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THE ETHICAL ASPECTS OF EVOLUTION

8vo. 6s. net. 1908



JUSTICE AND HAPPINESS

8vo. 3s. 6d. net. 1911

(CLARENDON PRESS)

P 2826

RELIGION

AND

FREE WILL

RELIGION

AND

FREE WILL

A CONTRIBUTION TO
THE PHILOSOPHY OF VALUES

BY

W. BENETT

Οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει.
1 Cor. iv 20.

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1913

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK
TORONTO MELBOURNE BOMBAY
HUMPHREY MILFORD M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

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CHAPTER I

RELIGION

THE FALLACY OF THE ETHICAL MEAN. THE FINAL END OF RELIGION

CHAPTER I

RELIGION

THE FALLACY OF THE ETHICAL MEAN. THE FINAL END OF RELIGION

WE have observed (*Asceticism*, ad fin.) that, when the end is strength of character, no extreme of self-torture is excessive: and from this statement we are unable to recede. It suggests an examination of the popular conception of goodness as the mean between excess and defect; and we may prepare the way for a more comprehensive treatment of the subject by inquiring how far the principle of the mean will help us to explain the particular concept of justice. Justice is a good thing. Is it a mean? and, if it is, between the excess and defect of what quality? And we must throughout bear it in mind that a mean between the excess and defect of any one quality, when represented quantitatively, is not the same thing as the balance between two opposed qualities. A balance between two opposed quantities, however high, or however low they may be, if they are equal, is always zero. CH. I

Retributive justice has been commended as a protection against the double danger of an excess or defect in the workings of revenge. Here, it may be thought, we have a clear vindication of the mean,

CH. I in exactly the same form in which it is conceived by Aristotle. But we should be wrong. Our safety against excess and defect in revenge is not justice itself, but the result of justice, and to substitute for justice, in the apportionment of punishment, a general mean between extreme vindictiveness and apathy would lead to absurd consequences. Unless corrected by some other principle, it would give us the same level of punishment for all offences—something half-way between hanging and a farthing damages. This, however, would, in nearly all cases, contradict our sense of justice: for one half of the offences it would be too severe; for the other, too mild. The supplementary principle that is required is that the emotion of vindictiveness should vary in intensity with the moral gravity of the offence. We should then have a natural justice, and the judicial functions of the criminal courts would be superfluous. Judges would be required, if at all, merely as a branch of the executive—all the applications made to them would, *ex hypothesi*, be perfectly just, and their authority would only be required when execution was barred by superior force. But, in conditions like that, there would no longer be any question of a mean. Hanging would be demanded when the offence was of the highest degree of atrocity, and a trifling injury would be satisfied by a farthing damages.

There are, indeed, two things usually, and most rightly, numbered among the highest goods, which are not tendencies or emotions, but mathematical relations; and which do not themselves admit of

degrees. One of those is equality; the other, scientific truth. Of these, I believe equality to be universal, and scientific truth to be merely an application (disregarding the surds of evolution) of the principle of mathematical equality between objective causes and effects. Distributive justice is a compound ratio of equality between equality of persons and equality of merit and reward, in which the latter pair of factors, that is, merit and reward, being subjective, do not admit of quantification by any mathematical calculus. Now, a mathematical relation does not admit of degrees, and there are, therefore, no degrees either of justice or of scientific truth. A transaction must be either just or unjust: a scientific proposition must be either true or untrue. However close the approximation may be in either case, a mere approximation is neither justice nor truth; though for the first, indeed, it may be a serviceable substitute. CH. I

But we may talk of a just man, or of a man of a truly scientific mind. What is implied in these attributions is no degree of justice or truth themselves, but the determination to exclude the emotional tendencies from all influence on the purely intellectual processes which are concerned, directly with ascertaining what is just and what is true, and only indirectly with action. This determination is purely subjective, and, like every other subjective tendency, may be either weak or strong: like love or hatred, it admits of degrees; and even more obviously than in their case, it can never be in

CH. I excess. Its opposites are the unquantified emotional tendencies of ethics and religion which it excludes: and when either it or they achieve an overwhelming superiority over the other, evolution is doomed. A complete freedom from partiality and emotional preference is the distinctive characteristic of the judicial and the speculative minds: they are the intellectual virtues, and within their own provinces they can never be in excess. Anything short of completeness is a defect.

We have thus three distinct uses of the word 'justice'. As an abstract principle, it has no degrees, and the concepts excess, defect, and mean are alike inapplicable. As a mental quality, it admits of degrees, but can never be in excess; as an effect, it prevents another mental quality, vindictiveness, with which it has no more necessary connexion than it has with any other mental quality, from realizing itself in an extreme activity. It has no direct effect on the temper of vindictiveness itself, but it controls its activity. This is the office of retributive justice. The office of distributive justice is to protect us against the effects of avarice, or the mania for accumulating property.

