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THE IDEA OF A FREE CHURCH

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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THE IDEA

OF

A FREE CHURCH

BY
HENRY STURT

SECOND AND CHEAPER EDITION

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PREFACE

THE living writer on religion to whom my debt is greatest is Professor Alfred Loisy, whose works summarize the best results of modern New Testament criticism. I should have made much use of Mr. F. C. Conybeare's *Myth, Magic and Morals* if my own book had not been finished before it appeared.

To prevent misapprehension in religious circles it may be well to state that none of my former colleagues in *Personal Idealism*, some of whom are distinguished members of the Anglican Church, has had the smallest share in the preparation of this book.

5 PARK TERRACE, OXFORD,
1 *November* 1909.

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INTRODUCTION

If one may hazard a prophecy, the twentieth century will be a time of reorganization. The nineteenth was a time of growth, of tumultuous and eager growth in every direction. There is room enough for growth still; and we must look to it that our forces do not slacken: but every thoughtful man must wish for a little more reflection and system. Our industrial constitution is a byword for confusion and wasted effort; no one quite approves of the old political arrangements with which we muddle along from year to year; educational reform, in our universities especially, has just become a living controversy; and, as the following pages will endeavour to show, religion wants reforming most of all.

Now, some whose faith in philosophy is keen think that in this present need of reorganization the philosopher will find a great opportunity. I do not mean that philosophers should straightway abandon their writing-desks and descend into the tumults of the street. One may do practical work

otherwise than as a platform orator and newspaper agitator. No doubt the active workers, the men of personal enthusiasm and magnetism, who by their speech and presence control the imagination of the multitude, will always be the executors of reform and get the honour and reward thereto belonging. The work I have in view for the philosopher is something quieter, but still very important; it is the supply of ideas and the sketching of programmes. The philosopher may not have the qualities needful to execute his ideas; but he may supply ideas to the men who can execute them.

I fear that to attribute so practical a function to the philosopher may not meet with general assent. Some will say that the philosopher ought not to do such a thing; others that he cannot.

The first set of objectors would maintain that the man of speculation has nothing whatever to do with propounding practical programmes. The best representative of contemporary philosophy, they would say, is a character something like the following. He is one who has the profoundest reverence for Plato and Aristotle and, possibly, for Hegel; he takes the position of a spectator of all time and existence, and, so far as man is able, looks at things from the standpoint of the Absolute. In regard to any particular question, what interests him above all is that there are at least two sides to it; and he is able to discourse on either side in a thoughtful

and cultured way according as the spiritual needs of his pupil may seem to require. Above all he is an educator, whose work it is to chasten and sweeten the hard impetuosity of youth. His wisdom is of the kind that suits best with a soft Scotch accent; under his guidance we learn to look round a subject reasonably and distinguish delicate shades of meaning.

The other objectors would concede that the philosopher might do well if he could be less unpractical; but would doubt his capacity for practice. Is it likely, they would ask, that a person with so academic a training could offer any suggestion worth the attention of practical men? Well, the proof of the pudding can only be in the eating. But, at least, the present state of our political world does not countenance the idea that philosophy disables the mind for public affairs. The most adroit and supply-strong prime minister of our time has won no small renown as a thinker: India, as I write, is being successfully guided along the anxious path of progress by a philosophic statesman: and it seems likely that problems of the British Army which have baffled generations will be settled by an administrator whose mind is steeped in abstract speculation. And there is a historic precedent that encourages us. The group of English Philosophic Radicals were in their day at the forefront of the movement of thought, but yet were able to exercise

a very great and beneficent influence on political development. Their practical ideas and schemes have somewhat dropped out of remembrance because they have largely been carried into effect, and are taken as part of the established order by public men.

The question really is whether the philosophic intellect of civilization is ever going to emerge from nonage and take a considerable part in the world's work; or whether it is always to be content to follow behind the practical men and to ratiocinate about what they have done. I concede that the facts of history seem to be against us; but would suggest that a sufficient explanation of this can be given. There are only two epochs that count, that of Greek thought at its best and the last 150 years. Now Plato and Aristotle are far from lacking in instruction on practical matters, so far as they deal with them. But before Greek thought had time to get a firm grip on life the Greeks lost their political freedom, and everything, philosophy, literature, and art, declined on to a lower plane. Freedom is an absolutely essential condition of the best spiritual effort, and Greek thought had too short a spell of freedom to show what it was capable of. A like consideration explains the practical incompetence of German thought. Kant, Fichte, and Hegel were not practical men; they were not fit to direct the reorganization of a university, still less of a commonwealth. But can we blame them, having regard to

the fact that Germany was then (and still to a large extent remains) a country deprived of the blessings of domestic political freedom ?

After all, however, it is superfluous to tax our minds to explain away the incompetence of philosophy in distant times and places ; what really matters is the question whether it cannot do more in England. But it did do a great deal in the first half of the nineteenth century, that is, as soon as thinkers of first-rate ability appeared, with political and social conditions that gave them a fair opportunity. One reason why it has not done more for the nation during the last forty or fifty years is that it has largely ceased to be national. Our thought has been undergoing a process of germanization, an inevitable and on the whole a salutary process ; but a process, we may hope, that has now reached its term. Now that we have learnt all that Germany has to teach us, we may expect philosophy to resume the position in relation to public interests which it held in the time of Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

There are special circumstances in the present position which lead us to hope that philosophy may not prove unequal to its task. It would be most presumptuous to assert that philosophy is now adequate to interpret life, and that it has learnt to take account of all the relevant factors ; but at least we may say that it is less inadequate than at any

previous time in its history. To justify this statement fully would need a long explanation, intelligible only to experts. It is enough to point out that philosophy has learnt now to take account of an element of human nature that has never received its due from previous thinkers, the element of personal will. How strange that will, the most vital and valuable part of character, has been neglected so long, from the dawn of speculation till yesterday! Yet so it is. We owe it to the work of recent thinkers that this deficiency is now made good. There is now some possibility that philosophers may give us theories of social organization, of the state, of education, and of religion which will be of service to the practical workers in those fields.

It is easy to see how this recognition of personal will must make a difference to our view of religion. The main question which we have to consider is, What is the best kind of religion? This is the question that transcends and embraces all others of history or abstract theory. Now, if we neglect any important element of human character, we cannot hope to answer this question; any more than, for example, we could decide what is the best kind of house to live in, if we neglect the fact that people cannot be healthy without good ventilation. We must form such conceptions of God, of God's relation to man, and of man's proper attitude towards God as will give due weight to the fact that each

man has a personal will, and that it is desirable that the personal will should be strong. I mean to sum up these requirements in a phrase when I say that religion should be free. Our established religion, I hold, is unfree, that is, does not give proper recognition to the personal will; but, rather, regards it as a thing to be diminished and depressed.

In attempting to help with this work of reorganizing religion, philosophy will surely be undertaking a task which is within its proper scope. Philosophy is a poor thing unless its inquiries bear directly or indirectly upon religion. Wherever philosophy is keenly studied, the religious interest is paramount: so it always has been, and so it ought to be. And religion on its reflective side is nothing but philosophy. A truly national religion is a nation's philosophy, the resultant expression of its meditations upon the ultimate meaning of life. It should be the supreme ambition of the philosopher to help in forming the mind of the nation on these profoundest matters of human interest.

CHAPTER I

THE TASK

§ 1. THE task which the present book proposes is to suggest a religion and a church more satisfactory than the Christian. It is inspired by the conviction that our established religion is now utterly insufficient to satisfy a thoughtful mind, and that all progress, moral and intellectual, demands that Christianity should be given up and replaced by something better. Thus the purpose of the book is primarily constructive, to suggest the better ; not destructive, to confute what exists : but a certain amount of criticism must inevitably mingle with the construction.

It would be injudicious to begin by launching out into a long and elaborate attack upon Christianity; but, on the face of it, there is extreme improbability that a religion established so long ago and under circumstances so utterly different from ours should be suitable to the England of to-day. Macaulay wrote a famous piece of nonsense when he said that

in respect of everything that gives man knowledge of God the Englishman has not advanced the smallest step beyond the Blackfoot Indian. The exact opposite is true. Every spiritual advance made by man increases his capacity to know about God, and makes him better able to frame a good religion. As the Rev. Professor Inge puts it, in a phrase that sums up my argument in the neatest way, "an honest God's the noblest work of man." Upon those who contend that Christianity is not obsolete rests the burden of proving that our English society has made no advance upon Jewish society in the first century A.D.

§ 2. For the sake of raising a presumption that my present enterprise is justifiable one conspicuous instance of the insufficiency of Christianity may be adduced, that of moral exhortation. Not that this point is really the most important, still less the only one. I am convinced that the whole scheme of Christianity is wrong throughout; but this is the instance most readily quotable. Let the reader listen with attention for the next few Sundays to the sermons which he hears at his parish church. In an ordinary sermon by an ordinary preacher we do not look for an authoritative exposition of doctrine, but we may expect to hear what the doctrine amounts to for the everyday conduct of life. If one may mention one's own experience, it was the unreality and futility of the ordinary sermon that suggested

to me a thorough examination of the basis of Christianity.

The moral teaching of the gospels lies in a very small compass : apart from the general exhortations to love or charity in the gospel of St. John there is very little beyond the Sermon on the Mount. It is on this Sermon that the preacher usually draws. It tells us to love enemies and persecutors, to give to all who ask, to do to others as we wish them to do to us, to be merciful and forgiving, to reform ourselves before offering to reform others, to support good profession by good practice.[1]

§ 3. Now my complaint against this kind of exhortation is that it is not sufficient for the guidance of ordinary men, and falls hopelessly short of the principles which animate distinguished men. Take half a dozen or so of the noblest lives of the latter half of last century—Gladstone, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin, Watts, Mill, Jowett, Darwin, General Gordon. In the list I have purposely included two, Gladstone and Gordon, of whom it was currently said that they were great Christians. But what has Christianity to do with soldiering ; and what has it to do with those political activities that are Gladstone's enduring title to remembrance ? The

[1] Quoted from the apparently more authentic version of St. Luke. St. Matthew adds exhortation to poor-spiritedness, peaceableness, chastity, and unworldliness ; but these make no difference to my argument.

career of a British statesman with its schemes for public improvement, its rhetorical or literary appeals to public opinion, its debates, its ambitions, its responsibilities, its loyalties, its renunciations — nothing of all this has one jot of recognition from the gospels. There is not a word in all the Christian scriptures to countenance Gladstone's political life. Somewhere in Cardinal Manning's biography there is quoted a regretful passage from his journal written before he became archbishop and while he was still immured in his community at Bayswater, wherein he contrasted the lonely dulness of his own existence with the rich and splendid activities of his old friend Gladstone, and reflected that he himself once had a career before him in the Anglican Church hardly less interesting and distinguished. But he found comfort in the thought that, after all, these mundane interests might have imperilled his soul's salvation. Manning in fact was a typical Christian and Gladstone a politician.

The case is the same with our other names. Browning who put all phases of his experience into verse, Carlyle devoting his fiery imagination to revivifying history that he might show the working of divine justice and the practical value of the heroic spirit, Ruskin the interpreter of art and champion of the hand-worker, Watts the painter and sculptor, Mill the philosopher and socialist, Jowett the educator, Darwin the patient enthusiast of science—what

has Christianity to say to any of their very various works? As these great men were spending themselves freely in the noblest tasks under the neglect or even the hostility of the accredited exponents of religion, what were the accredited exponents doing meanwhile? Saving their souls. There is not a word in the New Testament to recognize the value of art or literature or philosophy or the sympathetic study of the past or science or education or political enterprise or soldierly valour and honour. To what a mean, spiritless monotony, destitute of every enthusiasm that distinguishes civilised society from a herd of inoffensive human cattle, to what a level of sainted noodledom would Christian exhortation drag us down.

§ 4. Now it may be said that the gospel teaching was never meant for exalted characters, but for simple men and women; and that for such it furnishes an acceptable ideal of conduct. But this I utterly deny: the Sermon on the Mount furnishes an ideal for no one. Part of it is visionary, and the rest negative—a string of prohibitions. The visionary part is a gospel of suicide; the negative part leaves out the essentials of morality. The Golden Rule itself, when interpreted in the light of the rest of the synoptic teaching, is practically negative—'Don't treat others as you would dislike to be treated yourself': it furnishes no adequate rule of life. The root of moral goodness is a positive

devotion to healthy interests, interests that are connected for the most part with business, family, and commonwealth ; and these are ignored and must be ignored by all teaching that is faithful to the gospels. In the gospels there is not a trace of anything like public spirit or patriotism. The early Christians certainly cherished in a modified form the national hopes of Israel, but the fulfilment of their hopes would have meant the cessation of all mundane institutions. As for the work of money-getting it is treated throughout the gospels as a semi-criminal business. Worst of all is the Christian attitude to family life. In its original authentic form Christianity was an anti-domestic institution. The Christian family, of which so much is said in edifying books, is, to speak strictly, a contradiction in terms. The Christian community from the first was against the family. Jesus and his apostles were religious mendicants, calling urgently upon men to renounce domestic ties in view of the speedy coming of the Messianic Kingdom. We know how consistently St. Paul held by the anti-domestic tradition. The great saints of Christian history have not been family men and women, but ascetics to whom love and the breeding of children were abomination.

Christian meekness is not a virtue at all, but either a vice, or, at least, a deplorable defect of character. Let any sensible father ask himself if he would like his son to show conspicuous meek-

ness. Would he not view symptoms pointing in this direction with the utmost pain and apprehension? A man suffering from confirmed meekness is good for nothing. There is a common delusion that it is a desirable quality in woman; but the delusion does not survive marriage, except in the minds of husbands who cannot bear that any one in the house should have authority but themselves.

As for charity, we do indeed need charity in our lives, much charity; but not the Christian sort. The charity of the early Christians was the highly charged emotion of a small fanatical community which had given up social and domestic ties, and, excited by the portents of the Holy Spirit and by expectation of the Second Coming, met together daily for the breaking of bread and prayers. The right sort of charity for ordinary use is that whose nursery is the family and whose main field of exercise is the modern commonwealth.

§ 5. The exhortation of the Christian pulpit of to-day is tolerated because people currently suppose that, though it may not do much good, at any rate it does no harm. The preacher's call to absolute self-sacrifice is at the worst only an amiable well-meaning performance that no one takes too seriously; boisterous young natures are subdued by it and persuaded to abate something of the racket that annoys their peaceable elders. Even the elders who have seen through it years ago get a certain

satisfaction out of it. There is a certain section who like it because it is picturesque and paradoxical ; a taste for it goes with a taste for the finer sorts of bric-a-brac, for a suit of armour to stand in the hall, or an antique prie-dieu for the drawing-room, quaint old things pleasingly incongruous with the civilization into which they have survived. This sentiment we find most strongly in places where, superficially, we should least expect it. Very worldly and frivolous people, decadents famous for verse and worse, like to think occasionally of nuns whose lives are meekness, vigilance, chastity, and perpetual adoration before the altar. "Calm, sad, secure, behind high convent walls, these watch the sacred lamp ; these watch and pray," as Ernest Dowson said. And, strange to say, even quiet respectable citizens, whose outlook is as different as possible from poor Ernest Dowson's, feel the need of this admixture of paradox in their lives. Deep down in the smuggest souls there lives the elemental delight of imposture, the still silent joy of participating in a common consecrated act of make-believe. Principles of grasping self-assertion all the week ; principles of utter self-renunciation in church-time : the more absolute the contrast, the keener the relish of relief. To some natures all this serves as a substitute for romance.

If ever it be found impossible to establish a church on the principles of freedom, the reason

will be that such a church would be too straightforward, too plainly useful and rational, with no picturesque, out-of-the-way corners and initiations, with no surprises, nothing to minister to our natural partiality for the crooked, the odd and the obscure; it would not fall in with that widespread habit, the habit of Mental Indirection. In science we know that modes of thought are victorious which help us by their simplicity and economy: the case is different with institutions, especially institutions which people are not fully in earnest with; complication in these is a positive recommendation. But all depends on whether the nation which now amuses itself with religion can be brought to take it seriously. There would be no fear of the issue if men would come to religion with the same spirit of practical respect which they bring to physics or chemistry.

And yet, is not all the amusement of our religious trifling purchased at a terrible cost to others? I quite admit that ordinary healthy minds are not hurt seriously by Christian exhortation; they are furnished with a natural anti-toxin, common-sense or stupidity, that gives the infection no chance to live: though even they must suffer a certain mental deterioration due to habitual insincerity and the divorce of language from meaning. But there is a small yet very important class to whom it does deadly mischief, the ardent souls, the idealists, the

men and women of aspiration, of noble, tender devotion. They in their youth are looking out for guidance and inspiration, craving for a hero and a cause, hoping for a life-work that shall not be lower than the best; and what catches their notice first is this clap-trap of self-negation and renunciation. For what a squandering of the world's best energies is Christianity responsible! Why is there so much misery in modern society, so many chances missed, so many open sores undressed, so much complacent, callous cruelty in high places unrebuked? Mainly because that for generations the choice spirits who should have been fighting for the world's true welfare have been led astray by will-o'-the-wisp pretenders, drawn aside into quagmires of misdirected enthusiasm, and lost.

§ 6. The moral exhortation of the Christian church is the most convenient feature of it for attack, because it is so thoroughly familiar. It would take far too long to develop a criticism in other directions: the positive doctrines that follow will show plainly enough what direction it would take. I believe that the ideal of life which Christianity implies is contrary to the best tendencies of the age; that the religion of Christianity has been superseded in the minds of thinking men by a new religious attitude which has for a long time been growing up silently; that its theology has nothing to do with any of our effective convictions, and has

therefore ceased to be a subject of rational interest; that its scriptures are alien books which have no relation to our national history and character, and have done great harm by drawing the nation's thoughts away from the record of its own great deeds and the commemoration of its own heroes.

§ 7. What, then, are we to do in face of this situation? Should we enter upon a movement for the reform of the existing church, or should we start a new one? In favour of the former alternative there is the argument of historical continuity. The Christian church has a great prestige and has played a great part in national affairs; were it swept away, a tradition would pass that could not be recalled. All this may be admitted: and yet the reasons on the other side are even stronger. The difficulty of reform in ecclesiastical societies is immense: and thus, though the established church may be moving, it moves so slowly that the gap between it and the best contemporary thought is continually widening. And, even if this were not so, why should we wait indefinitely to get a rational church? Why should we go in spiritual hunger on the chance that our great-grandchildren may be satisfied? Moreover, experience shows that the best way of reforming a blindly conservative institution is by starting a rival. The most excellent arguments for reform rebound harmlessly from the case-hardened obstructionist till they are winged by fear.

Against the proposal to establish a new organization there can be no arguments but those of inertia and timidity. As for the former—if people are so constituted that doing nothing is more interesting than doing something, there is no arguing with them : no unenterprising spirit was ever made to feel the joys of action by force of reasoning. As for the causes of fear, they are, thanks to the glorious work of the liberators of old, no longer physical, but moral. And I think too well of the world to doubt that but little odium would fall upon the promoters of an institution devoted to constructive work, and entering the field against existing churches in a spirit of fair and frank antagonism.

§ 8. The motive of the book, then, is to propose the establishment of a church that would do more for human welfare than any now existing. This being made clear, it is time to explain its plan. Consider what is meant by a church. It is an organization of people who have the sentiment we call religion and have organized themselves ecclesiastically for the encouragement of the sentiment. Thus the church is not an end in itself; it exists for the sake of religion. Now, there are different kinds of religion ; and the ecclesiastical arrangements that will suit men animated by one kind of religion will not suit men animated by a different religion. Thus before we can say what is a good church we must determine what is right religion. And this

takes us another step backwards. Religion is not a separate self-contained thing; it is an element in our life; it must fall into our general scheme and harmonize with our ideal of excellence: there are different religions corresponding to different ideals and schemes of life. Though it would be quite wrong to say that religion has no independence and is a mere adjective, a mere tool, to general welfare; yet it is plain that our judgment of what is right in religion must be influenced by our judgment of what is right in the general scheme of life. If a man has a servile scheme of life, for example, and deems human welfare to lie in some form of subjection to an alien will, then, surely, he will tend towards a religion of subjection. And if he approves a free scheme of life, if he deems welfare to lie in the free development of our nature, he will find satisfaction in a free religion. Thus we must determine the ideal of manhood before we can determine what is the right religion. This, then, is the plan of the book—ideal of manhood, religion, church: all that is added of detailed theology and criticism is subsidiary.

§ 9. Most of the propositions that follow will be offered with some show of proof, such proof as the nature of the subject allows: but the fundamental proposition of the book cannot be proved; no reasoned proof is possible of a general attitude to life. This proposition I will now put forward for

the sake of making clearer the argument that follows. It is that the welfare of civilized man lies in the principle of freedom, that is, in the proper development of every essential part of human nature *under the guidance of the individual judgment.* The right ideal of manhood is an ideal that is governed by this principle ; right religion is a religion that harmonizes with this principle ; a good church is a church that is animated by a free religion and has for its subsidiary aims the promotion of all that appertains to the life of freedom.

CHAPTER II

THE IDEAL OF MANHOOD

§ 1. It would be quite inappropriate to set up to defend by argument the ideal of life described in the following pages. Things so ultimate as a way of life are established in a worthier fashion : argument can deal only with secondary things. If a man on reading these pages thinks, 'I do not like this way of life ; it goes against all that I have thought admirable and worthy of imitation,' then let him depart in peace and practise that other way of life which he thinks better suited to him. If he gets satisfaction thus, he will have proved that his way is the best for him. The only fashion whereby a new way of life can be established is by practice : some of those to whom it is presented like it and think it would be good to practise ; and when they practise it their expectation is justified.

Let no one suppose that the ideal which follows is a mere effort of imagination : imagination cannot invent much in this direction. Ideals which are

practical are made by selecting from actual lives. It is not going too far to say that the ideal of free manhood which I am about to advocate is realised or approached by thousands of contemporary Englishmen; and nowhere more than in our ancient Universities, which, as being points at which the culture of the ancient world blends with that of modern England, are schools of morals even more than of learning.

§ 2. By the ideal of free manhood I mean the harmonious development of each man's nature on its various sides under the direction of his own judgment. There are thus in the ideal the two elements of freedom and development. It may be doubted whether these two elements are really separable; a man cannot be developed unless he is free, nor free unless he develop himself. And yet for purposes of exposition the two may be taken apart.

Freedom means the exercise of one's judgment in doing, and especially in doing the most wide-reaching and significant things. A man is free in his private relations when he pursues a career which he approves of as good for himself, and when he does or forbears this or that momentous step of his own will: he is free politically when he approves the acts of those who carry on the government, and has a voice in dismissing them if they cease to satisfy him: he is free in religion if he makes or

takes a religion that satisfies his ultimate demands upon the universe.

§ 3. Though freedom is the best thing in the world, there are powerful influences working against it. The vicious instinct of tyranny is deeply implanted in human nature. It gives us a pleasant sense of power to crush and mould our fellow-men ; to make them wait respectfully upon our pleasure and cringe under our rebuke ; to cause them to adopt our habits, and to hear them echoing back our thoughts with praise. Social and industrial tyrants are always trying to get us to work at tasks of their setting ; political tyrants want to tax us at their will, to set us to fight their enemies, and to make us keep them in luxury while they mismanage the national affairs ; intellectual tyrants impose their systems on us as the final pontifical utterances of superior wisdom. Most noxious of all are the religious tyrants : not only do they claim to make our religion for us and frighten us with horrid bugbears if we venture to make one for ourselves ; but some of them have created elaborate organizations which in the past have scourged and burnt men of moral and religious initiative, and still use their immense corporate influence to propagate in a thousand insidious ways principles of spiritual slavery.

In harmony with this bad instinct we find widespread a cult or admiring attitude towards social or

religious domination. Very nauseous is the expression of this spirit in contemporary fiction, which, even though it is not a serious contribution to thought, reflects the mental state of the multitude who read it. In certain famous tales of Mr. George Meredith, to quote the worthiest example, the people who are held up as supremely interesting spend their lives dominating others with no good or useful purpose in the domination. In books of this class the hero is very often a 'nobleman,' a person possessing great power which he has done nothing to deserve, with manners implying the secure possession of this undeserved and irresponsible power, surrounded by inferiors who are for ever in the deferential attitude, though they are invariably the more capable and useful human beings.

More nauseous still is the literature of religious servility. The novelists of high life at least do not expatiate on the blessedness of the footmen and hangers-on of the 'person of quality': but the tract-writers cannot melt sufficiently over the peace of soul which comes from surrendering one's individual judgment to priests and to scriptures interpreted by priests; they are enthusiastic over the soft simplicity of the pious, and paint in lurid colours the misery and depravity of those who think for themselves in matters of religion. God himself they represent as the most overbearing and ineluctable of tyrants: we must be always in the dust

before him : were he even to treat us with atrocious cruelty we ought to fold our hands and murmur, 'Thy will be done.'

§ 4. Let me define freedom a little further by contrast with what may be confused with it. Freedom is the right to do ; it is not the right wholly to abstain from doing. A man is to be free to choose his career ; he is not to be free to choose no career. We need not negative but positive freedom, the freedom of the citizen who gladly takes up his share of public duty, the freedom of the artist who wants to do original work. There is no such thing as inoffensive idleness : man must be always wasting and consuming, and, if he consumes with no return, he forfeits his right to exist. Moreover, the example of idleness is demoralizing. The common vagabond will not work ; he wants his hollow tree, his crust of bread and liberty. Are we to let him have them ? Certainly not. He is not a harmless wild creature like the squirrels and hedgehogs that make a woodland interesting.

Positive freedom is not opposed to loyalty ; it is impossible without loyalty. This follows from regarding true freedom as freedom to do. No one who is not loyal can be an effective member of organizations, and, apart from organizations, no work of good quality can be produced. The artist may not take much part directly in society, but his work all through has reference to society ; he is an

embodiment or expression of the spirit of his society. So it is with the moral life ; it must be a man's own ; but it is ineffectual unless it belongs to a wider system.

Great are the virtues of belonging to an organization of freemen. There is no better moral tonic than working shoulder to shoulder with men who insist on your obedience if they are better than you, but are willing to obey if you are better than they. In such co-operation one sees sun-clear the elementary facts of life and the foundations of moral principles. There all the mirage of over-culture is dispersed. Such societies enjoy a temper which is opposite both to tyranny and slavery. A nation penetrated by this spirit (however imperfect its form of government) is capable of such enthusiasm as makes it unconquerable.

True freedom then dissociates itself from the waywardness of individualistic romanticism, from nihilists and anarchists, and from those who think their country always in the wrong. One must admit, of course, that these irreconcilables are useful in their way : they form a standing opposition to the existing order ; they take the function of *advocatus diaboli*, a useful function, though one of limited scope. The ideal which I am at present recommending is more for the average man.

§ 5. Freedom, the affirmation of one's own mode of viewing life, is the indispensable condition of all

that is morally valuable. Let me illustrate once more from art. A production that is the output of the worker's own taste is beyond comparison more valuable than one produced mechanically : mechanical production is the death of art. So it is with life as a whole. Making people behave well, in the negative sense of breaking no rules, has no value except in preparation for eventual freedom ; and even that educative value is much overrated. A bishop of more than usual discernment once said at a temperance meeting that, if it came to a choice, he would rather see England free than sober. Sobriety by itself is nothing : a horse is a perfectly sober creature. The only sobriety that is worth anything is based on deliberate preference.

§ 6. The contrary opinion, that men can in no way be trusted to use their judgment, is part of that doctrine of natural depravity which is at the foundation of Christian theology. Who can estimate the mischief that this doctrine has done in the world ? It falls in fatally with our congenital relish for tyranny. The real reason why men like their neighbours to be ignorant and weak is that they may have the pleasure of oppressing them : the reason given out is the fear that when the weak people get strong they will misuse their strength. Liberalism is just the opposite of this : 'Trust the people,' and trust them more and more in proportion as they show that they can use the power they have. Human

nature may have some serious flaws, but the Liberal believes it to be good upon the whole. Obscurantism, political reactionism, and the doctrine of original sin are all forms of pessimism.

§ 7. That is *how* to develop our nature : let us go on to consider what it is that is developed. A great part of the physical and intellectual elements of free manhood has been stated essentially by the thinkers of Greece : it is for us to assimilate their teaching with the modifications required by our modern progress. One of the profound truths of Plato's *Republic* is that physical training is even more beneficial to morals than to the body. Every advance in physiology and pathology, in the theory of education, in psychology—especially in the new study of experimental psychology—has shown more clearly the interdependence of mind and body, and has rendered more unquestionable the beneficent reaction of physical fitness and of healthy muscular exertion. Bodily exercise raises the courage, sweetens the temper, and puts us in the way of establishing wholesome and natural relations with our fellow-men. The class of hand-workers gain these good things in the course of earning their bread : those who work otherwise must pursue them of set purpose. The tendency of men near middle life to give up all the athletics of their youth is generally a note of spiritual even more than of physical degeneration.

One of the most valuable effects of physical training from the educator's point of view is its reaction upon mental vigour. A society that wants to be intellectually vigorous must be physically vigorous. It is not uncommon to see individuals who are weakly in body yet sound in mind, preserved in spiritual health by the health of those around them. But there is no such thing as an unathletic society showing the best powers of mind either in literature or in art. Without strength there is no courage, without courage no manliness, and without manliness no originality, except in the invention of new forms of scoundrelism.

§ 8. Systematic bodily exercise is one of the surest marks of high civilization, and the best natural antidote to what may be classed together as the servile physical vices, those of sloth, gluttony, dirt, and drinking. Well established as this principle was in ancient Greece, it has not been recovered till our own day in forms suitable to our northern climate and national character. It is now generally recognized among the upper classes, and is spreading perceptibly through the middle and lower. It is perhaps the most valuable and certainly the most characteristic contribution of English universities to our national culture: the destinies of the British Empire lie in the playing-fields of Oxford and Cambridge. It is a mark of vulgarity to be ashamed of the body; it is barbarous folly to neglect it, or

to buy wealth or erudition at the cost of health; it is degrading superstition to think to gain merit by physical mortification.

When the principle of physical fitness is fully recognized in this country—and its triumph cannot be much delayed—an immense impetus will be given to social reform. What a vast difference that will make in eating and drinking, in cleanliness, in sexual continence, in the adoption of rational clothing, in hours of labour, in the construction and ventilation of houses, in the planning of towns and provision of open spaces, in maintaining public access to woodland and waste and, generally, in the adoption of a more simple and out-of-door manner of life.

Apart from religion the greatest obstacle to these hopes is mercantilism, by which I mean the eagerness to get wealth without regard to the welfare of those who help to create it. The rampant fury of mercantilism, so triumphant through the middle of last century, has now greatly abated; but a terrible evil still remains. The callous short-sighted selfishness of employers does more destruction to English manhood in twenty years than all our fighting since the Conquest. We want a public opinion that will set a mark upon the callous employer. We want a race of employers who will feel themselves disgraced so long as there is one of their work-people who has not the opportunity of a clean and healthy life.

§ 9. In the realm of intellect also we can draw inspiration from the Greeks, and yet in some ways we must go beyond them. Intellectual development seems to me to have two aspects, curiosity and veracity. In the matter of curiosity the Greeks will always be the world's masters : it is the example of their ardour of discovery and artistic enthusiasm that makes their literature an indispensable element of liberal education. But we need more love of truth than they possessed.

What are the motives to the scientific love of truth ? Well, in natural science probably a sense of the majesty, orderliness, and complexity of the subject investigated. The wild physical speculations of an imaginative book like Plato's *Timaeus* are repulsive to us, savouring of flippant irreverence. The problems of physics or chemistry or biology are so momentous that we cannot afford to trifle with them. A good man's life may well be spent in working out some of the less important of them, and no trouble will seem too great to get satisfactory verification of our solutions. A feeling of this kind was beyond the opportunity of the Greeks who were only on the threshold of science, and to whom the pursuit of physical researches had not got beyond the status of a liberal-minded hobby.

In philosophy veracity is no less important, but seems to me to rest on a somewhat different foundation. There we are dealing, not with facts which

can be brought to the test of the senses, but with guesses about ultimate things. In these conjectures our will must play its part : we are making demands upon the universe ; we are postulating the existence of conditions which we wish to find, and will, so as our power extends, try to call into being. Now it is very easy to let our desires run away with us and to make demands upon the universe that are frantic and unreasonable. What keeps us in control is, above all, a certain manly self-respect. It is not dignified to let oneself be carried away into a fool's paradise of wild hopes and dreams. The wild hoper indeed defeats his own purpose ; from the state of super-exaltation he passes readily into dejection.

It is easy to show by appeal both to history and to the facts of the present time that freedom is an indispensable condition of every kind of intellectual development. Why did the Greeks get no further in science ? Why did the whole national intellect decline so lamentably from its highest level in the fifth century B.C. ? A historical disquisition on the question would be out of place, but certain things are generally admitted. The national decline was coincident with loss of political independence. With our historical experience we see how thoroughly justified were the Greeks of the best age in their passionate resistance to tyranny and to alien domination. The rule of the despot and of the foreign

conqueror lowers the nation's self-respect and checks active enterprise in its most important and dignified sphere, the management of the commonwealth ; and what is hostile to enterprise and self-respect must be hostile to knowledge. Political freedom is the great nurse of art, literature, and philosophy.

One lesson which we learn from the comparison of the ancient with the modern civilization is that industrial freedom is indispensable to the progress of science. Exact science cannot advance without the invention of apparatus ; and such inventions are only made by people who have a practical hand-working knowledge of materials. In the ancient world the hand-workers were either slaves or bordered on the servile condition, too much degraded and despised to exert inventive powers.

Though we have got rid of the legal status of slavery from modern Europe, we have not got rid of the servile habit of mind. Thousands are condemned, or condemn themselves, to a spiritless routine. They know just enough to do their own bread-work—selling tea or boot-clicking or coaching for Responsions—but take no interest in anything outside. They are thus indifferent to the progress of the sciences, natural or human.

Still closer is the connection of intellectual development with religious freedom. All the higher speculative use of the mind has reference to religion : every intelligent man in some measure makes his

own religion. When religion has been stereotyped and adherence to the traditional letter is enforced by persecution, thought is checked in its noblest function, and personal self-respect is impaired. Bigotry is the most deadly enemy of all mental activity, and the natural ally of political and industrial slavery. Free thought on matters of religion should not be regarded as a privilege or wayward luxury; it is a duty incumbent on every one who has the faculty of independent thinking.

§ 10. It is melancholy to reflect how inferior Christianity is to paganism in its ideals of physical and intellectual culture. No doubt the Anglican Church, with its common-sense and its compromises, its 'muscular Christianity' and its 'Greek-play bishops,' is at a higher level than other churches: it, at least, is not anxious to drive all thinking men outside its pale. But think of the ideals of that more authentic representative of Christian tradition, the Church of Rome—of the horribly verminous St. Francis (greatest of Christian saints), of the emaciated anchorites, of the bloodless hysterical virgins, of ignorance and simplicity exalted to the rank of virtues. Think of the policy of the Papacy towards science from the condemnation of Galileo down to the recent encyclical on Modernism, the decree of the Roman Inquisition condemning the doctrine of dogmatic development,[1] and the latest

[1] This is the decree *Lamentabili sane exitu* of July 3, 1907. The

edition of the *Index librorum prohibitorum*.[1] Aristotle is the philosopher cherished of ecclesiastical authority. What would Aristotle have thought of Pius X. on recent developments of philosophy and religious thought?

The Catholic Church at the present day is undoubtedly the most deadly of all enemies to human welfare; but Protestantism, though less abhorrent, is a more present foe. Think of the hatred of the Calvinistic churches to art and literature, of their sour disapproval of all the beneficent mirth and games of youth, of their contempt for worldly knowledge. How many bright and fertile spirits have been crushed beneath the ugly, hard-hearted monotony of Protestant religion! The intellectual emancipation of Europe began at the Renascence: few people see how far it is from completion.

fifty-eighth proposition condemned by the decree is a doctrine of truth advocated by the philosophic school of pragmatists.

[1] Dated 1907. Among the authors proscribed therein are Bentham, Berkeley, Cabanis, Condillac, Condorcet, Cousin, Cudworth, Descartes, Diderot, Gibbon, Grotius, Hallam, Heine, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Locke, Malebranche, J. S. Mill, Montaigne, Montesquieu, Pascal, Quinet, Renan, Rousseau, Saint-Beuve, Spinoza, and Voltaire. Thus do we discover the meaning of all that hideous cant in the preface to the *Index* about the Roman Pontiff's "great duty of shepherding the universal flock of Christ." In this list of "adulterine, apocryphal, and pernicious books" unfit for Christian perusal, are still included the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and Church Catechism. Galileo's dialogue in favour of the Copernican astronomy, after more than a hundred years of proscription, has now mysteriously disappeared. What occasion has the Catholic Church to recognize the fact of the earth's rotation?

Hardly had the Northern nations escaped when a new tyranny closed round them.

It was a true instinct of self-preservation that set the mediæval monk against classical studies: they open a world to us which, however gross its failings, shows what the human mind could do unshackled by ecclesiastical oppression.

§ 11. In the remaining two elements of the ideal we gain less from the guidance of the Greeks: as compared with the modern world the Greeks were wanting in the affectional and volitional elements of human excellence. This fact is signalized by the poverty of our terms for these sides of our experience; and, such is our intellectual dependence upon Greek words, by a corresponding difficulty in making oneself understood. The affections and the will are only just beginning to be recognized by the learned as factors to be taken account of in framing a philosophy of life. When the ordinary learned man is not supplied with the name for a fact, he cannot see the fact. Philosophic originality largely consists in seeing facts that ordinary learned people have no names for.

Perhaps because of this neglect by learned men, perhaps also because learned men are themselves often weak on the affectional side, the affections are still imperfectly understood.[1] But certainly the

[1] These words were written before the appearance of Mr. Wm. MacDougall's *Social Psychology*, which has thrown a flood of light on this most important and hitherto neglected province.

affections are a great and valuable part of our life, without which intellectual and volitional power is hollow and fruitless. It is love that best enables us to understand people: it is love that gives the best aims to which energy is directed.

The main part of our affections consists of love for and interest in persons. The two things are not quite the same: we cannot have love without interest, but we can have interest without love. About love I need say little, since its importance is perfectly well recognized. It is well understood that our affection for persons, more especially for those who stand close in kinship and friendship, is the most valuable and satisfactory part of our life. Beyond those whom we love there is always a circle of people in whom we take an interest more or less friendly or neighbourly, whose characters we like to study and think about, and whose fortunes we like to trace. Included among them may be persons with whom we have no intercourse. Those who claim our attention thus are said to be interesting people: and it is healthy for each man that he should have a large circle of people whom he regards as interesting.

With the wider and deeper emotional sensitiveness of modern times no small importance belongs to our non-human affections, as those for animals and for things inanimate such as objects of human art, buildings, and scenery. It is this, rather than

pure philanthropy, that makes people work for the preservation of ancient monuments and spend money on the beautifying of towns.

§ 12. Beside our affections for men as individual persons we must take account of our affections for men combined into societies. For these corporate affections, as we may call them, the generic term is loyalty. Loyalty is so important an element in conduct that I feel some doubt whether it ought to be mentioned here in a subordinate position, and ought not to be regarded as a principle pervading the whole character second in importance only to the principle of freedom. Freedom indeed comes first; because, as a matter of fact, each of us is an individual, not a society. But freedom without loyalty is empty and can do nothing. We can only work by combination with our fellow-men, and loyalty is that associative sentiment that makes combination possible. Wherever human beings are together for some common purpose, as a family, as a business organization, as a college, as a club, as a city, as a state, there loyalty is the cementing influence. And in men of the best character there is a loyal sentiment which looks beyond even human relationships: there is loyalty to the principles of science, loyalty to the laws of life and death regarded as expressions of the intelligent scheme of the universe.

