, and religious ardours were blended, in his poem *The Ecstasy*, describes the state of mind of two lovers :

"Our hands were firmly cemented
By a fast balm, which thence did spring;
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string.

. . . As, 'twixt two equal armies, Fate
Suspends uncertain victory,
Our souls—which to advance their state,
Were gone out—hung 'twixt her and me.

And whilst our souls negotiate there,
We like sepulchral statues lay,
All day the same our postures were,
And we said nothing, all the day."

The state, only with its objects altered, is just that which is found in religious mystics at a certain stage of their mystical development.

Religion properly so-called differs only from these in relating the objects of its feeling of sanctity to the individual's desire for salvation or righteousness, and to a definite set of beliefs or scheme of thought about the mystery of the universe and man's destiny therein. But if its brand of sanctity excludes that of the thrill of poetry, or denies the absolute value of intellectual discovery, or is hostile to the feeling of sanctity enveloping and spending itself upon purely humanitarian ends, then so much the worse for it. All it has a right to ask is that those who pursue other approaches shall try and see whether their

ideas are not narrow, whether they cannot be related to a wider sweep of reality.

It is all very well for Browning to say " we live by admiration, hope, and love." Even had he struck a rather deeper note by substituting *veneration* for *admiration*, and introduced a plea for pure knowledge, this would have been but a partial view. What we live by must be organised : the different ideas and aspirations, the goals and springs of conduct, must be brought into relation with each other and with a full experience of outer reality, in the widest possible way. This is where *organised* religious thought makes its contribution to civilisation.

In any such intellectual organisation of religious thought there appear to me to be three main categories to be considered. The first is constituted by the powers of nature ; the second by the ideal goals of the human mind ; the third by actual living beings, human and other, in so far as they embody such ideals.

As we have already seen, the personification and glorification of these would give us an approximation to the theological doctrine of the Trinity, though in various details, especially as regards the first person, there would still remain considerable differences.

Mr H. G. Wells proposed the name ' The Veiled Being ' for a conception closely akin to my first one. I find the term misleading. In so far as the reality herein included is in truth a Spiritual Being, it is so completely Veiled as to recede into the unapproachable realms where, for instance, dwells Herbert Spencer's ' Unknowable.' And in so far as the reality is not veiled, it is definitely not a Being.

If a name is required, *power*, it seems to me, should be the noun. What is apprehended by the religious consciousness here is the Eternal Power which is outside man, power possibly in part spiritual, certainly in all its most obvious aspects material.

Corresponding to the third person of the Trinity (and, logically, in this scheme, too, coming last), is Pure Spirit or Idea. It is constituted by the sum of man's general and ultimate notions about truth, beauty, goodness. It forms a definite and real part of the atmosphere in which human beings grow up. Since it consists of general ideas, its implications can never be exhausted, it always urges man on to goals which can never be completely attained. It is indeed spirit in its most general form, and in so far as a natural object for religious feeling, a Holy Spirit, even if completely impersonal.

The third may perhaps be best thought of, from the point of view of religion, as spirit realising itself in living matter—spirit progressively embodied, eventually coming to exert a control over nature and life. At its lowest it is a spark of spirit dimly and unconsciously sharing existence with material body; at its highest it is conscious spirit directing evolution in accordance with its desires and will; throughout, it is a movement towards more mind, expressing itself in the realities of individual lives, characters, and achievements. It connects the other two aspects of reality. It is Incarnate Spirit, embodied in Life the Mediator.

These ideas can be, of course, analysed and dissected. It is the function of science to do so in the most detailed and dispassionate way possible; of philosophy to relate them to its metaphysical back-

ground; of theology to discuss them in relation to man and his personal and racial destinies. Enough, however, will have been said to show that this analysis can be properly made; meanwhile the idea of natural fact and power remains something unitary, a perfectly genuine conception, however detailed an analysis physics, chemistry, and the rest of the natural sciences may make of its component parts: and the same is true of the psychological analysis of the second and the biological analysis of the third idea.

These three categories of fact, however, are closely related. Abstract idea and pure ideals are properties of living human organisms; human organisms are continuously linked with all other organisms, plant and animal, by the evolutionary process; and this existing stream of organic life must itself have evolved continuously from non-living matter.

All three are merely different aspects of one reality; and, in so far as our human destiny is concerned, the historical processes at work have been such as to make the spiritual or mental sides of this one reality emerge from insignificance into greater and greater importance until they come largely to dominate and control the material aspects.[1]

A recognition of these relationships and this unity is equally essential with the recognition of the three separate sets of facts.

Thomas Hardy, throughout his writings, has stressed the arbitrary and capricious power, indifferent to human life and human thought, as which

[1] Malthus was expressing the same general idea in terms of a different system of thought when, in his celebrated Essay (1st ed., p. 294), he wrote: "The impressions and excitements of this world are the instruments with which the Supreme Being forms matter into mind."

it seems to me External Nature must be perceived by any one not blinded by theological preconceptions or his own desires. Where I would suggest he has gone astray is in setting this up as the essential reality, and in neglecting to notice its relationship to the other realities I have been discussing.

The three categories themselves, and their relationship, are not the same thing as the sum of the isolated brute facts which go to compose them. They are the facts as apprehended by the powers of the mind—they are reality embodied in experience, and so becoming organised and unified into an ordered and more vital reality.

Had the word God not come, almost universally, to have the connotation of supernatural personality, it could be properly employed to denote this unity. For if my reasoning has been correct, what has been called God by men has been precisely this reality, or various aspects of it, but obscured by symbolic vestures. Perhaps the day will come when men will recognise this, and throw away the veils. Until that time, it is best to use some other word or phrase. In any case, this reality, as a proper object for the religious sentiment is something unitary and deserves a name. For the moment I shall call it the Sacred Reality. The precise term, however, does not matter. What does matter is the recognition that the experience of the universe as affecting human life and therefore as invested with sanctity is a reality, and is the proper object of religion.[1]

[1] Cf. George Santayana (Introduction to *The Ethics of Spinoza*): "The spirit of God, accordingly, means simply the genius of men, the ground of which lies indeed beyond them, in the universal context and influence of nature; but the conscious expression and fruition of it first arises in them severally, as occasion warrants."

As regards the relationship of this reality to human life, one further comment is in place. The category of Natural Power transcends human life on the material side, as matter. It is external, and what is given in it is alien and unfamiliar. Humanity is one combination of the elements of reality; but there are an infinity of others, some exceedingly diverse. Humanity, however, consists of a number of bits of living matter, and is thus rooted in what transcends it.

The category of pure spirit also transcends humanity, but on the spiritual side, and in a different way. It transcends any and every particular by being general, exceeds anything and everything actual by being ideal, and yet the capacity for thinking in these general and ideal terms is a capacity of particular and actual human beings. Humanity is much more intimately entangled with this aspect of reality, and transcendence and immanence are there more intricately interwoven.

When we come down to more detail, there are many facts which need to be taken into account to get a proper picture of reality. We must accept, for instance, the fact that men are not fundamentally equal, but unequal in being endowed by the natural processes of reproduction with chemically different outfits of hereditary units. Development, both of body and mind, achievements and character, is a gradual realisation of some of the potentialities inherent in these outfits. Development is a true *epigenesis*, to use the technical term, a bringing into existence of actually new and more complex organisation. It is brought about by interaction of the hereditary outfit with the outer environment. Factors

in hereditary constitution or in environment may limit, very definitely, the possibilities of development both on physical and mental sides. If, for instance, one particular human hereditary unit be different from normal in a particular way, the human organism is incapable, always and inevitably, of distinguishing red and green colours : or if one particular chemical substance be absent from the child's diet, it will inevitably grow up stunted and deformed, a sufferer from rickets.

Though the conditions in respect of higher intellectual and spiritual characters are, clearly, much more complex, the same, undoubtedly, holds good for them as well. The automatic working of Mendelian law may, to take an extreme example, produce a congenital imbecile, who is no more capable of any comprehension of what a Christian means by God than he is of lecturing on advanced physics ; and the converse is seen in those whose hereditary outfit equips them from the start with more than usual talent, in music, say, or mathematics, or spiritual sensitiveness. But, *per contra*, those same talents can only unfold into actuality when developing in a suitable environment; a wolf-child could not become a mathematician, nor could a paleolithic man, in the absence of musical tradition and musical instruments, have become a great musician.