From justice it is a natural transition to freedom. Freedom has been defined as a compromise between licence and constraint, and this again might at first appear to afford a crucial instance of the law of the golden mean. The compromise, however, denotes a proportion between two conflicting tendencies, and has no reference to an imaginary optimum in

the strength of either. Nor does it contradict the supposition that, in ethics, the optimum is always identical with the maximum, provided the direction is right. The conflicting tendencies whose opposition makes up freedom are activity and inertia; the latter being represented as a force under the term 'constraint'. If regarded merely as natural forces, there is no distinction of value between them: when elevated to the sphere of human action, activity, taken by itself, is always valued as good, and constraint, as bad. Nevertheless, the former, apart from the latter, introduces disorder, and puts an end to evolution. The same result would ensue on the assumption as an optimum, in the good quality activity, of any particular degree between its extremes. A moderate activity is no more valuable than a lukewarm love. As soon as human activity is arrested at any stage, even if that be the extreme at present conceivable, human evolution as a whole will also be arrested. All that is necessary is that the evil principle of constraint should maintain an approximately equal rate of growth, without reaching such proportions as to overpower its opposite, the good principle of activity. In stationary conditions the case would, no doubt, be otherwise; and a compromise between licence and constraint could then mean nothing but a limited degree of activity. CH. I

Perhaps the best illustration of this truth is furnished by art. Genius is the quality through which forward evolution in all lines is effected, and a dearth of genius brings about stagnation and

CH. I decay. But there is no limit beyond which genius ceases to be admirable. Even Aristotle would not have preferred Cebes or Speusippus to Plato or himself, in virtue of their mediocrity. In artistic achievement the Greeks of all peoples reached the highest level, and their secret was that they were able to control the loftiest flights of genius by the strictest rules that have ever been devised for that purpose. A lower order of genius would be unable to support so strict a restraint; but, on the other hand, an impatience of all restraint, however mild, has, in our own days, crippled achievement, and brought about the decay of genius itself.

We may next take up one of the virtues of asceticism. Chastity is a virtue, incontinence is a vice. Marriage may be represented as the mean between the excess and defect of chastity taken by itself. But marriage has never been regarded as more than a very ordinary virtue, and not always as a virtue at all. If we want to understand our ethical feelings on the subject we must get behind the facts to the intentions. The intention, or impulse, in chastity, is self-repression; in incontinence, self-assertion; and the latter is often called licence, which means uncontrolled activity generally. But in this case the ethical values are reversed, and it is control which is the good, and activity the bad principle. This difficulty, however, is only apparent. Self-control is not the same thing as slavery to another, but the highest form of freedom. Nor is the final end, in this case, a fur-

ther advance in evolution. The sexual impulse is perhaps the earliest and the most universal of all the special modes of movement which grew out of the primary modes of attraction and repulsion: and it is the one in which we most closely resemble the lowest forms of life. The tendency is therefore retrograde, and it is, in itself, bad. With possible exceptions, which are so few that they may be disregarded, the conscious end of sexual love is always pleasure, and pleasure, as an aim, is degrading; though as a reward it need not be. But the impulse itself is necessary to evolution. If it were extinguished no living material would be left for evolution to work on. Nor can there be any excess in the impulse itself. The race of men in whom the sexual impulse was weak or perverted would soon be extinguished by one in whom the impulse was stronger or better directed—first by force of numbers, and still more by the increased power which is brought about by competition for the necessaries of life. All that is required is this: that the control of morality should increase in stringency with the increased strength of the sexual impulse. CH. I

The feature in marriage which excites ethical approval is, not the satisfaction of the impulse, but the self-restraint, and, as that is not very severe or difficult, but well within the capacity of most men, the emotional intensity of the approval is not high. But the goodness, such as it is, is recognized, and when the restraint is raised to its extreme expression,

CH. I as it is in perfect chastity, the approval may rise to the pitch of enthusiasm. That men have, on that account only, been regarded as saints is, apart from all questions of its reasonableness, a certain proof that the ethical reaction has occurred, and has been felt by large numbers of men. And, inasmuch as the practice of this form of self-restraint has the effect, in common with many other forms of the same principle, that it produces strength of character and elevation of purpose, it would be absurd to call the approval, however strong it may be, unreasonable. Thus we find, in this case also, that the needs of evolution demand the extreme strength of both the conflicting principles—of the animal impulse, and of the ethical control—impartially. But evolution will advance if the rational principle takes the lead, and retreat, if the animal impulse; and the approval of the moral judgements always attends on the principle which assists advance.

We have defined courage as the disposition to meet a danger; and cowardice, as the disposition to avoid it. The first, as a personal quality, and apart from circumstances, gains more honour than almost any other human attribute; the second is one of the most despicable. A mean between the two would be apathy in the presence of danger. This is never regarded as a virtue. Again, a mean between courage and apathy can only be understood as a temper that would withstand a moderate danger, and fly before any that was more than moderate. As a virtue this might perhaps rank

with marital fidelity. The highest courage is one that can be relied on to advance against overwhelming odds. In other words, courage can never be in excess. As a subjective quality it is always good, and never so good as when at its extreme height. Cowardice, on the other hand, is always bad, and its badness is in proportion to its degree. A man who is afraid at every trifling threat is more despicable than one who yields to save the honour of a friend. CH. I

When, however, we proceed to a consideration of its practical effects, the case is not equally simple. It is still true that there are occasions which demand nothing short of the highest degree of courage: but there are others in which the end can only be attained if courage is tempered by prudence. Which of these occasions is more frequent or more important we have, so far as I am aware, no general principle to decide. Augustus, and he was no mean judge, preferred, in a commander, caution to boldness. An exhaustive treatment of the subject would take us out of our way, but it concerns us to remark that prudence differs from mere animal cowardice in being calculated, and that it depends for its justification on the end it has in view. If that end is the safety of the country, as with Fabius, prudence is highly esteemed. if, as with Carmagnola, the end is the interests of the general himself, it is not much more respectable than cowardice. And this brings in another consideration. Courage itself may be employed for

CH. I a bad end, as by a pirate. Even then it may be admired as a quality, but it will no longer be respected as a virtue. The Christian martyrs discarded prudence, and devoted the extreme of courage to attain the ends of religion. The courage of Bruno was not less extreme—'Maiore forsan metu mihi mortem nuntias quam ego accipio.' But the verdict on the whole transaction will not be unanimous. To Christians the martyrs will be saints, and Bruno a pirate: the atheist will reverse the attributions. It is all a question of final end, and, eventually, of belief.