Among the affections which should form part of a complete character we must include religion

itself. This must be insisted on, as superficial thinkers sometimes argue that religion is good only as a way of getting people to lead a certain kind of moral life. The truth is that the religious sentiment has intrinsic value, just as much as love of children, or love of music. It is a form of experience which we feel to be good while we are experiencing it. This, in fact, is one of the cases where we must beware of the fallacy of thinking that everything is good as a means to something ulterior—music good because it promotes social intercourse, religion good because it consolidates the family, and so forth. It is just the characteristic of human consciousness as opposed to lower forms that we do recognise intrinsic value in certain kinds of experience; of which religion is one. The opposite error to this is to suppose that we cannot have too much of religion: but against this it would be superfluous to argue at length. What we want is a balanced personality. Religion is capable of upsetting the balance just as much as any other of the affections.

The improvement of the world's affections has been due to many co-operating causes; but one of them is undoubtedly the influence of Christianity, which in this has performed its great service to mankind. Its work, however, has been limited to the personal affections and to religion. In the corporate affections Christianity with its narrow

outlook, its mean view of life and its utter want of public spirit is lamentably deficient. Loyalty is a virtue whose name is never mentioned in Christian exhortation. Here probably lies the secret of our marked inferiority to ancient Greece and Rome in the matter of patriotism.

§ 13. Fourthly, the ideal of free manhood includes the element of volitional force. In this respect also we must go beyond the example of antiquity. The Greeks had no name for force of will: their words that approach it mean the unshakableness which resists rather than the vigour which pushes forward. Even the Roman character, which was so much manlier than the Greek, declined and failed, when it lost the stimulus of political freedom. In explaining this inferiority of the ancients, we must remember that they had less to strive for. One great career, that of industrial success, offered less to honest ambition than it does now: the institution of slavery, the rudimentary state of industrial organization, and the want of mechanical appliances were unfavourable to industrial enterprise. The political career, although marred by many bad features, was more stimulating. It was political freedom that made the greatness of Greece and Rome: with the establishment of alien domination in Greece and of Caesarism in Rome there came an immediate decline. Moreover, a difference has been made to our appreciation of political energy by the conception of evolution. The ancients had

no notion of political progress: when they grew, their growth was unconscious like the growth of children: their political ideals always aimed at a perpetuation of the present or a return to the past. It was Plato's dream to make his ideal city as immovable as Egypt.

And there is another and a deeper reason why volitional force should be an element in an English ideal of life; it is suitable to the national character. This national character has found happy expression in our political constitution. Behind the fact that a people enjoys a certain degree of freedom there always lies the fact that its nature will not be satisfied without that freedom. Behind all the individual deeds and chances that have led to our free government there lies the stubborn national resentment of interference and oppression; the ruling class has conceded privilege after privilege to those below, because no peace was possible till concession was made. This Teutonic self-assertion was wanting to the ancients. And even in the allied gift of physical daring the advantage seems to lie with the Northern nations. There was little of the sea-roving spirit in Greece and Rome; we cannot imagine the Romans at their best fighting period setting forth like the Norsemen; we cannot imagine the chief magistrate of an ancient republic on retiring from office giving up his luxurious refinement for a big-game expedition to Central Africa.

§ 14. I wish to make my explanation of volitional force as concrete as possible; otherwise it is sure to be misunderstood, especially by the learned. The learned man has the utmost difficulty in recognizing the existence of anything not mentioned in his Greek text-books, and the Greeks had no term for volition. For this reason I will mention three or four types of men who have the kind of volitional force about which I am writing.

The first type—the most important and the commonest—is the good family-man. The good father is not merely one who is attentive to his wife, kind to his children and industrious to provide for them: he is one who takes pride in producing and rearing a fine family of children, and is resolute to make the efforts and sacrifices necessary for accomplishing that purpose. He is one who would say with the Psalmist: "Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children, happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate." A well-reared family is the best monument of a well-spent life, and it is the one form of admirable constructive work that is within the reach of all.

Another type is the good soldier. I do not mean the complete soldier, who must be obedient and intelligent; but the soldier as an individual fighting man, courageous, punctilious and full of

initiative. A famous character of fiction is Alan Breck Stewart in *Kidnapped*. We may notice that there is rather too much of this spirit in the Celtic races, and too little in the Anglo-Saxon.

More congenial to our national character, and still more congenial to that of America, is the quality of business ability as exemplified in the enterprising trader who looks out keenly for commercial advantage, is ready to take risks and launch out into ventures, and altogether pushes his business with vigour and resolution.

A volitional type which is specially a product of our national genius is the good sportsman. The good sportsman—I regret to use a term which has frivolous associations, but no other is available—is a lover of conflict who tries his best to win, but will not avail himself of any but legitimate means. He is one who recognizes the larger unity that joins him to his rivals and imposes upon him duties towards them: the bad sportsman recognizes no duties and lets rivalry degenerate into rancour. Nothing is better than our violent English games for training men in sportsmanship, and in the self-control that goes therewith. Thus does the English boy learn to suffer pain with no resentment against those who cause it. To show temper when punished in a boxing match, or tackled heavily at football, or hit by fast bowling would be quite unworthy of one who had enjoyed a liberal education. Savage and

underbred natures are both indifferent to hurting others, and furious when they are hurt themselves.

Of set purpose I have adduced none but common examples of volitional force, and have left aside the more unusual, such as the politician, the artist, and the scientist. There is indeed no reason why all that I have adduced should not be combined in the average citizen. The peaceful vigour of the good father and the good business man is quite compatible with the militant vigour of the soldier and the sportsman. Men are too fond of excusing themselves from various manly enterprises on the ground that they are men of peace. The good citizen must be a man of peace and a man of war also. For the common people the ideal is that the man who drives a milk-cart or stands civilly behind a counter should need nothing but a rifle and a change of clothing to be transformed into the smart authoritative soldier.

§ 15. Having given concrete examples of the men whom I take to be forcible in respect of volition, I may now describe that kind of excellence in more abstract terms. The men who succeed in those various departments of activity just described are said to have force of character. The fundamental condition of force of character is that a man should desire to do something effective with his life : that he should desire a career such that towards the close of his life he should be able to look back and say to himself, 'That is the life which I have lived, and it

has not been a bad one.' The goodness of the life must be positive, not negative in the sense that it has broken no rules, like a musical exercise in the severe classical style. The man's life may be more or less like other lives : it may in the common phrase be a conventional life ; but in a very real sense it must be his own as having been affirmed and approved by his personal judgment. In the adoption of his career a man who would be strong must be discreet ; he must take a career which conforms to the general conditions of human success and is realisable in the circumstances in which he is placed : we cannot call a man strong who is for ever being thwarted. In carrying through his career he must have consistency ; he must not cherish aims that are incompatible : in common phrase he must know what he wants. And, if his career is to be really his own, he must be resentful of interference and strongly attached to his personal independence. And, as there are sure to be many who will try to interfere with him, he must have courage to withstand them. Courage he will need also for enterprises that have risk, since without risk hardly anything that is really valuable can be won. Perseverance he will need to continue in enterprises of long duration. Another quality, very valuable in the young, less valuable in those who are older, is the love of adventure, the desire to see new lands and new faces, to contend with unknown difficulties. Moreover, since in the vast majority of

cases, a successful career implies influence over men, the strong man will desire that influence. He will be fond of power whether it be the direct power of command, persuasion, and prestige, or the power which a man gains by setting an impressive example, or that still subtler power which we call personal magnetism.

§ 16. These principles apply to women no less than to men : we have only to allow for the fact that women are more affectionate and more conservative. The better sort of woman desires to have her own career ; at the least, to rear her family and be mistress of her own home. Such an ambition is the very foundation of the distinctively feminine virtues. She will also desire power, the power appropriate to women. The power of women in civilized nations is very great, is increasing and ought to be increased. As women are better educated and wider opportunities are opened to them their power will grow, and with it the knowledge to apply power to worthy purposes. Improvement in female education is a matter which is second in importance only to the replacement of Christianity by a more masculine form of religion. Indeed it is the half-educated women of the upper classes who at present are the chief supporters of Christianity, the gospel of weakness and submission. Both reforms would co-operate in making women stronger, more efficient, and better able to insist on having their just rights respected by men.

§ 17. Seeing that these pages are written with the purpose of making a practical change in English institutions, I feel at liberty to recommend my ideal by pointing out that force of character is a quality specially congenial to the majority of Englishmen. Proof of this will hardly be required. If it were needed I should not point to what people talk most about, our world-wide conquests and fondness for playing with danger. I think that in the tone and bearing of the working classes we find a deeper testimony. No one who knows the British workman well and has listened to his familiar talk and swearing can doubt that his ideal is one of strength and efficiency. He does not aspire to be gallant and an object of feminine admiration, or to be thought well-off with a house and land of his own, or to have *savoir-faire* and use a pocket-handkerchief: he likes to be thought a man who can do and be depended on. His peculiar vanity is to exaggerate his roughness that people may think him very strong. If this ideal of rude power did not obtain among the classes that are the foundation of our national culture, our upper-class performances in empire-making and steeple-chasing would count for nothing.

And there are reasons of an opposite kind that make it not amiss to have said so much about force of character. There are sections of the community who want exhorting not to be feeble. The character of our middle class, the class that has been softened

by trade and sedentary occupation, is seriously marred by a strain of fat self-indulgence and flabby humanitarianism. Many a prosperous tradesman will think it equally horrible to be forced himself to walk a couple of miles in the rain, and to treat mendicity on the principles of the Charity Organization Society. Partly from this failure in moral tone, partly from a peculiarly British tendency to self-depreciation, partly from that natural love of paradox that some one has called the habit of Mental Indirection, partly from the influence of Christianity, this element of volitional force has never been included in the officially recognized ideal of conduct. This makes it all the more desirable that it should be included now.

§ 18. These, then, seem to be the elements of the ideal of free manhood ; and the ideal has solidarity through its various elements, by which I mean that the elements are mutually dependent so that to omit or mar one element would mar the others. Freedom is the great enveloping condition of the whole : unless what a man does is his own doing, it is worth nothing. The affections, the most important and most central element of character, stand alone most easily ; and yet it is evident that they gain when associated with intelligence and power. Affectionate idiots, it is true, are not uncommon, and their love is not to be despised : but the love of the wise and strong is better. It is equally plain that without

the affections volitional force is barren or even mischievous. What is not generally recognized is that the affections are essential to the full development of the intellect. There is a strange prejudice fostered by the unnatural conditions of some academic societies, though perpetually refuted by the facts, that the best intellectual work is done in isolation, away from society, almost from friends, without the encumbrance of family ties. As a fact the celibate recluse has usually a very narrow horizon ; his ideal is to devote his life to some bit of antiquarianism ; and his labours seldom result in anything more than revising the text of a third-rate Latin poet or writing articles for a dictionary. A similar mistake is made in regarding intellect as separable from will. No one understands a thing so well as the man who is passionately eager to understand it. The futile lives of many who are esteemed as learned men prove that mere curiosity or memory-retentiveness, apart from will to do, confers no real intellectual power. And the paths of literature and learning are always encumbered by useless, tottering souls who desire the credit of being engaged in 'research,' though it is well understood that their researches will never lead to anything. Love, knowledge, and resolve can exist apart ; but they are at their best together. For an ultimate analysis all these partial virtues may be regarded as modes of that primary virtue, appreciation of human life. It is men that we chiefly love,

men that we chiefly wish to know, human aims that we strive to realise.

§ 19. This, I think, finishes the direct account of the Ideal; but indirectly one may define it further by obviating certain mistaken views. I do not propose to try to anticipate all the objections that a perverted ingenuity might bring forward, but for the most part to correct by anticipation some of the practical mistakes which may beset those who are disposed to accept my chief doctrine.

The first point may be raised most conveniently perhaps by asking what is the relation of this Ideal to what is known as morality. So far much has been said of expanding and affirming the self: nothing has been said of self-repression. And yet morality in the common usage of the term is largely a matter of self-repression. Let me explain what seems to be the place in conduct of this negative or self-repressive element, and what in general is the sense to be given to the term morality.

Morality is a term of vague significance: it is hard to say what is commonly meant by the phrase a 'moral man,' if not that the man is one whose general conduct commands approval and shows a certain strictness and regard for rule. I shall be doing little or no violence to common usage if I take 'morality' to mean the proper spirit to adopt to one's ideal. If a man's ideal were wrong, if he deliberately held it right to leave out one of

the elements which we think indispensable, such as the affections or the intellect, we might blame him, but we should not call him immoral. But we might apply that word to one who, having a good ideal, was culpably lax in observing it.

To be resolute and thorough in living up to one's ideal, therefore, is what I mean by morality. This thoroughness implies certain principles in the mind of the doer. The primary principle is simply enthusiasm for the ideal, the warmth with which a man throws himself into working out his plan of life. If it be said that warmth of character is fundamentally a natural endowment, that would only show that our best and most lovable qualities are gifts of nature. It is enough if we are able to encourage enthusiasm both in ourselves and in others.

But every important enterprise has its negative side: we cannot do much unless we also abstain much; we must observe the rules of 'Thou shalt not' if we mean to be earnest in carrying out the great 'Thou shalt.' The self-repressive principle of morality is the most obtrusive and the easiest to preach upon; and thus the shallow moralist tends to think that morality is all an affair of refraining.

The most famous statement of negative morality is, of course, the Decalogue of the Pentateuch. For the sake of clearing up the matter further let us

consider how the commandments are related to our ideal. The first four are of merely Judaic significance; the fifth, enjoining honour to parents, is positive and is plainly implied in the maintenance of the domestic affections; the last five forbid murder, adultery, stealing, false witness, and covetousness. These five commandments are what commonly rise in the mind when the code is mentioned, and they state some of the most important negative conditions of right living. The list might well be enlarged for modern use, since it says nothing about drunkenness and cruelty. But it would be the shallowest moral philosophy to think that any multiplication of negative precepts could make a man moral in the positive sense.

Decalogue-morality is related to enthusiasm as precaution to sound rules of health. The timid valetudinarian thinks to ward off disease by his apparatus of snow-boots and draught-excluders: the wise physiologist knows that the body is kept in tone by exercise and judicious exposure to cold. Women are the worst offenders against moral hygiene. In their timidity and ignorance of the world they load their children with prohibitions that tend to break their spirit and make them quite useless for the battle of life.[1]

The prohibitions that are laid upon us from

[1] As an instance, Carlyle's mother enjoining him never to fight at school.

outside, and to which we yield unthinking conformity, have no moral value except in the way of establishing habits. The only laws that have intrinsic moral value for us are the laws we lay upon ourselves. But prohibition-morality, whether we lay it upon ourselves or whether others lay it upon us, has an inherent weakness, in that the best men have an instinct prompting to transgress ; I mean the instinct of enterprise, of doing new things, of passing old boundaries. Though there is no provision for it in the ancient systems of religion and morality, enterprise is absolutely essential not only to the advancement but even to the maintenance of all that is best in civilized society. It is true that there is a destructive antinomian side to this pleasure of breaking boundaries which we see too often in the young and powerful, and with which we are only too familiar in our ancient seats of education. But of every transgressor we may ask whether his transgression comes from brutish incapacity to feel the obligations of the law or from a spirit which is merely impatient of constraint. The cure for the latter kind of outbreak is not repression so much as turning the pent-up energy into profitable channels. I would claim it as the best point in the ideal of free manhood that it recognizes the value of the spirit of enterprise and indicates the proper field of employment.

As the expansive side of morality requires warmth

of character, so does the self-repressive side require sternness and vigilance. We need to apprehend not only the beauty and value of life, but also the gravity of failure: we need to think solemnly of the incurable mischief that may be wrought by thoughtlessness, carelessness, and impatience of control. A man of this temper who takes a strict view of his own obligations will not be foolishly lenient to those whom he is called to command. But sternness, like charity, ought to begin at home.

To this side of morality belong also the conceptions of duty and obligation; wherein the importance of not failing in one's ideal is connected with a sense of loyalty to a wider system of which the doer forms part. This wider system may be either social or cosmic, or it may not be distinctly apprehended at all. For it is possible to feèl a strong sense of duty with no clear apprehension of that to which the duty is due. Duty is a conception indispensable to the moral life: without it the individual is not always strong nor steady enough to endure discouragement and temptation.

§ 20. The spirit of the age recognizes the moral value of society so fully, that there is no serious danger that many people will carry the individualism of my ideal too far. But to make the matter clear I may say that I hold the right principle to be an individualism tempered with collectivism. The individual always comes first: our scheme of life

as a whole, and every part of it, conduct, art, and religion, can only have value so far as it is an expression of individual character. And yet the social factor must never be left out of account. The ideal is one which is only possible in society, and is determined by society both in what it leaves out and what it includes. To do something merely because it is different from what other people are doing is fruitless eccentricity. If a man's individual character is scarce perceptibly different from the average of his neighbours, then his life ought to resemble theirs. Nothing is more painful than a commonplace man trying to be original. The limitations of individuality may be illustrated from art and literature. Our social environment sets limits to what we can do in those fields : there is the clearest and most decisive difference between epochs so near as the Middle Victorian and the present day. We cannot work like them ; nor could they have worked like us.

And, just as the artist owes not only his limitations but his strength to his society, so it must be with our scheme of life. Though our own it must belong to our age and nation. It must be contemporary, not archaistic, and still less anti-contemporary. It must be national, not cosmopolitan : *il faut être tout à fait de son pays pour être quelque chose.* We do not fully understand the way in which the individual exerts influence upon society or society upon the

individual. But the more we know of history and of contemporary life the more impressed we are by the power of the forces that are inarticulate till one day the great man, the great artist or practical moralist, comes to give them clear expression. No genius ever rose upon the world whose coming was not prepared for by deep forces that work unseen.

Moreover, the ideal contains an element that is essentially social, the affections. A scheme of life like Goethe's, all intellectual curiosity and adventure with no enduring affections, always breaks down in the end. And let those who worship mere strength consider how strong men are reared. Under the conditions of civilization it is not possible to bring up healthy children without close maternal care. In mere brute power of fighting a nation with strong home-affections will have the better of one in which they are weak. It is our affections that give us national and social cohesion, and supply content and purpose to our activity. What is it that Nietzsche's Superman is striving for? What will he do with the beautiful blonde strength that he is so proud of? If it is only to behave like a wild beast, the first rational man whom he meets will shoot him.

§ 21. And there is another mistaken sort of individualism that must be guarded against, that which supposes it possible to lead an equally good life in any sort of state—'let kings and commonwealths be what they may, we must cultivate our

garden.' The truth lies rather with Plato, who in his *Republic* teaches us that the ideal life can only be lived in the ideal state. No doubt there are good men in Russia and Turkey, but they must be labouring under fearful difficulties.[1] Caesarism, oligarchy, bureaucracy, caste—all these are bad political principles, and must have a bad influence upon citizens.

That men should possess power over their fellow-men is necessary for purposes of organization. This being so, it is idle to think that all men can have equal opportunities of reaching their full development: to be in a subordinate position is to be comparatively weak and slightly considered. In a sense all government implies a principle of subjection, and exposes both governors and governed to certain temptations. These dangers may be minimized by popular election, which makes it plain that power lies ultimately with the mass of the governed; by moderately frequent change of governors, who do not get time to persuade themselves that they are made of different clay from the governed; and by making merit the sole ground of promotion. Promotion otherwise than by merit not only gives us bad governors, but is a cause of widespread demoralization. In a state, such as Russia, where these principles are defied, injury is done to the

[1] Written before the recent Turkish revolution. When will the day come in Russia?

volitional energy of all who are subject to power; the lower classes hate and fear the upper, while the upper classes hate and despise the lower; intellect is proscribed, or corrupted into a venal support of the existing order. The well-disposed Russian is put into the painful dilemma of either chafing continually at the abominable government under which he lives, or of acquiescing tamely in its abominations.

I should not have troubled to speak of alien countries, whose salvation must lie in their own hands, but for the sake of introducing a question of present interest to ourselves. We, thanks to the virtue of our forefathers, are free from the grosser forms of political subjection. But as a survival from darker times there remains to us our constitutional monarchy; and the question is whether this can be justified by the principles whose working has led to our comparatively happy political position. It is painful to have to say anything against an institution which for personal as well as historic reasons is regarded with affection by multitudes of Englishmen, and has a solid sentimental value as symbolizing the unity of the Empire; but if we are to carry on those traditions of freedom that have made England great, it is impossible not to see that monarchy, however constitutional, is an anachronism. A Royal Family is put into a position to which no human beings should be exposed. They are cursed by possessing a semi-

sacred character ; they see every one about them unnaturally and unwholesomely complaisant and self-constrained ; they are exempt from effective criticism, and have little to fear from the rebuffs and shocks whereby common people are taught to respect their neighbours' rights. Every great ceremonial position, such as that of the head of a state, exposes its holder to a strain that only the strongest and maturest can endure. In commonwealths such as the United States and France men are not placed in these positions till they are past the age of vanity ; their tenure is brief, and at the end of it they and their families sink back into the happy obscurity of private life. This is the best way to minimize the difficulties of a position that will always present difficulty. Some day, let us hope, the royal families of the more enlightened parts of Europe will wake up to the moral danger in which they stand, and will ask to be relieved of a position which is harmful both to themselves and to every one with whom they are brought into connection. This criticism of monarchy applies in principle to all hereditary titles and offices. A man who, without reference to merit, is placed either in command or in subordination, is injured himself and does injury to his society. But the thorough application of this principle would cut so deeply into our social system that it cannot be discussed in this place.

The ideal of free manhood is emphatically a

democratic ideal. There is a prejudice against democracies that we must labour to remove; it is thought that they must necessarily be bourgeois in tone, wholly preoccupied with the pursuit of dollars, timid and commercial in their ideals of culture, with low standards of scholarship and workmanship, boastful and unmilitary, the natural prey of quacks and political pirates, weak in their administration of justice, mean in their ambitions, abjectly dazzled by the rank and pomp of more aristocratic nations. We want a democracy which will disprove all that,—a democracy not fond of war, but thoroughly prepared for war, chivalrous, drastic, contemptuous of humbug and platitude, full of the spirit of adventure and appreciative of spiritual distinction. I do not see how we can get such a democracy till we are rid of our inherited load of social and political make-believe; but in such a democracy only will the free man feel himself thoroughly at home.

§ 22. Still less is the ideal of freedom consistent with religious subjection, that is, with any system which denies man's right to make his religion and share in managing his church. By 'making religion' I mean forming for oneself such a conception of the quality and functions of God as is best for one's welfare and in harmony with facts.

The basis of ecclesiastical domination is, firstly, the conception of God as an arbitrary master whose main interest in men is to have them absolutely

subject to his will and to receive from them unstinted praise and glorification, a conception which plainly attaches itself to the grossest traditions of savage royalty ; secondly, the belief that the will of God is plainly manifested to the world. As to the mode in which the divine will is manifested there are two main views : the scripturalist holds that it is contained in the Bible ; the sacerdotalist that it is continually being declared in the authoritative doctrine and practice of that organized body of priests who form the effective church.

The principle of religious freedom is readily capable of misrepresentation and caricature. It is not equivalent to ecclesiastical atomism ; it does not mean that everybody should form a church all to himself—*quot homines tot ecclesiae.* There are many valuable religious aims that cannot be achieved save by co-operation, and this implies a common basis of action, a common doctrine. The case is the same as with political co-operation. We cannot work our political purposes without belonging to a party. In cases where we do not agree with the authorized party-doctrine we have to consider whether asserting one's independence is worth the cost of reducing oneself to political impotence. It *may* happen that a politician is heartily in accord with every single item and detail of the party programme ; but this must be a curious coincidence and no special cause for self-congratulation.

Nor do I mean that every one should be called upon to make his own religion: the immense majority even of highly-educated men are totally incapable of the least attempt at such a task; the utmost we can hope is that they will interpret with some individuality doctrines received from others. The merely average person will doubtless remain content to take his religion all ready made; but this, though not dishonourable, can never be a cause of glory. Certainly no man with any delicacy of feeling will make it his ambition to domineer over the religious consciousness of his fellow-men. A tyrant must always have something coarse and vulgar in him; spiritual tyranny may be tyranny refined to the uttermost, but it will keep the taint of vulgarity still. The hateful term orthodoxy must be expunged from the vocabulary of religious experience.

These principles give us a criterion for judging the relative value of actual ecclesiastical systems: we have only to consider what sort of systems give most opportunity for individual development. There is much liberty in any church that is based on Scripture; for Scripture admits an indefinite variety of interpretation: there is more liberty in churches which, as the English Nonconformists, admit a popular principle into their management, than in the Anglican church where the laity have no direct power. Worst of all is a thorough-going sacerdotal system such as the Roman, where the closely organized

body of the priesthood has all the power, both in doctrine and in church government. Such a system is deadly in its influence on personal independence, on intellect and even on religion. Every year the process of events in Europe gives fresh proof of the incompatibility of sacerdotalism with the best ideas of modern culture and with the most certain teaching of science in regard to the management of life. Every year it grows plainer that sacerdotalism is failing, even when judged by its own standard of success. Its hold grows weaker upon countries where formerly it reigned without dispute: the masses who live under its sway care less and less about religion. It is vain to stimulate zeal by promises of heaven and threats of hell: the only effective motive to make civilized men interested in religion is a share in making and managing it.

If what I have been saying is true, it is vain for any one to think he can combine freedom with membership in any of those existing churches which make a merit of orthodoxy. Almost without exception the existing churches are based upon principles of subjection. There are three alternatives: we may remain churchmen and give up freedom; we may secede without organizing and be helpless; or we may establish a new organization based on principles of freedom.

§ 23. And were such an organization started it would not fail from narrowness. The ideal of

freedom is of universal application: it is good for poor as for rich; for women as for men. It simply means that every one should make the best of himself subject to his opportunities.

And yet, for certain, many who have been brought up in the morality of self-negation will make it an objection that the ideal is one for the few only, for the strong, the thriving, and the self-assertive. Let us consider this. It must be based on the assumption that it is wrong to set up an ideal of self-expansion for people who are poor, weak, and ignorant. But is this true? No one would desire that people, however low in the scale, should have no ideal at all; and even if he did the desire would be in vain. Every man who lives a connected rational life frames to himself, with or without deliberate purpose, an ideal or norm of conduct; only that in some men it is more definite and self-conscious than in others. Is it satisfactory that any one's ideal should be self-negating; that being poor, weak, and ignorant he should desire to remain so, or to lose the little wealth, strength and knowledge, that he has? If poverty, weakness, and ignorance are good, there is no more to be said; evidently we cannot have too much of them. But if they are evil let us try to diminish them. And experience has shown that the only sure way for an evil to get abated is that those who suffer from it should desire its abatement. No application of external remedies will cure these social

evils : they can only be cured by self-help. The ideal of freedom is the principle of self-help applied in the moral sphere.

Though every one can strive towards the ideal of free manhood there are few indeed who can hope to realise it with fulness. This is no valid objection to it ; and in any case cannot be made an objection by the advocates of self-negation, whose ideal is quite unrealisable. It is easy to see that our opportunities are limited by natural disposition. For the sake of simplicity imagine an artificial case : imagine a man of certain qualities with the chance early in life to choose his own career. Plainly his welfare will not lie in going inconsiderately for the highest. He must consider whether he will do best as a statesman or as a carpenter. In real life, of course, men are not called upon to choose deliberately. Talents adjust themselves and men find their own level. Sex is another natural limitation. The business of society could not be carried on if men were as tender as women, and women as bold as men.

With the present constitution of society—however it may be in the future—an almost equally definite difference of opportunity exists between the upper and lower ranks of society, those who by conventional terminology are distinguished as rich and poor. The real distinction between the classes is that one works with muscles, while the other works,

or ought to work, otherwise. Continuous manual labour entails a physical disposition unfavourable to many forms of intellectual activity. Men employed in these subordinate places must accept a curtailment both of their intellectual and of their volitional opportunities. But there is another aspect of the matter that is not always allowed for : it is that the manual labourers have not all the worst of it. Though their outlook on life is narrower, they see things more truly ; their physical life is healthier and better balanced, their temper more self-reliant and resourceful, their morality more truly adapted to the facts of life. The roots of language and of literature are in the common people : the best literature always represents a point of equilibrium between school-culture and folk-poetry. In some respects culture of the mind is not unlike culture of the soil, which makes profitable crops but destroys the beautiful growth of natural vegetation. Conversely wealth and the discontinuance of regular physical exertion always entail a certain degeneration, which is not merely physical but spreads into every side of the character. Our upper classes would soon become morally and intellectually effete if they were not continually recruited from below.

Thus no one has any real chance of uniting all the excellences of which manhood and womanhood are capable : some have wider opportunities and some narrower. And those who have the

narrower opportunities have within reach a good which is more solid and enduring than the others enjoy.

§ 24. Another objection will be sure to come from those who have been trained in the traditions of a morbid and misdirected humanitarianism: it is that this ideal of life is too hard and unsympathetic and gives no opportunity for the virtues of self-sacrifice. We repel the objection by pointing to the affectional element of the ideal. The main source of the affections is family life, and every family man knows what self-sacrifice is involved in the rearing of children. By looking round for opportunities the most ardent self-sacrificers can gratify their tastes without retiring from the world. Let the woman who dreads the ideal of self-expansion take charge of some large family of motherless children; she will find a discipline more chastening than the strictest nunnery. Unhappily it has been the tendency of Christianity to draw attention from these natural and beneficent occasions of sacrifice to others that are useless and appeal to a disordered imagination. In the past it has been women especially who have been deluded by exhortations that have all the false ring of the theatrical stage. To scourge the back with knotted cords instead of bearing bravely the pains of childbirth; to wash the feet of beggars instead of knitting stockings for the children; to be submissive and liberal to priests

rather than to comfort aged parents—these were the ideals of religious womanhood in the Middle Ages; and the tradition flourishes still. The real enemies of self-sacrifice are the religious systems that ignore or depreciate the institutions that call continually for our sacrifices, the family, the social order, the nation. Let us have self-sacrifice then: but let it be the self-sacrifice of the mother and the soldier, not of the fakir.

§ 25. Nor would the ideal fall short in treatment of those who are failures in life. Such men fall into two classes, those who fail by their own fault and those who fail by the fault of society. In regard to the latter class it is plainly the lesser part of our duty to succour individual unfortunates; our main duty is to ascertain where the social system is wrong and then to agitate till the mischief is removed. Measures of eleemosynary relief, though very well in their way, can only palliate; and there is always a slight element of demoralization even in the best-directed charity. As to the self-made failures it is superfluous at this time of day to preach upon the dangers of indiscriminate humanitarianism. The bad disposition of such people largely consists in their feeling no interest in or obligation towards the social system wherein they live. The best hope of correcting this lies in the diffusion of a religion and a morality that put high value upon public spirit and patriotism.

And it is free men, rather than slaves, that are truly compassionate to sickness and suffering. There will always be much suffering that cannot be prevented, only assuaged—the workers stricken by disease, the men disabled in dangerous trades, the old people who have fallen hopelessly infirm. The proper view is not to regard these poor people as victims of a bad world's cruelty, but to treat them as we treat sick soldiers. The army medical service is not only a service of compassion, but also one that contributes to combative efficiency.

But it makes much difference, not only in what spirit we give, but in what spirit we receive. Let me illustrate once more from warfare. The best modern armies have a clear approval of the objects for which they are fighting. When a soldier of this type is stricken down he does not curse the war and all that brought him into it; he keeps up his interest so far as his pain will allow; he is willing to fight again when he is healed. In a society which is pervaded by a good *moral*, by patriotism and right religion, there is no reason to fear that subscriptions to hospitals will dwindle, that deserving old people will be left to the cold charity of the workhouse, and that aged parents, aunts, and uncles will be voted a nuisance and a burden. It is probable, indeed, that these obligations will be more fully and regularly met than they are under the Christian dispensation. And the sufferers on their side will recognize that

much lies with them. Though they can strive no longer, it is important that they should keep up sympathy with those who are striving. The good man in suffering endures like a stricken soldier: though his body be laid aside, his heart goes forward with the march of humanity.

CHAPTER III

FREE RELIGION: WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT IS PROVED

§ 1. Do we need religion at all? That is the question which must be faced before we go on to ask what is the right religion. In the changes of man's thoughts about religion, and in the dissatisfaction with old creeds, and amid the vague suggestions of something to replace them, voices are heard saying that the day of religion is past, and that in the future man will be satisfied to live his life without thought of any superhuman power. It behoves us then to see clearly what is man's need of religion, and whether it is a permanent need, or one which, as the ages broaden, is destined to pass away.

I do not think that the feeling against religion has been due in any large measure to serious thinking: but even a mind naturally religious may have been so revolted by the wrongness of existing religions as to think a clean sweep the only remedy. In part, too, the anti-religious movement must be

reaction against the exaggerated claims for religion which we hear in our churches. There it is held up as a counsel of perfection that God should be the chief thought of our lives. Such a doctrine I believe to be not merely impracticable but pernicious: so long as we live in this world our chief thoughts should be worldly. Never in the most fanatical period of Christianity has there been any considerable body of people recognizing these exaggerated claims—at the most a few ecstatic saints, and the rest merely superstitious. However, we must not be driven from the truth by the excesses of its injudicious friends. I think it not difficult to show that religion, though it is a subordinate not a predominant element in our life, is permanently necessary to man; and that his need of it grows more certain as he advances in culture.

§ 2. Before we go farther we need a definition. Religion is best defined through its object. What is the object of religion? What is it that the religious man thinks about when he thinks religiously? People often speak about religion as though it need have no object at all: they suppose it enough to say that it is an emotion. Such loose thinking is deplorable. Has not every emotion an object? When we experience fear, or love, or reverence, do we not fear, love, revere something? In strict language religion is not an emotion, but a sentiment; like loyalty, it is an emotional disposition having

reference to a certain object. To feel religious with reference to no object is hardly less insane than to feel a loyalty which is loyalty to nothing.

Speaking in the most general terms we may say that the object of religion is the Power beyond the world. Man's intelligence has always been busy continually tracing the causes and searching the hidden powers of things. As soon as he rises to the capacity of viewing the world as one, he comes to think of one great Cause and one great Power behind the world. This conception, which appears so early in the history of thought, only becomes stronger and more definite as thought advances. The world as we know it by direct experience is evidently not self-explaining; it never displays to us the source from which it comes, or the end whither it is moving, or the energy that sustains its continued existence. Regarded merely as a cause, or a purpose, or an energy, the Power Beyond is not an object of religion but of philosophic speculation. Our attitude is religious when we believe the Power to stand in some effective relation to our life: there is religion when we fear it, or love it, or reverence it, or hope for benefits from it. The Power Beyond then becomes to us that to which we give the name of God.

§ 3. Even those who do not in the least give way to pessimism cannot feel that human lives, even the best of them, are fully satisfactory unless they

are viewed as part of an intelligent system that is wider than the human: the individual life is so short and accomplishes so little; personality is such a thing of shreds and patches; the race so trifling an episode of evolution; the earth itself so ephemeral a speck in stellar space. Without religion there is so little meaning in our life in relation to the universe. Why in this particular corner of space should a race of conscious beings have come into existence, grown and progressed some way towards their destined extinction? Most serious of all for the unreligious is the abbreviation of hope. When we are young the world is interesting because there are plainly in sight great tasks to do. As we grow old the world seems to grow old with us. Part of what was to do gets done and the residue seems hopeless of accomplishment. The vista closes in: man's really interesting achievements lie back in the past. There is little chance that anything so good will ever be seen again: we may think ourselves lucky if things do not go downhill.

These incommodities of life are not felt by every one at all times. There are many excellent men who are carried on from day to day by routine or the quick succession of absorbing work and are never moved to think about religion. Their weakness is that they are liable to be quite discouraged and thrown off their balance by strokes of ill fortune. And, more than that, the thoughtless pleasure of living always

slackens with advancing years. It is in old age that men need religion most: not, for the reason commonly given, that they ought to be thinking about the next world; but because they are tempted to think too little of the present one.

We must frame our scheme of life not for the thoughtless but the thoughtful. The more people think, the more they will feel these incommodities: nor can any one hope to see them overcome. We cannot seriously believe that the resources of science will ever keep us from dying, or from growing old, or make us cease to feel that we are creatures of trifling size compared with the vast spaces around us. Religion, however, though it cannot change these elementary facts, can put a different aspect upon them. Just as one who is a citizen of no mean city feels that his personal insignificance is abolished by his citizenship, so our human insignificance will cease to trouble us if we take a right view of our place and function in the system of the universe.

§ 4. Having thus formed some idea what religion is and why man needs it we may approach the question What is right religion? Put in a general form the question is unmeaning. Religion exists to satisfy religious need, and religious needs are various. To savages God is a being to be prayed to for material help; he it is who makes the rain to fall, sends food, and keeps off enemies. A later stage of religion we may call the purificatory; in which man has grown

disgusted with himself, his moral uncleanness and failure. Religion, then, becomes for him a means of escaping from his sins, and a security for entering upon a better course of life. To many minds religion is a means, one might almost say a contrivance, for securing the observance of moral rules. These forms of religion may not be ours, and yet we cannot call them absolutely wrong. The religion that furthers the way of life which a man has deliberately chosen is the right religion for him.

But it is a question of the deepest significance to ask what is the right kind of religion for modern civilized life as it ought to be and as it might be lived. In the preceding chapter I have tried to give some account of what I hold to be the best kind of character. The right religion from my point of view will be the religion that suits best with it ; it will be the religion that most helps a man of such character in living his life ; it will be a religion that enhances the value of every element of a good life and character. I say 'enhances,' because it cannot be made too plain that the function of religion is not to invest our life with interest, but to heighten an interest which is there independent of religion. The life of free manhood should be interesting in and for itself.

§ 5. Before we go farther it will be convenient to recall the definition of religion as a practical attitude. That is what differentiates it from theology. Theology is quite theoretical : it professes to tell

us in explicit logical form what we may believe about God and the relations between God and man. But religion is part of a man's effective scheme of life: it is an affair of practical interest, of action, of hope, comfort, and consolation. A man may never be able to state his religious principles in definite terms and yet they may influence his thought and conduct profoundly. Thus only an instructed man can have theology; but an uninstructed man can have religion.

The right religion, the religion that accords with the ideal of free manhood, is accepted, I believe, by the best men of the time in this implicit way. If this be not so, if what follows awakens no answer in the reader's mind, then these suggestions for a new church can have no practical importance. The fundamental thought of right religion I have heard expressed in crude terms: 'God can't do without me any more than I can do without him.' Does that shock the reader, or does it seem to him exaggerated but true at bottom?

§ 6. The fundamental principle of right religion, then, I take to be the conviction that man can do something for God. The man with right religion regards human life not as isolated, but as forming part of the cosmic system of which God is the intelligent mover. The ultimate meaning of our freedom is that we are free to help in the cosmic system. This redeems our life from the reproach of pettiness and want of meaning. The rightly religious

man believes also that God is favourable to the zealous following of our ideal of life, and unfavourable to a slack and listless way of living; that God will not let things decline, so that the world will become dull and cease to satisfy our legitimate demand for interesting experience; and that God will preserve in some permanent form all that has had real value in this world. To put the matter abstractly, he believes in the co-operation of man with the cosmic purpose of the world, in the divine goodness, in the inexhaustibility of the divine power, and in a future state.