Destiny is the limiting force of heredity and environment ; and freedom is human plasticity—the variety of possible development opening before a man endowed with a definite heredity.

At first sight this may seem to throw light on the eternal conflict between predestination and free-will.

In part, perhaps, it does so ; but on such a view the free-will would only be apparent. What at any rate is certain is that the sense of free-will and the accompanying fact of envisaging alternatives between which to choose is essential for action at high levels. Many of the leaders of religious thought have stressed the fact that the choice of the right alternative is inevitable to a mind which has both truly seen and truly felt the meaning of two alternatives. The intellectual parallel is instructive. What is essential and what is difficult in an intellectual problem is to see the intellectual alternatives clearly and to amass sufficient knowledge concerning their implications. Once this is done, the solution is inevitable.

I have previously urged the view that mind and matter are merely two inseparable aspects of one more fundamental substance. Along somewhat similar lines it may be said that what we call the sense of effort is, at one time or another, necessary in the process of achievement, and that the simultaneous holding of alternatives in the mind, with consequent sense of indetermination and need for choice, is a necessity for moral and spiritual as for intellectual advance. Certain it is that the freedom of the will is in a way paradoxical ; for the more disciplined and efficient the mind and the more clearly and fully the alternatives are envisaged, the quicker and more effortless is the choice—and yet the greater is the sense of freedom and spontaneity in the choice. It may well be that the controversy will turn out to be an unreal one, based on a false logic in the definition of freedom ; and that what we call freedom consists essentially in the power of

envisaging a number of alternatives together in the mind, while mere arbitrariness and non-determinate choosing, which is often thought to be the essence of free-will, is really something which cannot exist and can indeed not really be *thought* at all.[1]

One salient way in which man differs from other animals is in the much greater range of potentiality given to him. There is very little difference between two healthy jelly-fish; a little more, but still not much, between two monkeys; but the difference between two normal men may easily exceed the difference between a jelly-fish and a monkey. This difference is, of course, mainly in the mind; but the mind is the most important part of man.

From another aspect, it is equally clear that had circumstances been but a little different, a human mind might have developed into a mental organism quite different from its actual state; and equally that even the best-developed minds fail to realise more than a fraction of the possibilities open to them, while the average man allows his mind to remain a baby instead of encouraging it to grow up, lives all his life like a chrysalis in a cocoon without realising that he might, if he wished, emerge winged.

Out of this raw material of possibilities, man builds his personality. Sometimes he does not realise what lies waiting to his hand; at others, he concentrates on some parts only of the mental dispositions,

[1] Cf. Professor Munsterberg (*Psychology and Physiology*, p. 7): "Freedom of will means absence of an outer force or of pathological disturbance in the causation of our actions. We are free, as our actions are not the mere outcome of conditions which lie outside of our organism, but the product of our own motives and their normal connections. All our experiences and thoughts, our inherited disposition and trained habits, our hopes and fears, cooperate in our consciousness and in its physiological substratum, the brain, to bring about the action."

and (consciously or more often unconsciously) represses the rest. These neglected or repressed realities of being have a way of taking their revenge and suddenly flooding up into consciousness, so that the personality which had thought itself secure, in the privacy of its smug self-imposed limitations, suddenly finds itself in the presence of tremendous forces, not personal, and yet part of its own flesh and blood, vital realities which it had thought to escape, now confronting it and threatening, unless both welcomed and disciplined, to strike it down from off its pedestal of equilibrium.

One of the most insidious enemies of true freedom is this unreasoned repression of certain instincts and all things connected with them. They continue to work in the subterranean part of the mind, and will influence the process of thought going on above, so that consciousness is all the time finding reasons for acting in this or that way, rather than using reason.

Thus a false organisation of the self, with its failure to unify the raw materials of spiritual gifts and its unresolved conflicts of desires or values, is a powerful source of instability and incompleteness, and must distort or cramp the religious outlook. On the other hand, the most potent force for ensuring that the personality shall be stably organised is a proper scale of values. The ethical history of man has been the gradual enlarging of his scale of values and the relegation of certain values from high to low position and vice versa. The greatest change wrought by Christianity, for instance, was the dethronement of many such primitive values and their replacement by love, mercy, sacrifice, and humility.

The scale of values is the architect's plan which determines how the piles of timber and brick and stone shall be built into a building.

Primitive man receives most of his scale of values ready-made; he imbibes them like the air he breathes; they are hard set in the tribal customs and standards whose foundations he does not even think about, much less question.

The educated modern, however, must contribute something of his own effort to his scale of values. If he be not a spiritual and intellectual cipher, he will, however much he may have unconsciously absorbed during childhood, be faced with the need for readjusting his ideas as experience is forced upon him. Once he is forced to look into the matter, he will find that vast stores of experience, gathered by others, are available to him in books and in the minds of living men, and he is driven on, if he is worth his salt, until he has explored the main lines of knowledge, however cursorily, for himself, and found out what kinds of fact there are which bear upon his personal problems. This is one of the main ways in which a developed differs from a primitive civilisation; the one is locked up, away from expansion and change, in its little world of tight traditions, while the other is set in an open land whose boundaries of knowledge recede over the horizon. If the religious believe that the spirit of truth be a gift from or a part of the third person of the Trinity, then to continue to shut oneself up in the swaddling-clothes of primitive doctrine when the limbs of the spirit might be freed for action is a sin against the Holy Ghost.

Developed religion from this point of view may

be thought of as confronting the external world with an inner scale of values, and attempting to harmonise the two in life. If to this it be added that the specifically religious feeling of sacredness and reverence must play its part in the ceaseless encounter between outer and inner, the result is a good working definition. It may also be added that, from the standpoint of the individual, development and change must enter into the process. The child's mind cannot but be unorganised, must lack experience, must work on the childish plane, with crude association instead of sharpened reason, with undisciplined wish and phantasy instead of tempered desire and purpose. The passage from a childish to a mature way of thinking and feeling, from the infantile to the adult mental plane, is necessary. In the process, experience alters the scale of values, and they in their turn alter the way of dealing with experience.

The various ways in which the individual spirit may succeed or fail, partly or wholly, in this traject from infancy to true manhood, are the province of the psychologist. It may, however, be safely asserted that for the majority of human beings, though by no means all, a scale of values which includes elements of a religious nature is needed if the development is to be at all complete or satisfactory.

I would accordingly like to supplement my more comprehensive but static definitions, which I intended to apply to primitive as well as to developed religion, by something more specifically the concern of modern civilisation, applying only to developed religion in which general ideas of morality and reason have asserted their right to attach themselves

to the primitive concept of sacredness and to modify and extend the domain of religion and its expression.

A developed religion, then, must satisfy the following requirements. It will not merely be confined to man's more or less immediate reaction to the mysterious or sacred; it will not be content with a system (often incomplete or self-contradictory) of mythology or of primitive rationalisation as its theology; nor only with traditional ritual or formalism as its code of action. On the contrary, it will always extend its conception of what is sacred and a proper object of religious feeling to include man's destiny and his relation with the rest of the world; it will apply the pure force of intellect to its ideas, and attempt a theology or intellectual basis which shall be both logical and comprehensive, accurate and coherent; it will also inevitably perceive that ethics and morality are keystones of human destiny, and link up its sacred beliefs with a pure ethic and a reasoned morality. It will, in a word, not be content to leave its religious life chaotic and unordered, with loose ends unconnected with the rest of reality, but will come more and more consciously to aim at an organised and unified scheme of religion, which further shall be connected with all other parts of the mental life; and it will attempt to achieve this by putting forward a scheme of belief and a scale of values around and over which man's aspirations to sacredness in emotion, thought, and action may most securely grow.

Thus a developed religion should definitely be a relation of the personality as a whole to the rest of the universe, one into which reverence enters, and one in which the search for the ultimate satisfactions

of discovering and knowing truth, experiencing and expressing beauty, and ensuing the good in righteous action, all have the freest possible play.