The first stage in all inquiries of this kind is the collection of particular judgements, or judgements of a low degree of generality; and not until his collection is sufficiently comprehensive should the inquirer attempt to draw conclusions. At every stage of his inquiry he will be liable to be biased by three distinct influences: first, by his moral temperament; secondly, by intellectual prejudice; and thirdly, by his material interests. The first of these he can hardly expect to escape, nor indeed is it necessary, or perhaps even desirable, that he should. Nearly all men are representatives of one principle or another. As a nursery jingle tells us, every child that comes to birth is either a little Whig or a little Tory; and every principle, whether it is good or bad, must be represented in thought, as long as evolution continues. The chief danger from this quarter an inquirer must guard against is that of allowing his moral temper to suggest a con-

clusion before his collection of judgements has been completed. My own experience, if I may refer to that, has always been that a dispassionate review of a sufficient number of ethical judgements has led me to conclusions which differed very widely from any that I could have anticipated; and this was never more true than in the inquiry on which we are at present engaged. Both the other disturbing influences, that is, intellectual prejudice and material interest, are forms of dishonesty. They disqualify a man for the work, and all their fruits are poisonous. CH. I

For this inquiry the collection of facts is nearly as complete as it need be, but, before we proceed to the next stage, room must be found for the judgements which men commonly pass on the conflicting principles of love and hatred. These may be regarded as the most highly generalized of the emotional forms which are derived from the primitive tendencies of attraction and repulsion. In their primaeval rudiments both were equally essential to ordered evolution, and it will be found that, in our own days, both of their latest developments are equally necessary for the same purpose. Love may be conceived as embracing the whole of a creation, including stocks and stones, and a consistent pantheist, who was at the same time a believer in metempsychosis, could hardly refuse to go this length. Buddha is said to have cut off his head to feed a starving tiger, and he would, no doubt, have done as much for stocks and stones, could he have

CH. I ascertained their wants. At higher levels of thought, where distinctions are drawn between matter and life, and between life and reason, the range will be progressively restricted, and among ourselves the line will usually be drawn at humanity. That a man with sound moral instincts should love a tree in the same sense as he loves his children would seem to most men incredible in the present, and undesirable in the future. Love may be distinguished, according to its object, into two main streams flowing in the same direction; that is, love of general principles, and love of individuals; and the first of these includes the love of God (religious), the love of goodness (ethical), the love of country (political), family love, and finally the love of humanity at large, which must be classed differently, according as our point of view is religious or ethical.

Religion and morality concur in regarding love as the highest form of goodness, and there are few who will not admit that it can never be in excess. The mean between love and hate is indifference; the mean between an imaginary excess and defect in love itself is a lukewarm affection; and neither of these has ever been counted as a virtue. The religious maxim, that we should love our God with all the faculties of our mind, is equally true with regard to all the other general principles which call for self-devotion: in morality, in art, and in science itself. In no line of subjective activity can the self-devotion be too intense in degree, or too wide in

comprehension. It admits of no reservation, not even of wife or child: who indeed need not suffer—'I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more.' The lower love may often be included in the higher, but not always. And we may here dismiss the question of family love, with the remark that it is good in itself, and that it can never be in excess, except when it competes with some other conflicting principle. CH. I

Nevertheless, for the purposes of evolution, the proposition that love can never be in excess has no greater certainty than the opposed proposition that hatred can never be in excess, provided that it is subordinated to love. Religions, whether true or false, will lose their power when they lose their hatred of sin and impiety, of atheism, and of all lines of thought which tend to the contempt and suppression of religion itself. Morality will decay when vice is no longer hated, and the strength of a country when it ceases to hate its enemies. And the more intense the hatred the greater is its practical service to religion, to morality, and to political independence. The slightest defect in our hatred will lessen the value of our love. 'Perfecto odio oderam eos qui oderunt te.' A mild dislike, which means no harm, is of no value in any of the relations of life. The ethical judgements always abhor hatred when regarded as a quality, and by itself; but they do not abhor a good hater, who hates with all his soul the enemies of what is good.

Nothing I have advanced is likelier to provoke

CH. I objections than this; but nothing is more certain or more important. Hatred, when guided by reason, is a source of strength, and the conflict between ideals is so close that to yield odds ensures defeat. Nor do I for a moment deny that it is an evil. My object is to show that evil, even in a supreme degree, is inseparable from evolution. Hatred, when properly directed, is never contemptible: it is better than the mask of benevolence which covers an unwillingness to sacrifice ease and luxury, and to face the risks of wounds and death. It does not follow that, because it is an advantage, it must always be an element, in warfare: but there are no signs that it will be less operative in the future than it has been in the past. If, during times of peace, improved facilities of intercourse have done much to dispel the blind suspicion and contempt for foreigners, with which nature effected her purpose in the past; a war, in which each individual soldier feels that he is personally interested, will be waged with more bitterness than when the footmen are merely pawns.