Of these beliefs the first seems to be the most important, and even to contain by implication all the others. It is always more important and improving to believe that we are doing good than to believe that good is being done to us. And this belief gives to human life what it needs most, an enhancement of dignity: it assures us that we are an integral part of the best and greatest of all possible systems. Now, can any one belong to a great system without receiving benefit from it? Will not the director of the system see that its members have what they need? One of these needs is countenance in the good way of life. This seems to be the proper way of understanding the goodness of God: it should not be an eleemosynary goodness, a goodness that bestows alms upon feeble distress. Another need is hope, the assurance that the future will

always be better than the past; another is the assurance that death is not the end of the valuable things which we have known in this life.

§ 7. This is what religion must do, and the significance of it may be made clearer by saying what religion must not do. Religion must not substitute superhuman interests and motives for interests and motives that are human. It must not tell us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven: we know nothing about treasures in heaven. It must not tell us that "virtue is the doing good to mankind for the sake of everlasting happiness." This is very bad doctrine; not merely because it is grovelling, but also because it is futile. No extrinsic motive ever made a man successful in any good pursuit. If, for example, a man sets himself to rear a family of children he will not do it well if his motive is to fulfil some biblical precept, or to provide heirs to his estate, or any of the other extrinsic reasons that might easily be suggested: he will do it well only if he is fond of children; all the various extrinsic motives will only serve to reinforce the main one. We must do good to mankind because we are interested in men. I know that all this will appear shockingly plain and dull to minds that will never confess that they act upon plain motives. Just as every medical man knows patients who will not do simple things, who will, for example, not wash with common soap a part affected by a filth-disease,

but will wash it with some expensive medicated soap that is not a bit more efficacious; so there are people who like to think that their ultimate motive for being, say, good to their children is that some one died in Judaea centuries ago, and would be affronted by the suggestion of a motive more direct and natural.

Nor should religion cast any contempt upon common worldly interests. Common worldly interests are and ought to be the mainspring of our life: our heart and treasure ought to be on earth. Science, art, adventure, and religion lend glory and distinction to common pursuits; and in exceptional natures they form motives equal or even stronger to those which influence ordinary men. But such natures are and ought to be exceptional. Certainly no such exceptional man ought to set himself up as a general example and exhort men to despise common pursuits for the sake, say, of philosophy or religion. Treatises *De Contemptu Mundi* are inspired by wrong religion and are mischievous and execrable.

It is a merit of the right religious view that it reconciles religion and the world, which mischievous fanatics have for ages laboured to estrange. There is no radical opposition between the best life and the common average life. The reader must often have had the experience of hearing some musical instrument played upon first by an elementary student and then by a master. How different sounds the

instrument when the master touches it! Is there anything in common between that rich exciting melody and the dull strumming of the wooden beginner? Yes; they are the same notes all the time. Well, that is like the difference between the noble and the plebeian life. Business, family and state are the material of both: but the man of genius knows how to transfigure the material with a higher meaning.

§ 8. Nor should religion strive to reduce man's strength, and his pride in his strength, and his will to live: it should rather encourage him therein. The essential principle of asceticism, I take it, is that it regards the will to live and all the effort of expansion as bad and to be reduced to the lowest level. To a thorough-going ascetic the indulgence of natural affection or the pleasure of intellectual power is no less sinful than the coarser pleasures of the body. Asceticism still has no small band of followers in civilized Europe. So far from doing good or deserving praise, they seem to me to be fighting against all that makes for the progress of humanity.

Above all religion must not take a low view of human nature. It should not lament over man as fatally condemned to be weak and wretched: it should not regard him as the *ex officio* beggar of the universe. Oh! the horrible mendicant whine of certain forms of Christianity! *Seigneur, ayez*

pitié de nous: any one who has been importuned by the miserable wasters who haunt the streets of Paris knows what are the moral affinities of that. Nor should religion teach that man is essentially depraved, that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually, that the human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, that we are by nature born in sin and the children of wrath. It is the fatal flaw of orthodox religion in its relation to conduct that it devotes itself mainly to the repression of this alleged natural depravity. Thus has moral goodness received a mainly negative meaning. I once heard it said by a devout Catholic of certain modern Italian monks that they were good men, but did nothing whatever. What a terrible misuse of the term 'good.' Rules of abstention have no value whatever except to further good schemes of action. It is the business of human authority to frame and enforce the necessary rules of abstention: religion has a much more important and noble function, to stimulate us to enterprise and aspiration.

§ 9. If these principles of criticism are true, what current religion is there that will bear the test? Let the reader answer the question for himself. In its general tone the right religion will differ from Christianity by the whole breadth of heaven. Its distinguishing mark would not be humility. It will, of course, include so much of that quality

as is conducive to the ideal of life with which it is associated; but it would base its claim to acceptance on other grounds. No book that embodies its principles would ever be called the Treasure of the Humble. Its affinities lie elsewhere. It is akin to the spirit of romance and the poetry of action. It is, if a literary catchword be desired, an epic religion. For the souls that are incurably timorous, for the oppressed if they are merely patient under their oppression, for the weak and suffering if they do not admire health and strength, for the quiet, narrow-minded people who loathe the smallest deviation from their little routine, for such philanthropists as think that the giving and receiving of alms is an end in itself rather than a necessary evil—for all these poor folk such a religion can have no meaning. But I hope it will find answer in the hearts of those who love Homer and Shakespeare and the legends of the North, who are proud of the record of their country in every branch of manly action and thought, who are deeply thankful that to every well-natured mind there stretches away a vista of work without visible end; of crusades against stupidity and vice; of depths of science to be explored; of fair structures to be built, material and spiritual; of waste places to be brought into the service of man; of good seed to be sown in human lives that are still unborn.

§ 10. This is what I take to be the right religion:

and it is possible there may be found some who are inclined to agree with me and yet stop short of full assent because the proofs do not satisfy them. 'Is this religion of yours,' they may say, 'anything more than a hypothesis with no assurance that there are facts corresponding to it?'

The demand for proof may come from two very different quarters and be prompted by very different motives. It may be put forward by those who are impressed with the muster of historical evidence adduced in support of Christianity. To them the answer must be made that religions are never proved by appeal to history: historical evidences could never do more than predispose a man to try how a suggested religion works in practice. It is by practice that religions are validated or discredited. Christianity is not a system of evidences; it is, primarily, a way of looking at life. Just because I believe that it fails as an attitude to life, I argue that we ought to cast about for a new religion. Free religion is not without its proofs that appeal to the understanding, but its great claim is that it is a source of inspiration for conduct; and it will succeed in so far as that claim can be practically established.

It is only at periods when churches have grown cold and corrupt that much stress is laid upon historical evidence. At the present day there is great activity in the criticism of documents; but they are

not much used to constrain the assent of those who hesitate to accept Christianity. The better men lay more stress upon the proof from practice.

And surely it is self-evident that Christianity never spread in virtue of its historical evidence: of those who were converted after the death of the first generation of Christians not one in ten thousand was competent to criticise the documents and tradition. It spread because it was better suited to the times than any other of the religions that competed with it. In part that suitability was good; the world needed something humaner and purer than paganism: in part it was bad; Christianity fell in with the tendencies of a desponding and disintegrating civilization.

And in modern times religious changes come to pass in the same way. Tractarianism has certainly not gained its commanding position in the Anglican Church in virtue of its array of historical evidence. Young men in the middle of the last century took up tractarian ideas because they saw that they were more interesting than, say, evangelical ideas, and opened up greater possibilities of religious efficiency. And, if these ideas are losing ground, it is because the oncoming generation is finding other ideas that are more interesting and practically valuable.

§ 11. Still less does a right religion need the support of miracles. Indeed it is difficult to see how miracles do support a religion. When it is

related that a man has had the power of healing the sick or of raising dead persons to life, the story, if true, proves no more than that a certain person had some extraordinary faculties ; it does not prove that the principles of conduct enunciated by that person are such as we ought to adopt in our lives ; the principles of conduct must be accepted or rejected upon their own merits. Let the reader ask himself what amount of miracle would compel him to accept some religious system, say Mahometanism, which intrinsically he regarded as detestable. Would thousands of well-attested documents do it ? Would the appearance of a Mahometan prophet working genuine miracles before his eyes ? Nothing could be more impressive or well attested as examples of the miraculous than the performances of certain spiritualistic mediums — in particular, of Daniel Home ; but they did not give Home the smallest claim to be regarded as a religious authority. The utmost that can be claimed for miracles is that they are potent in compelling attention. We could not ignore a man who worked genuine miracles freely ; we should have to listen to his message, though nothing that he did could deprive us of our right of criticising freely what he said.

The whole notion of God sending a special messenger who, by exhibiting miracles, should constrain men to accept a new rule of life seems to me utterly barbarous and degrading. Are men so

blockish that they cannot be left to recognize the intrinsic merits of a religious and moral system? And what is the value of their conversion if they are merely dazzled and confounded into submission? Are we not reminded of the European explorers who establish their authority among savages by marvels of the musical-box and burning-glass? No wonder that contemporary apologists are rather ashamed of the miraculous elements of the Gospels.

§ 12. A very different line of answer is needed for the scientific agnostic who, though recognizing the practical value of a free religion, demands some scientific proof, and does not think it honest or dignified to believe agreeable things on insufficient authority. A position of this kind calls for sympathy and commands respect. For religion we need faith, but some kinds of faith-philosophy deserve the bitterest things that the scientist can say about them. Better to be damned with Huxley and Clifford than saved with Pascal.

Whether it would be a good thing to be able to prove religion scientifically we need not inquire at this moment. The main principles of free religion are that God exists and that man can help him. What possibility have we of applying scientific proof here? We cannot have exact prediction as in astronomy, or experiment as in chemistry, or trains of analogical reasoning to explain the history of present phenomena as in geology. Those principles

are matters of faith ; and the proper answer to the scientific agnostic is to point out the province of faith and its distinction from the province of reasoning. We live by faith in many other things than religion.

§ 13. Reasoning is the basis of our conviction when we are engaged on matters in which we either take no personal action, or, if we do take action, in which our efficiency and self-respect are unimpaired whatever the result may be. We are convinced by reasoning about the facts of Babylonian history and the canals on the planet Mars : we are convinced by reasoning in such a matter as a chemical investigation. When a chemist analyzes a sample of water to find out how much ammonia it contains, he is personally active ; but he remains just as good a chemist whatever the amount of ammonia in the sample may prove to be. But consider a matter where efficiency and self-respect forbid an attitude of impartial judgment, for example, a man's relation towards the political party with which he acts. Mere intellectual reasoning will not do here. A politician must have faith in his leaders, in their wisdom and courage, faith in the value of the party principles, faith in the future of the party. If his faith has no foundation, if the leaders are incompetent, the party principles effete, the party itself doomed to speedy extinction, then he is a fool or knave for having stayed in it so long. It is an insult to ask

a politician what is his impartial judgment about his party ; just as it is an insult to a husband to ask him if he really thinks his wife a lady worthy of honour. The politician must believe in his party, or he cannot be an efficient and self-respecting politician. It is hardly necessary to enumerate the things about which a man should have faith ; they are simply all the things about which he must be in earnest. A man must have faith in himself, in his importance, capacity, the goodness of his way of life and chances of success ; in his wife and family ; and in every institution and object to which his loyalty is due.

This is the main principle ; we believe without full scientific proof when belief is necessary to the efficacy of our action and when action is necessary to our welfare. But there are obvious qualifications : reasoning and reflection have their place in action, though a subordinate one. Reasoning is, at the least, a lantern to guide the feet of action. And a lantern may be used, not merely to tell us whither we are moving, but whether we are moving at all. Even the most keenly active minds have their moods of discouragement. At such times reasoning cheers us with its feeble though not altogether ineffectual taper ; it proves to us that things are right though for the time we cannot feel them right. It enables us to hold our ground at least till the force of faith returns.

§ 14. Let us apply these considerations to religion. The first question which the doubter must put before himself is whether he has need of religion. Does he find life entirely satisfactory without it? If he does, then let him go no farther. We have no more right to bully the unreligious man into religion than to bully the tone-deaf man into concert-going. But if the agnostic can imagine a God such that all our better nature will be strengthened by believing in him, such that man's life will gain a nobler and a wider outlook, that our courage will be braced and our curiosity sharpened, that the petty fears and annoyances which beset us will lose their sting, that a deeper significance will be felt through every act of our human drama—if the postulation of such a God would make the agnostic better satisfied with life, then he does need religion. And what a man has a wholesome and genuine need for he is right in trying to obtain. Just as there are good men who live well without family or without care for the commonwealth, so, if we may trust common experience, men may lead good lives without religion. But they are a minority: for the majority religion is a great and permanent need.

Religion, as has been said before, is a practical affair; it is not a creed, or a formula, or an expression of merely intellectual assent; it is a certain way of acting, a certain way of conducting life in respect

to its wider issues. And thus the conditions of success are similar to those of other activities. To be successful in religion, to possess full religious efficiency one must believe strongly in the fundamental principles of religion. There is some amount of intellectual proof for these principles; but the conviction of faith must go far beyond the warrant of the intellectual proof if it is to be effective.

What, then, is this intellectual proof of religion? It seems to consist mainly of two arguments, the Argument from Design, and the Argument from Success. Put shortly they amount to this, that the existence of goodness in the world proves the existence of a superhuman Source of goodness, and that the general success of good conduct indicates that the world has been constructed with the purpose of favouring the good. No one was ever converted to religion by these arguments as mere pieces of reasoning: they can only be appreciated in relation to doing; for neither the existence nor the success of goodness comes home to our minds except by doing good things. But they have their use in supporting the religious man in his days of lassitude and dejection.

§ 15. Faith is confidence in success, and success is the establishment of faith. The more success the life of free religion brings us the firmer becomes our confidence in its principles. Thus do we break the old and evil connection between religion and failure.

We must cease to think that the foolishness of the world is the wisdom of God, that man learns more and becomes more fully assured of God the weaker and more foolish he is. What we need rather is to dignify success. Success without religion is a hard and, generally, rather a vulgar affair : if religion be the crown of it, it becomes really worth striving for.

It may be said that this makes religion based too much upon experience : such is the voice of those who hate experience and are rooted in their distrust of the governance of the world. Faith and religion are, and ought to be, based upon experience. The most successful nations and the most successful men are the most religious : and if this is not generally recognized it is because too many of us have a mean and slavish conception of success. In periods of decay and despondency, as in the decline of the Roman Empire, we always find right religion declining—the pure radiance of right faith sinking into the smoky flare of superstition.

The pragmatic establishment of faith is the only reasonable and dignified mode of establishment. Assume that God exists, how would he desire that men should be brought to believe in him? By a bit of subtle argumentation, like St. Anselm's ? By the recorded testimony of some one long since dead that God had appeared to him ? Such trumpery proofs suffice to establish trifling things, things that appeal to a little circle of specialists, things that

count for little either way. The proof of God must be a great and noble proof, one which is honourable to God and elevating to man. We must think of the existence of God as a matter which makes a difference to us throughout, according as we accept or reject it. It is doing honour to God when a man says, 'Belief in God has made a notable difference to every energy of my life.' It is elevating to man when he establishes his belief not by a languid intellectual assent, but by personal effort and sacrifice.

§ 16. Still less can we take our religion upon any external authority. Of all the questions connected with religion none is more important than this one of authority; for we are surrounded by ancient and potent organizations preaching to us that salvation lies in authority and that the pride of independent judgment brings death and ruin. It is upon this question of authority that the sharpest contrast is disclosed between the views of orthodoxy and those which I am now advocating.

The old religions are religions of authority. A teacher alleging to be divinely inspired appears and says to men, 'You are foolish and ignorant. I will teach you what to think of God and how to worship him. Do not venture to think for yourselves. Be my sheep and come into my fold. I make a personal claim upon your allegiance. Disregard it at your peril!' This claim he bequeaths to an organization

which prosecutes and consolidates it by all the familiar arts of established and endowed priesthoods. However tolerant they may be in practice, all our established religions are intolerant in principle. In practice they may be content to live and let live; in principle they regard submission and belief as requisite to salvation.

All this is diametrically opposed to the principles of free religion. It is essential to free religious principles that men should judge for themselves what is good both in life as a whole and in religion which is an element of life. All education and training should be directed towards improving this power of judgment; it is the best thing in our intellectual life; apart from it no learning or literary brilliance has any serious value. We must protest with all our manhood against the claim of the 'inspired' teacher to be our prophet, against his effort to treat us as sheep and drive us into his fold, against the claim of priests to think for us as qualified experts in matters of religion.

§ 17. We must protect our right of private judgment in religion because religious efficiency depends upon it. This will be plain if we familiarise ourselves with the view of religion as an activity or as a practical attitude towards life. In regard to conduct it is a truism to say that men are keen in proportion as they act upon their own initiative, judgment, and responsibility. This applies to every

sort of work—to picture-painting, to nation-governing, and to boot-making. It is a fundamental character of human nature to be keen about these things that are forms of self-expression. Another man's ideals, another man's plans, another man's thoughts have for us no more than a second-hand value. When we give up our judgment, it is in matters where we either act not at all or are content to act listlessly. We defer to experts in mining and ballooning because those enterprises are foreign to us : the man devoid of taste defers to the judgment of the connoisseur ; he decorates his house according to another's taste ; he buys pictures which he is told are good ; he lets others judge for him because he has no effective judgment of his own.

The doctrine that there are religious experts who have the right to tell us how to think and act in religion is, to borrow for a moment the language of orthodoxy, a dangerous deceit and damnable error. It is an expression of the great malign principle of tyranny, a principle as old and universal as human nature itself, a principle which will always exist and need fighting against as long as there are strong men who do not know what strength is good for. The acceptance of such a doctrine means that people cease to be religious in the right sense of the term. They may be attached to their church because they want an object on which to lavish loyalty, or because its services give scope to an exalted mood of mystic

devotion, or because it justifies a morbid appetite for self-abasement and mortification, or for motives that command our sympathy even less than these. But right religion, free religion, is impossible to people who entrust their judgment and conscience to another's keeping.

The proper use of authority in religion is to serve as an example of performance. No true artist copies his predecessors ; but they show him how the thing has been done. Thus great religious lives are monuments of religious success. They are indispensable to those who come after for encouragement and inspiration.

§ 18. The same question may be raised in a more abstract form by asking what is the standard of value in religion ? How do we know when we attain success in religion ? When we refuse to surrender ourselves to the alleged expert what is it that we rely on ? Is there any objective criterion ? The answer is that we must rely each upon his own judgment and that there is no objective criterion. Indeed what objective criterion could there be ? Suppose that a code of abstract rules were offered to us—could we accept it without criticism ? Suppose we are referred to the example of some actual life —can any man's life be imitated blindly ? And if criticism be applied to details can it be kept away from principles ? The criterion of value is the personal affirmation.

But, it will be asked, is not the personal affirmation liable to be mistaken? Of course it is. And if the individual is utterly distrustful of his own judgment then he had better give up the religious life altogether, and bow his knee in any house of Rimmon that may happen to be nearest him. But, if he means to be rightly religious, then he must judge for himself and take the risk of failure. Doubtless the risk is considerable, but it is only the traditions of a slavish superstition that make it terrible. The God of orthodoxy threatens eternal torment to all who think about him otherwise than as the official dogma commands. Why live any longer under these degrading fears? Why think of God as capable of conduct which in man would be cruel and narrow-minded tyranny? The risk we run is simply that of failure in the religious life: and religion, though a great and good thing, is not vital to individual welfare.

§ 19. The nearest approach we have to an objective criterion is the standard which is approved by the consensus of society: and the validity of that varies largely in different matters. It is greatest where success or failure makes a great difference to personal welfare—such as morals and the forms of conduct to be observed in social intercourse: it is very weak in matters, such as taste in dress, where very wide variations have no effect upon welfare. Religion stands somewhere between these two

extremes; it makes a considerable difference to welfare, but not so much as to give us confidence that what the majority approve is right.

Moreover, there are special reasons which impair the confidence we might otherwise feel in the judgments of society about religion. One is the natural conservatism of men in religion, which makes them loth to discard obsolete ideas. Another is the fact that men are built more or less in water-tight compartments, so that their professed religion bears very little relation to their actual conduct. Another is the historical relation of the northern nations to the old civilization: the Gothic and Frankish barbarians had no more power of criticizing Christian ideas than have the Polynesians of to-day; right down to the time when the Revival of Learning put us on something like a level with Greece and Rome our countrymen accepted Christian ideas as belonging to a superior civilization. Then we must consider the quasi-fascinative or hypnotic power possessed by ideas; a system of striking ideas once firmly established has an extraordinary influence over the minds which come within its range: and the lower the level of general culture the less able is the individual to hold against this influence. Finally, we must take account of a cause closely connected with that just mentioned and one which is hardly ever fully appreciated, the poverty of our stock of ideas. Few people, beside those who have devoted

themselves to speculative studies, realise what a small number of ideas there are in the world, and how limited is man's power of invention in the higher departments of intelligence. A notion is current that when an idea is wanted it forthwith makes its appearance. Nothing is more plainly refuted by the facts of history. Consider the decline of ancient Greece and the decline of the Roman Empire — there, if anywhere, ideas were needed; and yet the right ideas were not produced. This is merely an illustration of the barrenness of the human mind drawn from an alien field. To illustrate the same point from contemporary philosophizing would be only too easy, but would carry us far away into technical discussion. Only let no one argue that, if no new religious ideas appeared during the nineteenth century, therefore no new ideas were required. That implies a faith in our creative powers such as history does not countenance. I contend that at any time during the last hundred years new religious ideas have been most urgently needed. They have not appeared simply because no one has thought of them.

Altogether the argument that a religion which is established must be right is a very precarious one: it might have been used at the Christian era in favour of the continuance of paganism, and it might be used now in China and India against the Christian missionaries. Christianity is established in England, but

there is considerable doubt whether it really represents the religious convictions of the majority : certainly it does not represent the convictions of the best and most representative class of Englishmen. In any case we must maintain the independence of our judgment in the face of whatever consensus of social authority. It is of individual judgments that the consensus itself is formed.

§ 20. Much is said in edifying books of the fervency of the Christian's faith ; and no doubt that faith was fervent in the days when the basic ideas of Christianity were still congenial to men's minds : but, surely, the faith of free religion should be much stronger, in so far as it is an inspiration to conduct. How much more invigorating is this faith than the faiths of religions that take a pessimistic view of man. Buddhism believes that life is bad, but has faith that God will in the end give peace by extinguishing consciousness : Christianity believes that man is wretched and sinful, but has faith that God will save him. Buddhism is a gospel of annihilation, and Christianity a gospel of salvation. How much more inspiring should be a gospel of cosmic progress through personal exertion. So dreary and servile is the Christian outlook on the universe that one doubts whether anybody now can really have earnest faith in it, as faith has been defined in the preceding pages. It is easy to understand how the Christian may feel intense loyalty to his church as an institution ; or

may glow with devotion to the idealized figure of Christ; or may feel perfectly convinced that men so good and great as the Christian saints could not have been on the wrong path. But is it possible at this period of history, in the full daylight of English civilization, for any one to feel that the doctrines of human depravity and divine salvation hearten us up for the conduct of life? Let us search our hearts and try to think clearly. Have we really got faith in our established religion? And, if not, is it not time we gave it up and made trial of another?

CHAPTER IV

A NEW THEOLOGY

§ 1. THE new theologies that have been put forward in recent years do not deserve much credit for novelty: they are merely the old theology with a few of the worst absurdities missed out. A theology which would be genuinely new must make a more serious effort to represent the better spiritual tendencies of the age.

The relation between theology and religion has been indicated in the previous chapter. Religion is practical, theology is theoretical. Not that the distinction is an absolute one: religion, even in the simplest mind, cannot be quite unreflective; while every piece of theology makes, or might make, a difference to practice. But, broadly speaking, the distinction holds. Thus a man's theology should be a theoretical statement or theoretical deduction from his effective convictions: if he lives by the principles of free religion, he ought to hold a free theology. I know that this 'ought' is not always, perhaps not

often, realised: it is the commonest thing to find men whose theology is utterly at variance with their religion. But that is a misfortune. It belongs to a stage of uncritical thoughtlessness which, we may hope, is being left behind.

§ 2. This is not perhaps a new conception of theology; but the consistent application of it would put the study into a position very different from what it occupies at present. Faust, the typical polymath of the Middle Ages, enumerating the sciences which he has mastered—Philosophy, Law, and Medicine—adds, with a groan, Theology. Now why should an intelligent though unpractical student mention theology with a groan? Why should theology have come into a byword for wearisome futility and unreality? This seems to be the reason. In churches there is an inevitable element of conservatism which prevents men from recognizing explicitly the actual changes which time produces in religion; and this natural conservatism is greatly intensified by the opposition of established priesthoods to change in doctrines which have become associated with their intellectual and material interests. Thus theology tends to lag far, indeed many centuries, behind religion. Now, religious ideas which have an effective life in men's minds are always worth study. Take some that are familiar—a suffering God, a God born of woman, a God eaten by his worshippers—these to the people among whom they

sprang into existence were natural beliefs, even possessing a kernel of philosophic truth. There is no finer material for the historian of culture than such beliefs when treated by the methods of modern anthropology; but as treated by orthodox theology they become the dreariest unrealities. Readers will remember how Professor Frazer's great anthropological study, *The Golden Bough*, starts with an account of a most curious piece of savage religion surviving into civilized times, the priesthood of Nemi, a priesthood which was held by its occupant till a successor managed to slay him. Now imagine this treated theologically as representing something that has actual validity and should command the reverence of civilized men. Imagine the shuffling, the ignoring of patent facts, the distortion of history, the baseless assumptions, the wearisome disingenuous argumentation, the utter want of humour, the pedantic blindness to actual human motives and meanings—that is the stuff that orthodox theology consists of. The degradation of theology may be measured by the epithet that is thought most honourable to theologians, a *learned* theologian. What a deadly stigma is, all unconsciously, affixed by that term of praise! Who cares to be thought learned whose converse is with vital realities? A learned engineer, a learned poet, a learned philosopher —could any epithet be crueller? We can only save theology as a science by bringing it to intimate

relation with real things, by making it interpret what men actually believe and feel. If this could only be done, and all those fearful contorted masses of pedantry and sophistry be flung into oblivion, how vast a load would be lifted from the mind of humanity! Theology would take its rightful place as the noblest and most bracing of spiritual adventures.

§ 3. And not an adventure merely, but a work in the highest degree useful and salutary. For, if we can form any probable conception of the life of God, it will be an example for our own life, so far as the conditions allow us to carry it out. Suppose that we see reason to believe that God's life is one of self-effectuation, of progressive enrichment by means of the world which he governs, then, surely, man's life cannot be otherwise; it cannot be a life of self-negation, of self-impoverishment, of refusal to use the riches of the world that come within our power. Those who maintain the contrary have it upon their hands to show that God, who wishes his life to be of a certain quality, wishes that his creature man should have a life of opposite quality; and that, whereas he might be an example to us, he is rather a warning of what we ought to avoid: and they would have to reconcile this apparent perversity and contempt for our need of guidance with the alleged beneficence of the Deity.

If a right theology is useful we cannot be pre-

sumptuous to undertake it. There is no presumption in trying to understand the general character of God and his relation to the world. Every benevolent intelligence desires that it should be understood; to wrap oneself in mystery is the vanity of petty and despotic minds. Those who sneer at any attempt to form a system of rational dogma expose themselves to the counter-reproach of intellectual cowardice and pessimism.

Let us therefore follow our instinct boldly; for theologizing has been an instinct in the better sort of minds from the earliest ages of culture downwards. It is not likely we should have this instinct if the use of it were not conducive to our welfare.

§ 4. The basis and the starting-point of what I take to be a right theology have been explained in the two preceding chapters. The basis is the general tendency of the age to think highly of man, as opposed to the old depreciation and self-abasement. The old religion regarded pride and self-reliance as the root of sin, and man as a worm in the dust, a miserable castaway who by a primitive act of disobedience had debased and defiled himself so utterly that an unexampled sacrifice on God's part was necessary to reclaim him. So far from his doing good to the cosmos, all else that God has made is good and only man is vile. We must turn our back on all that before we can think of attaining a right theology. The right starting-point is the

religious conviction that man has an exalted cosmic function, the conviction which may be shortly expressed in the phrase that man is the helper of God.

Starting thus, theology is to be developed by the method of pragmatism, by which I mean that in all its development as in its starting-point reference is had to utility. The cardinal principle—man the helper of God—was established, it will be remembered, by showing that it is salutary: and so any theological doctrine may be considered as adequately established if it is either salutary itself or follows from some other salutary doctrine. It is only necessary to remember that one of the conditions of welfare is acceptance of the facts of science.

The same principle will be a guide in selecting the topics of theological discussion. Every question will be discussed with relation to human welfare. If no relation is discernible, then the question may be left aside. What a difference it would have made to theology if this pragmatic method had been observed in the past.

For certain speculative purposes it might be necessary to develop theological doctrines much farther than this chapter attempts to do. My present purpose requires no more than a very slight sketch of main principles. This restriction of inquiry is itself an application of the principle of utility.

§ 5. *A Jove principium*—Let us begin by con-

sidering what theological conception of the Power Beyond harmonizes with the principles of free religion set forth in the preceding chapter.

I will begin with a proposition which to my mind has almost self-evident truth, though I know from experience that some minds will receive it with surprise and even with ridicule : it is, that God has function. In current theology God either has no function or, if he has, performs it badly. The whole of Christian theology is based on the assumption that God blundered in his creation of man, and that his subsequent dealings with man form a continuous effort to regain lost ground. But this, when we think it out, is a degrading theology. God must not be conceived as existing merely to repair his own mistakes. He must have a substantive function in regard to the universe in general and to man in particular. To deny this is to imply that in relation to the world God is useless or even mischievous.

And if God has function he must have purpose. Function means doing something which has part in an intelligible scheme ; and to frame a scheme and proceed to execute it is what we mean by purpose.

And if he has purpose he must have power, power to execute his purpose. We cannot imagine a God who has purpose, but no power to execute the purpose.

It is useless to say that God has purpose unless

we form some idea of what that purpose is: it is not intelligible to affirm that an agent has purpose but that we are utterly unable to imagine what the purpose can be. We can think of only one aim which God can have, the increasing of his welfare. His functioning in relation to the universe and to man must be a mode of gaining welfare which he cannot or does not gain otherwise.

§ 6. These considerations lead inevitably to a proposition that is sure to be bitterly opposed, though I believe it to be essential to a right theology; it is that we must give up the static conception of God for a conception which is dynamic and kinetic. The orthodox theology asserts that God has power; and yet that he is incapable of change, his experience is complete, and nothing can make any difference to him. But the two things are plainly incompatible. If power is exercised it must make a difference, not only to the object upon which it is exercised, but also to the agent who exercises it: he must get something by exercising the power which he does not get otherwise. The only way in which we can imagine power to be exercised without making any change is when the agent represses some intrinsic tendency to change and maintains the *status quo*, as when a man calms his rising passion or keeps a heavy stone in place by pushing against it. But there is no possible motive for attributing this sort of power to God.

We should have to think of the world as tending to deteriorate or disintegrate, and God as operating like a fixing-solution to keep it the same. This is not an honourable function ; at least, not one in which man would desire to share.

We must, then, give up the doctrine that God is incapable of change. We must apply in theology the evolutionary principles that have transformed the other sciences. We must think of God as developing, and as exercising power upon the universe for the purpose of promoting his development ; and we must think of the world in general and of man in particular as contributing to the development.

To recognize that God must change is not lowering to our conception of God. Motion is not inconsistent with stability. From mechanics we are familiar with the facts of moving equilibrium. And in the sphere of human character stability has nothing to do with inertia. A man gets praise for stability of character when his purposes are continuous and he works continuously to realise them.

A more formal objection may be adduced by the old theology. It will be said that a Deity who changes must necessarily fall short of the perfection which we are bound to attribute to him : for at any given stage he is imperfect when compared with the stage that succeeds. But, like most formal arguments, the apparent cogency of this rests upon

verbal ambiguity, upon a misuse of the term 'perfection.' When we call any thing or person perfect, we always mean perfect in some definite sense—"perfect as mother, wife, and queen": of absolute or indefinite perfection we can form no idea; if used at all, the phrase has merely rhetorical significance. When, therefore, we apply the term to God we ought not to use it indefinitely; we ought to mean perfection in respect of the performance of the divine function. Now, so far as we are able to conceive this function, it must consist in sustaining, managing, and advancing the world. At any given time, we may assume, God performs the function perfectly: but, as the world grows, there will be a corresponding growth in the divine consciousness. Thus God is always perfect yet never the same; he is a moving perfection. That there is no difficulty in the thought of a moving perfection we may see from a common example. There are men so happily constituted for social intercourse that we could not wish them different at any stage of their lives. From childhood to old age their character changes, but their perfection endures.

§ 7. Is God to be thought of as personal or impersonal? It is to questions like these that the pragmatic method is most applicable, and it is this method only which will lead us to satisfactory answers. On the whole it is plainly more to our

advantage that God should be personal. The pantheist declares that everything is God. Does he gain anything by this? Does it do him any good to believe that every stick and stone and bit of mud is a piece of the Deity? On the other hand it is most desirable that we should think of God as having the faculties of intelligent purpose, moral preference and appreciation of beauty. The possession of these faculties is just what we mean by personality, or, at least, we only know them as possessed by persons.

On the other hand there is every reason for not attributing to God the limitations of human personality: we need not suppose that the separateness of God from man is anything like the separateness of one human person from another. No human person can share directly in the consciousness of any other, and it is essential to human personality both in its excellence and its defect that this separateness should be maintained. But we need not suppose that this condition extends to God: God's consciousness may be an including consciousness; he may be able to share directly in the experience of finite selves. We require indeed some such conception for understanding the helping of God by man: the helping becomes more effectual if what passes in human consciousness can have immediate effect upon the divine.

Similarly, the assertion of God's personality does not mean that he exists deistically in clear separation

from the world. He may pervade it in every part, and we have a right to believe that he does so pervade it, if that belief is for our welfare and does not conflict with any belief still more important. There is no reason why a theist should not be a pantheist also in the Wordsworthian sense, no reason why he should not appropriate to himself all the emotion of the Tintern Abbey poem.* These are obvious qualifications of the doctrine of divine personality; and, as we go on, we shall find it expedient to attribute personality to God only in a sense far short of what is required by orthodox theology.

§ 8. In his dealing with the world God must show intelligent purpose. Its creation (to use for a moment the common phrase) must have been an intelligent act, meant, we can only suppose, to further the divine welfare. And this design must have been successful; we cannot think that God meant the world for his good, but blundered so grossly in its making that it redounded to his injury. Had he wished to make the world perfect at a stroke doubtless he could have done so. But, as it is, he has chosen that the perfecting should be a gradual process still going on. As evolution progresses we must suppose that the world increases in helpfulness to God and that the growing wealth and beauty of organic forms gives satisfaction to the divine consciousness. To our human minds the early primrose

each succeeding spring brings joy almost as though it were a messenger from a brighter world. We must suppose that God also rejoices when he sees that his world is good.

Above all, man must be a source of satisfaction to God. This is hardly the place to enter upon a digression to show that man, though physically inconsiderable, is the most important element of the world as we know it. It is enough to point out that he has above all creatures the gift of intelligent consciousness and a unique power of initiative. What the other creatures do for God they do blindly: man alone can work of set purpose. All that is valuable in man, all elements of human progress, must conduce to the satisfaction of God. To suppose the contrary, to suppose that human strength, beauty, knowledge, and virtue are indifferent to God or arouse his envy is to sink back to the lower levels of barbarian religion.

§ 9. To believe that God receives benefit from the world does not, of course, prevent us from believing that he confers benefit upon it; in our human experience the two things are correlative: a man who devotes himself to managing an institution both gives and receives. Reflection upon the divine benevolence suggests an answer to the ancient question, Why did God create the world? In its common form the question is a bad one; for it implies that in the beginning God was alone and

that the world was a subsequent creation. We ought rather to take the view that God is unthinkable without a world to care for. Such a view would enable us to carry farther the parallelism between the divine life and the human. All the higher life of man is impossible without objective interests : a life of absolute egoism is not merely reprehensible but impossible.

The benevolence of God is so fully recognized in current theology that we need not dwell long upon it. There are, however, various ways of asserting it, and we ought to be careful to choose the most salutary. It is not salutary to try to prove that God is good by pointing to the various forms of his bounty which we may enjoy with no exertion of our own. No real gratitude is ever felt for such bounties: experience shows that no one is ever touched by unsought gifts, unless there is some close personal relation to the giver. God's benevolence ought to be regarded as an encouragement to action and as a reward of success. A man who is trying to do something good ought to believe that the world is arranged so as to favour him : and the more successful he is the more does he obtain the comfortable assurance that there is a beneficent power behind the world.

If it be said that this puts our belief in God's benevolence on too empirical a footing, I would answer that it ought to be empirical. If a prudent

man engaged on good enterprises found things so arranged that his enterprises continually failed he cannot reasonably be expected to keep his faith in the divine benevolence unimpaired.

§ 10. To what degree must we say that God is benevolent? Plainly only so far as conduces to our welfare. It is not salutary to believe that God is infinitely benevolent to men: we should not do well to act upon such an assumption. We live under a sterner governance than that: there are terrible penalties for incompetence and apathy.

When it touches upon the subject of God's benevolence the orthodox theology thinks no language too warm and no imagery too poignant. It gathers all the softer elements of human kindness and combines them into an ideal object which is held aloft for our adoration. I admit that there is a certain emotional satisfaction in prostrating oneself before such an object, not unlike the pleasure of listening to pathetic music. Those who like to indulge in emotion without troubling much how they get it may adhere to orthodoxy. But can they seriously and effectively believe that we are governed on tender principles when they face the facts around them? They will not persuade a town just wrecked by earthquake or a man suffering from cancer in the face that the love which God shows to man is like a human father's love.

Observe, I do not say that God does not love

men like a father : I only say that he does not show it. It may be that his actual mode of dealing is after all the truest kindness ; that the stern discipline under which we have grown and shall grow is after all the best. Perhaps anything milder would have had the weakening influence that 'coddling' has upon children. It is not the races who have enjoyed the kindliest climates that have done best.

It cannot even be said that our discipline grows milder as civilization advances : it is very doubtful whether civilization does decrease suffering. Human power increases undoubtedly, but with it the liability to pain.[1] Apparently the lowest organisms do not suffer at all : the lower animals suffer less than the higher : the diseases of savages are much simpler than ours ; their affections less easily wounded ; economic injuries affect them less. Man is like a climber scaling a steep mountain ; as he rises his view enlarges ; he looks down upon those below him : but the danger of a slip is more terrible. We buy our culture at the cost of the gravest personal liabilities.

§ 11. We come now to what is for us by far the most important part of theology, the manner in which man should bear himself towards God : it is

[1] This was written before the appearance of Mr. Wm. Benett's *Ethical Aspects of Evolution*, in which the doctrine that with the progress of evolution pleasure and pain increase side by side is set forth with much power and wealth of illustration.

this that makes the greatest difference to all the part of religion that has influence upon conduct. One side of the matter is made sufficiently plain in current religious systems; it is that man being God's creature owes him reverence and worship. But the other side of the matter, which is no less important for practice, is usually conceived quite wrongly. It is the fault of the old religion that it takes a servile view of the relation of man to God. As a familiar instance I might mention the customary superscription of the Popes prefixed to their official pronouncements: *Pius episcopus servus servorum Dei*—that expresses the spirit which seems to me utterly wrong. Man should stand up before God as a free co-operator in God's work. To think of him as God's slave is both degrading to man and dishonourable to God.