Any conflict which prevents the personality from attaining wholeness is a hindrance: all taboos against considering any part of the universe in relation to man and his destiny are hindrances: so, too, are all restrictions upon the free use of reason, or the free appeal to conscience.

So far from Solomon Reinach's definition of religion as "a sum of scruples impeding the free use of human faculty" being a true one, it is the opposite of the truth for a properly developed religion. It is, unfortunately, the fact that it applies well enough to many primitive and moderately-developed religions; but its applicability may be taken as an excellent touchstone for the degree of development which a religion has attained.

Religious ideas and practices may be, as in many primitive peoples, closely adapted to the general life of society: when civilisation is rapidly changing, however, they are often either ahead of or behind the general thought of the time. The ethics and spiritual insight of Jesus and of Buddha, for instance, were far ahead of their times, as was the theological insight of Abelard, or the moral zeal of some of the Hebrew prophets, or the love of learning by the better of the monks in the Dark and early Middle Ages. More often, however, the unfortunate tendency of the sacred to become the untouchable, and therefore for religion to become an unduly conservative force, has led to religious thought and practice being below the general level of its times. The anti-evolution agitation in this country sixty or

seventy years ago, and in the United States to-day, is an instance in the intellectual sphere ; the refusal of the Roman Catholic and other churches to discuss such subjects as divorce or birth control in any reasonable spirit is an example in the moral sphere ; the excessive formalism of orthodox Jewish religion in the time of Jesus is an example in the field of ritual ; the intolerance by many missionary societies of native custom and belief, as compared with the views of anthropological science and of enlightened administrators, will serve in the field of national ethics.

What must never be forgotten is the fact that all sides of a religion must be considered. All will remember Nurse Cavell's remarkable words on the eve of her death : " Patriotism is not enough." The idea can be taken and applied to religion and its place in human life. Belief is not enough ; and the sincerest religious feeling is not enough. In the long run the most devout religious spirit will do more harm than good if it is coupled with false or incomplete intellectual views, or with a rigid code of morals based on authority instead of reasoned value, or with intolerance. In the long run falsity or fixity, timidity, incompleteness, or sloth, in whatever department of the religious field, will take their revenge.

Just because religion is so powerful and universal, just because it can embrace all human faculties and actions and all aspects of the world about us, therefore it can be a potent and violent force for evil as much as for good.

Once this two-edged nature of religion is recognised, its potentialities for harm faced by the religious,

its potentialities for good acknowledged by the rationalist, there will be more chance of progress from low, fixed, undeveloped or under-developed religion which clogs the wheels of progress, to higher, forward-moving, developed or developing religion which helps to lead the way.

An undeveloped religion does impede human faculty.

A developed religion is one which is so organised that it helps to unify the diverse human faculties, and to give each of them the fullest play in a common task.

All parts away for the progress of souls ;
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments—all that was or is apparent upon this globe or any globe, falls into niches and corners before the procession of souls along the grand roads of the universe.
Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand roads of the universe, all other progress is the needed emblem and sustenance.—WALT WHITMAN, *The Song of the Open Road.*

I that saw where ye trod
The dim paths of the night,
Set the shadow called God
In your skies to give light ;
But the morning of manhood is risen, and the shadowless soul is in sight.

The tree many-rooted
That swells to the sky,
With frondage red-fruited
The life-tree am I ;
In the buds of your lives is the sap of my leaves ; ye shall live and not die.

But the Gods of your fashion
That take and that give,
In their pity and passion
That scourge and forgive.
They are worms that are bred in the bark that falls off ; they shall die and not live.
—ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE, *Hertha.*

To see a World in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.
—WILLIAM BLAKE, *Auguries of Innocence.*

Through love, through hope, through faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.
—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Your creeds are dead, your rites are dead,
Your social order too.
Where tarries he, the Power who said :
See, I make all things new.
—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Obermann.*

Chapter X

Conclusion

The critic of what is established, the opponent of orthodoxy, whether it be an orthodoxy theological or economic, is almost invariably reproached for his destructiveness. It is true that there is such a thing as mere iconoclasm, and that certain types of minds are so powerfully moved by love of truth that the least inaccuracy or logical flaw is abhorrent to them, or find certain aspects of popular religion so grotesque or so abhorrent that religion as a whole seems tarred with the same brush. To them, religion is something to be attacked. They never pause to ask whether it be a good thing to throw out the baby with the bath: indeed, it is probable that most of them have not noticed the baby, and would probably deny its existence. On the other hand, those who are resolutely hostile to all criticism, whether destructive or constructive in its intent, are equally pernicious. For them (if we may pursue our simile) the baby exists, but the bath is more important: the value and wonder which is in the child has been transferred to the mere receptacle, and sooner than have this transferred, sanctity interfered with, they will forego all possibilities of a better bath-tub, and even prefer the water to stagnate unchanged, until the ablutions come to defile rather than purify.

The destructive criticism which I have been offer-

ing in a good part of this book has, however, been no more deliberately or solely destructive than is a mother's insistence upon her growing boy relinquishing, say, the habit of sucking his thumb—a habit not only pleasurable but in an earlier stage natural and reasonable enough—no more so than the efforts of a teacher to rid his pupils, when they are of an age to profit by the strong meat of thought, from the inevitably naive views of childhood and of uninstructed everyday, to the truer and more satisfying conclusions of organised science and philosophy. Let me illuminate my meaning from biology—and this not merely because it happens to be my own science, but because the whole problem with which this book is attempting to deal, the problem of religion, is itself a biological problem. Man is an organism—a peculiar and indeed in several respects a unique organism, but an organism no less; as such he is limited by his material construction, tight-bound to his environment in bonds of inherited relation, voyaging from strange past to unknown future on an evolutionary sea.

If some discarnate spirit, not knowing what the future was to bring forth, had been able to visit this globe and to see its conditions say every forty million years, what would have been his report? Assuredly it would always have been good. At the beginning, the existence of life where before there had been no life would have been a notable fact. Later the vision of elaborated life, the hosts of strange and beautiful marine creatures, heavy-armoured or pellucid-swimming, brilliant coral and flower-like sea-anemone, would again have been good. It would have seemed good when the first

fish, dominating the rest of life through power of brain and back-bone, sailed the seas; when plants first learnt to colonise the land, hitherto barren; when the first trees towered to new heights, and the first insects practised life's new power of flight among them. If the imaginary observer had seen the world in the middle of the Secondary period, he could not fail to have been struck by the amazing creatures he saw. The insects had been first on land; but new forms of life now dominated the scene. The reptiles, outdistancing the amphibia from which they had sprung, luxuriated in every variety of form. There were reptilian creatures unrivalled for sheer bulk; others as rapid as racehorses; others which beat the fishes at their own game and had become kings of the sea; still others that were veritable dragons of the air, far outdistancing insects in speed and size alike. There would have been things that did not seem so good, it is true. As the winter came round, the activity of these embodiments of the vital spirit would have flagged, and whole realms of the earth's surface must have been permanently closed to their cold blood; the law of life was rapine and death; brute force and bulk were as successful as accuracy of perception or speed. None the less, it would have seemed natural and right to accept all these evils as the price of the good.

But if he had again visited the earth in the later middle of the next, or Tertiary, epoch, he would have found a very different picture. The reptiles, though surviving in various forms, were then no longer dominant, and all their most remarkable types had perished off the face of the earth. The picture of life would have been very much like that

which the traveller views to-day in the unspoilt parts of East Africa and Uganda; and all who have seen that life testify to the thrill of its vigorous beauty and its variety. Some of the apparently inevitable drawbacks of Secondary life have been overcome. Life, in the form of birds and mammals, is no longer subject to the arbitrary changes in its proper activity inflicted by the changing temperature of the outer world: it has surmounted the difficulty by maintaining its own inner environment at a constant temperature. By this device it has been able to colonise parts of the world untenanted before: even the Arctic is invaded by this new warm-blooded life. What is more, bulk and armour, that seemed so necessary and indeed so magnificent in the old reptiles, have largely been discarded; and in their place the better and more beautiful devices of speed, alertness, and intelligence. The old struggle still remains, however, and progress is still achieved mainly through the ruthlessness of selective death.