The difficulty disappears when the distinction between phenomenal and transcendental aims is called to mind. For the Jew, to whom the conception of a suprasensible order was unknown, the obligation to hate was of equal force with the obligation to love, and joined in the same reward. 'Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore has the Lord raised thee above thy fellows.' In an order which is beyond evolution, and where there is no

longer any conflict of principles, love may subsist apart from hatred, but, under the conditions of evolution, love itself must fail with the disappearance of its opposite. A righteous indignation will always be necessary as long as evolution endures, and will grow with its growth, and decay with its decay. It will only become superfluous when men neither marry nor give in marriage: that is, at the end of the world. But there are two necessary restrictions. In the first place, it must always operate in the same direction, and under the control of love: where hatred leads, decay sets in; and, secondly, it must always be directed against the temporary interests of its object, and never against his real, or supra-sensible interests—it must not pursue him beyond the grave. CH. I

The love of individuals is best exemplified by friendship, and here again it will, I hope, be admitted that there is no room for excess. A lukewarm affection excites no admiration. In its perfect form, friendship is a mutual tie in which each of two friends is willing to give his life for the other. But, like other forms of love, it involves hatred. A man must hate the enemies of his friend as intensely as he hates the enemies of his religion, or of his country, or of society. Every defect in his hatred detracts from the value of his love. But love of man is restricted by two conditions which are inapplicable to the love of God. Nothing affects the question of its intensity, but the word 'neighbour' limits the range, and the words 'as yourself' the

CH. I direction of the activity. We will take the second of these limiting conditions first.

At first sight the command, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, seems little less than absurd. We ought not to love ourselves at all: our conduct ought to be wholly unselfish. Nevertheless, though it is true that he must not pursue on his own account any phenomenal end whatever, the most exacting moral sense would not forbid a man to perfect, so far as in him lay, his own nature; or to pursue, in a religious sense, his own salvation. And, we may ask, should a conflict arise between his own ethical or religious ends, and the temporal interests of a friend, must he degrade himself, or imperil his soul, in order that his friend may build a palace? Assuredly not. He may do that neither for himself nor for a friend. When, however, the end is transcendental, there is no risk to a man's personal interests. He cannot make himself less perfect by seeking for the perfection of others, even though all humanity be included; and, in these relations, pleasure and pain are irrelevant. Ultimately, what the religious command enjoins is, that a man's love for his neighbour, and his love for himself, should be directed towards the same end, and employ the same degree of strength. With this, the moral sense is in full agreement; and, as we have seen, the degree of strength must be the utmost he can put forth. The only limit to love and to hatred alike, when properly directed, is that it should not be so strong as to extinguish the consciousness of the end. Conduct

then becomes purposeless, and when we lose the consciousness of purpose we descend to the level of brutes. CH. I

For the love of God, or of any earthly principle that is always good, such as justice or freedom, the end itself is always good, and no distinction of this kind can arise. But in the concrete love of humanity, whether as masses or as individuals, the objects combine within themselves all the good and all the evil of the phenomenal world, and we must choose between two principles—the good or the evil; and according to its direction our love is either good or bad. The love whose aim it is to gain for others wealth and power, and all the good things of this world, is as genuine an emotion, and equally deserves the name of love, as the love which would deliver them from degrading superstitions, and raise them in the scale of humanity; but their effects on evolution are diametrically opposite. The first is the most powerful of all the engines of disintegration; the other is the most powerful of all the engines of progress. The path of the one leads downhill; of the other, uphill. When the aim of patriotism is to increase the riches and the contentment of the people, the nobler end of freedom, and the glories, literary or artistic, of a great nation, are kept out of sight: the heroic temper of self-sacrifice is extinguished, and the inevitable goal is slavery. It is the same with individuals. A man who seeks material well-being for himself, and forgets the nobler ends of evolution, degrades himself—and he degrades his

CH. I friend when he seeks for the same end on his behalf.

The use of the word 'neighbour' reminds us that there are degrees of obligation in our relations with our fellow men, which arise out of special relations between ourselves and them, and which are roughly proportionate to degrees of local proximity. Of these, the most imperative are, no doubt, our duties to our country, and to our church; and the most importunate, our duty to our kindred. Each country represents a special ideal of its own, which conflicts with the ideals of all other nations, and the conflict will be more severe between neighbouring than between distant states. If we loved the partisans of a conflicting national ideal in the same way as we loved the partisans of our own, the conflict would cease, and there would be no further evolution. Again, if we loved the enemies of our religion in the same way as we loved its defenders, there would soon be no religion to defend. Men who live at such a distance that their beliefs and their actions can neither assist nor defeat our own aims have no more *ethical* claim on our love or our hatred than monkeys have.