In developing this position I must first say what we are to understand by the term 'free.' The mere dictionary meaning of freedom as absence of restraint is nothing to the point: in this sense a cat or a vagabond is the type of freedom. The only worthy sense of freedom is freedom to do, to produce something that the agent apprehends as valuable. Imagine a world in which the opposite conviction prevailed; imagine men suddenly convinced that they were as fatally determined as billiard-balls, then, surely, all their higher activities would cease. Belief in the possibility of creation is undoubtedly the mainspring of art: the true artist is always convinced that he is

doing new things, realising new forms of beauty. It is the same in the moral life: every new mother's love is a love that never existed before; it may be like the loves of other mothers, but it cannot be the same; it must come from her heart and hers alone.

As commonly defined moral freedom is the correlate of responsibility: to be free means the same as being liable to punishment. At a certain stage of culture this was an aspect of freedom which was doubtless important to insist upon: but it is a stage which we ought to have left far behind. When people who have never been free first come to emancipation it is expedient to impress upon them that they will be punished if they abuse their freedom. People who have long been free take this for granted. What we need rather is to take freedom as a stimulating principle. It should be a principle of hope, not a principle of fear.

§ 12. If man has power to create he must have freedom both as against God and against the laws of material force. If God does everything and man nothing, then man is evidently superfluous and his independent existence illusory. To attribute everything to God certainly has an imposing sound—"when Me they fly I am the wings; I am the doubter and the doubt, and I the hymn the Brahmin sings." But soberly considered it means that man is a puppet and God a puppet-master. Moreover,

it makes things so meaningless. Why did God let the Brahmin think he was singing the hymn, when he was really singing it himself?

And upon the other side our conviction of freedom needs safeguarding no less: we must stand up against the arguments of those who hold that man is not free, but is impelled fatally by material forces. This is a mere prejudice of minds which have moved so long in one form of science that they can understand no other. Call it spontaneity or what you will, there is a quality in human action that is not seen in the behaviour of the things that are studied by natural science. We cannot deal successfully with men unless we recognize their power of doing things against our will and against the pressure of material circumstances. This puts human character and action outside the grasp of natural science. And yet not outside the grasp of science altogether. We have science wherever we can trace system, and the non-spontaneous natural-science systems are not the only ones. Let me illustrate the point from the arts: an imaginative picture, if it is truly artistic, has system, though not of the same kind as an arrangement of mechanical forces. Mechanical systems are systems fixed and settled once for all: a human system is one that was made by the agent. Seeing the artistic system as a completed whole we can trace the interconnection of the parts: but we could have made no scientific prediction about it,

because we cannot know to the bottom the consciousness by which the system is produced. And so of the course of a man's life: when it has been lived we can recognize it as systematic; but it was a system which the man made as he went along. Our science of man-made systems is retrospective not predictive.

§ 13. The sections that follow have bearing upon the great question of the personality of God, of which some mention has already (§ 7) been made in this chapter. The only fruitful way of discussing such a question is to take it in its relation to practice.

Can we be called upon to love God with the love which we give to a personal friend? Surely not. If God does not show to us the love of a father, we cannot feel any natural craving to love him as sons. Using the term love in its exact and proper sense I doubt the mental healthiness of the man who *loves* God in the same way as he ought to love the human persons who are nearest to him. In the records of mysticism we are told of saints in whom the love of God has been an all-absorbing passion: but the type of character there disclosed does not seem to be one which is useful for the conditions of the modern civilized world. Undoubtedly the devout man's sentiment towards God will be strong and deep; but I think we want another term than love for it. Perhaps 'trust' is best: "though he slay

me, yet will I trust in him." There is so much that is good in the world that we may have confidence that things are good upon the whole.

Nor can we be called upon to take God for a moral example: "ye therefore shall be holy, for I am holy." A moment's thought will show how limited is the sense in which God can be an example to man. Man's virtue lies mainly in human relationships; we have no warrant for thinking that divine relationships (if any) resemble ours. It is often urged as an argument for a trinitarian theology that it enables us to think of God as having internal relationships and so as having an existence analogous to that of man. But can the relations between the persons of a divine Trinity be anything like those of human family and citizenship? Can a Son "begotten from everlasting" be a son in any way analogous to human sonship? The life of God can only be an example to us in the very general sense that we must suppose it to be a life of self-effectuation through objective interests such as human life ought to be.

§ 14. One of the first questions which the religious man will ask when he hears that a new theology is being put forward is, 'Does it admit of prayer?' How this question is answered depends on what is meant by prayer. In the primitive meaning it is a petition for certain benefits such as a change of weather, or strength to resist temptation.

These two examples are not exactly of the same kind, one is an interference with the course of physical nature, the other an influence exerted upon a human mind. Now it would be absurd to assert dogmatically that either is impossible, that God could not interfere to make rain fall to-morrow, or help a man to keep his hands from picking and stealing. The question is whether such interference is conducive to our truest welfare. The changes of the weather are at present for the most part beyond human science. But surely it is more for our interest that the changes should follow definite laws and that the science of meteorology should progress, rather than that individual men should be able to influence God to make changes outside the laws. No doubt we should like to have it both ways—to be able to influence the course of Nature by prayer for our advantage, while not interfering with scientific comprehension : but at present there is nothing to show that the two things are compatible. In regard to the other sort of divine interference, that whereby human volition is acted on, one cannot speak so emphatically. The question is whether it is more salutary for a man to stand by his own strength or to get into the habit of looking elsewhere for support. The matter resolves itself into a difference of temperaments, the difference between the self-reliant and the clinging. I see no reason why each party should not preserve its opinion. I would only

deprecate the stigma which is at present placed upon the self-reliant by the non-self-reliant party.

There is one sense of prayer which is not open to any of these objections, I mean the sense in which it is a meditation on God and on man's position in reference to God. Without being a petition for particular blessings it may be an expression of thankfulness for what we enjoy in the world, a retrospect of the good past and anticipations of a better future, in short, it will be an articulate expression of the religious spirit generally. Private prayer and common prayer in this sense of the term will always be essential to the spiritual life.

Prayer, then, is valuable ; but its value must not be overestimated. In this connection it is fair to appeal to certain well-known facts. It is not the nations who pray most that do best and rise superior in difficult emergencies. In choosing comrades for any difficult adventure we should not give special preference to men who spent much time in earnest prayer. Many men have lost their lives by praying when they ought to have been up and doing. Even if it comes to the worst and death is inevitable it is better to die fighting than to die praying. Somewhere in Luther's life it is recorded that his wife asked him, " How is it that when we were in the old religion our prayers were so frequent and fervent, whereas they are now so few and cold ? " The proper answer, of course, is that fervency and frequency

of prayer is no test of proficiency in the spiritual life.

§ 15. By far the most important for practice of the aspects of the doctrine of divine personality is that of Sin. Sin is also the most important element of orthodox theology. This is quite natural, indeed inevitable. Orthodox religion, as currently understood for practice, is a religion of fear and subjection : it is pre-occupied with the fear of incurring the divine displeasure. I propose now to examine the conception of sin with the purpose of deciding whether it should be retained in a free theology. Is it salutary that wrongdoing should be regarded as sin, that is, as a personal affair between God and man?

§ 16. In arguing this question of sin it is very important that our ideas should be definite : there is no subject that lends itself more fatally to vague edificatory declamation. Let us begin, then, with an attempt to analyze the current conception of sin. The conception seems to arise from the belief that there is a relation of personal loyalty between God and man. God is regarded as a personal master who lays down laws and claims allegiance from his servants : the saints are the loyal, the sinners the disloyal. The conception of sin is parallel to the medieval conception of treason : the sinner is a kind of traitor. By his act of treachery the sinner becomes tainted. He is alienated from God, who regards him with displeasure and casts him out from favour.

Finally, divine punishment falls upon him, if not in this world, certainly in the next.

§ 17. If this be a true analysis I would maintain that the conception of sin rests upon a false foundation : as a matter of fact men do not stand to God in the relation of servants to a personal master. By the ordinary man (for the present I leave the mystic aside) God is not apprehended with anything like the closeness of a personal master : we do not see his presence or receive his direction when in doubt, or hear his voice in praise or blame ; he issues no commandments to us as he is said to have done on Sinai. Our conception of God is not definite or concrete enough to support the alleged relation of personal loyalty. In understanding this matter a simile may help us, if it is not understood too literally or pressed too far. God's lordship over us is something like the lordship of the British sovereign power in England over an intelligent peasant child in India. The Indian child hears of that power under the symbol, it may be, of the British King : the power affects him, it is indeed one of the great enveloping facts of his existence. But the laws that concern him directly are those of his family and village : his allegiance is all due to those purely local authorities. It would be absurd and even pernicious to try to work upon his mind by preaching to him about the approval or disapproval of the power far across the seas.

All this holds good for the ordinary man: with the mystic it is otherwise. The claim of the Christian mystic is that he does enjoy personal communion with God. This may be so, and, if it be so, that is only one more reason for thinking that there is no single form of religion which is suitable to everybody: as a man's nature is, so must his religion be. The man who meets God face to face, the man who dwells in God and God in him, will doubtless need this personal conception of sin against which I am arguing.

§ 18. But I must protest against the assumption that the mystic is the perfect religious type to which all should approximate. Mysticism, like everything else, must submit to the pragmatic test: it can only approve itself by producing good fruit in work and character. Does mysticism as we meet with it in actual experience fulfil this test? It may be admitted that the mystic experience is capable of affording the strongest satisfaction to those who have it in full measure. This is proved by what we know of contemplative monasticism. The Trappist monk is condemned to perpetual silence, physical privation and exclusion from worldly interests: his work is monotonous and mechanical, such as can give no enjoyment to an educated man. His aim is to advance towards what Huysmans[1] calls the

[1] There is a most graphic and sympathetic account of the Trappist life in Huysmans' *En Route*. The novel is interesting as depicting an ideal of life exactly contrary to that which these pages advocate.

vie unitive, the life of mystic union with God : the pleasure of his existence lies in devotional feeling, called forth especially by the ceremonies of his Church. Many of the Trappists, according to credible accounts, attain the *vie unitive* to a degree no lower than that of the great classical mystics, such as John of the Cross and St. Theresa. But granted all this, the question arises what is the value of the experience ? To those who are committed to this way it no doubt seems supremely valuable. But how is this ecstasy better than that of the Indian fakir ? It is vain to answer that the fakir worships a false God and the Christian a true God : for in the mystic ecstasy all specific differences of theology are extinguished. The fakir is condemned by the intelligence of civilized Europe as useless and even noxious. His experience is not fine in itself, and contributes nothing of value to others. He is not an artist or a thinker ; he has no beautiful human affections ; he is not a worker in any useful work. The Trappist must show himself more fruitful than he has been hitherto if he is to escape the fakir's condemnation.

Mysticism is the hypertrophy of a sentiment which in its due measure is valuable and good, the sentiment of the Whole and of the Ruling Spirit of the universe : its basis is just that religious consciousness which in a previous chapter I argued to be an element in a complete life. To let this sentiment

absorb one's whole thought, or even to carry it to the length of supplanting one's normal human interests, is hardly less disastrous than to pamper to excess some more earthly passion.

§ 19. For the imaginary motive of loyalty to God we should substitute the real and powerful motive of loyalty to society. It is the motive which we know under the names of patriotism and public spirit; it is a motive which under the influence of a religion that favours it should attain a great expansion. The good man, moreover, is not without a sentiment of cosmic loyalty. To him the laws of life—the rules of health, the elementary conditions of personal and social welfare—are objects of reverence. They are laws to which he submits himself gladly; they lay obligation on him both by their intrinsic excellence, and because they are manifestations of a World Spirit which he believes to be personal, though its personal quality is not fully revealed to man.

And for the imaginary motive of friendship with God we should substitute the motive of social sympathy. To the ordinary man the alleged alienation of the sinner from God is a theological fiction; he never feels towards God as towards an outraged friend. But social sympathy is a most real and effective experience. I do not think that we yet understand fully how one human mind acts upon another, and how in particular people are affected

by the general tone of the society around them; but it is the chief of the external forces that make for righteousness. The way to improve society is, on the one hand, to improve its general tone; and on the other hand to ensure that all members of the community come fully under the influence of the tone. The healthiest and most natural way of laying oneself open to the influence of the social tone is by mixing freely in the active business of the world. Those who are impervious to it are men of coarse and dull character, or of recluse habits, or of a natural self-centred imperviousness such as we not unfrequently find among students who rely exclusively upon reasoning and thereby make themselves objects of ridicule and pity. Every advance in the spread of education increases social sensitiveness and makes social sympathy a more effective power for good.

And to the man of reflective mind there is added a sense of cosmic harmony. Every one can see that there is a tendency in things to favour virtue, and one who thinks will recognize in this tendency the expression of a world-purpose. When such a man is doing wrong he feels a vague unhappy sense of disunion and disharmony with the cosmic scheme.

§ 20. If there is no close personal relation between God and man, then not only the idea of allegiance, but the ideas of pollution, of alienation and of punishment, are without foundation. The idea that

sin pollutes the sinner in the sight of God is by far the most effective element in the conception of sin. It has come down to us immediately from Judaism, which was full of penalties for ceremonial defilement: but the history of ancient religion shows that it has deep roots in the human mind. In the officially recognized pagan religion there was no such thing as sin; but we find it in forms of religion that had great unofficial influence. All that immense structure of Christian theology which is concerned with redemption is based on the belief that all men sin more or less, are thereby polluted and need purification.

In the ordinary homilies about sin no distinction is drawn between the various kinds of sin in respect of their polluting quality; but, as a fact, the student of society will find that with ordinary people it attaches to one sort only, sexual transgression. No one ever heard of a sane man suffering religious remorse for being harsh to his wife, or for over-reaching in business, or for getting drunk. Even scrupulous people would have little patience with a 'deep sense of sin' developed on such occasions: evidently simple reformation is enough to set the matter right. The work that the idea of religious pollution has done in the history of European morals has been to attach religious horror to misdeeds that the pagan world tended to regard as venial.

We need not go far to seek the reason why this

particular piece of ceremonialism has endured notwithstanding the general tendency to eliminate ceremonialism from morals and religion. People see that mundane motives are adequate to control other sorts of vice. Avarice is intensely unpopular, drunkenness directly pernicious and disgusting. But sexual incontinence, though pernicious, is pernicious indirectly and is difficult to detect and punish : its prohibition, therefore, seems to need a supernatural reinforcement.

§ 21. Whatever we may think of the idea that God punishes sin, it deserves at least respectful discussion. The personal God of love is too often, I fear, nothing but a commonplace of sermons ; the God of wrath is a terrible reality to multitudes.

But is the idea really efficacious for any useful purpose ? Undoubtedly the fear of God's anger sharpens remorse ; but is remorse of much avail in keeping a man straight when temptation recurs ? Those who believe in its efficacy must think that men who cannot be frightened by earthly penalties will fear the supernatural. But is this justified by experience ? Surely the history of law, in particular of English criminal law, shows that mere increase in the severity of punishment does not repress crime. In the present case the result is that a number of sensitive people, the people who are most manageable, quail with terror ; but the hardy offenders laugh at the threats of religion.

And in some respects, moreover, the idea does positive harm. Surely it is essential to moral progress that the sense of responsibility should be fostered in every way, both responsibility for one's individual action and for that of the community in which one is a partner. Civilized communities cannot be kept together without the systematic punishment of offenders, and it is most desirable that individual and community should recognize to the full their responsibility as ministers of justice. It must weaken responsibility to hand over the business of punishment to God.

§ 22. But, it will be asked, how is moral discipline to be maintained without the conception of sin? To my mind the question suggests the Draconian legislator who despairs of society if all offences are not visited with frightful penalties; or, to use a less dignified though more effective simile, it suggests the inefficient nurse who, having been accustomed to frighten the children with bogie-tales, resents being told that her disciplinary methods are mischievous. For the preservation of discipline we must look to the ordinary human agencies of increased social sympathy and self-respect. By self-respect I mean the maintenance of a high personal ideal together with the force of character necessary to act up to it. The mischief of the conception of sin is that it lowers self-respect and checks social sympathy. To take its place we have ready to

our hand the conception of wickedness, which has not the objectionable features of the conception of sin, but yet preserves all of it that has value. The wicked man is disloyal to the principles of life, is out of harmony with the cosmic scheme, is at warfare with society, is disgusting to the well-regulated mind, and is on a path which will almost infallibly lead him to punishment and sorrow. But the conception has not the peculiar tang of ceremonialism that attaches to sin.

§ 23. It is the ceremonial element that makes sin a principle of hatred. All social progress lies in the consolidation of society and the strengthening of the ties that bind men together: the conception of sin puts division between men and weakens society. On the one side are the pure saints, favoured of God, duly performing the acts that earn divine favour; on the other side are the reprobate, hated of God, abhorrent to the righteous. Quite different from this is the spirit of the good citizen towards the offender. Both are partners in the work of society, but one is a delinquent partner needing to be chastened and stimulated to a better performance of his partnership. The reconciling social bond is always round them. The Jews of the time of Jesus are the most striking example of the way in which a fanatical devotion to the conception of sin makes a people hateful to its neighbours. The career of Jesus himself involved a fine protest against the

extreme ceremonial interpretation of sin current among the Jews: and the Gospel narrative itself furnishes the most exquisite example of the anti-social tendencies of the conception—"God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican." This is the very antithesis to the spirit in which the good man should regard the offending citizen. Here is the root of religious persecution; here is the cause that makes the effort towards a religious life result too often in alienation from one's fellow-men.

Finally, and perhaps worst of all, the conception of sin inflicts a stigma upon the physical side of humanity. 'Sin comes from the body, therefore the body is sinful,' such is the formula of asceticism: the ascetic, the self-tormentor, is obsessed by the thought of sin. In its treatment of our physical nature the position of Christianity is vastly below that of paganism. We shall never have a right theory of morals or a right theology till we recognize that the body is precious and admirable, and that physical excellence, though not the best thing in life, is one of the things that are very good. Religious asceticism is altogether bad and hateful. The only wholesome asceticism is that of the athlete and the scholar who despise indulgence because it weakens muscle and brain.

Sin, then, is a conception which should disappear from theology: the history of religion is littered

with conceptions that have been outworn and cast aside, such as the jealousy of God, the envy of God, the pleasure of God in the sufferings of his worshippers—not to go beyond conceptions that civilized men have agreed to think intolerable. At one time, no doubt, the conception had use; but whatever work it had to do seems now to be done. However that may be, there are multitudes to whose minds it is obsolete and who need a theology in which it finds no place.

§ 24. Our belief that the human consciousness survives bodily death is to be established, like other dogmas, by the consideration that it lends interest, dignity, and comfort to our present life. That it does this is so evident that one need not recapitulate the mass of reasons for believing in human immortality. It may be permitted, however, to mention one reason more special to the line of thought developed in these pages. I have argued that man's mundane work has for its cosmic function the helping of God: we can see the full result of this helping only in some future state of existence.

It will be understood that from the standpoint here advocated there is nothing to be said for pantheistic immortality, for the simple reabsorption into the One-and-All associated with Spinoza. Such an immortality offers no interesting sequel for our curiosity or love of adventure; it offers no prospect

for the further exercise of our higher affections and activities: it does not vindicate the goodness of God or reward the goodness of man. This also is so evident that it may be taken for granted. But there are considerations limiting the personal character of the immortality which we postulate.

Few people, even those who are most in love with themselves, can wish for the perpetuation of all their personal peculiarities. Dr. Samuel Johnson could hardly wish to be eternally short-tempered, short-sighted, and fond of tea. Such peculiarities are not merely external, but have the deepest influence upon a man's character and career. Health, sex, profession count for so much that the person from whom they were eliminated would cease to be recognizable to his old friends. Altogether, what an intolerable thought that we should be surrounded for ever by all the unpleasant and uninteresting features of personal human existence. In any case can we imagine personal existence without the body? Every advance in psychology shows more conclusively that the human body is absolutely indispensable to every form of consciousness that we can recognize as human.

§ 25. All that is really needful is that the future state should preserve what in us is worth preserving. There must be some continuity between the present and the future state so that we can pass without annihilation from one to the other, and we must

find again there all that was really valuable in this life.

We cannot understand how all this can be done, nor is it necessary that we should. But the relation of our dream-state to our waking state will serve as an illustration in some degree. Our dream experience is partly continuous with our waking experience; and yet the waking state is immeasurably superior in all the higher qualities. No one would want all his dreams preserved: we are quite satisfied if we remember all that is really interesting. So it may be with the next life: viewed from that vantage-ground our present life may seem absurdly trivial and incoherent. Most of our mundane experience we shall let slip from us without regret. And just as in dreams we cannot understand the waking state, so in this life we cannot understand the future life.

The probability that the next life may offer unimaginable opportunities should not make us despise this present life; it should not do more than moderate the short-sighted pride of worldly success or the bitterness of worldly defeat. The function of the conception of a future life is to dignify our present life; in which respect it is like the rest of religion: its function is emphatically not to draw us away from worldly affairs.

What people actually think about a future life is not very far different from what they ought to think; and this seems to be the main result of a

valuable inquiry undertaken some years ago by Dr. Canning Schiller.[1] On the orthodox view men ought to care little for the present world and a great deal for the next: their hearts ought to be in heaven, not in this vale of tears: other-worldliness, in the higher sense, ought to be a powerful motive of conduct. The result of Dr. Schiller's inquiry has been to show that the thought of the next world has very little influence upon the majority of people: they do not want to be extinguished or to lose dear kinsfolk, and that is nearly all. In the main this state of feeling is not unwholesome; but it may be questioned whether the general indifference has not been carried too far. One may conjecture that the Christian over-emphasis upon a future life has provoked an excessive reaction: by pretending to think too much about immortality we have come to think too little. But it seems to me that we cannot make the best of this life without viewing it as a preparation for another career, where our powers of action and of affection will be much greater than they are now and will find a much nobler and more satisfying sphere.

[1] *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, pt. xlix. (October 1904).

CHAPTER V

A HISTORICAL CRITICISM OF CHRISTIANITY

§ 1. It is an essential element of the proposals contained in this book that we should cut ourselves clear away from Christianity. What has been said in the preceding pages will be taken to show, I hope, that the general spirit and tendency of modern Christianity is opposed to right religion. But it may still be argued by Christian apologists that this is because Christianity has deviated from its original, and that we should get good guidance by reverting to primitive Christianity, the religion of Christ and his immediate followers. To refute this argument I must unwillingly make an excursion into history. The Christian apologist is wont to pose us with the question 'What think ye of Christ?' The chapter that follows is my answer.

The life and character of Jesus may be a suitable life and character to idealize and embroider upon, simply because it is all so romantic and strange to

us; though I think it a fatal mistake altogether to base religion upon the story of a life: but, viewed historically, this life and character have for us very little instruction and contain few lessons which a modern Englishman can take to heart. Told in sober story the life of Jesus brings as little edification to us as the lives of the chief Christian saints—St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Ignatius Loyola, the ideas and moving principles of whose lives belong to a stage of culture which we have left far behind.

Nor do we get any more instruction from St. Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel, who, next to the synoptics, have done most for the Christian faith. The views of Christ put forward by those two writers are not historically true; they are imaginative interpretations, dominated throughout by certain doctrinal prepossessions. And, to us, they are as foreign and unhelpful as the historical life itself.

It is on the Pauline and Johannine interpretations of the life and work of Jesus that orthodox Christian doctrine is built; and thus the common phrase, 'the historical basis of Christianity' is a fallacious one. Orthodox Christianity has no historical basis at all: its basis is imagination. The Christ of the Christian Churches has something of the same relation to the historical Jesus as the 'King Charles the Martyr' of Anglican liturgy has to the historical monarch

who tried to govern England without Parliament, and suffered decapitation as the final outcome of his political misdeeds.

I feel as certain as any one can be about a matter beyond the reach of the exact sciences that all compromise with Christianity is undesirable, and that schemes for reforming and tinkering up the old system are delusive and will end in bitter disappointment. The only manly and sensible course is to clear this obsolete religion away and begin afresh: Christians least of all ought to feel aggrieved at such a proposal, since that is the way they took with paganism. The theological ideas of Jesus were wrong, and such distinctive moral doctrines as we can get from the authentic gospels are totally unsuited to the conduct of modern lives: the Johannine theology, though hardly noxious, is null and undesirable: the Pauline theology noxious in the highest degree.

We can maintain these propositions without ceasing to esteem the personal character of Jesus and St. Paul. If we believe that human progress has religious significance, it is absurd to expect that the views of Jewish teachers of that age would be suitable to the twentieth century. Jesus was a beautiful and romantic character, from whose history we draw the general lesson that a life spent unselfishly in a great enterprise is noble and inspiring; we also draw certain minor lessons, such as the futility of ceremonial religion and morals, and of a life of conventional

respectability. We get an inspiration no less potent from a general view of St. Paul, and, one may add, from St. Francis and St. Ignatius Loyola. But this does not make Jesus, or St. Paul, or St. Francis, or St. Ignatius suitable to be the foundation of our English Church.

§ 2. Thus it becomes inevitable for the present writer, amateur in history as he is, to offer a short sketch of the history of Jesus. Fortunately, a plain statement is all that is required. There is not much need to labour in drawing lessons and deductions: the facts may be trusted to speak for themselves as soon as we can see them clearly. The difficulty is to see them clearly, partly because of the immense prestige of the authorized misinterpretations of them, partly because the facts themselves are so remote from anything in our own experience.

The average Englishman hardly realises how utterly different the life and ideas of Jesus were from ours. Such futile questions are often asked as, What would Christ do if he came to Chicago? or, intervened in the South African War? or, took up his abode in the 'third-floor back' of a Bloomsbury boarding-house? We might just as well ask what sort of lives Mr. Stead and Mrs. Cronwright-Schreiner and Mr. Jerome would have lived if they had been born in Galilee *anno domini*. The personality of Jesus, as we know it, was dominated by the extraordinary circumstances of the society into which

he was born, and is not one that can be detached from its context and imagined as moving and working in a different society. In particular the great enveloping condition of his career, the Messianic Hope of the Jews, is utterly strange to us. We can have no notion what the work of Jesus meant to him unless we understand that his whole public life from beginning to end and in every act of it was dominated by the current expectation that one was at hand who would redeem Israel.

§ 3. The Messianic Hope was intimately connected with the political and religious state of the nation, some knowledge of which is necessary before its significance can be understood. To a large extent it was, in the time of Jesus, an expression of the national spirit struggling to maintain its own very individual character against the material oppression of the Romans and against the still more dreaded encroachments of Greek civilization. In supporting this struggle the Jews were fighting against enormous odds. Palestine altogether is a very little country, rather smaller than Wales: Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee were each about the size of an average English county. The main seat of the nation, Judaea, was cut off from Galilee by the half-alien and wholly-detested Samaria. Galilee, which had become heathen, was reconquered for Judaism by the Maccabean king, Aristobulus, about a hundred years before the birth of Jesus, and was,

as may be supposed, provincial in speech and sentiment, and very mixed in race.[1] Peraea was a Jewish strip along the east of Jordan, so placed that the devout Jew could travel south from Galilee to Jerusalem without crossing the hated Samaria.

From the beginning the history of Israel had been extremely stormy, and presents the general aspect of a mountain people battling for freedom, like the Scotch and Swiss, against lowland neighbours superior in numbers and civilization. The severity of the struggle can best be shown by a simple catalogue of the chief events. In the earliest times the pressure came from the Philistines, the people inhabiting the lowland country that cut Israel off from the sea. It was their attacks that forced the Israelites, previously living as unorganized tribes, to consolidate themselves into the kingdom whose first chief was Saul: later the attacks came from the great neighbouring powers of Egypt, Syria, Assyria, and Babylonia. The northern Israelite kingdom was broken up by Assyria (*circ.* 720 B.C.); its inhabitants swept away and deprived of national existence. The southern kingdom suffered a similar fate at the hands of Babylon (587 B.C.); but many

[1] There are reasons for thinking that the inhabitants of Galilee at this time were not Semites at all, but Aryan settlers planted there by the Assyrian conqueror. See abstract of a paper by Haupt on "The Ethnology of Galilee," in *Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religion*, Oxford, 1908. Perhaps this explains why the character of Jesus diverges so remarkably from the Jewish type.

of the inhabitants were allowed to return by Cyrus fifty years later.

The Captivity made a complete break in the history of Israel: it is only after that great event that we find the government with that peculiar theocratic character, and the nation as a whole with that absorbing interest in religion which made it singular among all the nations of the earth. For about two hundred years, *i.e.* till the time of Alexander the Great, the Jews of Judaea lived in peace and complete obscurity under the government of the High Priests of the Temple, subject to the distant authority of Persia; and during this time the religious institutions of the nation took their permanent form. In 319 B.C. the king of Egypt captured Jerusalem; and thenceforward, for more than a hundred years, the Jews lived under the tolerant and enlightened suzerainty of the Ptolemies. At the end of the third century B.C. the Syrian power displaced the Egyptian in Palestine. Twenty-five years later Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C) made a vigorous and remorseless attempt to extirpate the national religion and replace it by the Greek, as part of his schemes for the complete hellenization of his empire.[1]

In the agitation caused among the Jews by this attempt a curious conflict of sentiment disclosed itself. Primitively the Jews were a warlike nation,

[1] An excellent account of this obscure period of Jewish history is given in Bevan's *Jerusalem under the High Priests.*

but under the pacific theocracy of the High Priests the accepted principles were those of non-resistance and supplication to Jehovah. At first the Jews trusted all to prayer. When the war broke out some of the more devout even let themselves be butchered rather than profane the Sabbath. It is recorded that the king's forces set upon one band on the Sabbath day; "and they answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped up the secret places, saying 'Let us die all in our simplicity.'" Thus the non-resistance doctrine of the Gospels has its parallels in earlier history. But this was only for a time: common sense and the ancient warlike spirit got the upper hand. Under the Maccabees the nation entered upon a whole-hearted and determined rebellion, which after many vicissitudes was completely successful. A Maccabean dynasty established itself, half-king half-priest, which extended the Jewish kingdom to the furthest limits it had enjoyed under Solomon. In the first century B.C. the Maccabean dynasty declined and the Romans began to intervene in Palestine. In 63 B.C. Pompey captured Jerusalem and entered the temple: and there were other risings and Roman interventions during the ensuing ten years. In the latter half of the century the Herodian dynasty from Idumaea begins to supplant the Maccabean. Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.), under the protection of Julius Caesar, raised the kingdom to great prosperity and,

though he gratified the religious prejudices of his subjects by reconstructing the Temple, did his utmost by building and by material encouragement to spread Hellenic culture through his kingdom. His death was followed by another rebellion against Rome. Ten years after his death his son Archelaus was deprived of his tetrarchy, of which Judaea formed part. And from that time, all through the Gospel history, Judaea was administered by a Roman procurator, subordinate to the proconsul of Syria. During the manhood of Jesus his native land of Galilee, together with Peraea, was under the government of another son of Herod, Herod Antipas: while yet another son, Philip, ruled the mountainous country east and north of the lake, the inhabitants of which were non-Jewish for the most part.

Thus severe and long continued had been the pressure of alien races upon the little Jewish nation. But the nation felt this physical pressure less bitterly than the moral pressure of Hellenic culture. How utterly different were the Hellenic and the Hebraic ways of life! On the one side baths, aqueducts, gymnasia, marble temples, colonnades and theatres, art, literature, rhetoric and philosophy; on the other side an intense preoccupation with religion concentrated upon sacred books and traditions, combined with a narrow fanatical ceremonialism that detested and despised all the beauties and comforts of Gentile civilization. Even to the most enlightened heathen,

such as Tacitus, the Jews were *gens teterrima* and their religion *detestabilis superstitio*. There was a sharp contrast even in their practical morality. The Greeks were weakest in those points mentioned foremost by St. Paul in his famous catalogue of "works of the flesh," "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness": the Jews failed most in the vices (not mentioned by St. Paul) of avarice and cruelty. Josephus (born *circ.* 38 A.D.), a type of orthodox Judaism, relates with approval the history of a certain Joseph, a youth esteemed "for seriousness, prudence, and righteousness" who, under the Ptolemaic supremacy, gained by court intrigue in Egypt the farming of the taxes of Syria, was remorseless and savage in extortion, died full of years and riches and was succeeded by a son like-minded with himself. What kept Judaism vigorous through this bitter and penetrating strife was the power of the religious classes based upon the popular veneration for the national scriptures and traditions. The civil rulers were always lapsing towards Hellenism. Even the second generation of Maccabean princes hellenized their names into such forms as Aristobulus and Alexander. The great Herod, with all his politic respect for Judaic observance, was a strong hellenizer; and so were his descendants, many of whom were educated at Rome in close friendship with the imperial family. Throughout the nation there was a clear consciousness of the struggle against this alien

influence and a fanatical hatred of all its outward tokens. It was counted a deadly offence in certain noble families of Jerusalem, at the time when the Hellenic invasion first became formidable, that they frequented a gymnasium and wore Greek hats and riding-cloaks. There was more than one massacre of judaizers by hellenizers and of hellenizers by judaizers before the hated culture was definitely uprooted from the Holy City. In the time of Jesus there were popular societies called Zealots composed of extreme nationalists sworn to punish with the dagger those who infringed the precepts of the Law. One of these dangerous fanatics, a certain Simon, is found among the Twelve Apostles.

Intrinsically odious as the Roman power was, it was not made more acceptable to the Jews by its representatives. Most of the procurators governed extremely ill. Pontius Pilate, cruel and extortionate as he was, stood far higher than Felix, a low-bred wretch whose enormities did much to goad the Jews into the great revolt which ended in the partial destruction of the nation.

§ 4. The Messianic Hope was, of course, intimately connected with the Jewish religious system, but in different ways with different parts of it. During the gospel period and for centuries before the Jews were an intensely religious nation. While they enjoyed a normal national life as a couple of small upland kingdoms defending their independence

against their neighbours, the worship of Jehovah was much like that of contiguous national gods, though favourably distinguished from them by its greater purity and by the moral element introduced by the prophets. The body of scriptures forming the law had not yet come into existence. Jehovah was pre-eminently the 'helper' of Israel in its wars and troubles: there was as yet no pact between him and his people. In this fluid condition the national religion still remained when the ten northern tribes were swept away into Assyria and disappeared. Before the time of the captivity of Judah the religious system had become greatly consolidated. After a period of moral and religious disorganization, particularly in the reign of Manasseh, the reforming party gained the upper hand under Josiah (639-608 B.C.). In this reign the Deuteronomic legislation was carried into effect with its regulation not merely of religious but also of social life. Local temples and idolatries were abolished. The worship of Jehovah was centralized in Jerusalem, and the priesthood attached to Solomon's temple gained greatly in importance. The value of this consolidating work was shown when Judah was carried captive to Babylon early in the next century. The worship of Jehovah survived among the captives and supported their faith in a future deliverance. When the fifty years of exile were ended it was religious rather than political leaders that were foremost in guiding the repatriation;

and it was only the more zealous Jews who returned, the others remaining comfortably settled in Babylonia. The state that was established in Jerusalem was a theocracy, that is, the chief priests of the Temple were the effective rulers under the supremacy of a distant Persian satrap. By the middle of the next century the devotion of the nation to its religion had greatly slackened. It was restored by the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah (*circ.* 450 B.C.) who, coming from Babylonia where Judaism had been sedulously developed in schools strictly isolated from the surrounding heathenism, introduced a new law-book which was practically the same as the Pentateuch as we now possess it. This re-establishment was permanent. From this time onward religion was the absorbing interest of the nation, and the whole Jewish intellect was devoted to elaborating its religious system. No other nation in the ancient world was governed by its priests, as the Jews were from the end of the Captivity onward ; and for good and evil, no other nation produced results in any way similar to those of the Jews.

We can distinguish three main elements in the Jewish religion of the time of Jesus—propitiation, with which are connected the sacrifices of the Temple ; ceremonial purity, represented by the Scribes and Pharisees ; and the popular worship of the synagogue. The priesthood formed a close hereditary aristocratic corporation attached to the Temple at Jerusalem.

The foundation of their power was the belief that Jehovah was propitiated and sins atoned for by the sacrifice of valuable things, both on behalf of the nation and of individuals in their private capacity. Previous to the Captivity the emoluments of the priesthood were modest and somewhat precarious: subsequent to the Captivity we find their power vastly augmented, and with it their emoluments. While receiving large portions of the animals sacrificed, their chief revenue was derived from stated dues paid independently of sacrifices and really forming a national tax for their maintenance. The largest of these dues was the tithe, and we know from the Gospels with what scrupulosity even such trifling garden-produce as mint, anise, and cummin were tithed by the devout. Every morning and evening a burnt sacrifice was offered on the great altar before the Temple on behalf of the nation; and at the numerous times of festival these offerings were greatly increased. "But copious as the *public* sacrifices were, they still seem but few when compared with the multitudes of *private* offerings and sacrifices that were offered. It was the vast number of these latter—so vast in fact as to be well-nigh inconceivable—that gave its peculiar stamp to the worship at Jerusalem. Here day after day whole crowds of victims were slaughtered and whole masses of flesh burnt; and when any of the high festivals came round there was such a host of sacrifices to

dispose of that it was scarcely possible to attend to them all notwithstanding the fact that there were thousands of priests officiating on the occasion. But the people of Israel saw in the punctilious observance of this worship the principal means of securing for themselves the favour of their God" (Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, II. i. 298).

Of all the elements in the religious life of the nation it was the priestly aristocracy and the people connected with the Temple that sympathised least with the expectation of a Messiah. So long as things kept quiet, there was no fear that the Romans would close the Temple, or put down the sacrifices which enriched the priests, or forbid the Temple tax which was paid throughout the Jewish lands. On the other hand, if Messianic disturbances broke out, it was not improbable that all these disastrous things might happen. The bitter opposition of the priests to such enterprises as that of Jesus was a natural impulse of self-preservation.

Far more favourable to Messianism, though not the kind of Messianism represented by Jesus, were the devotees of ceremonial purity. It was a belief of the Pharisees that the Messiah would straightway appear when all Israel performed the Law in its fulness. The rise of this class was another consequence of the devotion of the people to their national law. As the priests came to dedicate all their energies to the Temple services, a class of men grew

up who made it their profession to study and interpret the Law, to apply it to contemporary circumstances, and to teach it to the people. These were the Scribes who in earlier times were merely copyists under the direction of the priests, but soon rose to the dignity of interpreters, and supplanted the priests in their claims upon popular veneration.[1] While the Scribes were the theorists of the Law, the Pharisees were the practical exponents of it in its most rigorous application. Their name (Pharisees = those set apart) indicates the result of their principles. They formed a fraternity which, in order to preserve ceremonial purity, kept aloof from all contaminating influence, and especially from the uncleanness of the Gentiles. Strong in their formal self-righteousness they regarded themselves as saints, and all who differed

[1] The results of their labours are preserved in the Mishna, a later compilation, which represents the traditional Law *anno domini*, which was an elaboration and extension of the written Law of the Pentateuch. Some acquaintance with the Mishna (which has been partially translated into English) is indispensable for understanding the attitude of Jesus towards the Judaism of his time. It is only necessary to remark (*a*) that the traditional Law elaborated to an incredible pitch of minuteness the rules about the Sabbath ('Was it lawful to eat an egg laid upon a festival?'), about uncleanness, and the rest of the matters dealt with in the written Law; (*b*) that the traditional Law was then and for long afterwards preserved entirely by oral teaching. The venerated Scribe was a man destitute of all higher culture, who carried in his head immense masses of the most futile ceremonial rules and distinctions. Thus his conceit and pedantry were of the most offensive and virulent kind. The ceremonial rules and distinctions were constantly being carried further by discussions between the Scribes and their pupils.

from them as the ungodly. Under this cloak of saintship there was the usual pride, hatred, and uncharitableness, and even, if we may trust the denunciations of Jesus, dishonest rapacity. And yet the Scribes and Pharisees were strong in the popular veneration and were far more important than the Temple priesthood for the religious life of the nation. For the ordinary citizen a thoroughly Pharisaic life was impossible. The precautions and prohibitions created by the misapplied ingenuity of the Scribes were incompatible with free social intercourse. The statutes by which it was determined under what circumstances uncleanness was incurred and by what means it might be obviated were so multifarious as to be quite beyond the compass of an ordinary memory. Gentiles were present everywhere through the Jewish country; but the Law made intercourse with them extremely irksome. Pollution was conveyed even by touching the clothing of a Gentile and still more by entering his house: Gentile money was unclean because stamped with the image of the sovereign.[1] Thus the Essenes, whose principles in some respects were an exaggeration of Pharisaism, took the logical step of withdrawing from society altogether, dwelt in the desert in celibate communities (woman was a frequent cause of pollution), abstained from meat, wine, and oil, and spent a great part of their time in ceremonial

[1] Hence the need of money-changers in the Temple market.

washings and in prayer to Jehovah. It was this extreme ceremonial fanaticism which caused the Jews to be hated throughout the empire, and explains, even more than their national rapacity, the massacres and persecutions to which at various times they were exposed.