This mechanism, he would find, had always been the most powerful agency for change in evolution, and he might well be pardoned if he supposed that it was the sole possible agency. Knowledge, too, for all the improvement of the ages, was still limited in its quality, and still died with its possessor. Would it have seemed probable or even possible that this barrier could be overcome? And yet, had our imaginary visitor come once again when man was in possession of the earth, he would have had to revise all his ideas of the possible, and to admit that the good which he had recognised in earlier life, though certainly still good, was extremely im-

perfect. Indeed many of the qualities which, when the old scheme of life is considered by itself, can properly be called good, seem of a dubious goodness or wholly evil when considered in relation to the new state of affairs. How is it possible to consider natural selection an ideal method, in spite of its successes, if new methods of conscious planning, less wasteful, less lengthy, and apparently more successful, are now available?

Again, the possibility of accumulating knowledge over generations makes all the short-range knowledge of all other organisms seem almost pitiful; and even within human history, the organisation of tested knowledge according to the scientific method not only makes the earlier hit-or-miss procedures look foolish, but makes it actually wrong to utilise them when this something better is available.

There is no reason for supposing that any particular stage of life is the last word in evolution. Just as good a claim to be the "crown of creation" could have been made for the great age of Reptiles, or for the late Tertiary, as for our present phase of human life. Man is an organism, and not only may his knowledge and his power increase out of all dreaming, but his very nature may as well be changed as that of the reptile which was transformed to mammal or the monkey-being who grew through ape to man.

What is the moral? Simply this: that thought evolves equally with life. That religious systems which were inevitable products of humanity's childhood or of his adolescent thinking, which may indeed have been the necessary scaffolding for some better building, are not for that reason final. That

ideas which in their time and season meant immense advance, concepts which were not only solidly good but as good as it was possible for man to make them in the circumstances, may actually become harmful when circumstances alter and the old ideas are found to be hindering the progress of new and better ideas. Exactly the same state of affairs may be found in the field of industry and invention. Gas-lighting was a good method of illumination, and a great improvement upon oil and candles. Electricity was a great improvement upon gas; but where gas had become the established method, a greater resistance was offered to the change to electricity. Think of the hostility of the mill operatives in the early nineteenth century to labour-saving machinery, the obstinate indifference of the average British farmer to new agricultural methods.

But on the other hand, in spite of vested interests, conservatism, and prejudice, the progress of economic invention is to-day at least a fairly rapid one. Compared with progress in established religious systems of thought, it is extremely speedy. What is the reason for this difference? The answer, I think, is twofold. In the first place, and most important, stands the fact of the sacredness of religious beliefs. The beliefs may *in themselves* have no more claim to sanctity than have gas-lighting or old-fashioned farming; but, by an all-but-universal process, the sacredness of the religion with which the beliefs are associated may become transferred and, as it were, attached to the beliefs. There are very few people to-day to whom the idea of a stationary earth has an odour of sanctity. But listen to Father Inchofer's remarks in A.D. 1631 upon the new-fangled doctrine

that the earth moved round the sun: "It is of all heresies the most abominable, the most pernicious, the most scandalous!"

As Dr Fosdick, the American modernist, well remarks in commenting upon this outburst: "Father Inchofer, I suppose, had had a deep and beautiful spiritual experience. He had lived on terms of fellowship with God and love for men. He had always visualised that relationship in terms of a stationary earth with the concentric heavens encircling it. On that mental trellis the flower of his spirit had bloomed. It was very sacred to him."[1] The good monk was certainly genuine in his reverence for this idea. Let us not forget that a firm and genuine conviction is no guarantee of the truth of what is firmly and genuinely believed, and that our own assurance of the sanctity of this, that, or the other belief may be no better founded than was Inchofer's. Sympathy may help us to understand his attitude, but nothing will make it a right one. As Dr Fosdick concludes, "There is no peace in sight between religion and science until religion recognises that the sense of sanctity is too valuable an article to be misused in holding up scientific progress."

In the second place comes the belief that religious beliefs are different from other views, in that they have some supernatural sanction—that they are authoritative, or complete, or final, or are the product of a direct revelation from a personal God or one of his prophets. When all the world was superstitious and almost all men ignorant, when the authority of force was more necessary and the rate

[1] *Harper's Magazine*, February 1926.

of change much slower, then such notions (for whatever reasons they were held) may have been of valuable service in helping to spread and to lend force to the purer and nobler ideas attained by the few rare spirits who thought for themselves. But to-day, when all knowledge is at the door of any one who can read, to be had almost for the asking, when humanity can look round and see the present accurately in its relation with nature and with man's past development—to-day any such view is definitely pernicious.

If education were really education and not a machine for stuffing with facts, or for winning scholarships, or for inculcating the propaganda of patriotism or of class, one of the elementary ideas which we would expect school to impress upon growing minds would be the necessary incompleteness of knowledge and beliefs. No knowledge of phenomena can be perfect. We have only to reflect how the apparent perfection of Newton's mechanics has been shown to harbour the slight gap which lets in the wholly different view of Einstein, or how the idea of the compound atom made of spinning electrons and protons is now, with the arrival of the quantum theory, in the melting-pot again. How much more must that be the case when the belief concerns something so much more complicated. Let me once more quote Fosdick, as a witness from the party of organised religion. He is speaking of the doctrine of infallibility and literal inspiration of the Bible, and its results in the form of anti-evolution campaigns and Dayton trials. "It is that utterly fallacious idea of inspiration which causes the trouble. One wonders why anybody should wish to believe it.

What good does it do? What addition does it make to the spiritual value of the book?" In parenthesis, it should be observed that the doctrine not merely does not add to the spiritual value of the Bible, but detracts seriously from it. The only condition under which the Old Testament is tolerable is if we see in it a record of gradual movement in the direction of spiritual progress. If we really believed that the Almighty approved of bloodshed, hatred, massacre in cold blood, tribal success, and double-dealing in the way in which this is recorded in the Old Testament, it would be almost a duty not to worship him.

Beliefs, we cannot too often remind ourselves, are only tools of the human mind. They may be the useful but lightly regarded things we know as hypotheses, useful to busy science as a screw-driver or a pair of pliers is useful round the house; or the large, more firmly grounded erections known as scientific theories, built up so strongly and with so much of supporting fact that a great deal is rightly demanded of any rival claim before the old theory is discarded; or violently-held but slenderly-grounded beliefs, like some of those which any student of comparative religion will have come across, or like those which sweep across a country in time of war, which are of grave and often terrible importance in their effects, although they crumble to pieces once the cool light of day is let in upon them; or the beliefs, often but half-conscious, of everyday, compounded of intuition and prejudice, emotion and shrewdness, which guide most actions of most men and women in the routine of business and social intercourse.

If I have attacked certain aspects of certain religious systems, it is not because I have any wish to destroy the religious impulse; nor do I think that their destruction would leave an unfilled gap. If the whole great edifice of mediævalist theology were to crumble away to nothing, the religious feeling native to humanity would speedily enough build up something which could be put in its place.

But what, I shall be asked, is there which can be put in its place? Is it not presumption even to think that there is something which can fitly be put in its place?

If, however, as I believe, all theologies and all religious experiences are, as a matter of fact, entirely products of the human spirit, is it not much greater presumption to invoke the Divine in support of a particular belief, to assert that religious belief stands on a different footing from other beliefs, and to exploit God for the purposes of theological controversy?

The view that I would like to put forward is presumptuous, yes—but also humble: no religious outlook which takes account of nature and man as they really are but must mingle the contrasted elements of pride and humility—humility, in the sense of littleness when we confront our small and transitory selves with the majesty and permanence of life and the universe—pride, when we take heart and remember of what achievements man is capable—"what a piece of work is a man!"—and that each of our individual lives is unique, in a real sense ultimate, and reaches out to touch infinite heights and depths.