The conflict of party ideals in our own country affords an apposite illustration. It has given us a degree of freedom, accompanied by a growth of external power and internal prosperity, which has made our institutions, if not ourselves, the admiration of our neighbours. If either party had remained permanently in power, neither our free-

dom, nor the resultant development would have been as great. Neither party has ever loved the other, or even been commonly fair to its motives, its aims, or its achievements. Party hatred, and not reason, has always been the most valuable element in party strength, and if either had set the example of loving the other, it would probably have abandoned the country to the permanent government of its enemies—much to the disadvantage of the country as well as of the party itself. Foreigners have admired our constitution —they should rather have admired the conflict of party ideals which grew up within it. A rational criticism will find in party government as much to condemn as to praise, and not more; but it has maintained freedom, and stimulated progress, with a success that no rational government could have hoped for. The motives, of course, must be sincere, and the aim, not party interests, but the common weal. The history of England repeats in miniature the general march of evolution. CH. I

This is all we need say at present about the ethical aspects of universal love, but it leaves the religious aspect untouched; for the forcible maintenance of our religion is an ethical and not a religious duty. To a religious mind all men, the lowest savage and the highest product of civilization, are literally, and in the strictest sense of the word, equal before God, and have an equal claim to our love. But the interests of religion are religious and not worldly, and it has no concern with the

CH. I temporal interests of humanity. Its exponents in modern times are the great missionaries, such as St. Francis Xavier, the Jesuit Fathers in North and South America, or, among ourselves, John Wesley and General Booth, whose object is to deliver men from the night of false and degrading beliefs. But we must bear in mind the following conclusion. The religious end is not the realization of any secular end, or collection of secular ends, but the supersession of all. If ever completely dominant in this world, it might bring about a universal peace, but that would be paid for by the sacrifice of all secular values. The love of our fellow men might be universal, and without distinction of place or person, but phenomenal ends would be extinguished; there would be no marrying or giving in marriage, and happiness would cease to be desired. It would be the end of the world.

Philanthropy also may be classed as a form of universal love. The Greek derivation of the word betrays the scientific affinities of the concept which it stands for. The only point it has in common with religion is its aversion to social and political distinctions. But, even on this question, they have this radical difference, that whereas religion bids us to aspire to a higher existence than any we can conceive, by the exercise of the same qualities which raise us in the scale of life, science promises us no future beyond the grave, and is indifferent to all interests except those of material well-being. Its gifts to the savage are not Bibles, but blankets

and patent medicines, and among utilitarians this will not be regarded as a reproach. It bears the same relation to Christian morals as Theism does to Christian dogma. It contradicts the aims of ethics by its tendency to dissolve all the distinctions which constitute the characteristic and essential growth of forward evolution. Often, what is called philanthropy is really the disinterested hatred of wrong—of slavery, of oppression, of injustice to the weak, of outrage and cruelty, whether on the Danube, or in the forests of South America. This is really not love of the weak, but hatred of crime. When it prompts men or nations to self-sacrifice, there is no more noble impulse; but it is easily distinguished from the desire to spread the material benefits of civilization. CH. I

The subject has not been nearly exhausted. It may be doubted whether the exigencies of evolution demand that we should hate the offender as well as the offence. In some cases I think they do. Surely, our conscience raises no protest when we hate the man who lives on the gains of prostitution, or the traitor who persuades his comrades to abandon the cause of their country. Again, the man who is magnanimous may bear no grudge against his personal enemies, but ought he to love the enemies of his friend? These, and many other questions, would call for an answer if our purpose was a complete anatomy of love and hatred. But that it is not; and I hope we are already in a position to deal with the question with which

CH. I we started, that is, whether goodness is the mean between excess and defect, and to give reasons for an answer in the negative. It will be understood that nothing is further from my thought than a polemic against Aristotle's elaborate development of the theme: all I am concerned with is the bare conception of goodness as a mean between excess and defect.

No fact can be more obvious and indisputable than this, that what the ethical sense admires is not mediocrity, but the utmost attainable degree of strength in all the processes of life. This feeling is universal, and it served Kant as a basis for his explanation of the sublime. The claim which has been set up on behalf of the mean arises out of an ambiguity in the word 'goodness'; which may mean either virtue or the objective effects of virtue. Science, whose province is objective fact, will be contented with the latter, and will see no reason for penetrating behind the external effect to its subjective conditions (cf. *Ethical Aspects*, p. 155). It will see, for instance, that, on the whole, the best results are obtained by a general who is not rash, and will proceed to infer that true courage is a mean between rashness and apathy, or, perhaps, cowardice. A closer examination of the springs of action will show that the best results are obtained, not by a moderate courage, but by the utmost extreme of courage, when combined with, and, where necessary, held in check by, prudence of the highest order.

When life is regarded as stationary, the fallacy may easily escape detection. It is true that the error will at first be purely philosophical. Enthusiasm for the hero will remain after its causes have been condemned; and the instances where conduct is successful without being heroic are so numerous that the theory will not be without an ample show of external justification. But, with the introduction of the idea of evolution, it begins to be recognized that what is important is not any condition or form in itself, but the level of evolution at which it is realized; that is to say, that all values are really evolutionary. To use a mathematical illustration: means between one and a hundred, and between one and a million, may be equally useful in practical life, but the first will have only the slightest ethical value when compared with the second, because relative value depends, not on the ratio, but on the height of the denominator. Moreover, a closer examination of the process which constitutes evolution will show that the elevation which gives to the mean all the value it can have is completely dependent on the condition that both the conflicting tendencies between which it is a mean should be at their maximum strength. It is easy for either of two conflicting tendencies to be in defect, but neither can be in excess unless the other is in defect: and there is no such thing as an absolute excess. A tendency is in excess only when it ceases to be held in check by its opposite; and this may happen at any stage in its develop- CH. I

CH. I ment. For example: bigotry and superstition are not the excess of religion, any more than gluttony is excess of appetite, but the diseases which it contracts; either when it is unopposed, or when its aims are perverted. A healthy faith can never be too strong.