The effects of all this formalism upon spiritual life may easily be imagined. "Nothing was left to free personality, everything was placed under the bondage of the letter. The Israelite, zealous for the law, was obliged at every impulse and movement to ask himself, What is commanded? At every step, at the work of his calling, at prayer, at meals, at home and abroad, from early morning till late in the evening, the dead, the deadening formula followed him. A healthy moral life could not flourish under such a burden" (Schürer, *op. cit.* II. ii. 125).

The Messianism of a party such as this was necessarily of a hard and militant type. Its essential feature was not a desire for moral righteousness but a hatred of all outside the narrow pale of the Law. The Pharisaic zealots wanted a conquering Messiah who would put the foot of the ceremonially clean Jew upon the neck of the ceremonially unclean Gentile.

If these propitiatory and ceremonial elements had formed the whole of the Jewish religious system, the world would never have heard either of Judaism or of Christianity. For such elements have no

spiritual value or possibility of growth ; they could have contributed nothing to modern civilized religion. But there was a third element, the popular worship of the synagogue, which is the lineal ancestor of the Christian church-gathering and of every form of assembly for personal worship and exhortation. It is the synagogue that accounts for the diffusion of Messianism through the country, and for the general vitality of Jewish belief and thought : it is the synagogue which has made mankind eternally a debtor to the Jewish nation.

The institution of the synagogue goes back to the Captivity when the Jews, being deprived of their Temple, met for private worship in Babylonia. It was continued on their return from the Captivity ; and, as in the theocratic state there was no definite division between secular and religious life, the synagogue was the agency of local government, and its officers the secular officers of the community. Its constitution was thoroughly democratic and free from sacerdotal influence. The Temple services and the priestly order being limited to Jerusalem, there was no official class to control the local worship of the synagogue which existed in every village. The chief officers, such as the Ruler of the Synagogue, however appointed, were certainly not members of any priestly order. The service included readings from the scriptures, together with certain liturgical invocations, prayers, and benedictions : but the most

important part of it was the preaching, which in New Testament times took the form of a discourse upon the scriptures just read. Generally the work of preaching fell to the local scribe, if there was one at hand; but the ruler of the synagogue might invite some distinguished stranger, or any ordinary member of the congregation who was competent to act. When Jesus, therefore, "as his custom was . . . went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and stood up for to read" and afterwards sat down to preach, he was merely availing himself of the common order of Jewish worship: after the reading of the *Torah* (the Law) and the *Haphtaroth* (paragraphs from the Prophets) came the *Midrash* or hortatory exposition. The whole service was much more intelligent and stimulating than any Christian service can be, insomuch as the Jewish scriptures were the work of national lawgivers, historians, and prophets, embodying national aspirations and commemorating national heroes and sages. We, alas, have no Bible of our own: the Christian Bible is an alien book which none but a few antiquaries can enjoy intelligently. But every Jew felt that his scriptures were the deepest utterance of the spirit of his race.

§ 5. The Messianic Hope, then, was discouraged by priestly influence, encouraged by Pharisaic influence and diffused by the Synagogue. It begins historically as a vague looking forward to a better

future for the nation. "That the nation should be morally purified from all bad elements, that it should exist unmolested and respected in the midst of the Gentile world, whilst its enemies were either destroyed or forced to acknowledge the nation and its God, that it should be governed by a just, wise, and powerful king of the house of David, and that therefore internal justice, peace, and happiness would prevail, nay, that all natural evils would be abolished and a state of unclouded prosperity would appear—this may be said to have formed the foundation of the future hope among the older prophets" (Schürer, *op. cit.* II. ii. 129 *sq.*). The growth of the idea consists in extending the kingdom of the expected deliverer from the Jewish nation to the whole world. At the same time, with the extension of personal religion, men began to look forward to a resurrection of the just, who were to partake in the glories of the kingdom of God. Whereas the older apocalyptists expatiate upon the mundane glories of the expected Kingdom, the later view it as pre-eminently a kingdom of righteousness. And they think of it as a kingdom already existing in the heavens with its Messianic ruler: already there existed the new Jerusalem which would in the fulness of time descend to earth to replace the old. The whole mass of Messianic ideas was then worked into systematic and dogmatic form by the diligence of the scribes. In the most commonly accepted order

the sequence of Messianic events was as follows: a great tribulation and perplexity will vex the earth; earthquake, fire, famine, war, and all kinds of wickedness will decimate mankind, so that only a chosen remnant will be saved; a forerunner will come, according to most authorities, Elijah; the Messiah will appear as a victorious ruler; the heathen powers will assemble for a last attack upon the Messiah and be destroyed; Jerusalem will be renovated; the dispersed Jews will be gathered into Palestine, where the kingdom of God will be established; the world will be renovated and the dead rise again.

We may judge how strong and how widely diffused was the Messianic Hope by its traces in contemporary history and literature. It was doubtless potent in the risings of Theudas, of Judas the Gaulanite, and of the other prophets of rebellion whose names are not preserved. Apart from its mention in the gospels it is particularly noticed by Josephus as the great stimulant of Jewish courage in the great revolt. We find its echoes even in Roman literature. It was, probably through the residence of the Herodian princes in Rome, known in some degree to Virgil, whom it inspired with one of his most famous Eclogues. We may trace its influence in the poems which embody Horace's aspirations for the renovation of Roman society; and it is explicitly mentioned by Suetonius and by Tacitus, the latter

of whom had in general no sympathy whatever with the Jews and their religion.

The period in which Jesus began his mission was a great crisis in the history of civilization, one of the most dramatic and fateful that can possibly be imagined. Its interest lies in the fact that then two intensely antagonistic ideals were confronting each other, the Judaic and the Hellenistic. The centuries during which the Jews had lived under their priests had set them in a way of life totally different from that of the nations who owed their civilization to Greece ; and they were working up to the great revolt which was a tremendous effort to vindicate their way of life by force. They were crushed in the physical struggle, but their principles conquered in the end. Christianity is nothing but a spiritualized and humanized Judaism ; and the triumph of Christianity was the death of the ideals of ancient culture.

So nicely adjusted are the occasions that determine the history of mankind that the mission of Jesus could only have had effect within a few years either way of the time when it was actually undertaken. Had he come forward under Herod the Great the strong national government would have suppressed his agitation at once. Herod was not the sort of king to tolerate a Messiah, however non-combatant and non-political. Moreover, the Jews were too contented and prosperous at that time to feel the

need of a deliverer : Messianism only flourished in times of trouble. And, had Jesus come forward fifteen years later than he did, the new Jewish sect would have been swept away in the terrible national disaster before it had time to establish itself on an independent footing outside Palestine. Now and afterwards the new religion arose from the co-operation of personality and opportunity. If Jesus and, after him, St. Peter and St. Paul had not struck in just at the time when they did, there would have been no Christianity.

§ 6. These preliminaries are enough, I hope, to make it intelligible that a Messianic career should be undertaken about the third decade of the first century A.D. There were other Messianic enterprises beside that of Jesus about the same time, concerning which brief notices only have come down to us. As there exists no short impartial account of Jesus recognizing the results of recent research which would save the statement of the historical details in the following pages, I must try to recount as well as I can what I think to be the truth about him. The difficulties of the task are in distinguishing fact from fable, and in allowing for the natural bias of our authorities. Minor points may be obscure, but I think that in the light of modern criticism the general outline is sufficiently plain.

Whatever may be the value of the tradition that makes Jesus, like David, to have been born in

Bethlehem a few miles south of Jerusalem, it is certain that to all intents and purposes he was a Galilean, and was reared in the north away from the evil influences of the Jewish capital. In accounting for his lifelong freedom from ceremonial prejudice we must remember that Galilee, though out of the main current of life from the standpoint of Jewish religion, was much more in the current than Jerusalem for ordinary mundane purposes. Jerusalem was an isolated city, away from the thoroughfares of trade and war. Galilee was traversed by important roads, had within its boundaries the seaport of Ptolemais or Acre, was close to the great emporium of Caesarea on the south and the still greater emporium of Tyre on the north, contained the hellenized city of Tiberias, and was close to the very important hellenized district of Decapolis on the east. Nazareth stands on the hills just north of the wide plain of Esdraelon east of Acre, where the boy Jesus must have watched cohorts and caravans passing to and fro between the hinterland and the sea.

Jesus (the name was very common in Palestine) was bred to a trade the name of which is rendered by scholars variously as carpenter or house-builder. Such a station did not imply so much social inferiority as with us. He must have received an education at the synagogue school and made good use of the opportunities of culture afforded by the synagogue system. He certainly knew the scriptures

well, and not the canonical scriptures merely; there are indications that he was acquainted with such non-canonical writings as the *Book of Enoch* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which were doing much at that time to diffuse eschatological ideas. Altogether the tone of his teaching, unsophisticated though it is, is not that of a rude unlettered man who had forced his way up from the lowest ranks; but that of one who felt himself on an intellectual level with all to whom he spoke.[1]

The famous story in St. Luke of the boy Jesus disputing with the rabbis in the Temple is meant to show that he took an early interest in religion. We may safely assume that he grew up into an earnest and spiritually-minded young man. We are told that his parents went yearly to Jerusalem for the Passover. If he accompanied them on reaching manhood, his experiences in that all-too-religious city must have both fascinated and disgusted him. No doubt he gratified Mary's maternal ambition by taking part in the synagogue services: there he must have learnt the arts of the preacher and expositor of scripture. We must not suppose that Jesus took up preaching suddenly, when he started his Galilean mission. The words addressed to him by John, "I have need to be baptized of thee," are, if they can be regarded as historical, an indication

[1] All the famous rabbis of the age, Hillel and Shammai, for example, were, like St. Paul, craftsmen living by the work of their hands.

that he was already a man of some mark when he presented himself as a candidate for baptism.

The relationship of the Baptist to Jesus illustrates the often-noticed fact that great movements are usually begun by men with the rude daring of the pioneer, but are carried into full effect by a later and subtler hand. It was John, and not Jesus, who was first moved to come forward by the stress of the national Messianic expectation and, not merely announced the instant coming of the Kingdom, but made practical preparations for its arrival. And yet John (so far as our records go) had not the gifts to do what Jesus did. He had lasting importance only in virtue of the work of his successor.

With John the ancient spirit of Jewish prophecy revived again. He was a young man who had withdrawn into the desert of Judaea for ascetic meditation and undisturbed contact with nature. Thence he emerged to announce with passionate eloquence the approach of the Messiah, and, what was still more remarkable and original, to prepare by active measures a chosen people for the Kingdom. It was a cardinal tenet of Jewish eschatology that the Messiah's advent was to be accompanied by terrible afflictions from which only a righteous remnant would escape. By way of gathering together such a company of saints John called upon men to repent under peril of destruction in the approaching day of wrath. Repentance was to

consist in works of moral righteousness, not of the righteousness of the Sadducees and Pharisees, whom John reviled in bitterest terms : nor were the Jews to trust in their pride of descent from Abraham. Those who were penitent in this moral sense, John immersed in Jordan in token of their change of heart, thus adapting to his own purpose the act of ablution recognized as a means of restoration from ceremonial uncleanness, and usually applied to the Gentile proselytes who sought admission to Judaism. Great was the success of the new prophet. Men's minds were agitated, not merely in the neighbouring Judaea, but in distant Galilee. Among others Jesus, with his interest in spiritual things, was impelled to make the three days' journey from Nazareth to the Jordan bank near Jericho where John was baptizing, and received the rite from him.

At the time of his baptism Jesus was nearly thirty years old. He had thus reached the full development of manhood and had come to a time of life when men begin to settle down and lose their taste for adventure and for trying fresh modes of life. It is a great testimony to the power of the new movement that such a man allowed himself to be drawn into its current. We may be sure that the scenes upon the Jordan bank were extremely moving. The authoritative preaching of the Baptist, so different in its fiery appeal to the conscience from the timid commentating of the scribes, his bold

denunciation of ill-doing in high places, his crushing rebuke of the paltry side of Jewish pride and prejudice showed that a prophet had arisen equal to the greatest who had spoken in Israel. The throng of reverent hearers and the profound effect upon the individual of the picturesque baptismal ceremony showed that a true prophet would not speak to the nation in vain. Jesus himself was no unstable boy to be swept off his feet by the popular emotion; but it is plain that he was deeply affected. We may conjecture that his mind was oppressed by the rush of new thoughts and new possibilities. He seems to have felt that he needed divine guidance to determine his course at this fateful juncture. Following John's example he withdrew into the desert tract west of the Dead Sea for an interval of ascetic self-discipline, prayer, and meditation. There his mind, overwrought by hunger, exposure, and religious emotion was a prey to visions and hallucinations which he recounted afterwards to the disciples and which appear in our evangelists as the Temptation in the Wilderness. He returned after a few weeks of solitude, and, as we have grounds to suppose, joined himself to the band who were helping the Baptist in his work of forming a regenerate people to welcome the approaching Messiah.[1]

We do not know how long the movement of

[1] We have reasons for thinking that John's mission was longer and more considerable than we should understand from the gospels.

John was allowed to go on ; probably a considerable time, since it survived the Baptist's death a great while, and certainly long enough to be thoroughly known throughout the Jewish country. A time came when it reached a height to alarm the civil power. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, a man of crafty and suspicious character, had no reason to love the prophet, who had rebuked him for his irregular marriage with a brother's wife. Moreover, knowing the deep and chronic discontent of his people with the Roman dominion, he feared that the agitation might end in an outbreak of violence. He therefore decided to keep the Baptist safe under hand, had him arrested and conveyed him to the mountain stronghold of Machaerus, east

There is a fairly full account of him in Josephus, who wrote seventy or eighty years after his death ; whereas Jesus is mentioned only in a short passage generally agreed to be spurious : nor could the Baptist's church which spread so widely and endured so long after his death have been founded in a month or two. As to the relation between Jesus and John, we might infer from the character of the former that he would be an early disciple, and we know that he did not return to Galilee till the arrest of the Baptist broke up the mission. It seems probable that the time between his baptism and John's arrest was filled by evangelical work as one of John's lieutenants. The tone of the references of Jesus to John accord with this : they are the generous tribute of a loyal heart to a former leader whom he had loved and venerated. John's questioning message to Jesus from prison expresses the doubts of the leader when he saw his work continued by methods so widely different from his own. It is plausibly conjectured that the opening chapter of the Fourth Gospel was written with the purpose of exhibiting John's mission as expressly preliminary to that of Jesus, in view of the antagonism which had then arisen between the representatives of the two prophets.

of Jordan. As always happens when the chief of a popular emotional movement is arrested, the band of followers dispersed: the arrest broke a spell and spread dejection and distrust. Jesus, like the others, left Judaea and made his way home.

The disappearance of the Baptist left a blank in the public life of Israel. A great hope had been awakened, multitudes had been excited to a great enterprise; but now there was no one to lead them. It came into the mind of Jesus that the good work which had been crushed upon the banks of Jordan might be resumed in his own country. Leaving his home in Nazareth for the more populous district of the lake-shore, he started a mission of his own, proclaiming, in the manner of John, "The time has come, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the Good News."[1] Very soon he gathered round him a small band of followers, some of whom may have known him in connection with the mission of the Baptist. His fame "spread at once in all directions through the whole neighbourhood of Galilee."

§ 7. For the period preceding the Galilean ministry we have to piece together authorities, and to fill up gaps by conjecture. For the Galilean ministry we have the connected and intelligible narrative of St. Mark, which is now universally

[1] This and most of the quotations that follow are taken from the excellent version of the *Twentieth Century New Testament.*

admitted to be more authentic than those of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The latter evangelists add much to our knowledge of the discourses of Jesus, but not much to the story of his actions; in fact, though St. Mark's gospel is the shortest, it is as a history of events in Galilee fuller and more precise than any of the others. St. John's narrative, so much as there is of it, is quite different. It may or may not be harmonizable with the synoptic narrative: in any case it adds no fresh element which matters for the present purpose; our general impression of the career of Jesus will not change if the visits to Jerusalem recorded by St. John alone and the incidents there occurring be accepted as historical. For the present purpose it will suffice to retell the story of the Galilean ministry after St. Mark, using the other synoptists for purposes of minor illustration.[1]

[1] For the purpose of this short sketch I have treated St. Mark's Gospel as having more historicity than probably it deserves. But this is a fault on the side of caution. It is desirable to show that the career of Jesus, so utterly misrepresented by orthodox Christianity, can be made out plainly without any elaborate sceptical criticism of our main authority. The best modern scholars regard the Second Gospel not as the first-hand narrative of a single author or of one closely connected with the original apostles, but as the work of an editor who pieced together materials, more or less authentic, with indifferent skill, freely altering and rearranging them, and adding many sayings and incidents to support later interpretations (especially the Pauline interpretation) of the life and work of Jesus. Such is the view of Professor Loisy in his work *Les évangiles synoptiques*. It is the commonly received opinion that the Gospel was written in Rome, nearly fifty years after the Crucifixion.

The first step of Jesus was to gather round him a little band of four disciples, all fishermen. With them he proceeded to a small lake-side town, Capernaum, which remained his headquarters all through the Galilean ministry. Nazareth, which was about twenty-five miles westward of the lake, always remained hostile or indifferent to its great prophet. Nor did Jesus now or at any future time in his life receive countenance from any members of his own family.

On the next Sabbath after the arrival of the little band in Capernaum Jesus preached in the synagogue, where his authoritative tone, so unlike that of the ordinary preachers, made a powerful impression. This was greatly deepened by a wonderful act of faith-healing performed in the synagogue itself. Immediately after the dispersal of the congregation Jesus performed another cure, upon the mother-in-law of his disciple, Simon Peter. And before bed-time all the sick in the town were brought for him to exercise his power upon them. His reputation spread at once through the countryside. The miracle in the synagogue of Capernaum was, in scriptural phrase, the casting out of an unclean spirit. Many cures of this description have come within the observation of modern missionaries in the East. There is no reason to doubt that Jesus, by virtue of the faith which he inspired, was able to do cures of nervous and other functional disorders

in a way which seemed miraculous to those who witnessed them, and would perhaps seem hardly short of miraculous if performed to-day.

The cure of the demoniac in the synagogue was quite an unpremeditated and unsought affair. It was the patient himself who screamed out abruptly, apparently in the middle of the service. Jesus was compelled to break off in his discourse and rebuke the interrupter, and with a sudden impulse spoke the formula of exorcism, "Be silent and come out of him." There is no indication that he, any more than John the Baptist, meant to perform cures to support his proclamation of the Kingdom. When, to the general amazement, his exorcism was effective he threw himself into the outburst of popular emotion that swept through the little town like a whirlwind.

St. Mark goes on to tell us that "in the morning, long before daylight, Jesus rose and went out, and going to a lonely spot there began to pray." It is evident that the events of the previous day had thrown him into great agitation. Jesus was an oriental and a man of sensitive nature; but few men, however phlegmatic, could have slept a wink after the marvels of the preceding day, prolonged as they were far into the evening. No one, having suddenly discovered himself the possessor of an apparently miraculous gift, but would need an hour or two of solitude to think out his plan of action.

As a simple preacher Jesus might have been content to remain in Capernaum ; his gift of faith-healing increased his power enormously. He resolved to take advantage of it. When Simon and the others found him in his retreat, he announced his intention of going farther afield. With his disciples he made a circuit through Galilee preaching and exorcising.

As early as the second chapter of St. Mark we see the beginning of that conflict with the established religious authorities which lasted for the rest of the lifetime of Jesus. Starting as a disciple of the Baptist Jesus could have felt no friendship for the Scribes and Pharisees. But it is characteristic of his more pacific disposition that he did not challenge them. The first leper who was cleansed by Jesus was told to show himself to the priest and to make the offerings directed by Moses. Probably, at first, he would have been content to live and let live : but friction was clearly inevitable. The pharisaic party thought that the way to prepare for the Kingdom was by strict legal observance ; some of them taught that if two Sabbaths only were kept perfectly by the whole people the Messiah would come forthwith. John and Jesus laid stress upon a moral change of heart.

A definite occasion of conflict arose when Jesus pronounced words of absolution to a man whom he had healed : " Son, thy sins are forgiven." It is possible to overlook the meaning of this in the

mouth of Jesus. The question may be asked why he used words so provoking. Why not heal the man and leave his sins alone? We must remember that Jesus was forming a band of elect for the approaching Kingdom. All who joined themselves to the band must be understood to have renounced evil ways; and Jesus, in admitting new members to the elect, must have used the formula of absolution far more frequently than our records show. Especially would absolution be needed in the case of a diseased person, whose disease was *prima facie* evidence that he had incurred divine displeasure. But the claim to give absolution was utterly subversive of the existing religious system, according to which purification for sin was obtained by sacrifice or other ceremonial acts. No marvel that murmurs came from the orthodox present at the scene: "Why does this man speak thus? He is blaspheming. Who can remit sins but God alone?"

There is no reason to think that at this time Jesus had any intention of claiming the Messiahship. The impression left by a fair perusal of St. Mark is that now and for long afterwards he regarded himself as preparing, like John, for the Messiah's coming.[1] He was wont to speak of himself as "the Son of Man," a title whose exact significance is much in

[1] We cannot regard as historical the voice from the heavens at his baptism, "Thou art my beloved Son," or the repeated acknowledgments by unclean spirits.

dispute with oriental scholars. The most that can be said is that from its use in the book of Daniel and elsewhere it had Messianic associations. It probably committed Jesus to nothing definite, and was calculated to awaken curiosity and expectation in the minds of those to whom it was addressed.[1]

Following on the cure of the palsied man a series of incidents recorded by St. Mark show how utterly incompatible were the ideas of Jesus and those of the orthodox party. He broke through the prejudices forbidding respectable Jews to associate with certain classes : he committed the enormous outrage upon devout sentiment of enrolling among his followers one of those unclean agents of alien domination, a tax-gatherer, Levi by name. Certain scribes of the Pharisaic party saw him sitting at table in Levi's polluted house ; and noted with disgust that he took his food in company not only of Levi and his fellow-publicans, but of other outcasts from decent society.

Hardly less scandalous was the conduct of Jesus in the matter of fasting and Sabbath-observance. The Baptist had observed the legal fast-times ; and his disciples, who still carried on his work independently of Jesus, were doing so at the time of

[1] If it implies a definite Messianic claim it must, when used previously to the Acknowledgment by Peter, be set down to the editorial work of the evangelist. Some scholars hold, I think wrongly, that Jesus never claimed the Messiahship, and that all passages in the gospels implying the contrary are doctrinal interpolations.

the incident now recorded. Jesus refused to fast; his whole conduct indeed was quite the reverse of any kind of asceticism. He compares himself to a bridegroom in whose presence no gloomy observance must be thought of. Were he snatched away from any cause (for example, by the police-officers of Antipas, as John had been), then would be the time for fasting. At present, said Jesus, fasting would be as much out of place as a patch of new cloth on an old coat. With similar indifference he broke through the rules of the sabbath, letting his disciples pluck ears of corn as they passed through the fields. When the Pharisees remonstrated, Jesus tore in pieces the whole complicated web of ceremonial absurdity with the grand retort "The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath"; and added, with magnificent self-assurance, "the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

The incident which follows, that of the man with the withered hand, is generally taken to mark a final rupture with the orthodox party. The miracle is one of the less credible, but the synoptic evangelists all relate that the man was healed in the synagogue on the sabbath and that the Pharisees were watching in order to make it a matter of accusation. When the cure was performed and the legal prohibition against sabbath work thus defied, the Pharisees were filled with fury. So urgent did it seem to them that this desecrator should be put down that they entered

into communication with a party for whom they usually felt no good will, the officials and supporters of Herod Antipas. "The Pharisees went out and at once held a consultation with the Herodians to destroy him."

This is the first definite mention of an influence upon the career of Jesus which, there is reason to think, was far more important than our records show, the enmity of Herod Antipas. As a hellenizer this potentate would discountenance outbreaks of Jewish spirit like the missions of John and Jesus; as a subject prince standing in delicate relations to the Roman power he greatly feared all popular commotions which might compromise him. If the influence and reputation of Jesus were anything like as great as the gospels give us to understand, the new prophet must soon have been talked about in Herod's court at Tiberias, which was not ten miles distant from Capernaum. There was even more reason for him to take measures against Jesus than against John; for whereas the latter was in the south extremity of the outlying province of Peraea and worked largely in Judaea, Jesus was active in the centre of his princedom. We may be sure that the prince had spoken against Jesus before his adherents formed this design against the prophet's life; though it was not till later that we are told definitely that "King Herod heard thereof; for his name had become known." St. Mark relates that the prince

said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead"; which may be interpreted to mean that he recognized in Jesus the continuator of the Baptist's work with even greater opportunity for dangerous disturbance. At a later period Jesus was definitely warned to leave a district where he was preaching, for fear of Herod. In Jerusalem the Herodians planned, in concert with the Pharisees, to draw him into a conflict with the Roman power over the question of tribute. And in the last scenes of all Herod who, like Pilate, was in Jerusalem for the Passover, was "exceeding glad" when the procurator sent Jesus to appear before him, tried to extort damaging admissions from him and, being unsuccessful, "set him at nought and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel sent him back to Pilate." Such was the mean-spirited but not unnatural animosity of this pagan-hearted princeling against the disturber of his peace. And on the other side it is plain that Jesus requited the ill-feeling. He must have detested the man who had broken up his master's mission and ultimately put him to death: he warned his disciples to beware of "the leaven of Herod," meaning all the ideas of Greek culture and national kingship represented by the Herodian family: when warned of Herod's design against his life he spoke bitterly of him as "that fox," thereby stigmatizing his cruel and crafty disposition.

If we take account of these relations between Jesus and the prince under whom most of his life

was passed, we can explain some things in the synoptic narrative which do not explain themselves. Why did Jesus in the later period of his ministry abandon Galilee and make a distant, toilsome, and apparently purposeless journey to Sidon,[1] returning by a most circuitous route far from Herod's dominions? Why towards the end of his ministry did he withdraw to Caesarea Philippi? Why was he always making voyages across the lake from Herod's country on the west to that of Philip on the east side? It was not to evangelize, for we read of no systematic attempt to evangelize in the north outside of Galilee. Finally, it is possible that we ought to connect the constant injunctions of Jesus not to noise abroad his faith-healing powers with his fear of the petty tyrant in Tiberias.[2] If such considerations did really influence his movements, we could not expect a plain admission of it in the gospels: it would not consist with dignity to show the Messiah as hunted from place to place by the civil power. And yet, though Herod had good reason for arresting him, it is certain that Jesus did manage to avoid arrest, the one fact in favour of thinking that the

[1] It has been conjectured that Sidon is merely a mistake for the vernacular form of Bethsaida. This is quite possible; but the reader will remember that I am dealing conservatively with the gospel record.

[2] The common explanation is that Jesus disliked his function of exorcist and healer, and tried to limit it as much as possible. This cannot be; since he definitely recognized it as part of his mission by authorizing his disciples to heal in his name.

journeyings to the south recorded by St. John alone may have historical foundation. After the plot concocted by the Herodians and Pharisees we are told that Jesus and his disciples left that neighbourhood and withdrew to the lake.

The fame of Jesus was now spread from end to end of Palestine and even beyond it, so that a multitude collected, persons in which came from Sidon, fifty miles to the north, and (if the record may be trusted) even from Idumea, two hundred miles to the south of the Galilean lake. What Herod thought of this great agitation we do not know. Jesus then withdrew from the lake shore to a mountain, and organized a band of twelve disciples who were sent abroad to preach and to exercise the faith-healing of their master.

Next there follows an incident which greatly exasperated the difference between Jesus and the orthodox party. News of the strange doings in Galilee had reached Jerusalem, and had prompted the religious leaders of the capital to send a deputation of inquiry. These "scribes who had come down from Jerusalem" were forced to admit that marvellous cures had been wrought upon demoniac persons, but they found a ready explanation in the theory that Jesus himself was a demoniac—a theory which in their eyes was somewhat supported by his utter disregard of observances which god-fearing Jews held to be sacred. Jesus demolished this

explanation of his power over the demons by the parable of the house divided against itself; and ended with a hot outburst of indignation against his traducers. He declared that by this slander the scribes from Jerusalem had committed an unpardonable sin, and would be eternally excluded from the Messianic kingdom which he was forming. "Men will be forgiven everything—their sins and all the slanders that they utter; but whoever slanders the Holy Spirit remains unforgiven to the end."

Unfortunately the family of Jesus also fell in with this theory. Jesus had never found any sympathy for his mission among the home circle. Apparently some of the Jerusalem scribes went to Nazareth and persuaded the family that it was their duty to put Jesus under restraint. Probably Mary and her sons[1] were more inclined to adopt the plan as they anticipated, and anticipated rightly, that this Messianic mission would shortly bring Jesus to a violent end. The family party, then, came with this object from Nazareth to the lake shore. An eldest son so gifted and sweet-natured as Jesus must have been greatly beloved, almost worshipped, in his home: many incidents in the gospel story show that he greatly attracted the affection of women. No doubt

[1] It is most natural to assume that the brothers and sisters of Jesus mentioned in the gospels were children of Mary, as Jesus is spoken of as her first-born. But they may have been children of Joseph by a deceased wife; or Joseph may have been a polygamist, like others of his nation at this time.

it was maternal love that really induced Mary, now an elderly woman, to undertake this journey to and fro of fifty miles. But Jesus was too much embittered by insult to treat his relatives patiently : the only outcome was a lamentable rupture of family ties. After her long march Mary found the house where Jesus was sitting so crowded that she could not get in. She and her sons stood outside calling Jesus to come out to them. But Jesus would not come out : his only answer was to renounce them. Dear as the old family was once, he had found a better family to replace it : "looking round on the people sitting in a circle about him he said, 'Here are my mother and my brethren.'" As Mary moved away weary and broken-hearted, she must have felt that all hopes of saving her noble and beloved first-born were at an end.

There is a natural tendency in the Christian student of the gospels to overestimate the success which Jesus enjoyed in his mission. The parable of the Sower is meant to explain the smallness of his progress in forming the Messianic kingdom. What success he had had was more apparent than real : he had gathered round him from the lower orders a little band of disciples who loved and trusted him to the uttermost ; but he had made no great moral impression upon the community at large, still less upon the upper classes. The prejudices of the established system, the natural fickleness and shallow-

ness of men, the care of worldly business prevented people from accepting and carrying out his exhortations. They did not renounce family, bread-winning, and all other worldly affairs to wait in expectation of the presently approaching Kingdom. All but a very few, in short, behaved as the hearers of Christian revival missions behave at the present day; they heard, were impressed and thought seriously for a week or two; then went on living much as before.

And Jesus, if we may trust what follows in the evangelist, did not wish now that the promiscuous multitude should find a place in his Kingdom. To a select circle "the hidden truth of the Kingdom of God has been imparted; but to those outside it all teaching takes the form of parables in order that . . . they may hear without understanding, lest some day they should turn and be forgiven." From a famous passage in St. Luke (chap. xiii.) we may gather that Jesus anticipated that the number of the saved would be few: narrow would be the door of salvation; many would seek to enter in by it and would not be able.

Such discouragements inclined Jesus to think that, after all, the formation of an elect band for the Kingdom would be a relatively gradual affair: it would grow as seed-corn grows in the night when the sower is sleeping; it would start from little beginnings like a mustard-seed, smallest of seeds and greatest of herbs; it was like a bit of leaven

which spreads its influence through a great mass of dough.

Our gospel now records one of the many voyages from the west to the east side of the lake. On this occasion it is possible that the voyage was not so much a flight from danger as an attempt to evangelize the Jews in Philip's tetrarchy. If so, the attempt was a failure. We cannot believe the miracle whereby the demon whose name was Legion was expelled from a madman and sent into a herd of two thousand swine, which thereupon rushed down and committed suicide in the lake. But we can believe that the people of the country, the Gerasenes, were alarmed and hostile, and requested Jesus to leave the neighbourhood. He thereupon returned to Galilee.

About this period in St. Mark are recorded various miracles which throw no light either upon Christian doctrine or upon the career of Jesus, and have no interest for us except so far as they show that fanciful legend has entered largely into our record ; the stilling of the storm upon the lake, the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, and the raising of Jairus's daughter. But we may take them as an opportunity of considering generally what we are to think of the miracles in the gospel story. The Christian attitude towards them has undergone great changes. At one time the miracles were supposed to prove Christian doctrine. In more recent days, partly from an uneasy doubt whether

doctrine which needs miracles to prove it can be really sound, partly from an increased belief in the regularity of nature due to the progress of natural science, partly from a sense of the weakness of the evidence for the gospel miracles, partly from the discovery that all over the world, both in ancient and modern times, there are innumerable similar stories with even stronger evidence to support them, a tendency has arisen among Christian apologists to push the miraculous element into the background.

The man of average intelligence who has no prejudice to prevent him from estimating evidence fairly is at no loss what to say about these alleged miracles of Jesus. Some of the miracles of healing are quite credible ; others, such as the conversion of water into wine, quite incredible : of others we cannot say in the present state of our knowledge whether they are possible or impossible. It may be that exceptional men may have exceptional powers of which science at present can give no account : the whole matter awaits further investigation.

But even granted that many of the miracles which we now believe impossible really did happen, what does that prove for doctrine ? The only rational claim which Christianity can have upon us is that it is a way of life and a way of thinking about God which is good for us to pursue. But how can a way of life be proved good by miracles ? Suppose that a being appears to me and says, ' You ought to turn

the left cheek to the smiter.' I answer, 'Prove that that is so.' He replies, 'See, I can turn this stone into bread.' What does the miracle prove? Nothing more than that a being, natural or supernatural, has the inexplicable power of turning a stone into bread: it is utterly irrelevant to the question whether I ought to turn the left cheek to the smiter. If the gospel morality and theology are good, then they must be supported by purely moral and theological arguments. They will not be proved good and suitable to the twentieth century even if we had better evidence than the gospel narratives that Jesus walked across the sea of Galilee, or came to life on the third day after his death upon the cross.

To resume the thread of the narrative. Passing by these miracles which have interest merely as showing the character of our authority, we come to one of the frankest and most instructive episodes in St. Mark, the return of Jesus to his native town of Nazareth in the character of Messianic prophet. Though they recognized the excellence of his preaching the people who had known him all his life could not rid themselves of the influence of former associations; they would not hear of his Messianic mission. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And this proved a hindrance to their believing him." And, adds the evangelist with matchless candour,

because of their unbelief he could not do many miracles there.

By St. Luke the rejection of Jesus by his own townspeople is depicted in even stronger colours. He relates that the prophet spoke so bitterly of their want of appreciation and of his own intention not to use his miraculous powers on their behalf that they mobbed him in the synagogue, hustled him out of the town, and made an attempt to throw him over a cliff.

Looking behind the narrative of the evangelists we may doubt whether the failure at Nazareth stood alone. Unless he supports himself by deliberate imposture, it is the fate of the miracle-worker to make a great impression at the beginning, but afterwards to decline. When Jesus first discovered his gift of healing he doubtless thought that nothing was too hard for him. He must soon have been undeceived. Many diseases may be cured by faith, but not all. Even in nervous cases patients with serious lesions must have felt no benefit from the laying on of hands. We cannot doubt that in most places the failures of Jesus must have vastly exceeded his successes.

Moreover, after the first burst of enthusiasm, the preaching of Jesus must have found an ever-cooler reception: such is the fate of those who make tremendous promises and predictions that remain unaccomplished. The Kingdom announced as

imminent so far back as the first preaching of the Baptist delayed to come. The religious leaders of the nation grew increasingly hostile.

Nevertheless Jesus made a fresh progress through the countryside, and sent out his twelve disciples, two by two, commissioned to preach and exorcise demons. They were to go forth, like the Mendicant Orders of the Middle Ages, without provision for their journey or the full allowance of clothing, relying entirely upon the customary hospitality of the East. If people received them badly (a significant instruction), they were told to depart in anger. "If a place does not welcome you or listen to you, as you go out of it shake off the dust that is on the soles of your feet as a protest against them." Jesus himself probably subsisted on his journeys mainly by charity; for it is not likely that he had much opportunity to work at his trade, and most unlikely that he had any private fortune. St. Luke, however, records that he got help from some of his female devotees who were persons of substance. "With him went . . . some women who had been cured of wicked spirits and of infirmities. They were Mary known as Mary of Magdala (from whom seven demons had been expelled), and Joanna (the wife of Herod's steward Chuza) and Susanna and many others—all of whom ministered to Jesus and his apostles out of their means."

From various indications we gather that about

this time the danger from Herod Antipas increased. Through his steward Chuza, if in no other way, the tetrarch must have been well informed about Jesus ; but St. Mark here mentions the fact explicitly, and significantly adds the story of the Baptist's imprisonment and death. To this period are commonly assigned the words of St. Matthew meant to encourage the disciples against the dangers of the mission, "Be not afraid of those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul ; rather be afraid of him who is able to destroy both soul and body in the Pit. Are not two sparrows sold for a halfpenny ? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. While as for you the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Perhaps this is the real explanation why, after the disciples had returned from their mission in Galilee and made their report, Jesus gave the order, "Come by yourselves privately to a desert place and rest for a while." The party accordingly took to their boat and voyaged on the lake. It may have been the wonderful way in which the disciples and other followers surmounted difficulties of victualling in this desert spot that gave rise to the legend of the miraculous feeding of five thousand now recorded. Then apparently (the narrative is not very clear) Jesus voyaged to Bethsaida—a Graeco-Jewish town on the north-east, outside Herod's dominions, and thence after an unstated interval, to Gennesaret on

the west side where he performed many miraculous cures.

Once more before that journey to Sidon which seems to make a distinct period in the Galilean ministry we hear of a conflict with the Pharisees. There was probably no great interval separating this from the attempt to have Jesus confined as mad, for we still hear of the "scribes who had come from Jerusalem," showing that the deputation had not yet gone home. The Pharisees attacked Jesus for his neglect of the ceremonial observances of washing before eating. "How is it that your disciples do not follow the traditions of our ancestors but eat their food with defiled hands." Jesus in his answer reviled them bitterly as hypocrites, lip-servers, and inventors of futile ceremonialisms, and, carrying the war into the enemy's country, denounced their immoral evasion of natural duty by the custom of Korban whereby a man might exempt himself from the duty of supporting his parents by announcing that he meant to 'give to God,' *i.e.*, contribute to the Temple treasury, all that his parents might claim from him. All restrictions on food he brushed aside as quite immaterial for the moral life. To us this was an act of common sense; in Jesus it was an act of supreme originality; to the Pharisees it was a hideous desecration.