No one who will turn his eyes upon himself and

his own being and contemplate the spectacle in a spirit of detachment from practical details of every-day, so far as possible *sub specie æternitatis*, but will come to feel something of reverence at what we may call the miracle of the mere existence of such an organisation of material and mental qualities. If he has had some scientific training, his sense of wonder will be increased. This *man* is a small block of the general substance of which the whole universe is formed, just as is a stone or a stream or a piece of bread. Not only, however, does it share with all other portions of substance which we call alive the power of maintaining its form and character in the midst of continual change, continually building into itself new raw material of substance in less organised forms, and utilising as the source of its own vital energy the breaking-down of other substance which it then discards; not only does it possess in common with them the power or reproduction, based in the amazing architecture of self-reproducing units which genetics has recently discovered in the chromosomes; but it has come to possess, as the result of many millions of generations of natural evolution, as the result of automatic forces working to preserve what from the point of utility is best worth having in the struggle for existence, the most surprising qualities. This piece of world-stuff possesses not only form and movement, but the capacity for knowing about other parts of the world, even stars a thousand light-years off, events ten million years ago. It possesses the capacity for will, and with will and knowledge working together has learnt to control in notable degree both outer nature and its own nature. In some ways most extraordin-

ary of all, it possesses the capacity for feeling, and for feeling in such a way that before some emotions all practical considerations fall away as unimportant; through feeling, this sentient portion of the world-continuum may be exalted to states which have value higher than anything else in the same world-continuum, and are often regarded as having absolute value.

Here is a mass of a few kilograms, of substance that is indivisibly one (both its matter and spirit), by nature and by origin, with the rest of the universe, which can weigh the sun and measure light's speed, which can harness the tides and organise the electric forces of matter to its profit, which is not content with huts or shelters, but must build Chartres or the Parthenon; which can transform sexual desire into the love of a Dante for his Beatrice; which can not only be raised to ineffable heights at the sight of natural beauty or find "thoughts too deep for tears" in a common flower, but can create new countries and even heavens of its own, through music, poetry, and art, to which it may be translated, albeit temporarily, from this practical world; which is never content with the actual, and lives not by bread alone; which is always not only surmounting what it thought were the limitations of its nature, but, in individual and social development alike, transcending its own nature and emerging in newness of achievement.

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Let those thoughts close our discussion. For now I am through with discussion. Discussion there must be to enable one mind to comprehend the ideas of another. Comprehension of an idea means the

grasping of it in its relation with the rest of one's ideas ; to state is not enough, but one must view it from in front and behind, from this side and that, take it apart in thought and in thought put it together again. But the tree is judged by its fruits; and if discussion lead nowhere, it is fruitless. The fruit of discussion, including that inward discussion with oneself which is analytic thought, is an attitude of mind (which then determines the kind of action which shall issue), a mental self built up in an organised way, and that has its own value, as does pure thought have its own but different value.

What is left now for me is to make my statement of my own attitude. Others may agree or disagree. Let them at least remember that agreement or disagreement with this attitude has little to do with agreement or disagreement with this or that part of the views which helped determine it, and with the correctness or otherwise of the discussion that has gone before. For an attitude of mind or a statement of belief is a complex, organic thing, involving all sorts of hidden springs of personality, all kinds of thoughts never properly looked at in the light of conscious day, involving also in its construction something of creative activity, which itself (like the creative activity of an artist) may be good or bad, so that good materials may be spoilt by the use which is made of them.

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I believe first and foremost that life is not merely worth living, but intensely precious : and that the supreme object of life is to live ; or, if you like to turn it round, that the great object of living is to attain more life—more in quality as well as quantity.

We men are from one point of view mere trivial microbes, but from another the crown of creation: and both views are true, and we must hold them together, interpenetrating, in our thought. From the point of view of the stellar universe, whose size and meaningless spaces baffle comprehension and belief, man may be a mere nothing, and all his efforts destined to disappear like the web of a spider brushed down from the corner of a little room in the basement of a palace; but meanwhile he is engaged upon a task which is the most valuable of any known, the most valuable which by him can be imagined, the task of imposing mind and spirit upon matter and outer force. This he does by confronting the chaos of outer happenings with his intellect, and generating ordered knowledge; with his æsthetic sense, and generating beauty; with his purpose, and generating control of nature; with his ethical sense and his sense of humour, and generating character; with his reverence, and generating religion. In a phrase, he is a living mill or vital machine into which the world of brute reality is poured in all its rawness, to emerge, a new reality on a higher level, as a world of values. As General Smuts puts it in his book *Holism*: "Personality . . . in its unique synthetic process continuously performs that greatest of all miracles, the creative transmutation of the lower into the higher."

The only Absolute that man can know is the absolute of general idea—truth, beauty, goodness, holiness, unity. He can never reach absolute completeness in any field, nor absolute perfection. But he can attain satisfaction, a satisfaction embracing and profound. The satisfaction may be one of

achievement, happiness, or rapture; or it may be one, paradoxical and yet very profound, of realising his own littleness, dependence, and sinfulness over against the awful completeness and sanctity of the ideal. In such satisfaction it can properly be said that man touches the absolute and has a momentary perfection. He may attain as much completion, be in contact with as much of the absolute, as is possible for him at that moment. But it is inevitable that each of his experiences and states is temporary, and that always further possibilities lie ahead, in which the old can be swallowed up.

For man to live fully it is necessary for him, as for every other organism, to be adapted to his surroundings; but man can do so on a new level, denied to other organisms, in the world of mind. His life, if it is to be the best life possible, must be seen, felt, and practically lived in its relation to the rest of the universe. If he fails to take account of any part of reality, or if he misinterprets it, woe to him: the omission or the mistake will bring its retribution.

To this task of relating his life to the rest of reality, he must bring all his powers; but the mortar which must hold all together if the construction is to hold is the spirit of love and reverence. Such a construction, so held together, is a true and developed religion.

That is what orthodox theism means when it says that the knowledge and love of God is the first duty of man. But orthodox religions have kept primitive ideas of supernaturalism and of personality in God which render their view more difficult, less simple, more ambitious, less real. Those ideas are idols, and need to be destroyed like other idols.

I believe that we must learn all we can of Nature. A knowledge of matter and energy in lifeless and living systems is the first requisite, for we must know the world in which we live if we wish to be adapted to it and to control it.

It is of equal importance for us to think out our scheme of values. What goals are ultimate, what desires are highest? Almost all philosophies and developed religions are agreed that truth, beauty, and goodness are the three human ultimates, to be desired for their own sakes, to be desired above all else. At least, they are agreed in theory; in practice, difficulties crop up as to interpretation and practical methods. But it is worth while affirming fundamental theories, however many practical difficulties occur in their application.

Truth is not merely truthfulness; it is also discovery and knowledge. I believe that the acquisition of knowledge is one of the fundamental aims of man; that truth will in the long run prevail and is always to be preferred to expediency. I believe that the pursuit and enjoyment of beauty is another ultimate goal for the human spirit; that unnecessary ugliness is a sin against humanity and against the sacred reality which is larger than humanity; that natural beauty and art provide the greatest of all gifts of refreshment to the human soul—they are so gratuitous, a sacrament which we have no right to expect. I believe that moral goodness is the last of these ultimate and autonomous values; that although fortunately it is true, in general and in broad outline, that honesty is the best policy and that goodness is the highest expediency, yet when the two clash, the good is to be preferred to the

expedient; that both the greater good of humanity is to be put above the lesser good of the nation, and yet the intenser moral sense of the individual above the interests of a group; that both the self and others make their claims upon virtue and that we have warrant for belief that the burial of a talent is a sin equally with its purely selfish use.

Some would say that sanctity is another ultimate. I believe rather that reverence, or the capacity for discovering the sanctity of things, is a way of approach which is necessary if we are to advance beyond a certain point in the quest for the three highest values. Reverence then would be in the same category as love, joy, patience, disinterested curiosity, tolerance, and humour, in being a necessary way in which the mind shall walk if it is to achieve things worth achieving.