The belief in the ethical mean is thus due to two causes: first, the scientific habit of dealing with objective results in preference to their subjective antecedents, and, secondly, the failure to take account of evolution; an idea which, as has been pointed out elsewhere, contradicts the scientific postulate of uniformity. That, and the kindred maxim μηδὲν ἄγαν, represent the ethical aspect of the scientific tendency, and have come down to us from the earliest period of scientific thought. They are akin to the contempt for enthusiasm which distinguished the philosophers of the eighteenth century, and to Lord Shaftesbury's account of virtue as a kind of good breeding. Their triumphs are in contests for material welfare, but they contradict the higher aims of religion and morality, and they have always and everywhere held a low place in the ethical judgements of humanity.

There is, however, one other point which must be touched on before this part of our subject is dismissed. The pleasures of the senses are at their best when they are at a certain degree of intensity: above or below that point they fade and disappear. Of those pleasures I have taken no account, as they are strictly irrelevant to a discussion of the nature

of goodness. They are not good either as a means or as an end: as means, because they are always an end in themselves; as end, because their pursuit is condemned by the moral judgements. I may be allowed to add that the excess is not in the pleasure itself, but in the stimulus by which it is excited. A pleasure which has vanished is no longer a pleasure. CH. I

This, then, is the answer to the question we started with. But it is impossible to leave the inquiry at this stage. We have found that the mean is not the test of goodness: that there is no such thing as an absolute excess in any quality; and that when either of a pair of opposites, whether it is the one we label good, or the one we label bad, falls into defect, the whole process of evolution is checked, and eventually stops. It is our plain duty to inquire in what way these conclusions affect our views as to the universal final end of conduct.

Two at least of the propositions in the preceding pages are, I think, self-evident, and such as would be accepted as true by any healthy mind as soon as they were propounded: they are (1) love is always good, and hatred always bad; and (2) we must love what is good, and hate what is evil. But these two propositions are contradictory. For, if it is bad to love, and good to hate what is evil, neither love nor hatred is universally good or bad. And this would be true, however small the proportion borne by evil to good: the smallest infusion of evil would be

CH. I sufficient to defeat the universality of either attribution. But it is the law of evolution that good and evil are pretty evenly distributed, sometimes one, and at others the other, being slightly in excess. The love of evil would therefore be about as common, and as intense, as the love of good; and the same thing would be true of hatred. The distinction, then, between good and evil, so far as they are bound up with love and hatred, would be obliterated. And this would indeed be true in stationary conditions of life, where good and evil were in an exact equilibrium, and neither outweighed the other. In such conditions it would be true, as some scientific thinkers have asserted, that there is no real evil: nor indeed would there be any real good; but only pleasure and pain: and those are certainly not identical with ethical good and evil.

All values imply a final end or purpose, and an end implies systematic change, or movement towards a condition which differs from the present, and which may be realized in the future. We have given reasons for the belief that the regular movement or process which conditions ethical value generally is evolution, and that the end of evolution, whatever that may be, is the standard with reference to which differences of value are determined. Good is what brings us nearer to the attainment of that end, and evil, what defeats it. The only other universal end we can conceive is pleasure, and that does not explain the difference between good and evil.

If there were any clear indication in the past history of our race that we had drawn any nearer to the realization of any known or conceivable end, which we should all accept as desirable, it would not be unreasonable to regard that end as the universal final end of our conduct, and of evolution itself, however long an interval of time might be demanded for its realization. In the absence of any historical corroboration, any end that might be postulated is open to the objection that we can have no reasonable expectation that it will ever be realized: indeed, the absence of any such indication during the long period which separates us from the savage raises a very strong presumption to the contrary. Only three such ends, as far as I know, have ever been suggested: those are, extinction; the realization of a perfect human character; and the realization of perfect conditions of life. The latter two may of course be combined, but it is convenient to consider them separately. Extinction is not an end which all men desire, and it contradicts evolution; it need not, therefore, detain us. Of the second no one has ever been able to form a clear conception, and it must be regarded, like evolution itself, as a process rather than as an end. Of the third it is perhaps possible to form a somewhat clearer idea. Perfect conditions of life in this world may be interpreted to mean the total elimination of pain, and, as a step towards this end, the abolition of war might be recommended. No one, however, in the present state of Europe, will believe this to

CH. I be probable, unless he has the happy faculty of being able to believe anything he likes. Universal peace itself is only a negative end—that is, the removal from life of one of its most unpleasant incidents. Of a final stage in the evolution of pleasure we can no more form a conception than we can of a perfect character.

The conclusions which were drawn from a rough survey of life as a whole are strongly confirmed by the separate analyses of some of the more important factors in life which have just been completed. We have found a number of qualities which are always classed as good, opposed by a number of qualities which are always classed as bad—we may take liberty and love as representing the good qualities, and constraint and hatred as representing the bad—and of these we found that the further growth of each good quality is conditioned by the further growth of its bad opposite; and that any material falling off in a bad quality led to a corresponding decay of its good opposite. What, then, is true of evolution generally is equally true of each of these constituent factors separately. In these conditions it is certain that no improvement, in the sense of a rectification of the proportions between good and evil to the advantage of the good, is ever possible. It would mean the collapse of evolution. Even if we could look forward to an uninterrupted advance through an endless future we should never be nearer the elimination of evil than we are at present. However great the growth of good, evil would

always be running up to the same level. And men of science warn us that some day the process may be reversed. A sudden catastrophe may end the process, but it would not mend it. The view which this essay enforces is that of the parable. So long as evolution lasts, the wheat and the tares will grow together. Its essential character is the parallel growth of both alike. The optimists are like those who would pull up the tares before the growth of either is complete. Beyond this point no philosophy can take us; but religion adds that when the growth is ended, and not before, the wheat and the tares will be separated. CH. I