Very simply does St. Mark now introduce an

episode which is one of the most unexplained, though perhaps not inexplicable, parts of his narrative. "And from thence he arose and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon." The plain explanation is that the Pharisees and Herod had made continuance in Galilee impossible. Doubtless there really were political possibilities in the position of Jesus: the Fourth Gospel says that after the Miracle of the Five Thousand the lake-side people formed an intention "to carry him off to make him king." Herod, of course, could not have known that the pacific character of Jesus was utterly opposed to any such project of physical violence. But whether it was apprehension of sharing the fate of his former master or the fury of the ceremonial party that drove him out, it is recorded by two evangelists that Jesus abandoned Galilee and went far north to the Phoenician coast.

Some current explanations of the motives of this retirement are too far-fetched to deserve formal refutation. One is that having just abolished the distinction between clean and unclean foods he took his disciples into a Gentile country to show them how vain the distinction really was. He did not need to go so far afield for this object-lesson: it was ready to hand among the swine-breeding Gerasenes across the lake. Another explanation is that he wanted to be alone with his disciples. There were plenty of lonelier places than Phoenicia much nearer

home. Indeed it is highly improbable that he did take his disciples, or, if he took any, more than two or three of them. We know that the Phoenicians were unfriendly to the Jews; the party of religious wanderers with no independent means of subsistence could not look for the same liberal hospitality as in Galilee. Then there was the difficulty of language. Jesus and his party probably knew a little Greek, enough to make themselves understood in the towns; but the vernacular of the Phoenician villages must have differed considerably from that of Galilee. Jesus had no intention of evangelizing Phoenicia; since a famous passage of St. Matthew implies that Tyre and Sidon had never heard the call to repentance so slightly heeded by Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

We can only conjecture why Jesus went to Phoenicia rather than to some nearer Gentile country. Probably he was in the north-west of Galilee about Nazareth when the storm burst before which he deemed it prudent to retreat. He can scarcely have been influenced by the curiosity of travel. Tyre was the Manchester and Liverpool of the East, a huge manufacturing and seaport town, with mighty harbour-works, great temples to native gods, and the newer luxury and splendour of the Greeks. Jesus was a keen and sympathetic observer; but all his love was for the fields, mountains, and simple village life of Galilee; he

must have felt hopelessly out of place in the jostling streets of Tyre.[1]

Probably the purpose of Jesus was to stay quietly in Tyre with some Galilean friend in the Jewish colony. But his reputation as an exorcist was too great to allow this : "a woman, whose little daughter had a foul spirit in her, heard of him immediately" ; and Jesus, very loth, was constrained to exert his power for the benefit of this alien. Thereupon he left the place, and proceeded northwards to the lesser but still important city of Sidon.

Unless we take precaution to look at the map the gospel narrative here is likely to mislead. It says : "On returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon to the sea of Galilee." Now this is like going from London to Oxford by way of Birmingham. Jesus must have gone on to Sidon because he wanted to go there ; not because he wanted to get home. Why did he go to Sidon ? It is impossible to repress a conjecture for which from the nature of the case we could have no evidence but what is indirect. So far as regarded the results expected from it, the whole mission of

[1] It is rather odd that so promising a subject as 'Christ in Tyre' has never been utilized for painting or literary fiction. The gospel narrative does not expressly say that Jesus entered the great city, though there is every reason to think he did ; as a traveller from Reading to Chatham would not be likely to skirt round London. We are expressly told that he went through Sidon. There were undoubtedly Jewish colonies in both towns from whom the Galilean travellers would expect hospitality.

Jesus had been a failure. As Canon Sanday puts it, "A retrospect of the Galilean ministry seemed to show little but hard-heartedness, ingratitude, and unbelief." The brief time of his success was at an end; now onward, till he abandoned Galilee, danger and difficulty thickened around him. Those who try to harmonize the gospels assign to this period a serious defection among his disciples following the discourse in the Capernaum synagogue where he made the astounding pronouncement, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have not life within you" (St. John vi. 53). "On hearing it, many of his disciples said: 'This is harsh doctrine. Who can bear to listen to it?'" (*Id.* vi. 60). "After this many of his disciples drew back, and did not go about with him any longer" (*Id.* vi. 66).[1] It is no disparagement of the courage and steadfastness of Jesus if we conjecture that this accumulation of disappointment and anxiety temporarily broke his spirit. It may well have been that he had thoughts of abandoning his ill-starred mission. After all that he had said and done he could never again have lived at peace in Galilee; but he may have thought that in a great place like Tyre he might pass unnoticed, and earn a living peaceably by his trade

[1] The authority of the Fourth Gospel is very slender; but we can never be sure that there is no foundation for the events which it records.

among the Jewish colony. His reputation made this impossible even in Tyre, and he may have thought to try again in the remoter city of Sidon. If this design was ever formed, he soon abandoned it: the call of his destiny brought him back to Galilee.

The route taken by Jesus on his homeward journey shows how he shunned the dominions of Antipas. Going south-east from Sidon by the Damascus road he crossed the range of Lebanon into the deep and rugged valley of the Leontes; then turning north-east he crossed another range into the upper valley of the Jordan, then through the tetrarchy of Abilene, round the snow-capped mass of Hermon: then, leaving the Damascus road, south through Ituraea, Gaulanitis, and the hellenized district of Decapolis to the east shore of the lake. His absence must have lasted several weeks at least; he had travelled nearly two hundred miles through a most mountainous country. But it was not long enough to break up his connections with his followers; for after an unstated interval we hear of him embarking with them on the lake for Dalmanutha, which was probably on the western side.

It is at this place that we learn for the first time how sceptical were the orthodox of the prophet's alleged miraculous powers. "Here the Pharisees came out, and began to argue with Jesus, asking him for some sign from the heavens to test him."

At this challenge Jesus suffered the common fate of miracle-workers when the incredulous attack them. He whose powers were so superhuman amid a crowd of devoted believers worked no miracle to convince these scoffing Pharisees. "Sighing deeply, Jesus said: 'Why does this generation ask for a sign? I tell you, no sign shall be given it.' So he left them to themselves, and, getting into the boat again, went away to the opposite shore." So precipitate was his departure, that the disciples omitted to take provisions for the voyage. Jesus was deeply moved by this rebuff, and as soon as he left the inhospitable countryside, inveighed against his enemies: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." St. Mark records no more miracles and no more preaching in Galilee. In fact the band only returned to Capernaum at a later time to prepare for the final journey to Jerusalem. From Dalmanutha they went to Bethsaida in Philip's tetrarchy; and thence north to the Gentile country of Caesarea Philippi, a recently founded city on the southern slope of Hermon.

Why did Jesus retire to Caesarea Philippi? Again the orthodox interpreters give the quite inadequate answer, 'To be alone with his disciples.' The explanation is rather that the prophetic mission of Jesus was, to use a colloquialism, 'played out' in Galilee. Such an incident as the rebuff of Dalmanutha shows that his position had become

untenable. We know that at the close of his Galilean mission[1] he was bitterly dissatisfied with his treatment in the lake-side towns. They were a faithless and perverse, an evil and adulterous generation. He upbraided "the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.'"

Moreover, the mission of Jesus was essentially one of short duration. Every day that the Messianic kingdom failed to appear made it harder for him to go on proclaiming that it was close at hand. His band composed of fishermen and craftsmen at the best—at the worst of outcast men and women—had no promise of permanence or anything to

[1] I adopt the temporal order of St. Luke, but quote from St. Matthew.

command the confidence of the natural leaders of the people. The mob of curious and excited peasants who flocked to see his miracles dispersed as soon as their curiosity was satisfied. When a miracle-worker loses his prestige his fall is rapid. The hospitality which alone enabled Jesus and his followers to subsist might at any time change to insult and maltreatment when their popularity was gone, and the friends of Herod got the upper hand.

We are not told that the band lodged in Caesarea Philippi itself, but doubtless it did: in the city there must have been many Galileans who would show them a hospitality which could not be looked for to the same degree among the non-Jewish population of the villages. It was on the walk from Bethsaida to Caesarea (a distance of about twenty-five miles) that we first hear in St. Mark of a claim to the Messiahship. Jesus did not actually make it himself, but questioning Peter, "Who say ye that I am?" elicited the answer, "Thou art the Christ." In St. Mark's artless and straightforward tale there is no sign of any deep premeditation on the part of Jesus or of his disciples. Though the fateful declaration was doubtless the outcome of thoughts that had been working silently long before, it would be most unfair to say that Jesus and his followers, knowing the prospects of their present mission to be hopeless, put a new face upon the matter by a change of policy. The simplest and most honest minds may feel the

necessities of a situation without putting alternatives clearly before them. To Simon Peter the alternatives were, either our leader is an impostor, or he is the Christ himself: to Jesus they were, either to resign hope in the Messianic kingdom and to sink back into the life of the craftsman, or to announce that he himself was Christ. We cannot say that Jesus *chose* the latter course ; he simply moved along it, feeling the former to be intolerable.[1]

[1] It would be out of place to discuss at length the vexed question, when, if ever, Jesus claimed the Messiahship. There are three alternatives (*a*) that Jesus never claimed it at all, a view advocated by some of the most recent and intelligent of the critics, but one which leaves it hard to explain why the disciples claimed it for him after his death; (*b*) that Jesus was convinced of his Messiahship at his baptism and adopted a policy of *gradual* self-revelation to his disciples ; (*c*) the view of the text. The reasons for (*c*) and against (*b*) are, (1) it does least violence to the record : (2) it does not attribute to Jesus inner reservations and dissemblings and deep plans for the education of his disciples quite inconsistent with the simplicity of his character : (3) it explains the change in the outward policy of Jesus to have been caused by a change in his mind.

Records like those of our synoptics never tell us anything of a man's intimate plans and hopes, and so we cannot be sure what those of Jesus were at any time in his career. But we may conjecture that Jesus at the beginning of his mission supposed that the Messiah would appear shortly in Jerusalem : that his own function was to prepare a band of elect in Galilee as John had tried to do in Judaea ; and that on the Messiah's advent he would march down from Galilee at the head of his band to put himself by the Messiah's side. When his Galilean mission collapsed and he had become convinced that he himself was the Messiah, his place was evidently in Jerusalem, and thither he straightway repaired. Had he thought from the first that he was the Messiah he would not have lingered so long in Galilee but would have gone straight to Jerusalem. It is certain that he regarded Jerusalem, and Jerusalem only, as the place where a Messiah should establish his kingdom.

It is a most wonderful testimony to the love and respect inspired by Jesus that his disciples took up his Messiahship unquestioningly. All his external circumstances were those of a homeless and penniless wanderer ; nothing could less resemble the heavenly king who was to restore the glories of Israel and reign over the elect with unimaginable splendour. But we read of no murmuring among the band on the ground that he had put his claims too high. On the contrary they were quite carried away by their master, how completely, we learn from the story of the Transfiguration. One day, when three of the most intimate disciples, Simon Peter, James, and John had gone apart with the Master far up into the higher solitudes of Hermon, they saw his face and clothing transfigured with unearthly lustre in the misty sunlight of the mountain side, they saw shapes whom they took for Moses and Elijah conversing with him and heard a voice from the clouds saying, "This is my beloved Son ; hear ye him." How this strange story arose we cannot tell. It may be that Jesus, exalted by the thought of the new mission before him, had a renewal of those hallucinations which we have not heard of since the Temptation in the Wilderness, and that his overmastering personality communicated the visionary influence to the minds of his disciples. Or, more probably, it was all due to Simon Peter, who is represented as taking a leading part in the affair.

Very likely it was this ardent and emotional disciple who in the first instance saw the forms and heard the voices ; and that he was the source of the delusion of the Transfiguration, as he was later of the delusion of the Resurrection.

It is not easy to understand in what sense exactly Jesus understood his position as Messiah and what plan of action he had marked out for himself. According to our record he anticipated that his Messiahship would bring upon him suffering and death. This may be true in some degree ; Jesus may have taken to himself the prophecies in Isaiah of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. But much doubt is thrown upon our record by the precision with which Jesus is said to have anticipated events. "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." This could only have been written in the light of events and legends which were still in the future. There are passages which indicate that Jesus had a less passively suffering conception of his Messiahship than St. Mark would have us believe. He is more likely to have dwelt on the triumph than on the suffering. "The Son of Man shall come in the Glory of his Father with his angels" : "I tell you that some of those who are standing here will not know death, till they see the Kingdom of God come in power" : "I will not

drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." It is extremely probable that at this time and right onward to the hour of his arrest Jesus with his sensitive and emotional disposition alternated between opposing moods, now exulting in the assurance of triumph, now appalled at his own temerity and oppressed by terrible forebodings. But whatever the plans and feelings of their leader, it is certain that the band, having made a secret return through Galilee, prepared in Capernaum for the great enterprise of marching to Jerusalem to await the establishment of the Kingdom.

§ 8. It is generally agreed that there were two main primitive sources for the history of Jesus, a short biography which is, or more probably forms the basis of, St. Mark's Gospel, and a collection of sayings or 'logia' used by St. Matthew and St. Luke to enrich their narratives. Before we proceed to the closing scenes of the career of Jesus we may pause to ask what light the sayings and preaching of Jesus throw upon his character and plans.

The personal nature revealed by the synoptic discourses is amiable to the highest degree. To the personal charm of Jesus so high a tribute has been paid by Renan and others that there is less need to dwell upon it here. The character of Jesus was sensitive and affectionate, but capable of blazing up into anger even with the closest friends, as in the

famous rebuke to Peter at Caesarea Philippi ; simple and straightforward, but capable of subtle argumentation in controversy with enemies ; enthusiastic and devoted to a great cause ; cultured but quite unspoilt by culture ; ambitious in the spiritual sense but innocent of temporal aggrandizement. Notwithstanding the bitter disappointment and suffering sustained in a hopeless and chimerical enterprise, Jesus kept his sweetness of disposition to the end. The most wonderful part of his work is not his miracles, but the personal impression he made upon his followers and the devotion with which he inspired them. It was the bond of affection for their revered master that brought the Christian community together again after the shattering blow of the crucifixion. Had not Jesus been a supremely lovable person there would have been no Christian Church.[1]

It was partly, but not altogether, due to this

[1] In forming our conception of the personal character of Jesus it is necessary to allow for the fact, which is never allowed for by Christians, that all our records are such as must represent him in the most favourable light possible, and we have no means whatever of checking this extremely partial estimate. I think the records justify us in saying as much as is said in the text above : but no one with a historical conscience would say that they justify us in asserting that Jesus was the perfect embodiment of human virtue ; still less that he was free from all sin. The absolute sinlessness of Jesus, which is emphasized by Christian doctrine as his most essential characteristic, is never asserted by the Gospels : in St. Mark, above all, there is not a trace of it : it can only be 'proved' from Scripture by a very weak collection of second-hand passages. See Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ*, s.v. 'Sinlessness.'

lovable quality that Jesus was an incomparable preacher. Merely as art his best discourses have the greatest value, and have done infinite good service to the mind of Christendom. They have a quality which few kinds of human art possess : they are fresh and unsophisticated yet in perfect good taste. This rare and precious quality we find in forms so diverse as early Italian painting and Scotch lyrical poetry. The work of Giotto and of Robert Burns at his best is comparable artistically to the preaching in the synoptic gospels.

The excellence of the preaching of Jesus is made more impressive to us by the fact that it stands alone. The ordinary Jewish preaching, so far as we can judge of it from the earliest extant Midrashim, was utterly inferior in style and power. To suppose, however, that Jesus struck out this admirable manner of discourse quite alone is to put too much upon one man's originality. We may conjecture that there was a school or local method of preaching in Galilee in which Jesus was more or less systematically trained. His art seems unique and unapproachable because nothing contemporary to which we might compare it has survived. We may, then, regard the preaching of Jesus as trained or cultured work : it has also that other condition of naïve excellence, that it is uncontaminated by alien culture. Cosmopolitanism is fatal to artistic freshness. Evidently the hellenizing process had left rural Galilee quite

untouched: and thus the synoptic discourses of Jesus have that accent of nature and truth which is quite lacking to the discourses attributed to him by the Fourth Gospel.

Apart from eschatological ideas there is practically no theology in the authentic discourses of Jesus: nothing can be less doctrinal than the logia recorded by the synoptic gospels. All we can get out of them is that Jesus took a much more humane view of the relation between God and man than did orthodox Judaism. Judaism was essentially a religion of fear: the righteous 'feared Jehovah.' Now, without attributing to Jesus that definite promulgation of a 'religion of love' such as is suggested by St. Paul and declared explicitly in the writings attributed to St. John, the general character of the synoptic narrative shows that Jesus dropped god-fearingness as a virtue, and laid but small stress on all the ceremonies for averting the displeasure of a jealous God. There was nothing rigid, legalistic, domineering, or conventionally respectable about Jesus; and his conception of God conformed to his personal character.

Next we have to consider the moral teaching of Jesus which, though partly good, has in the main, through circumstances which he could never have foreseen, exercised a bad influence on the morality of modern Europe. The good part is his declaration of the need of a sincere goodness of heart, and his

protests against the formalism and conceit of the Pharisees, and against the cruelty and avarice which many of the orthodox concealed beneath the cloak of ceremonial impeccability. Some of his most incisive phrases about hypocrisy and self-righteousness deserve to be set up in letters of gold in Christian Churches, where they would profitably replace those repellent wooden placards at the sides of the Communion Table inscribed with the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic dispensation. On the other hand, the teaching of humility and suffering, which may be referred to conveniently as the morality of the Sermon on the Mount, is a very different matter.

To do justice to the Sermon on the Mount we must distinguish carefully what Jesus meant from what he is commonly supposed to mean. To appreciate it truly we must remember that Jesus was, above all, an eschatological prophet, that is, a prophet announcing the instant coming of the Messianic Kingdom which was to end the existing order of things in Israel. The Beatitudes all through refer to this consummation. "Blessed are the poor in spirit *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*" And all the other phrases, "they shall be comforted," "they shall inherit the earth," "they shall be satisfied," "they shall find mercy," "they shall see God," "they shall be called Sons of God"—all are various ways of promising participation in the Messianic Kingdom.

To one who will read the record with candour and attention the eschatological character of the Sermon on the Mount is plain enough ; but it is a character which is necessarily slurred over by Christian interpreters. The Kingdom of Heaven, in the sense in which Jesus predicted it, never came to pass. To save the credit of the gospel, therefore, these sayings are interpreted in a sense which they were not meant to bear, as rules for ordinary people in the normal conditions of society. And thus understood they have done more harm than the student of ethics and sociology can well compute.

If the question be asked, Why did Jesus put the moral qualification for admission to his Kingdom so extravagantly high ? we must take account of the fact that he was, in popular language, an idealist ; he was not content with what ordinary people think sufficiently good, but sought out the best in every quarter and tried to better it. Idealism in this sense is always amiable and excusable ; and above all is it excusable in a prophet who is convinced that the present state of things will immediately be replaced by a new state which is infinitely better. The ancestral code of Israel forbade murder ; Jesus forbids anger : the ancestors forbade adultery ; Jesus forbids an unchaste look : the ancestors forbade false swearing ; Jesus, here borrowing from the Essenes whom he had met often in Judaea, forbade all swearing whatever : the ancestors said " an eye for an eye

and a tooth for a tooth" ; Jesus says "if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also," and when a man would take your coat "let him have your cloak as well" : the Essenes were despisers of riches and assisted those in want ; Jesus says "sell all thou hast and distribute to the poor." "What are blows, coats, money, to men before whose eyes floats ever the vision of the end of the world and the day of the 'Son of Man.'" [1]

It is agreed by all men of worldly experience that these precepts, if practised thoroughly, mean the ruin of personal character and the dissolution of the social order. And yet their fascination is not hard to understand. The figure of Jesus is so beautiful, so sincere, his story so strange and romantic, that we cannot choose but listen to his voice. And here in the seeming-limpid narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke we find him uttering 'golden paradoxes' that set at naught the wisdom of the world. To warm and unscholarly minds the inference is easy ; perhaps, after all, the golden paradoxes are right and the wisdom of the world wrong. It is the interest of the established churches to foster the delusion : and thus the sweet and simple dreams of Jesus have been degraded into those nauseous sentimentalities by which Christian preachers try to corrupt the manhood of modern society.

[1] From an essay in Mr. Garrod's *Religion of all Good Men*, which popularizes admirably some important results of German research.

To ask what social system is advocated by Jesus would be to put a question which from the nature of the case admits of no complete reply. Jesus had no definite notion of a social system; nor did his Messianic Kingdom admit of one. And yet the general tendency of his social preferences is plain enough. He regarded himself as sent specially "to preach the Gospel to the poor"; and his followers, with the exception of a few rich women and outcast publicans, were all poor people. In the East, then as now, riches, being due almost always to some rascality or political oppression, have a taint about them; while poverty, as we learn from the Psalms, has affinity to goodness and godliness. Though the Gospels on the whole are not greatly disfigured by denunciations of the upper classes, there are still not a few severe passages. "Woe unto you who are rich, for you have had your comforts in full: woe unto you who are full, for you shall hunger." Such a parable as that of Lazarus and Dives shows that Jesus regarded wealth as inconsistent with membership in his Kingdom. The little roving band of mendicant enthusiasts had no private property, but carried a common purse of which Judas Iscariot was keeper. The man who saved money, laying up for himself earthly treasure, was always a special object of the prophet's ridicule. About the life and industry of civilized cities Jesus knew next to nothing; to him they were merely places where

people wore fine clothes and lived delicately: they and their inhabitants were altogether outside the range of his sympathy.

§ 9. To resume the narrative of the career of Jesus. We do not know how long it took the Galilean band to pass down through Peraea to Jericho. Probably they moved very slowly, so that Jesus had time to send out disciples (so many as seventy according to St. Luke) to announce his coming and collect adherents. As they drew near the city his disciples, perhaps sharing a mood of their leader's dejection, were appalled at the boldness of the enterprise: but he seems to have had a large party with him when, some time before the Passover, he reached Jerusalem; and the triumphal entry arranged by his followers and other Galilean sympathisers already in the city attracted much attention from the inhabitants.

For the last scenes of the life of Jesus we have narratives which are much fuller and more historical than for any earlier period: the miraculous element practically disappears. But with all this light some main questions remain doubtful. With what plans did Jesus go to Jerusalem? Why was he put to death? Why were the populace favourable at first and afterwards hostile? We cannot expect an intelligible account of motives and causes from the gospel records. They are bound to regard the crucifixion as a predestined event—simply, the time

had come when Jesus was to be received up. But we, who take a human view of the affair, must look for a human explanation : none is certain ; but the following seems most probable.

When Jesus went to Jerusalem he thought himself to be the Messiah. But he did not, after the usual manner of Messiahs and Mahdis, assert his claim by armed attack upon the established government. His only overt act was the Purging of the Temple ; for the rest, he contented himself with proclaiming his Kingship and the near approach of the Kingdom.[1] He thought that his actual assumption of royal dignity would take place when his Heavenly Father descended in power to inaugurate the Kingdom and to give him more than twelve legions of angels to subdue all hostile powers. Till that came to pass he remained, so to speak, a Messiah *de jure*, but not *de facto*. It was only as not contemplating merely human violence that Jesus could say " my kingdom is not of this world." In any other sense the kingdom was intended to be of

[1] It is unquestionable from the acclamation of the multitudes, " Hosanna to the Son of David," and from the accusation set up above his cross that Jesus definitely claimed the kingship ; but it is remarkable that the synoptics record so little by way of personal claim in his discourses in Jerusalem. It is impossible to repress a conjecture that this is because most of the things said by Jesus about himself at this time could not be recorded by the evangelists, since the issue belied them. We cannot doubt that Jesus did promise to destroy the Temple and build it in three days, and probably this daring prediction did not stand alone.

this world, actually established in Jerusalem, with chosen disciples sitting on thrones on either hand, a kingdom where the faithful should receive a hundredfold the houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land which they had abandoned to follow the Master ; a kingdom in which the hypocritic Pharisee, the domineering Sadducee, and the hateful Roman oppressor would find no place. It was to establish this Kingdom of Heaven *on earth* that Jesus came to Jerusalem, the centre of the nation : had his kingdom been purely spiritual or heavenly he might just as well have stayed in Galilee. We must suppose, then, that he came to Jerusalem with an intelligible and, according to his presuppositions, a feasible plan. He came in absolute faith, a faith which would look to pluck up a mountain by its roots and cast it into the sea. His march to Jerusalem was not an act of suicide : he did not come to throw away his life by dashing himself against forces which he knew would destroy him.[1]

Inevitably in proclaiming and preparing for his kingdom Jesus came into sharp collision with the leaders of Judaism, whose expected Messiah was quite different from this desecrator of cere-

[1] It is hardly possible to exaggerate the intensity of the faith with which devout Jews expected divine intervention. At the time when the Roman troops were finally storming the Temple at the end of the Revolt, thousands of the Jews assembled in the precinct stood looking up into the sky for the instant appearance of the Deliverer.

monies, this favourer of beggars and publicans and sinful women. As usual he denounced the Pharisees, but in terms far bitterer than he had ever used: "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" Since the Pharisees did not hold the reins of government his quarrel with them might have continued indefinitely; but he roused against himself a more effective enemy. The very next day after his triumphal entry, St. Mark relates, "Jesus went into the Temple Courts, and began to drive out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of the pigeon-dealers, and would not allow any one to carry anything across the Temple Courts." This most daring act is commonly spoken of as an amiable outburst of righteous indignation, and a picture is formed of Christ passing single-handed through the Temple Courts with a scourge of small cords making his salutary purgation. The reality must have been very different. Jesus was apparently a man of slight physique and no warlike prestige. The dealers and money-changers of the Temple market were numerous, especially as the great sacrificial season was drawing on. Had Jesus not been strongly supported he would have been overpowered at once and flung outside, even if a stab from some sacrificial knife had not cut short his zeal for the purity of the House of Jehovah. There

can be no doubt that Jesus headed a large band of his followers from Galilee and Peraea who, armed with rustic weapons, raised a violent brawl against which the Temple police were for the moment powerless. No wonder that the chief priests and scribes and elders came to him shortly afterwards and asked indignantly, "By what authority doest thou these things?" Let us imagine a mob of Protestants from Lancashire invading St. Paul's Cathedral with hoarse northern cries, buffeting the vergers and tearing down all that might be thought to have a Romanizing tendency, and we can understand the fury of the authorities of the Temple at Jerusalem. In answer to their remonstrances Jesus threatened them in the harshest terms with exclusion from the approaching Kingdom; he likened them to the wicked tenants of a vineyard who would pay no rent and even murdered the son of the lord of the vineyard, and therefore deserved to be killed by the lord himself when he came to claim his own. Of the Temple itself, so laboriously and magnificently constructed, Jesus spoke contemptuously: he seems to have expected that it would be destroyed in the establishment of the Messianic Jerusalem, and that a new one more magnificent would be miraculously built in a few days.

There is no reason to doubt the express statement of St. Mark that the Purging of the Temple was the reason that made the Jewish authorities

resolve to destroy Jesus;[1] though the fear that his Messianic claims might embroil them with the Romans may have been a contributing factor. To the priests and the Temple people generally the matter was one of life and death: either the Temple market must proceed unmolested, or they and their families would be threatened with starvation. Jerusalem was naturally a very poor city, and quite a large proportion of its inhabitants must have lived by the Temple in one way or another. Nevertheless, the authorities did not venture to act at once against Jesus: "they feared the multitudes because they took him for a prophet." Having failed to involve him in a quarrel with the Romans by asking if he thought it right to pay the imperial tribute, they waited for his popularity to decline.

According to St. John, whom St. Mark supports, Jesus only entered Jerusalem on the Sunday before the day of his death. Some expert biblical scholars doubt St. John's chronology, and hold that the Second Gospel has been 'edited' to harmonize it with St. John. Any reader can see that the four days are far too little for the events and discourses that are crowded into them. But the fatal objection is that this period is insufficient for the change in public feeling: at the beginning of it the populace

[1] Some good authorities suppose that Jesus, by his act of Purging, meant to abrogate the sacrificial system altogether. If so, we need no further explanation for his being put to death.

loved him : at the end of it they hated him. Not four days but several weeks are necessary for this.

How are we to account for so great a revulsion ? Doubtless by the same cause that ended the Galilean mission ; the Kingdom of Heaven simply failed to appear. It is possible, though our evangelists do not say so, that Jesus named a day when Jehovah was to come ; and he came not. This would explain the change fully. In any case the circumstances were much less favourable in Jerusalem than in Galilee : the Pharisees were much stronger ; above all there were the crowds of priests, Levites, serving-men, and Temple-dealers whose livelihood Jesus had threatened, and whose beloved Temple Jesus had destined to destruction.

When the Temple authorities did act against Jesus their action was thoroughly effective. They waited till near the Passover, when men's minds were occupied with preparation ; they learned about his personal movements so that they might take him at the best advantage ; then they sent a party who arrested him by night and brought him before the Sanhedrin before daybreak. We perceive that the authorities did not consider the movement of Jesus very dangerous by the fact that they allowed all his adherents to escape, though it could not have been difficult to catch some of them. Jesus himself was anticipating the arrest, as he knew there was treachery in his band. At one time he thought of resistance

and armed some of his followers. There was a slight scuffle at the arrest and one of the Temple servants was wounded by a Galilean. But at the last Jesus, who was no fighter, went quietly, and his disciples scattered in the darkness.

The picture which the gospels give us of the Galilean band at the time of the arrest shows plainly that they were in very low circumstances. Had they been strongly supported in Jerusalem they would have been well lodged in the houses of people of good position. As it was, they were reduced to 'camping out,' as we say, in an olive grove just outside the city, an arrangement which, in the month of April, must have meant hardship in an upland country like Jerusalem. Here, in rough shelters, we may suppose, huddled away from the cold night breeze the disciples had fallen asleep : though Jesus, tortured with apprehension, remained awake until the temple police found him.

Without delay, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin specially assembled for the case. He was easily convicted of blasphemy, as that crime was defined by Jewish law, and would have been stoned at once under a national government. But the Romans had reserved to themselves the power of inflicting death. He was therefore sent over to the procurator who had come up from Caesarea to keep order at the Feast, that his sentence might be reviewed.

According to the unanimous testimony of the gospels Pilate, believing Jesus to be a harmless enthusiast, did his best to save him.[1] We have no means of checking this record : but the conduct of the procurator appears very strange, especially in view of what we otherwise know of him. We must remember that, on account of the bitter hatred between Jews and Christians and of the Christian need for Gentile converts, the bias of the evangelists would be to minimize the Roman share and to magnify the Jewish share in this tragedy. As we learn from Philo and Josephus, who are witnesses not prejudiced by Christian influence, Pilate was notorious for severity ; and the Galileans were well known to the Romans as a rough, warlike people. Not long before the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, so we gather from an incident mentioned by St. Luke alone, Pilate had massacred some Galilean pilgrims within the precincts of the Temple itself, so that their blood had streamed over the sacrifices which they

[1] In view of the great stress often laid by Christian apologists upon the nobility of the behaviour of Jesus before Pilate it is worth while pointing out that this part of the story must be received with great reserve. How did the evangelists get their information ? It is extremely unlikely that any of the disciples were present at the scene, and equally unlikely that Pilate or the Roman guards or any of the party of accusers reported afterwards to the disciples what the words and behaviour of Jesus had been. The difficulty is greatest in the Johannine narrative, which magnifies the conduct of Jesus most ; there Pilate takes Jesus into the Government House to interrogate him privately, the crowd remaining outside for fear of ceremonial defilement.

were offering. At present the messiahship of Jesus might be harmless enough, but there was no assurance that it would not take on a dangerous form. The experience of the British in fanatical countries, especially in the Egyptian Soudan, shows that alien governors must treat Mahdis and Messiahs with a very firm hand. That the country was in a disturbed state is shown by the fact that at this same time there were men in prison for a recent uprising in which blood had been shed. It is possible that there is some foundation for the statement in the Fourth Gospel that Roman soldiers assisted the Temple police in making the arrest. But whatever Pilate's action may have been, the Jews prevailed in desiring the prisoner's death, yelling out for the penalty of crucifixion with fierce cries. After suffering horrible insults and cruelties Jesus was led away with two other convicts to a felon's death on a knoll just outside the city.

It is not altogether a vain speculation to ask what would have happened if the Sanhedrin had been more merciful, or the procurator firmer in resisting them, and the life of Jesus had been spared. Had he been released instead of Barabbas, would the fright of his narrow escape have cured him of his Messianic dreams and deterred him from reassembling his scattered followers? Or suppose that the Jewish authorities had kept quiet and only contented themselves with securing the Temple

market from fresh interruption—what would have been the end of the mission of Jesus? Would he have let himself be carried away at last by headstrong counsels, and with Simon the Zealot by his side have risked a blow against the hated Roman power? Such was the invariable end of these Messianic agitators. Or would he have held his non-political attitude to the last, and, with an ever-dwindling band of believers, waited hoping hopelessly for the coming of the Kingdom, till mere starvation drove him back to his trade? We cannot tell. It is plain that his enterprise was 'fizzling out,' to use our common phrase, when the Sadducees crushed it with violence. Possibly, however, if left alone, his fertile and commanding intellect might have struck out some altogether new line of activity. In any case the history of mankind would have been different from what it has been. And in particular the Jews would have missed the strange fate that has actually befallen them. Little did the Sadducees anticipate that this act of brutal cruelty, probably no worse than hundreds of others before and after, would be so fearfully avenged upon the whole people to remotest generations.

It would be irrelevant to rehearse the well-known pitiable details of the death of Jesus. One small point, however, may be noticed. It was customary for the condemned man to carry his cross, or at least the transverse beam of it, to the place of execution.

The burden was not excessive for an average man : Jesus, however, proved not strong enough and the soldiers commandeered a passing stranger to carry it for him.

Death by the cross was usually slow ; strong men could endure the pain till they perished of starvation. But the slight physique of Jesus succumbed after a few hours. As the end drew near he saw that his faith had been a dream : it was all finished with the Kingdom of Heaven : his last words were a bitter cry, ' My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?' He died despairing, forsaken by his disciples and execrated by his countrymen : the two malefactors who shared his punishment railed at him deriding his kingship as they sat upon their crosses on either side.

Such was the end of Jesus : and no one at the time could have had any reason to think that the whole matter would not have ended there. To us in view of what has happened since it is almost impossible to realise that the facts can have been so simple and so small. Looking to us triumphant across the centuries the figure of Jesus appears colossal, majestic, infinitely imposing in its glorious benignity. But this is pure illusion : those who were in a position to estimate his contemporary importance did not see him thus. John the Baptist was a much more notable personage than his disciple, to judge by the space accorded to him in the almost contemporary historian Josephus. The whole episode of

the career of Jesus, his little rustic mission in Galilee and pitiful death in Jerusalem, was a very trifling affair, a transient wave, a bood-stained eddy in the whirlpool of that wild time. There is a well-known short story by Anatole France where Pontius Pilate is represented in retirement near the end of his life talking over old times with a pleasure-loving friend who had known him in Judaea. During supper the talk falls upon the qualities of the Jewish women, and the friend speaks of Mary of Magdala whom he had known during her unrepentant days in Jerusalem. He recounts the manner of his parting from Mary, who left him to join the band of a young miracle-worker from Galilee. "'His name was Jesus; he came from Nazareth, and was crucified at last for some crime or other. Pontius, do you remember the man?' The old procurator frowned and raised a hand to his forehead as one who searches through his memory. Then, after some moments of silence, 'Jesus,' he muttered, 'Jesus of Nazareth? No, I don't remember him.'" This is fiction, but it is absolutely true to history. But for the sect which his old disciples founded, the name of the Galilean carpenter would never have reached our modern ears.

§ 10. Such, or something like it, is the true account of the life of Jesus. And, if this is so, there is little need to spend time demonstrating the orthodox accounts to be false. Jesus was an eschatological prophet who subsequently became convinced that he

himself was the Messiah. He was not the founder of the Christian Church : that church is, so to speak, founded on Christ, not founded by Christ. There is not a word in the record of St. Mark to show that Jesus ever contemplated the foundation of such an institution as the Christian Church : such a notion is totally at variance with the whole plan of his activity. The Church was founded after his death by his old disciples. Nor did Jesus ever regard himself as the Saviour or Redeemer of mankind in the sense of atoning by his death for human sins.[1] He did not think of himself as an incarnation of God, or as the Word of God which had clothed itself in flesh. He did not regard himself, or speak in the tone of, an apostle of love, either in the sense of declaring God's exceeding love of men, or in the sense of loving men himself exceedingly and desiring his followers to love himself and each other exceedingly. But these are the main interpretations which the Church has put upon the life of Jesus.

But for the personality of Simon Peter the disciples, we may say confidently, would never have drawn together again after the dispersal caused by the crucifixion. As we gather from St. Paul, it was Peter's ardent imagination that set on foot the story of the Resurrection.[2] This happened, apparently,

[1] The famous passage of St. Mark x. 45, "To give his life a ransom for many," is 'editorial.'

[2] It hardly seems necessary at this time of day to expend historical criticism on the Resurrection. We have only to remember that the

in Galilee, and the visionary excitement thus aroused communicated itself to many others of the old followers of Jesus. The eschatological hope revived again, and the belief grew up that Jesus would

minds of devout Jews were full of ideas about the resurrection of prophets. According to the best authority Jesus himself, while alive, was believed by many, among the rest by Herod Antipas, to be John the Baptist raised from the dead; while others inclined to think he was Elijah. Every man who profoundly impressed the popular imagination might be expected to rise again.

We can place no reliance upon the records of what followed the crucifixion. St. Mark's tales about the honourable counsellor, Joseph of Arimathea (a person otherwise unknown), boldly craving the body from Pilate and laying it, wrapped with fine linen, in a new rock-tomb; about the women's preparations for embalmment (nearly two days after the death); about the women's visit to the tomb at sunrise; about the young man in the empty tomb sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment; about the appearances to Mary Magdalen and to the two disciples as they walked into the country—all this is pious legend, not history. And still less historical are the narratives of the other gospels. The real facts were probably so crude and devoid of dignity that no evangelist could recount them. Golgotha was apparently the usual execution-ground, and in that land of violence executions were frequent. There would be a long trench into which the remains of the crucified would be thrown. It was not probable that this trench was deep; the Roman soldiers would hardly go to the labour of digging deep in the stony soil of Golgotha. But if bodies were buried in a shallow trench the scavenging dogs would scratch them up. Possibly, when taken down in the evening (to satisfy the commandment of Deut. xxi. 22), the bodies were thrown out to be picked by vultures and dogs (the dogs that ate Jezebel so quickly); and then next morning the bones were interred in the trench, so that passers-by might not be defiled by them. We know from the story of Jezebel that the Jews thought such an end fitting for the corpses of those whom they held to be accursed. Whether it all happened thus or not, the remains of Jesus, mingled with those of the two malefactors, must have been totally unrecognisable within a few hours after death, and could not have been produced by the Jews to disprove the story of the Resurrection.

shortly return and establish the Kingdom. To await the Second Coming the Galilean band returned to Jerusalem, where under the presidency of Peter they resolved to maintain the apostolic organization established by Jesus. At one of the meetings of the little community—about 120 in number—a strange portent took place, the speaking with tongues or glossolalia, well recognized now by students of such matters as an accompaniment of intense religious exaltation. The manifestation was attributed to the outpouring of a divine influence, called the Holy Spirit, which thenceforward was held to distinguish this community from the not very dissimilar community established by the followers of the Baptist. There followed an outburst of enthusiasm ; a great popular impression was made ; converts flocked in ; and in the glow of the newly recovered faith Peter and other apostles were able to work miracles of healing no less marvellous than those of their Master. The intervention of the Sanhedrin did not avail to stop the movement. The apostles established an organization for the administration of the community. And thus was started the new Jewish sect which later, far away at Antioch, received the name of Christians.