Reverence then is part of the third chief sphere of reality which it behoves us to explore and understand—human nature. Matter and energy are man's surroundings. Truth, beauty, and goodness are the goals of his life, the ideals which he should put highest and desire most. Human nature and its tangible achievements are the forms in which the ultimate values are, in their degree, made real and given embodied expression. We must know the human mind, its roots and its flowers; its springs of activity and the methods by which these are transmuted into action; its disorders and the ways in which it may go astray and thwart its own development; the highest levels of experience, to which a few rare souls now point the way, but which may perhaps come to be the property of the majority instead of the few; the different kinds of tangible

expression, in art, thought, character, or civilisation to which it may give birth.

I believe that life, with human nature in its forefront, is the means of giving actuality to the ideal; that in this consists our true destiny; that the secret of making progress in this task is to train the spirit to all disinterested activity—disinterested love of what is brave and happy, of beauty, of knowledge, of ministering to those that suffer, those that are in ignorance or in that other, moral darkness; that this disinterested love, once truly gained, will bring with it all the other ways of advance, such as tolerance and humility, humour and reverence; that the highest expressions of human nature's faculty of bringing the ideal to dwell in actuality among men are works of art, including literature and architecture among them, are philosophies, laws of nature, and systems of scientific thought, are the characters of men and women, are ordered civilisations, are developed religions. The work of art embodies beauty and thought in concrete form; the philosophic or scientific system embodies knowledge; character embodies morality in a human being; a civilisation embodies the progress made by human nature in its cosmic task; a developed religion embodies the spirit of man busying itself in all reverence with his ultimate destiny in this universe.

I believe that in all these ways human nature can, and on the whole does, make gradual progress in the task of subordinating matter to mind, and actuality to the ideal; but that, so far from any finality of any sort having been achieved, we have not even begun to see with proper clearness the tangible goals to be set for the march of the world's

next day. On the other hand, I believe that our new-found knowledge, that there are before us, not centuries or millennia, but millions of years, with ever fresh goals revealing themselves, and yet ample time for the race to reflect and set its course and take steps to control itself, is one of the great hopes and consolations of mankind.

I believe also that the three regions of reality which I have mentioned, however diverse they be, however contradictory their main tendencies may seem, are all part of a single real unity. Dead matter has given birth to life : life has given birth to sensitive, purposeful, and intelligent mind ; and mind not only desires to control matter, but is capable of the task.

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I believe that it is both a foolish and a wicked phantasy of timorous thought to deny the reality of evil and of pain and suffering. They are intensely and terribly real. It is a false optimism to say that evil can always be overcome ; but it can often be overcome. The overcoming of evil by good is not merely one of man's main goals ; on the slow average it is being accomplished. The mystery of evil, however, is not only its existence ; it lies also in the fact that out of evil may come good. Those are irreducible facts which we must simply accept. But they are also facts which are inevitable in a world which works like ours. If evolution is a devil-take-the-hindmost, in which mutual aid, kindness, and forethought are but late and sporadic comers upon the scene, its struggle for existence must give us the evil of tapeworms and plague and mosquitoes as well as the good of biological progress. If man is an im-

perfect organism on to whose animal nature new capacities are grafted, but are often given in strange combination by the hand of heredity, often thwarted and distorted by environment, then we shall expect cruelties and hurts, perversions and fears, hatreds and selfishnesses, and all their evil effects. We shall expect them, but we shall try to overcome them. We shall expect them, and accept them as a challenge; but need not continue to torment our souls with the question of why an imaginary Creator, to whom we have ascribed our own ideals of foresight and benevolence, should have inserted evil into the scheme of things.

Pain, in spite of all that has been written about the difficulty of comprehending the reason for its existence, is simpler. It is a biological necessity. Without physical pain there could be no adapted life, no progressive evolution. Without mental suffering there could be no mental progress. Pain, once in existence, may inflict itself in biologically useless ways as well as useful ones, just as may intellectual or æsthetic pleasure. It may inflict itself in spiritually useless ones too; for though pain and suffering may be necessary ingredients of many a great character, they may be sterile. Sterile pain is a challenge like evil; it is for us to do our best to make it impossible. Indeed our aim must be constantly the reduction of all pain; for though it can often be turned to good, without that effort and expense of soul the good might have been greater. At all events we shall certainly never abolish it, and need be deterred by no moral or theological scruples, such as made themselves heard when chloroform was first used in child-birth, in our attempts to be

rid of it. What must be remembered, however, is the fact that pain is an instrument of adaptation, and that lesser pain in the present may ensure better adaptation and so forestall much greater pain in the future.

It is often true that it is cruel to be kind, and we have ocular demonstration of that fact every day of our lives in the later careers of spoilt children. It is interesting to find Christianity and psycho-analysis both insisting that suffering is necessary for spiritual advance. It is perhaps safe to say that there must always be pain of some kind if the human being is to advance from the infantile to the mature level of mind, from wish and phantasy and Castles in Spain to desire tempered by experience, purpose, and real achievement. The world is not what our desire would have it : those who have not faced that fact and all its implications of pain are doomed to remain in the unreal world of childhood. Of such pain-refusing phantasies are many false religions.

I believe that sin exists, and the sense of sin. But I believe that the exaggeration of the sense of sin, the over-stressing of the idea that it is a necessary preliminary to salvation (which is found in a number of Christian sects) is pernicious. The sense of sin is often most pronounced when the sins themselves are trifling enough, and dim or absent in real wickedness. The sense of sin so-called is in large part the expression of an unresolved mental conflict. Once that conflict is resolved, whether to heights of saintliness, or to depths of crime, or to the give-and-take equilibrium of ordinary decent manhood, the acute sense of sin tends to disappear. The sense of sin will also be much stronger in persons of certain mental types

than others, and can easily be exaggerated through the growing soul being forced to live under the pressure of irrational taboos or dogmatic authority instead of in love and freedom inspired and supported by reason.

While it is true that we all fall far short, not merely of perfection but of our reasonable possibilities, and that it is profitable for our mental health to turn our thoughts regularly inwards upon our shortcomings, yet constant over-emphasis on sin leads not only to frequent hypocrisy, but to a wrong habit of mind and a failure to realise as much of positive good as would otherwise be the case.

Once it is recognised that the sense of sin is often, and especially in adolescence, a mental disease, something to be avoided if possible and got over (like the measles) with the utmost celerity, instead of being paraded as admirable, the great step will have been taken. It is nothing to be ashamed of, any more than measles ; but, also like measles, it is nothing to be proud of. I believe that the religion of the future will have as one of its great aims the saving of man from an exaggerated sense of sin by prevention of childish conflicts. Just as preventive medicine and public health are becoming more and more important and will make the cure of the individual less and less necessary, so I believe what by analogy may be called " preventive religion " and general spiritual hygiene will become more important, and will make some of the methods of present-day Christianity look as crude and barbaric as does bleeding or the universal black draught to modern scientific medicine.

I believe in grace and the sense of grace. I do not

believe in it as a gift from divine power, but in the fact of its existence as a special inner illumination and peace which comes when conflicts are resolved on a high plane, when æsthetic or intellectual insight is vouchsafed, whenever, in fact, an unexpected or at least undeserved moment of spiritual achievement is thrust on the mind, and the mental state is coloured (sometimes half-unconsciously) with the feeling best described as sacramental. I believe that religion has arrogated to itself, quite unjustly, the exclusive possession of this "grace"; but that in reality it operates in every sphere of the mind's life.

I believe that its connection with the sense of sin has been much overemphasised; and that indeed the more sinless a human being, the more harmonious and unthwarted his development, the more numerous and the more glorious may be expected to be the graces and illuminations which sanctify and give value to his life.

I believe that the individual attains his supreme satisfactions in precisely these moments. They are the moments in which he with his mortal fingers touches the absolute. There is an absolute of truth; and though no one can grasp all truth or, what comes to the same thing, all the implications of a single truth, yet the particular problem we have held before us we may solve, we may see in a flash our solution, its truth, and its relation to many of our other ideas. That is Promethean: that is the bringing of the fire of absolute truth from its unrealised state to make it dwell in this phenomenal world.