This does not, of course, cover the whole field. Besides the necessary evils arising from human nature, of which perhaps the worst are war and criminal justice, there are what may be called the natural evils of disease and famine; as well as the inevitable increase in numbers, which gives us a choice between nearly all the others—war, famine, and pestilence; or artificial checks, which, in the long run, are the worst of all. Finally, and perhaps most comprehensive of all, there are the new motives of pleasure and pain, which are almost peculiar to humanity. These, in their proper use as indiscriminate reinforcements to action of all kinds, both good and bad alike, represent, if not exactly, at any rate very closely, the values of the civilization to which they are attached, and must be judged, as a whole, by the same standard. But they are liable to a perversion which makes them the source of the

CH. I lowest kinds of evil—that is, when they are pursued on their own account. One illustration will be enough. Hatred will prompt us to take an enemy's life: a desire for the pleasure which reinforces hatred will spare his life in order that we may enjoy the sight of his torments. The alternative is between the extinction of pleasure, and submission to the evils which come in its train; for we cannot have one without the other. We should, without hesitation, decide to keep both. But there is no standard, whether hedonic or ethical, within the bounds of experience, by which our election could be justified. Nor would there be, if it were the other way.

Thus, a dispassionate survey of the history of evolution, unbiased by emotional prejudice, not only fails to reveal any end or final redistribution of its constituent factors, which we can have any reason for preferring to the present conditions of life on earth; but it further affords us strong positive grounds for believing that no such end is possible. The process it reveals is endless; or only terminable either by a sudden cataclasm, or by reversion to the point from which it started. But there can be no values without some final end, and nothing in life is more certain than the existence of values. From this difficulty there are three doors of escape—either we must accept an indefinite multiplicity of unconnected final ends; and in that case we must give up philosophy and join Dr. Pangloss in digging potatoes: or we must assert that pleasure is the

final end; and then we must not only reject the teachings of history, but also throw overboard our conscience and our religion: or we must assume that there is some final end external to the process of evolution, and beyond the limits of our reason. The last represents the belief of the great majority of civilized men. CH. I

Of an end which is external to the whole course of evolution no phenomenal attributes can be predicated. It cannot be thought of as being in time; and it may be realized or defeated at any moment in time. In itself it can have neither beginning nor end, and it admits of no degrees. If realized in time, its realization must always be sudden and complete, and not partial or gradual. These considerations have an important bearing on our beliefs on the subject of a future life. In the first place, it would be impossible to reconcile them with any doctrine which denied the existence of a personal principle which survives death. For a purely phenomenal personality there could be no universal end of conduct. It would resemble an animal which has no interest beyond the satisfaction of its phenomenal wants. It is true that, even among animal wants, we are acquainted with some which are directed to the attainment of results which do not happen within the lifetime of the individual agent; and there may be many more of the same kind which have not yet been discriminated: but we have no reason to deny that all such results are exhausted in the preservation or

CH. I further evolution of the race; or for supposing that they have any connexion with the interests of the animal itself. Such wants may perhaps be regarded as the germs out of which the human conscience has been evolved; occupying, indeed, a vastly inferior position with regard to the total complex of animal wants than the conscience does with regard to the total complex of human wants, but directed towards the same class of ends; that is, the phenomenal ends of evolution.

With animals, then, we have no reason for postulating any other final end than conformity with the laws which direct the endless process of evolution. And we might believe the same thing of men, were it not that, in their case, the factors in evolution which are common both to them and to animals are enriched and suffused by the addition of the new factor of religion. Religion inspires men with the conception of a single final end to the conduct of each individual man separately, and compels them to seek it beyond the limits of birth and death. That final end of individual conduct is always the perfection and the happiness of the individual; and if those were attainable by direct effort within the limits of this life, the whole face of the problem of conduct would be changed. But, as we have already shown, they cannot. A conviction of the possibility is optimism. It is important to remember that the end which is actually aimed at is always the perfection or happiness of the individual. The perfection of the race is either a confused idea,

or an ethical aspiration to which the facts of evolution give no encouragement. The salvation of the individual soul is an aim which was first introduced by religion, and of which we can only divest ourselves by divesting ourselves of our religious beliefs. CH. I

Every belief on the subject of a future life has its origin in the religious tendency, but its distinctive character is determined, in all cases, by the fundamental ethical assumption as to the value of the ends of the present life. If those are condemned as radically bad, as they are in the systems both of Buddhism and of Hinduism, the religious tendency is contradicted. The first denies personality both in this life and in the hereafter; the second makes the extinction of personality the primary end of conduct; and both of them contradict the religious aspiration after personal happiness. It follows that neither has ever been a religion in the only intelligible meaning of the word. Neither has ever functioned as an active principle in the beliefs of large masses of humanity, except after the accretion of a quantity of alien doctrine which is logically irreconcilable with its fundamental postulate. Their only effect on evolution has been to stunt the growth of the religious spirit, and to maintain its primitive forms. If, on the other hand, it is assumed that the ends of this life are good, there is no reason why the reward of good conduct should not be located in this life, or in one closely resembling it. The only religion of any importance which is based on this assumption is that of Mohammed, and that, for

CH. I reasons which are given elsewhere, has not proved a success. Judaism, which might perhaps be reckoned in the same class, has, at any rate in its primitive form, no claims to be regarded as a world-religion: nor did it promise rewards in a future state of existence.