This poor and humble sect held a doctrine proportionately simple. They believed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and that very soon, certainly within the lifetime of the original apostles, he

would appear again and establish his kingdom. Their effective preaching simply consisted in the call 'Repent, join our community and await the second coming of the Messiah.' For the Jew, admittance was as easy as possible. He had only to say, 'I repent and believe,' and baptism was at once accorded to him. For the Gentile proselyte there stood the difficulty of circumcision and the rest of the Jewish ceremonialism. But there was great tendency, in harmony with the general attitude of Jesus, to make the ceremonial conditions as easy as possible, and even to waive the prime condition, circumcision.

In its primitive form Christianity had evidently no promise of permanence or of useful development. As the Second Coming was indefinitely delayed it must have languished and its doctrine grown ever more unreal, until it survived, if at all, in the same sort of obscure and attenuated form in which the church of John the Baptist is said to have maintained itself long after the full establishment of Christianity. But new vistas were opened to it by the interpretations of the life and work of Jesus made current by two men, St. Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel.

§ 11. The practical activity of St. Paul, his momentous step of establishing Gentile churches, lies altogether outside my scope. And for the purpose of this book the large subject of the

Pauline theology may be dealt with in the briefest way. Its essential characteristic is that it forms an attempt to bring the new sect into harmony with the Judaic system, and to view the Mosaic Law and the work of Christ together as one great divine world-scheme. Though a relatively well-educated man, St. Paul was no logician, and never sets out his doctrine in orderly form. But using his epistle to the Romans as a basis, and supplementing it from others, we get the following result.

In his natural state and as a creature of flesh, man is a 'child of wrath,' full of sin, and deserving of nothing but uttermost damnation. This tainted condition of human nature is to be traced back to Adam, who by his trespass in Eden contracted a moral disease which he communicated to all his descendants. The Mosaic Law, which the orthodox Jew regarded as a covenant whereby Jehovah admitted the Jewish nation to a special position of favour, was regarded by St. Paul as introduced by God in order to prove to man the impossibility of getting salvation by his own exertions. The Law in itself was good; but man was utterly incapable of fulfilling it; the Jewish nation never attained to righteousness. Indeed the actual effect of law was rather to increase sin. The legal prohibitions awoke and sharpened lawless desire in man: the Jew was no better than the Gentile, only more hypocritical; his legal privileges had bred in him a stubborn and

inhuman pride. Such was the horrible state of affairs when the Messiah came.

The work of Christ, according to St. Paul, was to put an end to the reign of sin. He, the only-begotten son of God, came to earth incarnate, took upon himself the sins of mankind, and, by his death upon the cross, atoned for them. This atonement admits men to grace. Those who embrace the life of faith, that is, believe the theological scheme here set forth, become by baptism sons of God, cleansed from sin, and fit for admission to the Kingdom.

§ 12. The Christology of the Fourth Gospel is not essentially different from that of St. Paul. The two principles which I am going to mention are contained in St. Paul and are only developed with explicit fulness by St. John. The Gospel altogether is not a history of Jesus in the same sense as the synoptic narratives, but an allegorical or symbolical construction with the purpose of setting forth theological ideas current in religious circles at Ephesus where the Gospel was written.[1] Two only of the Johannine ideas are sufficiently influential at the present day to call for notice here. Primarily, Jesus is to the writer of the Fourth Gospel an incarnation of the Logos or Word, the rational and effective aspect of the Deity. He is also an

[1] Such is the view of Professor Loisy set forth in his elaborate work *Le quatrième évangile.*

embodiment of divine love—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son." The command of Christ to men is, "Love one another; love one another as I have loved you. No man can give greater proof of love than by laying down his life for his friends."

It would be waste of time to set about proving that all this Christology is unhistorical. It is quite enough to lay the narrative of St. Mark alongside the interpretations of St. Paul and St. John.

§ 13. Beside the Pauline and Johannine interpretations there are two others which have been adopted by the Christian Church, but may be put aside even more summarily: Jesus is regarded as the author of sacraments and the founder of a hierarchy. Needless to say they are both quite incompatible with all we know of him. He was the least sacramental and ceremonial of religious teachers. Even more alien, if possible, to his authentic ideas is the founding of a hierarchy: it is almost impossible to imagine a mind and character less hierarchical than his. If the Galilean wanderer could return to life in modern Rome and see the pretentious and worldly system that has been built on a few words alleged to have been spoken by him to Simon Peter, he would be overwhelmed with astonishment and indignation. It is often argued that sacraments and hierarchy grew up inevitably in response to the needs of the Christian Church. Very likely: but

that does not make them any the more accordant with the spirit of Jesus.

§ 14. Before the clear sunshine of historical truth the weird mist-shapes of orthodox Christology must melt into nothingness. But even if we did violence to our intellectual conscience and forced ourselves to believe the misinterpretations of Jesus offered to us by the Christian Church, what is there to be gained by it? Can we say that these doctrines are useful, assuming it to be proved that they are not historical?

Now, I confess, I have not the heart to demonstrate formally the inutility of most of these doctrines. Those who believe that a sacerdotal hierarchy is good for social welfare, or who believe that divine favour can be attracted and moral improvement gained by sacramental acts, had better continue in their beliefs unmolested. If the plain verdict of history and science cannot touch them, it is not likely that any words of mine can.

As for St. Paul's theology, it is not merely useless, but as bad as a theology can be. The difficulty is not to prove its badness, but to explain how a great and good man like St. Paul came to invent it.

To understand St. Paul we must remember that, like all religious Jews at that time, he expected the imminent approach of the Messianic Kingdom. *Maranatha*: the Lord cometh, and with him the day of wrath and judgment. All who are not

'saved,' that is, justified by faith in the redeeming power of Christ, were threatened with unimaginable doom. St. Paul is not responsible for these horrible eschatological delusions: they were stamped upon his mind by his education as a religious Jew.

Now, if we read St. Paul's epistles with any degree of sympathy, we cannot fail to see that the great aim of his life, his life of noble and devoted service, was to save as many souls as possible, Gentile as well as Jew, from the doom impending. He did not regard himself as the founder of a Church to endure for ages, but as one working hastily under pressure of a terrible emergency. To save as many souls as possible, he wanted to do away with all ritual obstacles that barred admission into the company of the saved, more especially the rite of circumcision.

This primary purpose of St. Paul brought him into a difficult relation to the old Jewish law. On the one hand it was impossible for him as a loyal son of Israel not to regard the Law as in some sense valuable and divine. On the other hand, he needed such an interpretation of it as would enable him to regard it as quite superseded, and to tell the Jews that it was vain for them to think of winning salvation by means of it. His theology was not a purely speculative effort recommended to his mind by its inherent rationality; it was the best scheme he could think of to meet this practical situation,

and there is no reason to think he ever appreciated the moral difficulties to which it gives rise.

The Pauline theology is so little in favour at the present day that it is not worth while to spend long in denouncing it. He is always telling us of the righteousness of God. What sort of righteousness was it to create a being so frail as Adam, to allow the results of his trifling disobedience to contaminate the whole human race, and then to visit the world with a Judgment that must bring eternal torment to all but a very few? What are we to think of a God who promulgated an onerous law for the express purpose of showing man's helplessness and of provoking him to further sin? And who at the present day has a good word to say for the idea of vicarious punishment? It seemed reasonable to people at the level of the Jews, with their notion of sin as physical contamination. But to us, punishing one man to clear another is nonsense.

To present-day adherents of Paulinism, that which was of prime importance in the eyes of the founder of the doctrine has dropped out of sight: the Gentiles have been brought into the fold—in fact, are the fold; the Judaizers who hated and persecuted the great apostle have ceased to exist. The Christian Church has no longer any call to adjust its theology to the Mosaic dispensation as conceived by the rabbis of that time. Thus the special reasons which justified St. Paul's scheme

when it was framed hold good no longer. For the Pauline theology *as it is held at the present day* no term of reprobation and contempt can be too strong : there is no redeeming feature in its absurdity and cruelty.

Surely there never was a more striking case where philosophy was needed to safeguard speculation than this of St. Paul. How much more human his system would have been if he had sat at the feet of even the dullest of the Stoics, instead of at the feet of Gamaliel. The least philosophic training in the subjects whereon he presumes to dogmatize would have saved him from perpetrating all those atrocities upon the moral consciousness of civilization.

It would be a most interesting problem, if we had sufficient data for solving it, to estimate what actual harm the Pauline theology has done. For myself I believe that, just as the human body is furnished with appliances for destroying noxious microbes if their numbers are not too great, so the mind has a prophylactic principle—commonsense or impenetrability—which neutralizes the virus of noxious doctrines. I do not believe that the clergymen who have taught the Pauline theology have, save in exceptional cases, been depraved by it morally, or fallen in any way below the standard of the decent people around them. But I do think that much intellectual harm has been done. Surely the habit of preaching up these atrocities as the

perfection of divine righteousness and wisdom must exercise a stupefying effect upon the reasoning powers.

The Johannine theology is in somewhat different case. One can understand why the doctrine of the incarnation of the Word still has no small attractive power. But will its attraction last? It must decline, so it seems to me, in proportion as the world grows better.

Do we really, even at our present stage, want a God who became flesh and dwelt on earth; who was delivered from a woman, and went through the petty miseries of infancy; who toddled and scrambled as a Syrian urchin about the dirty lanes of Nazareth; who went through the turmoil of adolescence, and learnt and plied the carpenter's trade? I am not for one moment despising these human things: the charge of despising them must rest with those who would think it irreverent to bring them into a religious discussion. I only say that we are no better off for believing that God took them upon himself. If we are poor and wretched and discontented with this our lot of fleshly life, it may do us good to think that God endured it all before us. But if we are happy and well enough content with manhood so long as we are men, though hopeful of a better life when this is done, we shall not want an incarnate God to help us live. And, incidentally, it may be remarked that the in-

carnation doctrine gives us no comfort in the parts of life that are hardest to bear. We do not know that Jesus suffered from disease, and we know for certain that he never grew old.

The gospel of love I have already touched upon. I do not think that the highly charged emotional warmth of the early Christian communities, such, for example, as we find it depicted in the first epistle of St. John, is a state that can be long maintained, or is really wholesome. Nor do I think it reasonable or wholesome to act on the assumption that God loves men with the fervour described in the Johannine writings.

§ 15. In recent years some theologians, who have undertaken to reinterpret Christianity in accordance with the latest results of thought and criticism, have asserted that it really contains but one principle, devotion to the personality of Jesus. The love of Christ is the whole of righteousness; for, according to the common phrase, Christ gathers into one focus and exhibits in living concreteness the noblest aspirations of humanity. In a sense all this is true, though it is very important to remember what that sense is. The personality to which Christian devotion is directed is not a historical personality; it is, and always has been, an idealized personality. This does not mean that the personality is purely imaginary, or that men have done just what they liked with it: the idealizing process has been

circumscribed by the Christian record. But within the limits of that record very great imaginative licence is possible; indeed, infinitely more licence has been taken than with any other character in history. Each man thinks Christ the special embodiment of the qualities which he himself admires: to the orthodoxy of the Middle Ages he was 'our fair father Christ,' an episcopal sort of person; to the muscular Christian of Kingsley's generation the perfection of manliness; to the late distinguished Master of Trinity Hall an ideal educator; to Oscar Wilde "the most supreme of individualists."[1] The Christ of ordinary Christian worship in England bears very little relation indeed to the historical Jesus who worked in Galilee and died in Jerusalem.

Now what I wish to call in question is this whole method of idealization, on the ground that, though it has done good work in the past, it is now not so suitable as a 'real' method to serve as the foundation of religion. "The whole Christian conception of life," as a recent writer has remarked, "is essentially pessimistic": and this idealizing method is an incident of its pessimism. A 'real' method, on the other hand, one that stands loyally by realities, is based on optimism.

When people think ill of the world it is not desirable that they should think too much about it. This thinking ill of the world is very characteristic

[1] *De Profundis*, p. 80.

of the lower civilizations. The Hindu peasant, says Mr. William Benett, though not unhappy or even discontented, is a confirmed pessimist. The fact is that people in the position of Hindu peasants know themselves to be weak and at the mercy of the powers and forces around them. And it is weakness above all that depresses one's estimate of life. It is a gross libel upon optimists to say that their temper is due to good feeding or a healthy liver. A settled optimism is the reward of courage and steadfast resolution : what we despise in a pessimist is the timidity at the bottom of him.

Now people who think man an inevitably wretched creature and the world a miserable place are better off with an idealizing religion : they need a prehistoric Golden Age to keep them from brooding ; they need a perfect type of humanity who lived long ago and about whom they do not know too much. They do not want science, they want faith—faith in the past.

But I hold that we have got beyond this stage, and that now we are strong enough and can be bold enough to think that the world is good. We do not need to live in the past and fancifully deck out some long-perished being in all the perfections which our imaginations can supply : the present is good enough to take our stand upon ; good enough to make our foothold for reaching out into the future.

For the purpose of this real religion we cannot know too much about the world and cannot think too clearly. The Hindu peasant has little science and what he has does not make him think well of the world: we have much science, and the more we have the more interesting and splendid does the world appear to us. The average Christian lives in an intellectual twilight: thus only can he continue to believe his imaginations. The man of free religion must go as far as research and thought can take him. For we need strength, and we get strength from knowledge.

§ 16. We cannot allow great weight to the argument that Christianity must be true because it supplanted paganism and has endured to the present day. Mahometanism supplanted Christianity over a great part of its old territory, and still endures. The main reason of the victory of Christianity, as I hope to show presently, was that it was more human than paganism. Of course it had other collateral advantages in the struggle, some good, some evil. It was much purer than paganism. On this ground also Judaism always had a chance of becoming a world religion. All the large cities from Rome eastward had Jewish colonies which formed centres for the dissemination of Jewish doctrine; and many Gentile proselytes attended the synagogues everywhere. What kept people away was the ceremonial part of the religion, especially

circumcision. Judaism, with its definite prohibition of sexual irregularity, was more favourable to the purity and stability of family life than paganism. What Christianity did was to take over the Jewish rule in these matters without the odious ceremonial encumbrances.

Another side of Christian morality was their adoption of the virtues that are specially characteristic of women and poor people, the humble, tender virtues which we find in cottages rather than in rich men's palaces. The early Christians were almost all slaves or bordering on the servile condition. Christianity became the national religion mainly through the process whereby in civilized societies the upper classes are continually losing in fertility and being replaced from below. Finally, we must not fail to notice a bad aspect of the spread of Christianity, that it harmonized with the down-going condition of the Empire. The gentle, tearful Christian, intent upon the salvation of his soul and quite indifferent to worldly interests, put no check upon the decay of civil society, but rather accelerated it.

Once fully established as the dominant religion of the Empire, Christianity was inevitably accepted by the northern barbarians: intellectually they were as helpless as Hottentots before the civilized people whom they conquered. And, having accepted it, they jumbled it up with their own superstitions and

semi-savage ideas into that queer farrago of medieval Christianity which one hardly knows whether to be angry or amused at; and which still subsists with much of its quaintness unimpaired right down into this twentieth century.

§ 17. The history of religion since Europe became civilized is a story of progressive humanization. Christ was a more human divinity than Zeus, or Jupiter, or Isis, or Mithra. The heathen gods and goddesses were not human at all, or, if they were, not human on a very exalted plane. Just before Christianity, and concurrently with its growth, a much inferior sort of human religion came into vogue and prevailed exceedingly, the worship of the Roman emperors. Let us be thankful for the discernment of the martyrs and apostles who saw that Jesus was a better object of idealizing devotion than the best emperor of them all. And now the same principle that favoured the worship of Christ has caused him to be supplanted through a great part of Christendom by a very different divinity, the Blessed Virgin. Of the historical Mary we know very little, and that not entirely favourable: of her at the time of life attributed to her in the form in which she is actually worshipped, that of the young nursing mother, we know absolutely nothing, except one short verse in St. Luke.[1] There is nothing in the New Testament

[1] "But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart." Luke ii. 19.

describing her at that period of her life in the character in which she is typically represented in Christian art. This, however, has not prevented the Catholic Church from showering upon her the most absurdly extravagant terms of admiration and devotion.[1] The Blessed Virgin is frankly an idealization of womanhood; she is worshipped simply because that is the sort of being which people feel it good to worship. And those who have lived in Catholic countries are always impressed by the humanizing influence of the worship of the Virgin, and catch by sympathy some sentiment of affectionate regard for a being who is admittedly a creature of the imagination.

If we are to worship an idealization, Jesus is as fitted for the purpose as any man in history: indeed St. Francis is the only other who is worthy to be compared to him. And yet, if the orthodox could have been consulted, he is the last sort of person who would have been chosen. Imagine an Ecumenical Council assembled, the Supreme Pontiff in his majesty presiding over the brilliant scene, the cardinals and bishops in their canonical robes ranged according to their rank, the crowd of richly draped

[1] Here are some phrases from the Breviary: "Door of the heavenly mansion," "joy of heaven," "lily among brambles," "most beautiful dove," "star friendly to the shipwrecked," "thy clothing is as white as snow, thy face like the sun," "glory of Jerusalem," "joy of Israel," "Attract us, immaculate Virgin; we will run after thee into the smell of thy unguents."

attendants bearing their emblems of office, the vast throng of reverent lay spectators, all filling to the utmost the sumptuous and magnificent building, and imagine the question put, What is the most worshipful type of human excellence—Whom would the Council choose? Surely some one like unto themselves, some one with august imposing presence, some one gowned in expensive needlework, possibly some grey-beard confessor who long ago suffered public martyrdom with ineffable dignity for the creed and ceremonies of a mighty church. But how much wiser than all the councils, all the theological professors, all the accredited ecclesiastical exponents has been the common sense of humanity. A young dreamer, a penniless prophet with the gift of moving speech, an adorable vagabond, a lover of flowers and children, a chief of half-clad mendicants sleeping beneath the stars and looking for breakfast from a wayside fig-tree and often disappointed, a friend of publicans and outcast women, a village enthusiast who went upon an impossible adventure and failed—wherever and whenever people become true imitators of Jesus again, as in the circle of St. Francis, this authentic picture of the Master is recovered and becomes the object of practical imitation. How thankful one must be, how plain seems the hand of Almighty Providence in the fact, that Jesus never throughout his ministry encouraged the solemn futilities and pretences of the world, never enslaved

himself to sacrament and ritual, never prostrated himself before a priest, never posed as a pontiff, never did homage to potentates or princes, never pretended to wisdom that was not his, never wore fine clothes or cared for those who wore them. Had one such tame-spirited action ever been recorded of him, how much less romantic, passionate, and free would be the consciousness of Christendom.

The figure of the authentic Jesus is admirable, and his history, if it is ever rightly written in the English tongue, will always be profitable for our edification. But this is no longer the time for worshipping ideals of the past: such ideals as we need must be ideals of the future. An ideal of the past only stands between us and our present duty. The worth of Jesus is that he represents a human principle: a religion still more human than the Christian is one that will impel men to love and study and work in the world around them.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGION AND CONDUCT

§ 1. It is evident that in the system set forth in these pages religion will be related to conduct otherwise than in current systems. One officially recognized principle is that God should be all in all; that worldly work, if it has to be done, should be done as a disagreeable necessity, and is, in any case, quite alien to religion. Another current principle, which commands itself especially to those who claim pre-eminence in sober sense, is that religion is worth nothing except so far as it helps to make us 'good,' that its business is to be an engine of morality. Both these seem to me to be mischievous extremes. Religion is a kind of emotional experience that has its own value just as much as poetry. And yet, though it is good in and for itself, it has a function in relation to our general life. It does not supersede ordinary motives but reinforces them. We may say that the utility of religion is to consecrate our life.

On the whole, then, people are 'good' for worldly,

non-religious reasons : religion will not make them good if they are not good otherwise. And yet religion can do much to further goodness : certainly, wrong religion can do much to stand in the way of goodness. The present chapter will attempt to show how religion may improve our moral life. Without offering any detailed system of moral exhortation it will indicate the general tendency of the moral exhortation appropriate to a free church.

§ 2. What can religion do for childhood ? Directly, I think, very little. The natural and healthy interests of the child lie in physical activity, in the curious exploration of things about him and in picturesque imagination. Parental approval suffices to confirm the simple ordinances that constitute childish morality : the purely secular schoolmaster is enough to enforce performance of childish tasks. Religion to the child should mean no more than a general sense that there is a power beyond all human powers, and religious training should be no more than discipline in the forms of prayer and worship. Strong religious feeling is out of place in a childish mind. A boy who manifests ' deep love of souls,' or labours under an oppressive sense of sin, or is very fond of churchgoing and ritual, or ' loves Christ who died for men,' or has serious thoughts about the Atonement, or prays earnestly for the conversion of the benighted Jews, cannot be approved by those

who understand child-character. Early piety is quite a morbid phenomenon.

§ 3. As man grows up his outlook broadens, and God becomes necessary to the perfection of his character and to his understanding of the world. To the wild appetites of adolescence God must always be a restraining conception. But in the current theology it is all restraint. Young men of the best quality are ardent for practical and spiritual adventure ; they long to travel, to see and admire, to face and conquer difficulties and dangers, to converse with men of unfamiliar thoughts, to explore far fields of knowledge, and to try intellectual strength upon the hardest problems. To the young man Christianity can say no more than to remind him that he will one day grow old : a better religion will tell him that it is good to be young. For those who have the strength and spirit adventure is not merely a pleasure but a duty, and spiritual discovery an indirect way of worship. And when with age man's blood begins to flow more coolly a right religion will tell him that God is always young, and that the fire which dies so soon in us burns continually in him.

§ 4. Adventure and love are the best part of the young man's life ; and with love and all the affairs of sex Christianity is at fault. Its only thought is to repress ; and, assuredly, repression is needed. But because it has not looked beyond repression it

has done grievous harm and has lost the confidence of thinking men. In the matter of sex it is Catholic asceticism that keeps nearest to the genuine spirit of Christianity. The Christ of Christian tradition is a sexless being: St. Paul's counsel is summed up in his phrase, "It is better to marry than to burn." We know with what a lyric fervour the great emotional exponents of Catholicism have vaunted the superiority of a sexless life:[1] we know from what a height of disdain the celibate priest looks down upon secular frailty. The tendency of Catholicism is shown in its doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which after centuries of struggle has been stamped as an article of faith, and has completed the work of depriving the mother of Jesus of the essential conditions of womanhood.

How terrible has been the mischief of all this! The noblest affections despised, abandoned to the rabble, turned over to cheap jesting; the continuance of the race left to those who are least able to appreciate the trust. So profoundly has love been vulgarized that the very reformers have been corrupted: many who claim to be in the van of progress tell us that human generation should be regulated in the same cold-blooded way as horse-breeding. But the true policy of religion towards love lies in quite another direction. Uproot love, and you uproot the

[1] St. Ambrose's treatise addressed to his sister *De Virginibus* is a fair example.

strongest and best principle of our life. Hunger is strong, but love is stronger and counts for more in controlling the great machine of civilized society: art and literature are saturated with passion. The man whose soul and body have never thrilled with that magic has not lived to the full, and, as age comes on, can escape moral and intellectual degeneration only by a half miracle. Religion should not weaken love—strengthen it, rather, in those who from preoccupation with intellectual things have forgotten the bases of human nature. The business of religion is to consecrate and dignify love, to stop the mouths of shallow ascetics and senseless mockers, to check idle and morbid minds in making it a toy and ruinous excitement. This religious consecration would only enhance the natural sanctity of love. The philistines who would reform love by reducing it to the status of horse-breeding forget that when reserve is lost, when what was meant to be the secret of two becomes public and indifferent, the essential poetry and humanizing power of love disappear.

And with this changed estimate of love a new value will be put on continence. The best continence is not a state in which passion is extinct or wanting, but rather a state in which passion is like a strong spring compressed, lending vigour to the whole personality. The enervation of male incontinence is even worse than its cruelty and hard-heartedness. The nerves of the sensualist are shaky and unreliable;

his thoughts are sluggish and run in low channels. Incontinence prevails most where men have least opportunity to use their higher powers. A religion which would stimulate our energy towards great enterprises would do more for clean living than any amount of pietistic exhortation.

§ 5. After a man has got through the turmoil of adolescence, his *Lehr- und Wanderjahre*, he settles down to the main business of life: and the more systematic his life grows, the stronger should be the influence of religion. Much of that influence will consist in drawing attention to one set of duties as paramount in importance, and letting the rest arrange themselves subordinately. The duties of the settled citizen may be classified into four groups — the family, the business of bread-winning, public and social duties, and works of charity towards friends and neighbours. Christianity puts foremost the works of charity. This seems to be quite wrong: thus it is that Christianity, where it has effective influence, does most grievous injury both to the individual and to society. To me it seems almost self-evident that the rearing of children is the prime duty of adult manhood and womanhood: and, if this duty is intrepreted in its full significance, it involves performance of all the others.

This principle needs no laboured proof if one or two obvious misunderstandings be removed. One of them dates from before the days of serious

education. It is easy enough to propagate children, and not very hard to let them grow up anyhow with easygoing indulgence ; but not at all easy to rear them with proper regard to their mental, moral, and physical development. The greatest share, though by no means the whole, of this work naturally falls upon the mother : and to do it efficiently demands moral and intellectual powers of a high order. A very mischievous fallacy is that of vicarious education, whereby the 'upper-class' mother persuades herself that a nursery governess can be hired to do her work, while the father thinks he has done all his share when he pays for the boys at a boarding-school. Parents may hire help, but cannot absolve themselves of the main responsibility.

It is devotion to the interests of a family that furnishes the strongest motive to industrial efficiency, outside the personal pride and pleasure in the performance of one's work. Unless the work happens to be of an exceptionally varied and exciting character, interest in it tends to slacken with time. Nor is it very easy to keep up a strong interest in public affairs unless there are children coming on who will take their place in the system as the father drops out of it. Even such subsidiary virtues as interest in physical exercise are necessary to the complete paterfamilias. If a father cares nothing for feats of strength and skill how can he train his sons to be men ?

If other light failed in this matter we might get direction from natural science. Everywhere in the animal and vegetable kingdoms it is the great business of the individual to ensure the continuance of the species. Man does not go contrary to the great natural laws; he exhibits them in their highest application.

It is by its treatment of the family above all that Christianity shows its total unsuitableness to be a guide of conduct for the present time. The whole spirit of authentic Christianity is against the family. The common pulpit phrase 'a Christian family' is a contradiction in terms. The first and truest Christians were fanatics looking for the speedy coming of that kingdom wherein there should be no marrying or giving in marriage, but men should be as the angels in heaven. Adapt and enrich Christianity as we will, the original taint clings to it. Its saints are celibates, both of old and at the present day. And this type of saintship, whatever service it may have done in the past, is now obsolete.

We might infer on general grounds, even if daily experience did not confirm it, that protracted celibacy tends to produce a notable deterioration of character. The main exceptions are women who are brought into professional relation with children, and help as nurses or teachers to bring up the families of others. And even this vicarious motherhood is not a perfect substitute. The man, therefore, who wilfully

refuses the duty of fatherhood incurs a heavy responsibility, and stands as one who may be called upon peremptorily to justify his position. A healthy social tone, which religion should reinforce, would affix a certain stigma upon such a man. It should not be easy for him to be regarded as in the fullest sense religious or a good citizen : most emphatically he should not set up as a moral teacher and preacher. It is lamentable to see how much Christianity has done to pervert the wholesome human judgment in this matter. Spiritual leadership is accorded to priests who are hopelessly excluded from the most vital sources of spiritual strength and insight. Not that the common people, the solid foundation of society, have been seriously corrupted. In spite of religious eccentrics their judgment is sound upon the value of fatherhood and motherhood—*securus judicat orbis terrarum.* And yet in one sense the Catholic is our ally ; for the worship of the Blessed Mary (who has stepped into the place of the pagan Venus [1]) is a phase of the natural human revolt against Christianity. It is time that the cultured classes fell into line with the saner judgment of their inferiors. We must repel the claim of celibate priests and ascetic virgins to be our teachers and patterns of life.

And with this is connected a matter which need

[1] I mean, of course, the Venus of Lucretius and Virgil, not that of Martial.

only be touched upon lightly, as the public conscience is already waking to it. Religious exhortation should rebuke married people who, from love of ease or social display or from weak fear of poverty and suffering, refuse their due contribution to posterity.

§ 6. Let us now turn to consider what religion may do in regard to that portion of life which belongs to commercial business or bread-winning. Here again it seems to me that Christianity has had a disastrous influence. Secular business of any kind is alien to the true Christian spirit : from the first there was the antithesis of the Kingdom of Heaven and the kingdoms of this world. To give up one's calling, to leave all and follow the Master, has always been the Christian ideal. It was the strength of the old Roman paganism that it brought religion into closest intimacy with daily work, that its most popular and effective gods were gods of the hearth, the market-place, and the harvest-field. How alien from all that is the Christian principle of keeping oneself unspotted from the world ! One of the main religious problems of the future is to put religion into its place in daily life from which Christianity has ousted it.

This does not imply approval of the fancy of the Hegelian school to identify religion with daily business. We cannot give up the common distinction of Sabbath from week day : to do so would

vulgarise the Sabbath and leave the week-day no better. It would lead to intolerable cant if every carpenter might claim that each true stroke with his chisel was an act of worship. Let us do our best in workshop and counting-house from motives frankly secular. It is enough if we cherish for meditation (not for talk) the sense of the ultimate religious meaning of our bustle and toil.

When the religious stigma has been taken from the life of worldly business we shall be freer to recognise its moral value. It is in bread-winning that a man gets the best of his education, the best moral and intellectual discipline and the most wholesome opportunities of doing good to his fellowmen. Consider the philanthropic opportunities of the employer. What moral and material good he can do to those about him without fussiness or sentimentality. It undoubtedly lies to the charge of Christianity that these opportunities are as a rule grossly neglected. An anti-secular religion is not a stimulus to industrial philanthropy, but a substitute for it.

§ 7. The spirit of Christianity is even more alien to all that belongs to public life. We can get no guidance from a teaching whose last word was "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" and to which all civil government was a transitory affair, soon to be supplanted by the heavenly Kingdom. It must be due to wrong religion that

politics are popularly supposed to fall outside the good man's scope. We might even say that the Christian ideal includes political indifference: the Christian takes credit to himself for pursuing his path of humility and charity indifferent to the clamour of parties. But all this belongs properly to the time when kingdoms might be regarded as composed of two classes, oppressors and oppressed; it has no true relation to the commonwealths of western Europe. In England we have passed out of the pride-and-pomp conception of government, through the liberty-and-property-defence conception, and are at home with the principle that the state is a moral institution. The man who takes no interest in politics should be marked with a stigma like the man who has no love of children and no zeal for business efficiency. By politics I do not mean the arts and stratagems whereby one party tries to overreach the other, but the conduct of national business and the discussion of schemes for improving the commonwealth.

A right religion should consecrate the state in all its parts and functions, the pomp and ceremonial of great occasions, the deliberation of its committees, the routine of its administrative departments, the projects of those planning and scheming spirits who look ahead and inspire its policy. From the Parliament of the British Empire (a vision we may live to see realized) down to the humblest parish council

there should be a feeling that religion has close relation to good political service.

§ 8. The state is the great form of association; but there are for all our various human purposes—industry, education, religion, amusement and the rest—minor forms of association in which men must bear their part. To do such work well one needs qualities which may be summed up in the term associability, *i.e.* loyalty to the institution as such, pride in its work and traditions, readiness to adapt oneself to one's place and colleagues for the sake of the institution. It is a patent characteristic of modern society that associations tend to grow larger and larger; railway companies amalgamate, banks combine, a hundred businesses are merged in one gigantic store, churches sink their minor differences in union. All this evinces a great intellectual and moral advance. Small-minded men may be loyal to a small institution; they have not imagination enough to feel the grandeur of a great one. Christianity has never done anything to encourage associability, which intellectually and morally was altogether beyond the range of the leaders of the primitive Church.

With the evolution of modern society still wider associative possibilities are opening before us. At present our industrial associations, the most important we have, are capitalistic: we may hope that in time they will become co-operative; that they

will be bodies of self-governing workers, dividing equitably the produce of their labour. In spite of the manifest advantages of such a system its success hitherto has been very partial, mainly because it seems to demand qualities of good temper, fairness, intelligence, and public spirit beyond the capacity of the average worker. The same difficulty attends that extension of the scope of state-action known as socialism. The sufficient reason that makes people dread socialism is that socialism requires more from the citizens than they can be trusted to do. There would be better hope of getting rid of the evils of capitalism if we could have a religion which would influence men towards the virtues of social and industrial co-operation.

§ 9. As to the works of charity that are reckoned of such supreme importance by Christianity, under a right religion they would be deposed from their present place of paramount importance; but they would be done in a more reasonable spirit. Christian charity is the charity of the abject for the abject. A fellow-creature is wretched: it is not for his brother wretches to ask whence his wretchedness comes. Do you say that he deserves it? Do you yourself *deserve* anything but misery? Do you say that to relieve misery indiscriminately would cause social mischief? Presumptuous disputant! Venture not to pry into the deep issues of the future. Simply fulfil the commandment of charity and leave the rest

to Heaven. In short, the Christian maxim is, 'Put yourself in the man's place, and say if you would like people to make all these difficulties before relieving your distress.' Whither this leads we know too well. In Catholic countries, before the genuine Christian spirit was tempered with modernism, no man needed to work who would stoop to beg, and no murderer needed to fear punishment so long as he could take sanctuary in a church.[1] What a mischievous influence such principles still exert is shown by the resistance which multitudes of worthy people oppose to all intelligent methods of dealing with pauperism and vice.

We may reasonably expect that with a right religion charity would be not less kind, and much more manly and effective, than under the present dispensation. Consider what is the true bond of charity: surely, it is co-operation in some worthy form of work. The fault of even the more intelligent of our contemporaries is that their sympathies are too narrow; they tend not to look beyond the small circle of people who are in the same employment with themselves. As our forms of co-operation grow wider, closer, and more unselfish, and as the sense of civic and national unity grows more keen, we

[1] For illustrations of this see the *Autobiography* of Benvenuto Cellini, or, still better, a less-known book, the story of Catalina de Erauso. This Spanish virago killed several men, among others her own brother, but generally escaped by taking sanctuary. Her life in English has been edited by Prof. J. Fitzmaurice-Kelly.

may look for a great extension of charity. Not that any system of charitable relief, however enlightened and well organized, will dispense with the primal, instinctive virtue of kind-heartedness : this instinct of kindly feeling is the basis of all the work which men do to alleviate suffering. But, like all admirable impulses, it does enormous harm if left to work unregulated in a complex modern society. My complaint against Christianity is that it sets up uneducated kind-heartedness as a permanent, universal ideal.

§ 10. It is in things of intellect, perhaps, that the establishment of a free religion would make the greatest difference. We need not expatiate on the intellectual deficiencies of Christianity. Jesus, of course, had not the smallest idea of science or of the value of scientific work ; nor had the writers of the New Testament ; nor any members of the early Christian Churches of whom we know anything. It is not likely that in those humble associations of slaves and freedmen watching and praying for the Second Coming there would be the least approach to understanding what is meant by a life devoted to intellectual pursuits. And it is impossible for a Church to shake itself entirely free from the spirit of its founders. Christianity is, and must always remain, an anti-intellectual religion. A free church, on the other hand, will by virtue of its basic formula put great value upon intellect and do all in its power

to promote the intellectual virtues. Sincerity, at least, together with the love of clear thinking and the love of clear expression, will be taken as essential to the character of the free churchman.

The intellectual virtues which I am going to speak of can, to a large extent, be explained only in negative terms; and thus to show what a change free religion will make I must set forth a contrast with what exists under the Christian system. Originality is only possible when the mind is unfettered, sincerity is the absence of prejudice, and clearness the absence of obscuring influences. One can only explain our future freedom by showing our present thraldom; one can only explain how clear an atmosphere we shall inhabit in the future by showing what present influences darken us with fog and dust. Most people do not realize the intellectual opacity around them: their mental vision has accommodated itself to the medium in which they spend their lives.

The mere existence of a body of immovable dogma is a most potent cause of intellectual depression and demoralization. The mere fact that the human mind is growing and, as it grows, learns more of God, suffices to make dogmatic immobility an absurdity and anachronism. We want dogma, but not immovable dogma; and every rational Church should provide means for bringing its dogma into harmony with contemporary knowledge. To demand thinking men to adjust themselves to a

body of immovable dogma is an outrage; and, if the demand is successful, will seriously impair their capacity for thought.

Much greater is this evil when the mass of dogma is, like the Christian, very large, very complex, and immensely antiquated. Consider the shortest statement of it, such as the Apostles' Creed: to what a multitude of far-reaching propositions it would commit us: a whole *Weltanschauung*, now centuries remote, is implied in those few lines. And if the Apostles' Creed casts a hopeless blight on thought, will not the Athanasian Creed ("which ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for it may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture") be sure and speedy death. Certainly it is a widespread idea that one who has accepted the full Christian position has riveted fetters on his mind. 'I hear that Jones has taken Orders.' 'Well, that is the end of Jones as a philosopher'—how often are such words exchanged in places where thinking men meet together. A certain amount of technical argumentation is possible for a modern Christian clergyman; but original thinking never.

It is difficult to insist on the value of sincerity without by that very word casting serious reflection upon a large body of Christian clergymen. The fact of clerical insincerity is notorious: it is notorious that all our enlightened priests have ceased to accept in any natural sense the propositions to which they

subscribed at ordination. Thus we have among us a great number of estimable men practising daily and hourly 'economy of truth,' and never speaking of religion to simple people in the tone in which they speak to educated men. Although they recite the formula daily, they do not believe that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, or was born of a virgin, or descended into hell, or rose again the third day, or ascended into heaven or will come thence to judge the quick and the dead. Owing to the fact that men are built so much in water-tight compartments this insincerity is not so harmful as might be thought. The Broad Church economists of truth are usually excellent men, infinitely preferable to the bigots (if any still exist) who believe whole-heartedly all the monstrous and soul-destroying propositions of the Thirty-nine Articles. Nevertheless clerical insincerity is not a pretty business, and cannot be supposed to promote the intellectual virtues of which I am now speaking. Certainly great numbers of men well suited to the ministry are kept out of it by fear of unworthy compromise. If religion ceased to clash with reason, this particular difficulty in clerical recruiting would be overcome.