In just the same way we can touch the absolute of beauty and, through our spirit, perceive it investing common things and common vision; we can touch

the absolute of goodness and realise something of the good in a single course of action. There is an absolute of harmony and unity; we can experience in ourselves a moment of that harmony when we succeed in adjusting the diverse and conflicting elements of our life, as they happen to exist at the time, all in a single unity. It is but momentary; we must continue to grow, and new equilibria will come to be necessary; but in that moment we shall have tasted a knowledge which is absolute, and embodied something of ideal harmony in our actual temporal being. There is an absolute of righteousness; that, too, we can touch by moments; and this grace is most intensely felt when it rescues us from the opposite extreme, of a sense of sin or unrighteousness. But it is simply not a fact that it is the exclusive privilege of Christian believers. There is a grace of holiness which can be attained in love; without it ungratified desire is pain, desire gratified is merely transitory release from tension or satiety and revulsion—but with it superadded, ungratified desire is itself desirable, prayer and beauty is one, gratified desire a sacramental transcendence of the boundaries of the self, on which, as Blake says, "the soul expands her wing."

In all these and many other ways we may touch the absolute, sacramentally transcend ourselves. It is in this sphere that virtue is its own reward; this is the true coin in which human nature receives its best gifts, most valued because not deserved or simply earned as a right, but (I repeat) a present, a gift distilling out of the inner nature of things.

On the other hand, the spirit must labour for wages too, and earn them. I believe that to live

solely or mainly for these moments of transcendence, whether in religion, or love, or beauty of art or nature, or intellect, is mere selfishness. Like other selfishness, it brings its own penalties, which may be no less severe in spite of being never realised. The world demands work. Work is needed for the mere maintenance of life; more work is needed for the maintenance of a particular level of civilisation; still more work is needed if we look to the future and aim at giving later generations better chances of fuller life.

Put it in a slightly different way: the supreme moments when we feel in touch with things eternal and absolute may be man's highest aim and reward; but we ourselves shall not attain them without previous work and effort on our own part or on others; nor shall we be able to help ensure them for others (and so attain our own peace) without effort and work. I believe, therefore, that we must work, not merely for work's sake, though that is discipline and occupation, but with definite conscious objective. That objective should be the most embracing purpose, and the most embracing purpose we can have is to work for the race as a whole, not forgetting that charity begins at home, but remembering that in our hands is the trusteeship of this world's future. For the single blissful moment of salvation or peace or beauty to exist, the whole creation has groaned and travailed together until now.

Personal salvation is a single aspect of what is sometimes known as self-realisation: and self-realisation is only full and satisfying when it comes through self-forgetting; this applies to forgetting self in disinterested love of knowledge as much as

in the religious sphere. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. But self-realisation, even thus disinterested, is, by itself, selfish; and self-sacrifice, when it leaves out of account the duty of self-realisation, incurs the reprobation meted out to him who hid in the earth the one talent entrusted to him by his master.

Selfish preoccupation with personal salvation has been the curse of many religions; thoughtless and unprofitable expense of self-sacrificing labour is the curse of many charitable and social movements. A full religion must see to it that spiritual self-realisation in the present and patient self-sacrificing work for distant objectives are balanced.

I believe thus that religion should be both self-expression and self-renunciation. It has two main goals, personal and racial. The personal goal, often crudely symbolised as salvation in another world, is the raising of the soul to levels on which it experiences the assurance of peace, the rapture of illumination, the deep sense of communion, and knows that it has attained the utmost of which it is capable: this goal is the development of the religious life for its own sake.

The racial goal, often thought of narrowly and without full vision in the form of mere self-immolation as a sacrifice agreeable to a God, is work for the highest good of humanity, including future humanity as well as present. It is self-sacrifice directed by a conscious vision of human evolution and its possibilities.

The individual human being is, or can be, the highest thing of which we have knowledge; but the individual is small in comparison with the com-

munity, and both are small in comparison with the race. This submergence of self in the group may be seen in sectarianism, in patriotism, in social service. But it must be unstable and uneasy until it finds the largest group possible, and that is humanity, past, present, and to come. So soon as men and women realise that the future is in their hands, that they have it in their power to acquire and apply knowledge so as to control disease, prevent children from being born to misery through defective heredity, regulate population and, in a word, help to control the way in which civilisation and the human species is to evolve, then this practical end is at once seen to have highest value above all other self-subordinating ends.

Religious self-expression and religious self-subordination cannot in reality be kept sharply separate. They and their mutual relation within the religious life are expressions of the primary fact of human biology that man is a social animal, but unique among social animals in that division of labour and social specialisation need not involve limitation of individuality, but may be made to encourage and enhance it. On the side of feeling, their relation is paralleled by the relation in the religious consciousness of assurance and self-abasement, the certainty and proud joy of being supported by eternal verities which yet ferments to spiritual arrogance if it is not corrected by the pure but by itself sterile virtue of spiritual humility.

I believe that religion is peculiarly liable to abuse. This is so because it should and can involve the patient approach of the self to as much of reality as it can grasp, and yet at the same time it is an answer

to an imperious demand for certitude, for a basis on which, here and at once, to build our few short years of living. What wonder then if a hasty answer is often preferred to long search, or pretended certitude to reverent doubt? What wonder that the cramped human being compensates itself for the injustices of this world by indulging in phantasies concerning the next, or that the limitation of outlook which is the lot of so many is reflected in a one-sided creed? Finally, it concerns itself, and must concern itself largely with beliefs. The psychological mechanism of belief being what it is, small wonder that beliefs, however incredible or contradictory, are not merely held, but held with tenacity and violence.

Just because religion can concern the whole personality on the one hand, and the rest of the universe on the other, just because it can help to make unity and order out of diversity and chaos, just because it aspires to so much, just because of all this can it so easily fall short and go astray.

Further, the lesson of history is clear as to the chief abuses into which religion can fall. Playing on superstitious fear; dogmatism and intellectual narrowness; aspiring to a false certitude; intolerance and persecution; ecclesiasticism; exaggerated asceticism — these are a few. These can perhaps be avoided by recognising that religious truth is no more absolute or fixed than other truth; by rejecting providentialism and all those brands of otherworldliness which hate this world and despise it; by regarding fear as one of the curses of mankind; by recognising religion as but one of his desirable activities.

It is sometimes said that religion should permeate

every activity. There is a sense in which this may be true, but very definitely one in which it is false. This may be illustrated in the intellectual sphere. It is often asserted that there are certain things too sacred for investigation. But when the zeal for pure knowledge fills a man's mind, he not only may but he must pursue his quest irrespective of where it leads him, neglecting all other attributes of the thing investigated except its capacity for being understood. The fact that he or others hold it sacred is, for the spirit of pure intellect, mere irrelevancy. Further, as matter of experience, it is always found that the knowledge thus gained for its own sake leads to a possibility of deeper reverence than what could be accorded before the facts were properly understood. Religion did its best to stop the progress of astronomy and of physiology; but the modern astronomer's universe is far more stupendous than the tinpot cosmology of the ancient or the mediæval world, and with each new discovery in physiology and evolution the human body, brain, and mind become more amazing, more provocative of wonder and indeed of awe.

If reverence made us cease to investigate any truth (as of evolution), to cease loving or desiring to express any beauty (as of the nude in art), or to refrain from the performance of any good act (as of doing good on the Sabbath), we should be like horses shying at shadows on the road; the shadow of our reverence would prevent us achieving the reality of progress.

In other words, any religion which is not an affirmation of the ultimate value of truth and knowledge, beauty and its expression, and goodness and

moral action, which ever sets itself up against these, is in that respect a false, low, and incomplete religion.

The religious attitude of mind, which demands a reverent approach to reality, is necessary if the best use is to be made of human life, and if the varied activities and achievements of man are to be properly organised into a coherent whole; but it is by no means always necessary or even desirable as a component of any given activity or as a means towards any given achievement. The Middle Ages affirmed that no earthly science was admissible save as the handmaid of theology; that doctrine and the practice based upon it had to be broken down before natural science could make her marvellous achievements, for the only value which can count to the pure scientist is the value of knowledge for its own sake. In the same way the artist, be he painter or writer or sculptor, may have a reverent and essentially religious (not theological) view of the function of art in civilisation; but it is at his peril that he lets anything but the desire for pure artistic rightness creep into his work—if he does so, he runs the almost certain risk of achieving something which is bad art, and therefore unfit for reverence by him or any one else. Or again, the man of business may, and rightly, be animated by a religious desire for his work to have some more than merely economic meaning; but if he does not concentrate on economic productiveness as first essential, he not only will achieve nothing himself, but his schemes will be swallowed up in the melting-pot of failure.