§ 11. Much more serious in its intellectual mischief is the honest sophistry of the sincere Christian, the sophistry which he uses in his continual effort to reconcile his scriptures with each other, his scriptures with his dogma, and both

scriptures and dogma with the plain facts of history and acknowledged principles of civilized morality. It is difficult to estimate the amount of this intellectual damage, but it must be very serious: every convinced Christian, whenever he tries to think consecutively about his creed, must be sophisticating history like an Old Bailey barrister and interpreting plain language in a non-natural sense. Christian apologists must exhaust forensic art in proving that the Johannine narrative and sayings of Jesus are perfectly consistent with the *prima-facie* totally different narrative and sayings of the synoptic evangelists; they must reconcile St. Paul's total abrogation of the Jewish ceremonial law with St. Matthew's "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished"; whereas the eschatological character of the mission of Jesus is declared in the first saying recorded by St. Mark and continues consistently to the end of the gospel, they must argue that the eschatology was but an outward form concealing a profounder meaning, and that the Kingdom of Heaven (which would come in the lifetime of those there present and in which the twelve disciples would drink new wine with their Master) meant fundamentally and primarily "the world of invisible laws by which God is ruling and blessing his creatures"; when Jesus shows full acceptance of

the barbarous superstitions of his age, they must argue that the God-man made himself ignorant as man of things which he knew as God; whereas Jesus passed the night before his arrest in an agony of apprehension, they must explain that Jesus was not really apprehensive at all but only grieved for the sins of the world; and, when in the death-struggle he asked with a despairing cry why God had forsaken him, they must tell us that the cry did not mean despair at all, but some other strong emotion—triumphant faith perhaps. Such are the sophistries, gross and palpable, that may be read in the works of orthodox apology, written by men of the status of Bishop Westcott and Prof. Hort in the past generation and of Bishop Gore and Canon Sanday in the present one. But the chief struggle of the Christian apologists is with the moral difficulties both of Scripture and of Creeds. Shuffle and gloze it over as they will, the hideous doctrines of original sin and vicarious atonement are indelibly written in St. Paul and the Fourth Gospel, and are most explicitly and unmistakably laid down in the Articles of the Anglican Church. Every man who is not dead to the moral progress of the last century is revolted by these doctrines as they stand in the 9th and 31st Articles, on either side of the still more abominable doctrine of predestination and election. Much of the leisure which the late Mr. Gladstone saved from politics was devoted to

theological studies ; and he spent no small ingenuity in softening the horrors of the orthodox position and in trying to bring his theology into line with his moral consciousness.[1] The effort did credit to his heart, but what of its effect upon his mind? Can his most ardent admirers claim that he quite escaped contamination? Must we not connect this life-long habit of orthodox sophistry with the insincerity, the honest self-deluding shiftiness, which made him, in spite of his enthusiasm for the cause of the people and his championship of the oppressed, so profoundly distrusted by multitudes of democratic Englishmen?

But this is not all. There is in modern Christianity a still more pervasive danger, a still subtler influence debauching the national intellect and spreading mischief far outside the ever-diminishing circle of the 'faithful'; this is the encouragement given by Christianity to the use of language with no meaning at all, or with a meaning absolutely indefinable. Mr. Belfort Bax has written a clever essay on what he calls 'that blessed word' (in his *Ethics of Socialism*). The classical example of the practice of using 'blessed words' is of course that of the old lady who found unspeakable import in the word Mesopotamia : it meant nothing definite to her, and yet carried with it an emotional 'fringe'

[1] See his essay on 'True and False Conceptions of the Atonement,' in *Later Gleanings*.

which she felt as inspiring and consoling. This is a trivial example of a state of things—one might call it an intellectual disease—which prevails exceedingly. "Modern Christianity," says Mr. Bax, somewhat overstating his position, "is a mere coagulation of blessed words." And yet, he continues very justly, "let us always remember that most of these blessed words have had a meaning once. Although the men who use them now don't think, yet their fathers who invented them have thought. . . . Even the 'blood of Jesus,' sin, holiness, etc., were not, as now, mere jingle—evocative, if of anything at all, of nothing but a mawkish sentiment, empty of all intelligible meaning—to the subject of imperial Rome in the first century, who first used it, with the notion of bloody sacrifice confronting him at every step, and with the disgust at the decaying forms of ancient city-life driving every serious-minded man to seek satisfaction in self-brooding. There is a tendency in all great popular movements to form these crystals of blessed words which produce emotion by reflex action. The modern Socialist movement is no exception." In short, the language of Christian devotion is full of phrases which as first used in the Jewish and Christian scriptures had a perfectly definite meaning and represented intelligible beliefs. The modern world has quite grown out of the beliefs and yet we go on using the words. It would not be profitable to make a large collection of these

emotion-wakening phrases; here are some of them culled at random from a few pages of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*: "Cherubim and Seraphim," "Heaven with glory ringing," "an endless Alleluia," "Lord of hosts," "saving grace," "thy ransomed creation," "saints of God," "Lamb of God," "the Lord's anointed," "happy band of pilgrims," "celestial Salem." (We have ceased to go on pilgrimage now for some hundreds of years, and the ideal city of English folk is certainly nothing like Jerusalem.) The commonest of all these blessed words is "Our Saviour." Out of every million times in which this title of Jesus falls from Christian lips is there once any definite idea of 'saving us from danger' attached to it? The early Christians used it with full meaning: they were in hourly expectation of the Day of Wrath, and in that day Christ would save them. The average Christian thinks not at all about the Day of Wrath, in fact would repudiate this notion of God's wrath altogether as a detestable and obsolete superstition. Thus, then, has modern Christianity become a focus of intellectual infection, and from it the mind-destroying habit of meaningless emotional verbiage spreads into politics, the language of art, and even into philosophy.

I trust it is not the wild chimerical hope of a student too little discouraged by worldly wisdom—but is it too much to expect that, when we have got rid of Christianity, we may recover some of the

clarity of thought and speech, some of the emotional sanity of the ancient Greeks? They had no mass of infallible dogma crushing speculative originality; they had no clergy with one word for the simple and another for the educated; they had no theologic professoriate engaged in theologic circle-squaring and demonstrations that parallels meet somewhere at infinity in the kingdom of heaven; it was not a point of religious loyalty with them to sophisticate history and hocus the moral consciousness. Above all, they had no blessed words; when their hearts thrilled with emotion it was for some real object. Can we never clear away the dust of ages from our eyes, and burn or bury the rubbish of outworn systems? Shall we never have the courage to leave the Middle Ages behind us, and recognize finally that all those poor old Semitic superstitions belong to a stage of culture which for us has utterly passed away?

CHAPTER VII

A FREE CHURCH : ITS WORK AND ORGANIZATION

§ 1. If man needs religion he assuredly needs a church. Nothing great can be accomplished without organization ; and a church is simply an organization for religious objects. Thus hearty acceptance of a free religion must imply adhesion to a free church.

The main business of a church is plainly to encourage the religious sentiment. More or less closely connected with this primary business are various other works which may appropriately be undertaken by a religious organization.

The most obvious function of a church is to hold assemblies for public worship. Every sentiment is encouraged by meetings of people who share it : that is one of the plainest facts of social psychology. In devout minds churchgoing is felt as a need almost as plainly as hunger. Then there is the business of moral exhortation, which in a free church would differ considerably from any kind of exhortation now in vogue. And combined with this there is the

establishment and diffusion of a certain tone and way of looking at life. Another very important work which all churches recognize may be called the consecration of vital crises—birth, death, marriage, the assumption of adult responsibilities and occasions of public solemnity. At such times men's thoughts are lifted above the common routine and turn towards deeper issues. And the church should take advantage of the mystery and pathos of these great crises to call attention to the religious significance of life and to emphasise it by appropriate ceremony.

§ 2. From these direct and primary functions of a church we may pass to others that are secondary. Some are connected with what may be termed corporate interests, and look to the furtherance of the church as a particular organization. Such is the business of holding ground against rival bodies animated by different ideals. Churches that want to make themselves respected must be churches militant, not merely in the sense of fighting against evil, but also in the sense of fighting other churches. They must wage war (with due respect to the laws thereof), must look askance upon each other's methods, and cast doubt (not too obtrusively) upon the value of each other's work ; above all, they must compete for the adherence of the rising generation. There is no such thing as religious peace : religious peace is religious death. In such warfare, as in every other, careful organization is a great advantage. It

does not follow that a military organization like that of the Jesuits is the best for the purpose; indeed I hold the contrary to be true. But the organization must be deliberately adapted to the end to be gained. Proselytizing, which is an aspect of the same matter, is also very important; and for this we evidently need organization.

§ 3. It has been argued in previous pages that there exist, and have long existed, a large number of people who are free churchmen at heart. If this is so, and if the use of organization is so evident, why, it will be asked, has not a free church been established long ago? I do not wish to shirk this question, but to answer it suggests some painful thoughts. For one reason there is the deadly lukewarmness and ineffectiveness of cultured people. They will criticise, grumble, and secede from actual institutions, but they will not start anything of their own. This, we must admit, is true of the past. But will it, must it, be always so? Cannot thought be combined with action? Hitherto the chief agents in founding churches have been visionaries, ignorant fanatics crazed with superstition, and even, sometimes, impostors and madmen. Will not the progress of our race make it possible to take up such an enterprise without compromising a reputation for honesty and sanity?

Another reason, no less painful, but forcing itself inevitably upon our recognition, is the little-minded-

ness of men. It is so difficult for men to conceive the thought of any great end, and still more to feel effective devotion for it. Men will found churches to vindicate some small point of dogma or ritual, or even of ecclesiastical organization; just as they will give money to some small society such as a college, though they will hardly give it to a great university for the general purposes of the institution. Thus no man has had his imagination fired by the idea of a church which is not based upon, say, the principle of adult as opposed to infant baptism, nor upon faith-healing, nor upon the revelations of a bogus American prophet; but merely promotes religion and the spiritual welfare of the English nation.

§ 4. It is a sound instinct in the Christian Churches of England that makes them spend so much on missions. A church that is really alive must be a missionary church. Nothing fires the imagination more than the thought of spreading spiritual principles in strange and distant lands: and a church that is not full of imagination is practically extinct. A free church, therefore, should be a missionary church.

And yet its method must differ greatly from that of Christian Churches, whose missions are usually conducted with the most deplorable lack of sympathy. What they try to do is to impose the whole of a most peculiar and, if one may say so, most accidental

system upon peoples to whom it is alien by every influence of education and national character. A Japanese or Bengali is asked upon the most absurdly inadequate grounds to cut himself away from his national culture and to take in a mass of fantastic dogma utterly devoid of meaning for him, and combined with a moral code impracticable in all societies and doubly impracticable in the society wherein he must live. A free church mission would work on very different lines ; it would supply ideas, not a ready-made system. It would preach its ideals of life and its theology to such as were disposed to hear them, and would leave the hearers to work them up into forms suitable to national circumstances and character.

There can be no comparison between the greatness of the prospect open before a free church and that open to the Christian Churches. The work of Christianity is limited to evangelizing savages who are outside the pale of any decent religion : it can do nothing with peoples who belong to a religion with any pretensions to culture. Very different are the prospects of the evangelists of a free church. They would address themselves to the most vigorous and hopeful of the nations.

Great as the need of England is for reform in religion it is much less than the need of other countries. The folly and mischief of the form of Christianity current among us is less than that which

some other great European nations suffer under; and they again are better off than the Mahometans who languish under the blight of a religion absolutely incompatible with the higher civilization. How pitiable is the position of the intelligent man in France, Italy, or Spain: he must cut himself off entirely from religion with all its elevating and consoling power; or he must subjugate his mind to a mass of absurdities that will poison in him the deepest sources of righteousness and truth. Professed students of continental life may estimate more precisely the harm of the current antithesis of faith and reason. The most superficial observer cannot fail to see an immense and old-established evil—all the thoughtful people in one camp and all the religious people in another. What an enterprise is here to set the imagination aflame: what a Macedonia is this calling 'Come over and help us'—salvation to nations wrestling doubtfully against a hateful tyranny: light and hope and peace to souls threatened on either side by the grim spectres of superstition and atheism.

In a very real sense the nations of Europe are one family, and what raises the condition of the foreigner raises ours. Nothing would conduce more to the furtherance of a free religion in England than the establishment of free churches abroad. And this would be the only selfish element in the missionary enterprise. We must not think of trans-

planting English institutions to an alien soil. We may preach the principles of salvation : but the manner of it must be the work of their own brains and hands.

§ 5. Let us pass over to various subsidiary works that might be undertaken profitably by a free church. One obvious duty is the promotion of physical welfare, without which a *mens sana* and *mores sani* are impossible. The way has been prepared for it by the remarkable change that has been made in Anglican methods during the last twenty years or so. How wonderful has been the progress of enlightenment in the most unlikely quarters. How could any one have foreseen in the middle of the last century that before the end of it the Anglican Church would take up Boys' Brigades and set itself to encourage military exercises and soldierly bearing—that Church which to all appearance was the permanent ally of phthisis, anæmia, hysteria, neuralgia, dyspepsia and all the other diseases incident to a timid, flabby, sit-by-the-fire-and-read-the-Bible mode of life ? Every free church organization should be the *ex officio* advocate of open spaces, playing fields, summer camps for boys and every other facility for young people to take hard exercise in the open air. It is probable that at no distant date the state and the local authorities will take up this great national business in a much more effective way than at present. Meantime much might be done by good

religion. Imagine, for example, a free church organization established in some town of moderate size such as Oxford : it would make provision at once for the young people of the congregation, if they were not already provided for. It would at least see that they had a good playing field with instructors to teach the games, a swimming place on the river with swimming instruction, a club for nature study, and a boys' scouting camp on Shotover, beside boxing, fencing, and gymnastics for spending wet afternoons profitably. And, if the whole country were evangelized, similar provision would be made in every village.

§ 6. Another work which the church may well undertake is education. There are many true friends of education who would like to see it separated altogether from religion. I agree that on the whole the two things should be clearly distinguished : but it is well that some connection should be maintained. Higher education in particular should not be too much separate. A good religion should prove its goodness by showing that it conduces to useful work, and there is no secular work so ready to hand as education. Were a free church established, it would be quite proper, if, following the example of similar bodies, it had schools and colleges of its own, with free-church chapel-services and under the control of free-churchmen.

But in the way of management there would be

considerable innovation upon existing practice. In Christian schools and colleges good religion is supposed to compensate for bad education. The primary schools under religious management are always needing to be dragged forcibly up to the official standard, to the extreme annoyance of those who manage and subscribe to them ; and most of the religious secondary schools are said to show a similar insufficiency. As to religious collegiate instruction one may speak with closer proximity to the facts. The one college at Oxford under strictly denominational management makes no pretence at competing educationally with its fellow-institutions. Now it seems to me that a religious body which allows its educational establishments to remain in this position of inferiority is pronouncing its own condemnation. If a religion is good it must be good for something. If it is not good for education, what mundane purpose is it good for ? A religious place of teaching should be much better than any secular rival : its management should be much keener on reaching the highest efficiency. Success in reaching efficiency should be regarded as a great practical test of the soundness of the religious principles by which the management is inspired.

Nowhere could this be carried out better than in the sphere of university education. What an enormous difference it would make in the attitude of educated men towards Anglicanism if Keble

College made any approach to the scholarly distinction of Corpus or Exeter. The contempt which so many intellectual men feel for religion arises from the fact that it seems useless for everything such men care for. How changed that would be if we could have a college owned and controlled by men of the right religious faith, outdoing its secular rivals in their own work, with more enthusiasm for research, and cleverer in its methods of educating the average man. That would be evangelizing the country from the top, a way of conversion quite new in the history of religious revolutions.

§ 7. It may be taken as a matter of course that works of charity would be part of the subsidiary functions of a free church, as they are of existing churches ; the difference being that 'charity' would be interpreted in a vastly more intelligent and liberal sense. Christian charity generally takes the form of the charity of the soup-kitchen, rising to the level of the barrack-school orphanage in its higher flights. It is true that with the present constitution of society we are likely to have the coarser forms of distress continually with us, and, so long as we have them, their alleviation will be a fitting work for the churches. But the intelligent churchman will think mainly of working to remove the underlying causes of distress.

The relief of distress is by no means the only work of human sympathy which a church may

profitably undertake. Without pretending to make an exhaustive list I may mention a few others.

One is the extension of sanitary knowledge such as the principles of sanitary house-construction (so that a working man in renting a house may know what to look out for) ; the proper methods of house ventilation ; the relation of pure water to health, together with the commoner causes of water-contamination ; the principles of hygienic clothing ; the care of bodily health and comeliness ; and all matters of domestic arrangement usually included under the term 'sanitation.' It would be a most useful form of charity for a church to establish a staff of lecturers who would go from place to place diffusing this valuable kind of knowledge among the people.

Another work is the extension to poor people in country districts of the opportunities of reading. Excessive reading is very bad, but a moderate amount of reading is good for everybody. It is not merely an affair of the useful information acquired thereby. The practice of reading is important for general mental development : it enlarges the range of our experience and of our sympathy. Merely from the psychological standpoint the man who reads freely is better developed than the man who reads nothing. Every village in the kingdom should have its properly stocked library.

Another matter worth attention is the diffusion of what may be termed industrial education, by

which I mean the true principles of creating wealth and of using it. This would include on one side the elements of political economy, of co-operative production and distribution, of profit-sharing, and of thrift in its many various forms : on the other side the comparative value of the various articles of common consumption ; the object of this latter kind of information being to enable the working man with a sovereign in his pocket to lay out that sovereign to the best advantage upon the goods which are most suitable to his purpose.

Another good work would be the teaching of handicrafts—carpentry, cooking, the feeding and care of children and other domestic arts. Something in this direction is done by existing agencies in towns: but very little in the country.

Another work which would doubtless appeal more to the imagination is the diffusion of artistic education, both in the formative arts—drawing, painting, carving—and in music. Perhaps it is in regard to music that the greatest opportunities exist. Any one who will walk through an English town and listen to the whistling of the errand-boys and workmen may satisfy himself that large numbers of working-people have an excellent ear for music. It is a disgrace to our social organization that so many of our people, possessing this beautiful and ennobling faculty, should have no opportunity of developing it. In a happier future every village

will have its public institution in which the common people may obtain instruction in vocal and instrumental music.

Another work is that of facilitating the rise in the social scale of children of low position but exceptional abilities. This is primarily the duty of the local schoolmaster; but the local minister should watch that the duty is not neglected. That clever men should rise to their proper level is directly important for strengthening the state and indirectly important for preventing the growth of a dangerous class of able malcontents. Scotland has gained immensely because its clergy have in some measure recognized this as part of their duties: England has lost no less because our clergy, indifferent or hostile to education as they mainly have been, have utterly ignored it.

Here and there in the existing churches there may be men who take up one or other of these beneficent activities. But their work is sporadic and has little effect upon the system as a whole. The reason is, we need hardly say, that the Bible and the formularies of the Church, the authoritative documents on which the whole system is based, are utterly alien to any such interpretation of ministerial duty.

§ 8. The fore-mentioned works of charity, though valuable enough, are of much less importance than a work which is ignored or obstructed by the mass of Anglican clergymen, and very scantily recognized

by members of any other denomination, that is, the work of reconciling classes and thus mitigating the evils of social specialization. The separation and alienation of classes is a terrible price which we pay for our social efficiency. Not merely is it true that one half of the world does not know how the other half lives, but the upper half is terrified and disgusted by what it thinks it knows about the lower. The average gentleman, and still more the average lady, has no sympathy with working people, does not understand their lives, their motives or their morality, and thinks of their work as a wretched, degrading servitude which they only endure because it is 'what they have always been used to.' Again, the average English gentleman hates and despises the shopkeeper. If his father or his wife's father has been a tradesman he will stoop to pitiable shifts and evasions, sometimes even to downright lying, to conceal the fact. Having risen above the level of trade he will take precautions to keep his child from the contaminating companionship of tradesmen's children, and will insist that the schools of gentlefolk should be kept 'exclusive.' To the most superficial observer there are these three well-defined classes in England, the professional, commercial, and labouring, none understanding or sympathizing with the others: and closer inspection would show that each class is split into many subdivisions, trivial to outsiders but very important

to the minds of those who form them. Standing above them all is the class of the idle rich, numerically inconsiderable, but very important because of its power and because its pestilent ideal poisons the imagination of the whole community.

Now it is useless to rail against this lamentable state of things or to feel bitter against those who surrender their minds to the tyranny of these class distinctions. It is all the result of our highly specialized social system which separates men in work and therefore separates them in sympathy. But what a terrible evil it is. How it weakens the commonwealth, how it impoverishes and embitters the individual. So grievous is the pressure of it upon sensitive minds that a national calamity such as war is felt as a blessing, in so far as it draws men together and shakes them out of their hateful social prejudices.

This, then, is the great endemic evil of English society, and it is an evil which has not been mitigated but rather aggravated by the greatest of our religious organizations. The Church of England is saturated through and through with the virus of gentility. That a clergyman should be a gentleman is to the average Anglican a fortieth article of religion ; and to many minds it is an article that quite outweighs the other thirty-nine. Jesus was the least genteel of prophets, and the Church of England is the most ladylike of churches.

Now I am not arguing that ministers of religion should not be men of social culture, or that class-distinctions should be treated as non-existent. These distinctions represent real differences between man and man. What I plead for is that classes should try to understand each other, and recognize cordially their fellowship as co-operators in the work of society. A minister of religion should set his face against class-animosity in every form, against the typical snobbery of the country squire and against the minor snobbery of the five-and-thirty-shillings-a-week artisan.

It would involve going too far into detail to suggest how in practice this greatest of social evils may be mitigated. The contempt for the life and work of the manual labourer is mainly due to the fact that the upper classes do no manual labouring. This should not be. The moral superiority of women is largely due to the fact that most of them, in all classes, do some work with their hands, at the least making clothes and tending children. And every man ought to be in some measure a hand-worker—a gardener, or carpenter, or carver, or bookbinder, or a chopper-down of trees like Mr. Gladstone. Gardening is of course the most obvious and healthiest kind of labour for the sedentary man : and from it he may get more profitable moral lessons than from all the sermons that were ever preached. And every man with leisure ought to take up work,

—private, public, or philanthropic—which will bring him into wholesome contact with labouring people.

The antagonism between the professional and commercial classes is subtler and less easy to mitigate. We cannot use the method just recommended, because the moral benefit of keeping a shop is not equal to that of cultivating a garden. But, in relation to the church-system, much may be done by giving tradespeople a full share in the management and free access to the ministry. In the Church of England it is the rarest thing for a tradesman to take Holy Orders: in a free church a large number of the ministers should be retired tradesmen.

§ 9. Finally, it would be the work of a free church to guard against certain religious dangers, and notably against the tendency to mistake the space that religion should occupy in the life and work of the individual and of the nation; to speak in plainest language, it should prevent people from being religious overmuch. There are a few people who think we cannot have too much teaching, and a few that we cannot have too much physicking, but there are many who think we cannot have too much religion. It is for the church to correct this error, and to show that religion, though a very important element in life, is but an element, and that there are other elements even more important.

Hypertrophy of the religious sentiment is as

morbid as hypertrophy of the sentiment of pity, or of tidiness, or of devotion to the advancement of one's family. Thousands of homes have been desolated by religion—childhood blighted, the natural affections stunted, family duties neglected, consciences warped, young and sensitive natures delivered a prey to terror and despair, the sentiments of public spirit and patriotism eradicated like noxious weeds: all these terrible things and many others may be read in the biographies, in the eulogies, of male and female 'saints.' It is usual to speak of such families with respect and some admiration, as of people whose principles, though magnificent in the abstract, are a little too fine for this work-a-day world: to me they seem horrible examples of folly and perversity, only less repulsive than families disorganized by debauchery or cankered by base greed of gain.[1]

It will be the business of a free church, as a centre of education and enlightenment, to show what religion is good for and what are the bounds of its usefulness, to teach a philosophy of life where religion takes its proper place in conjunction with other elements, and to discourage sternly the morbid fanatics who turn a noble privilege into a desolating curse.

§ 10. But there is little need to labour the state-

[1] As an example of what is meant by religious hypertrophy, reference may be made to that remarkable book *Father and Son*.

ment of the duties of a free church if we keep in view its primary principle, the principle of freedom. An ideal of human life freely developing, an idea of God favouring free human development, an ideal of a church as promoting in every way personal judgment and power—these are enough to guide us right in all debates of policy.

It would be a vain fear to think that with our advance in closeness of social organization these principles will stand in danger. In matters of lesser import civilization is a process of increasing restriction; in matters of the greatest import it is a process of increasing freedom. We submit to innumerable prohibitions unknown to the savage in order that we may enjoy opportunities far beyond his reach. At present the individual does almost what he likes in the fierce welter of industrial competition; marries where he likes, and produces children under the menace of seeing them starved and stunted if he cannot maintain his social footing. It may be that in the future all these individual opportunities (such as they are) will be taken from us; that we shall enjoy such wealth as society assigns to us, and shall rear no more children than authority thinks proper. But in return we shall enjoy chances of spiritual development so strange to us that we do not even know how to want them. The religion which is one of the higher activities of the human spirit must be individual, as individual as poetry. When this

truth has become plain how pitiful will be the bigotries that would narrow us down to one pattern ; how hateful the persecutions that would stifle new modes of interpreting the highest reality. In the past religion has been a citadel of tyranny ; in the future it will be a citadel of freedom.

§ 11. In dealing with the organization of the church of the future it is evidently impossible to go beyond a general outline. When once an institution is started details settle themselves. The only use of detail at this stage would be to throw back some light on the general principle.

It is clear that a free church should be a national, not a cosmopolitan establishment. This follows from the fact that part of its work is to consecrate all good national works, customs, and institutions ; and these differ in different nations. A world-church must ignore nationality, and concern itself only with those elements that are common to various nations. This implies a serious impoverishment of ecclesiastical life. The value of a national church is seen most clearly when nations come into conflict. An international church can do no more than ingeminate peace, peace, declare that all the aims of mundane strife are trifling, and supply the cowardly with excuses for drawing back from their duty. There might have been some reason for this in the past centuries when the nations of

Europe fought mostly on futile dynastic quarrels: the matter is different now when nations know what they want and usually want something worth having.

But a question may arise how the term national is to be defined. Should we have one church for the United Kingdom, or one for each of the four 'nations' of which it is composed? It seems far better that there should be one each for England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and possibly a separate one for Cornwall, which is really a distinct Celtic nation: the differences between these countries are such that separate churches would do good work by enriching the national character and developing it along congenial lines. A question like this can never be settled on abstract grounds: a wide church has the advantage in dignity, power, and breadth of scope; a narrow church in intimacy and individuality: every actual arrangement must be something of a compromise.

§ 12. For the organization of the national church we want a system which will combine the advantages of congregationalism with those of a central authority. To encourage the spirit of independence and self-reliance each congregation should be a body managing its own finances and making its own arrangements for public worship. On the other hand, it is hardly less important that there should be a powerful and imposing central authority which would speak in the name of the church on matters where

the congregations are agreed, would control the national ecclesiastical institutions, would act officially in relation to the state and safeguard the interests of the church against non-churchmen. The nonconformist bodies of England are much to blame for not having exerted themselves more in this direction, they have surrendered themselves too much to that spirit of middle-class narrowness which is the bane of nonconformity. Each one of them ought to have a great metropolitan temple where services are performed with all the dignity that can be lent by architecture, painting, music, and the high position of those who take part in them. Each one ought to claim to share officially in all occasions of great national ceremonial. It is most anomalous that the Church of England should have representatives on the imperial legislature; whereas the great nonconformist bodies have never even agitated for them. They should all be represented on the basis of membership established by a religious census.

§ 13. In the buildings and appointments of the separate congregations and still more in those of the central body there should be all the magnificence that funds permit. A small and poor congregation need not be ashamed of worshipping in a poor building: a free church in its beginnings would have to put up with cheap brick architecture; but it should not rest till the brick had been turned into marble. Perish the wretched canting fallacy that buildings

and furniture and clothes make no difference to the human heart. There should be nothing of the Little Bethel spirit in a free church. "I doubt if they're half baked those chalk rosettes, ciphers, and stucco-twiddlings everywhere"—no proud Anglican Blougram, fresh from the magnificence of his own cathedral, must jeer thus if he ever happens to look into a free church building.

This does not mean that our church is to be a rich man's church—only that the level of public spirit must be high. In the matter of public buildings we are sadly behind our ancestors. Our private houses are incomparably more pretentious and luxurious: our public buildings on the whole inferior. Setting aside the 'ages of faith' when religion drove men into exaggerated enterprises, consider what was done in the seventeenth century. Consider St. Paul's, and how we should receive the proposal to build a metropolitan church like it. Or take a less conspicuous but more convincing example, the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century fabric of Queen's College, Oxford, a college no way remarkable for wealth or renown. Even according to the standard of to-day this fabric is magnificent and imposing; and how much richer are we than the generation of the later Stuarts, how vastly greater is our command over material. If a new college were projected to-morrow there would be votes for using second-quality brick and providing

the students with rooms not much larger than cubicles. In the architecture of a free church there should be something like the proportion between public and private buildings observed by the builders of two hundred years ago.

§ 14. A free church should differ from our Congregationalists or Independents in being based explicitly upon dogma. Even the Congregationalists, though they professedly have no dogma, have it practically; a certain agreement of dogmatic view being necessary for membership in their Union.

In dogmatic institutions there are opposite dangers to be avoided. The danger which our contemporaries see more plainly is that of having a large body of dogma, rigidly defined, with a strong central authority to enforce acceptance of it. What this leads to we see in the Roman Church, which is incessantly engaged in persecuting or ejecting its most intelligent and enterprising thinkers, and reducing its spiritual life to a stupid monotony. On the other hand, there must be no pretence of wanting to include everybody. Membership must imply a fairly definite, if not rigidly definable, sympathy with the aims and tendencies of the church: it will not be enough if a man be fond of religion and wish to lead a good life. We do not want a church like the Anglican, composed of three or four practically different sects, and only held in a very uncomfortable unity by its endowments. The question is one

of practice. The Anglican Church never acts as a whole, is utterly incapable from the antagonistic views of its members of acting as a whole. We want a church which is capable of vigorous and effective action.

At any one time there must be some latitude in the interpretation of dogma ; and provision must be made for development of dogma. We must not have a religious constitution like the political constitution of the United States, where no change can be made without securing the approval of some dozens of disconnected committees. A church which does not provide for varying its articles of association, so to speak, will in the end be strangled by its own obsolete formulas. We ought to take lesson from the pitiable position of the Anglican Church, which is helpless to make the smallest change in its ridiculous, self-contradictory, antiquated jumble of articles and liturgies. However, this particular difficulty of dealing with the past ought not to embarrass a church that makes no pretensions to infallibility or to special divine guidance.

§ 15. As regards the ministerial organization the main thing is that the ministerial work should be done as far as possible by members of the congregation, and that there should be no distinctly separate ministerial class. It may turn out in the end that a ministerial class consisting of men trained from youth for the ministry may prove in practice to be inevitable,

and that the work cannot be done by the arrangements here suggested. But there are reasons which make one regard such a class as at best a necessary evil. For one thing, every definite profession tends to develop a professional interest which is far from coincident with that of the public. If, for example, certain forms of law, such as conveyancing, are made simpler and less expensive, a lawyer who does conveyancing will speak of that branch of his work as 'spoilt.' Or, to take an example nearer home, a 'crammer' who has lived by enabling young men to pass certain ill-arranged examinations would be tempted to fight against changes that diminish the importance of cram and increase the value of genuine knowledge. From purely secular professions we must expect this sort of thing, and put up with it as well as we can: but it is most desirable that it should not spring up in connection with religion. To what disastrous lengths it may be carried appears from the history of the Christian clergy, especially in the Middle Ages when they claimed what was practically an immunity for every sort of vice and crime. And the present misfortunes of the Catholic Church in France are due to nothing but the healthy reaction of a commonwealth which is growing in intelligence against a closely organized body tenaciously pursuing aims that are indifferent or hostile to the public welfare. The Church of England owes much of its strength to the fact

that its ministers are not entirely professional, but are to a certain extent practically laymen ; are, at any rate, not closely organized for the furtherance of professional interests against lay society.

Another reason is that the ministerial position cannot be filled properly by young men. Most people would admit that youth and the clerical function do not go well together. It is only by pretending to a moral insight impossible for his years and a breadth of view unnatural to a young man (who is generally, and ought to be, something of a fanatic), and a gravity of exterior which would be pathological if it were genuine, that the young cleric can carry off a situation which is rather painful and rather ridiculous. The callow curate in the pulpit will, if he is cautious, confine himself to ecclesiastical platitudes ; or, if he is venturesome, he will outrage the dignity of the experienced matrons and heads of families upon whom he forces his clumsy counsel. And, not only is the young minister essentially incompetent, but we may doubt whether a youth spent in the ministry is the best training for the ministry. After some years of platitudinizing the habit becomes difficult to shake off. Nor does the ministry give special advantages for enabling one to understand society. The minister should be, as Goethe was or was supposed to be, a physician of society ; he should be one to read each wound, each weakness clear, and strike his finger on the

place and say 'Thou ailest here and here.' Now a minister of religion does not know people as they really are; they wear a mask, an amiable mask, before him; there is always an element of unreality in their conversation: to know them as they truly are one must do business with them, as a teacher, or a lawyer, or a physician, or a merchant. A long spell of secular work is really the best training for the ministry.

If the advantages of secular training were recognized, the clergy would gain no less in intellectual interests than in practical *savoir-faire*. There is a common delusion that clergymen are a 'learned' class. This may be true of other countries, but it is certainly not true of England. The daily work of an Anglican clergyman has nothing to do with learning: the weekly sermon is the only thing that even suggests study; the rest is a routine of choir-practices, committee meetings, and parish visiting. There is hardly any profession that makes so little demand upon the intellect. Accuracy, ready understanding, quickness of calculation, clearness of exposition, logical coherence, observation of facts, facility in manipulating fine tools, appreciation of language, observation of character,—these are the effective points of a really educated man. Success elsewhere, in medicine, teaching, law and commerce, makes more demand for them than does the clerical profession. In mere knowledge of books, viewed

as a recreation or a hobby, the average clergyman is no better off than the average lawyer, and much worse off than the average schoolmaster.

In this matter of ministerial training we may gain much light by studying the practice of the Anglican Church. The efficiency of that Church and the respect which it enjoys among intelligent people are largely due to its partly secular character; by which I mean that its ministers have had a secular education, have grown up with secular habits and sympathies, and are available for some important secular duties. Here they compare to advantage with the nonconformist minister whose tastes and activities, as a rule, are purely clerical. The Anglican clergyman has usually been at a public school, where the tone is always quite the reverse of ecclesiastical; he proceeds to the university where he rubs shoulders with a host of men destined for all sorts of professions: he is taught by teachers of first-rate ability in no way committed to the support of established ecclesiastical institutions. Before he enters upon his life-work he may spend a few years in teaching. And in his profession he will find a good sprinkling of men who have been teachers at school or at the university. An Anglican clergyman can do many things that a nonconformist minister is not supposed to do. He can play cricket, golf, and football, hunt, shoot, and take a commission in the territorial forces; he can farm his own glebe, take

part in local government and sit upon a bench of magistrates ; he can go to dances, card parties, and act in private theatricals. All this is excellent : but the greatest privilege of the Anglican clergyman is that the teaching profession is open to him. There are in the United Kingdom rather more than a hundred important schools for the higher education of boys, and more than half of them have headmasters in Holy Orders. At Oxford and Cambridge the importance of the clerical element in the teaching staff is well known ; it tends to decline, but will probably remain influential for many years to come. These men are continually passing out of teaching to take up clerical work, and form a most valuable leaven in the body ecclesiastic.

There are, we know, numbers of able and enlightened educationalists who look forward to the complete secularization of the teaching profession, and would like to see every college tutor and every headmaster a layman. While understanding and respecting their views in relation to the existing state of ecclesiastical institutions, one may hold that the ideal is rather in the direction of a closer alliance between religion and education. Though education is secular it is not so secular as other professions : it is done best when taken up as a vocation that is almost spiritual : there is something truly spiritual in the relation which may be established between teacher and pupil. Tutors who never speak a word

about religion to their pupils may make their work a means of inculcating, merely through example, the highest standards of duty.

§ 16. Though an attempt to settle details would be presumptuous and premature, a few suggestions may be offered for free-church organization. In each congregation, that being the ecclesiastical unit, power should reside in the general assembly of the congregation, and be delegated by election into the hands of a committee, who would then choose their chairman and secretary. It will be the function of the committee to manage the affairs of the congregation, to raise money for its buildings, services, and charities, and to prepare lists of preachers and readers. There should be a considerable variety of preachers, chosen mainly from the members of the congregation. The work of preaching should be put into the hands of as large a number as possible : nothing would make people more critical, and at the same time more tolerant towards preachers, than the knowledge that their own turn would come round shortly. Those who cannot preach may at least read. As it is most important not to let any class of people slip into the passive sit-still-while-others-work attitude, women who command the respect of the congregation should be asked to preach and read as well as the men. The task of organizing the committee and of advising its policy should lie with the secretary, who should be the executive minister of

the congregation. He should be partly a manager, partly a preacher, a professional preacher among amateurs. On the right selection of such a secretary or minister the success of the congregation will mainly depend. He should not begin as a young man: probably it will not be found convenient to appoint any one under forty years of age. His special training will have been gained as a member of committee and amateur preacher; his general training will come from the successful practice of some honourable profession. It will be the teaching profession, probably, that will be found to be the best training for ministerial life. Such an arrangement would be analogous in some degree to that system of college livings which has done so much for the Anglican Church. What is most important is that the minister should have energy and character: he should not be one of those inoffensive, good-natured, rather ineffective men (with a small private income), who drift into the clerical profession because there seems no likelihood of their succeeding in any other.

§ 17. As to the manner of public worship little need be said: in addition to preaching there must, of course, be prayers and hymns and reading of scriptures. It is plain that new prayers will have to be written and new hymns; and let us hope that the latter will not be like the doggerel of the Anglican hymn-books.

It is equally plain that we must have new scriptures. Of all the terrible intellectual disasters of Europe the Bible has been by far the greatest, mitigated only partially by the wild romantic savagery of the Old Testament, by the sweet natural beauty of the preaching of Jesus, and, for us, by the old-time nobility of our Jacobean translation. What an irreparable injury to the intellectual growth of England that week by week, for centuries, the people have had presented to them 'lessons' from the records of an Arab tribe unapproachably distant in culture, in national sentiment, and in spiritual aspirations. Who can estimate the degree to which our poetry has been stunted and starved, our national genius crushed, our history cheapened and thrust out of sight by this alien oppression? Scholars have sentimentalized over the desolation of Hellas by the coarse ignorant tyranny of the Turks. Have they ever thought of the ruin these ill-starred Jewish scriptures have wrought to the mind of the Teutonic nations? Some noble pieces, such as Nathan rebuking David, the story of Naboth's vineyard, and passages from the Book of Job might perhaps be preserved in a new anthology for public worship.

As to the moral value of the Bible sufficient indication has perhaps been given in the preceding pages. The book will always be deeply interesting to students of the history of morals: we see in it the process whereby the prophets introduced a truly

moral element into the worship of Jehovah, originally a tribal god no higher than those of Moab and Ammon ; we see how the obscure Messianic mission of a provincial prophet was made the occasion of establishing a purified Judaism which took up into itself the new moral sentiments that had been growing up silently among the lower classes of the Roman Empire. Most of the Old Testament is indifferent to us except as a fairy-tale : [1] many parts of it, even some that are officially read in churches, would be actually poisonous if any one took them seriously as examples of conduct. [2] The New Testament is quite unsuitable for general reading : in particular it should be kept carefully out of the hands of the young and the simple who have not scholarship and experience enough to separate grain from chaff, and to resist the infection of its dangerous delusions.

It is Christianity that we have to blame for our want of ancient national scriptures, and a free church must, therefore, work to mitigate in some degree this irreparable deprivation. Scriptures read in churches should be mainly historical, the famous lives and deeds of great Englishmen with a sparing admixture of alien history. The hortatory material may be

[1] The story of the sun and moon standing still at the command of Joshua, and that of the destruction of the prophets of Baal by Elijah are magnificent in this respect.

[2] Such are the stories of Jacob supplanting Esau, of Rahab, and of Jael.

less easy to come by; but in English literature there must be many noble pieces of exhortation that may be read with profit. The generations to come will be better off than we are. By that time our nation will have fully shaken off the bad old thraldom. Our great-grandchildren, let us hope, will have inherited a devotional literature that is not tainted with folly and superstition.

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THE END

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