To be always religious is as intolerable as to be always laughing, or always working, or always playing golf. For a man to have a religious disposi-

tion it is no more necessary for religious feeling to be always in possession of the mind than it is for a man of a humorous disposition to be incapable of sentiment or seriousness. The mere variety of human nature and human activity is its richness and its charm; and to give each faculty and each approach to reality its turn and its due place in life is to live not only fully but truly.

This brings me to tolerance. I believe in tolerance because variety is spiritual richness, and because variety and indeed opposition is necessary for the highest achievements of individuals and of civilisations. We rightly admire the man of many-sided genius — Leonardo da Vinci, Goethe, Aristotle, Michelangelo. But that is not the only way of achievement; one-sidedness is as necessary for society as many-sidedness, and it can attain the highest heights and the deepest intensities. We do not demand that the cart-horse shall win races, nor that the hammer shall saw wood, nor the poet rule nations. A colour-blind man could give a new mathematical insight to the world; and Darwin's achievement was no more lessened by his inability, as he grew older, to take pleasure in art and literature, than was Newton's by his childish preoccupation with the esoteric interpretation of scriptural prophecy. St Francis of Assisi was a living denial of nine-tenths of what to most men makes life worth living; and yet for most men he enriched life and its possibilities. William Blake had a hatred of all reason and organised knowledge; yet the most ardent believer in science and organisation may be enriched through reading him.

We need poets as we need artisans; we need

visionaries as much as hard-headed business men; we need the man who devotes all his energy to invention; we need the artist and the man of science; we need the saint; we need achievement, and we need character.

If our religion is a true religion, a religion of fuller life, it must both tolerate and reverence variety. The efficient biologist or engineer who would deny all value to religious meditation and the religious life; the missionary who begins by suppressing all native activities of which he in the least disapproves; the scholastic theologians who denied independent value to natural science or humanist philosophy; the efficient administrator who would lock up as a vagrant every one who is not constantly at work—all are limited in their outlook, and because limited therefore wrong. Even Plato, at the full-flight of his imagination, desiring to banish poetry and art from his ideal republic, was subordinating reality to logic and had failed to gain a full vision of truth and virtue. But our tolerance must not be merely passive, a tired intellectual gesture; it must be active, springing from the belief and knowledge that truth is too large to be revealed in but one form, or one creed, or one way of life. We must accept the hard saying that out of diversity alone comes advance, and that any one human mind is too small to grasp more than a little truth, to live more than a little reality.

I believe that one of the greatest defects of our modern world is its lack of a religion of its own, and the accompanying disruption of its thought and aims. Life's centre of gravity has shifted, since the Middle Ages, from heaven to earth. For a hypo-

thetical future existence called in to redress the balance of this, man has taken in exchange the certainty of present reality, with all its imperfections, but with all its perfectibility. Science has been the chief instrument of the new vision, organisation and foresight its watchwords, harnessed power, whether of natural forces or of wealth, its instrument. But religion, speaking broadly, has remained all these centuries adapted to the old state of things, not to the new.

The spiritual aspirations, the prayers, the saintliness of generations, their preoccupations with human destiny and aims, their concern with man's ultimate scale of values, have for the most part flowed into the well-engineered channels of the Christian church, that vast instrument organised in relation to the Middle Ages and the mediæval outlook. For the rest, they have spent themselves in sporadic outbursts of protest and revolt, or trickled away in the drought of isolation, or been forced to embark upon new organisations of their own, instead of being permitted to join freely in the task of irrigating the world.

The situation to-day is deplorable. The great bulk of the religious spirit, with all its potentialities for promoting human unity, for providing busy man with peace and refreshment, for helping humanity in its task of controlling evolution (which is only a more accurate way of saying bringing to pass the kingdom of God upon earth), for stressing the permanent satisfactions and highest values in the welter of daily existence, is locked up in a theological strong-box, hidden away from half humanity in a fairy-story land.

The bulk of creative human endeavour, on the other hand, either pays only lip-service to organised religion, or is in opposition. It does not and will not inhabit that mythological land; it has different values, different standards, different aims. It is science, art, industry, commerce, government: it is of this world. Its best science is bound up with this life. Its best glories are in the here and now—illuminations, ecstasies, glories of love, joy, peace; its furthest aims are in this world's future, its greatest task to work so that truth and goodness, beauty and holiness may increasingly be incarnated. By existing religions, it is offered personal salvation at the price of surrendering this world or subordinating it to the next. But it knows that the task of its soul is to animate this world. And what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole next world and lose his own soul? For he who would save his soul shall surely lose it.

This is the new temptation. For it is harder to be patient and tolerant, to think clearly and to plan ahead, to take the clay of actuality and make it embody ideal ends, to keep the torch of ideal values alight in the heart through the conflicts and drab realities of business and everyday life, than it is to surrender to authority, to believe on faith, to keep one's ideals bright by not using them, and to give up troubling over the affairs of this world in favour of the world to come.

If we wished to manufacture our own mythology, we could say that the religious spirit was the authentic princess on whom alone the masculine hero, creative endeavour, could beget a race of men worthy of the world and of themselves; but that

she was now held out of his reach in a keep, gloomy and old-fashioned, by an old father who lets pride of birth and historic descent stand in the way of happiness and fruitful activity. But mythologies, even the mildest, are apt to mislead. So I will merely state the facts as I see them—that the religious spirit is being cut off from power, resembling a store of gold in the hands of a miser; while the power which alone can shape destiny is (to change the metaphor) left without the spiritual refreshment which it needs for its task, robbed of the certitude of rightness in its aims which alone could ensure both their full worthiness and their achievement.

The contact between the two must be made. I believe that the great sacrifice needed for religion is that of her old certitude, to be offered up on the altar of humility. And that demanded by organised science, and all the doers of good works and planners of the future to boot, is that of all narrowness and aggressiveness, to be offered on the altar of reverence and imaginative love. But the sacrifice of organised religion is more necessary and more called for than that of science, and failure to make it will be not only more blameworthy but, from her own standpoint, more foolish.

If that sacrifice is not made, there will be strife. Great is truth, and shall prevail: but the day of her prevailing will then be long delayed, and the endeavourers of this world will be forced to dig their own wells to the waters which she inhabits, with expense of labour and time and spirit, when this sacrifice on the part of organised religion would have at once made them accessible to all.

I have no doubt of the ultimate issue. The ver-

dict of the trend of human history, in the twenty thousand years since civilisation dawned in the later Old Stone Age, is too clear to permit a doubt. But in what way it will come, and after how long, and what it will be like, the future religion of this world and of all humanity—that nobody can know.

One can only guess : that it will take a long time ; that it will not be the work of any single founder, but will be achieved through the gradual permeation of society by knowledge and disciplined thought as education spreads and becomes more effective ; that religion by abandoning some of its pretensions will become accessible to more people, and more vital in the life of the community ; and that the two necessities of scientific means and ideal ends will become more fruitfully linked as the one increasing purpose is more clearly seen.

Meanwhile the task of our generation, which stands in time at the beginning of the adolescence of the human species, is to combine clear thinking with unafraid feeling. Without exploring feeling and emotion and desire, it will not know the heights and depths of its own nature; without hard thought it will not know false from true or be able to set a course.

If we would understand and control nature we must first accept and obey her. If we would control her worthily we must have a true scale of values by which to measure. Hard fact and transforming value together build future reality. I believe that the whole duty of man can be summed up in the words : more life, for your neighbour as for yourself. And I believe that man, though not without perplexity, effort, and pain, can fulfil this duty and gradually achieve his destiny.

A religion which takes this as its central core and interprets it with wide vision, both of the possibilities open to man and of the limitations in which he is confined, will be a true religion, because it is coterminous with life ; it will encourage the growth of life, and will itself grow with that growth.

I believe in the religion of life.

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