The only form of religion that would exactly agree with the facts of evolution as we have stated them would be a strict dualism. Whether the religion of Manes was that is doubtful. It seems to have postulated a considerable absorption of evil before the final cataclasm, and, if so, it had an infusion of optimism. A strictly consistent dualism will assert, not only that good and evil are equal at the present time, but also that their relative proportions always have been, and always will be, substantially the same. If a progressive advantage is allowed to either principle the doctrine will be either optimist or pessimist, according to the principle which is preferred. A pure dualism would not only agree with ethics, but would be identical with it: it would repeat the ethical theory, but not supplement or confirm it; and, like ethics, it would offer no satisfaction to the craving of the individual for final beatitude, or any effective promise of a future life. That craving arises from a dissatisfaction with life as it is, and will not be appeased by the promise of another life in which the proportion of good and evil remains substantially the same as it is in the present. What it asks for is the extirpation of evil: and this is inconsistent with an empirical dualism.

The further evolution of the race, which is the aim of ethics, offers no attraction to the individual; and, in a strict empirical dualism, there can be no single final end, unless it be placed beyond experience. Moreover, it must be individual; for the future evolution of the race is either endless, or ends, if at all, in extinction. CH. I

With the appearance, then, of man we are introduced to a fresh dichotomy in the principles of action. Within the animal kingdom the universal end of action is the preservation of the individual in subordination to the interests of the race. With man, the universal end of action becomes, through religion, the perfection of the individual—a perfection which we have no hope of attaining within the limits of secular evolution. When religion makes the final end of the individual secular, it must either contradict the process of evolution, or concur with it. In the first case, it puts an end to the prospects of the race; in the second, it extinguishes the hopes of the individual. The only escape from this dilemma is to preserve the ethical principles of action for the guidance of men as items in humanity, and superimpose on those principles the additional rules which are required for the perfection of men, as individual persons, in a transcendental state of existence. The ethical rules are given us by the conscience, and may exist in independence of religion. They are paralleled, in the lower stages of life, by the numerous instincts which impel animals to make provision, often at the cost of the individual

CH. I life, for the needs of generations yet unborn. Their effects are exhausted in this life. They make no promise of individual beatitude.

The rules which are added by religion to the pre-existing rules of ethics are those which direct worship, in the widest sense of the word. Of the effects of worship on character this is not the place to speak. All that need be said is that it must not contradict the rules of ethics. When religion contradicts those, as in the days of the Inquisition, it is like the carpenter who cut away from the tree the branch on which he was seated. The rules of worship, then, will not repress the activities of daily life, but, on the contrary, stimulate them, and urge every man to make the utmost use, in the right direction, of the faculties with which he is endowed. The principles of growth and decay, of life and death, are so nearly balanced, that the defection of religion from its natural ally must secure the victory to the forces of destruction. The rules of morality will not be abrogated; on the contrary, they will gain in life and elevation.

This, then, as far as we are concerned (and to explore further would be childish), is the purpose of evolution—the transcendental perfection of the individual; and, unexpected though it may be, the conclusion is inevitable: there is no other universal final end of action that can be called in to dispute the claim. Being external to the course of evolution, it may be realized or defeated at any moment, and at any stage in the process. There are no necessary

intermediate stages which a man is required to pass through as a condition for attaining it. What advances or puts back the progress of the race, at the same time elevates or degrades the character of the individual, whether he be savage or civilized; all other circumstances are immaterial. If it were not for religion there would be nothing to suggest an existence after death, and we should have to be contented with a position like that of bees and ants, as inconsiderable links in a chain of endless transformations. Neither our conscience, nor our scientific reason, by itself, would give rise to the conception of a future life; and if any idea of that kind were evolved out of their mutual interaction—that is to say, by the reflection of the reason on the phenomena of the conscience—the future life would be subject to the laws of evolution: and, as it would exhibit no clear balance either of gain or loss, it would offer no prospect that could appeal to our hopes, or influence our conduct. In metempsychosis, all actions, both here and hereafter, would be valuable on their own account only, and not for any prospect of reward. The values of religion supplement and reinforce the values of ethics. The argument has led me, not I it. Nothing has ever had less attraction to me than anthropocentric conceptions of life as a whole; but to some belief of that kind we seem to be impelled by our reason, when it employs the methods of teleology. The absolute primacy of man is a necessary hypothesis in all systems of values; and the assumption of secular indifference between

CH. I optimism and pessimism leads inevitably to the doctrine of the transcendental perfectibility of the individual.

Independently of all interpretations of its character, the natural process of evolution does, in fact, offer no kind of inducement which could make a man prefer a life after death to extinction. The future it presents to us is an absolute blank, without any definite promise, even of a further advance; and if a further advance were secure, even then it is most unlikely that it would conform with our present ideals, or that we should be willing to accept it in exchange for our present conditions. In the prospect of a future life on earth there is indeed much more to fear than to hope for. We have no reason to expect that the present balance between good and evil will be altered either for the better or for the worse, and, so far, our attitude would be pure indifference; but indifference will give way to dread as soon as we recognize that our survival will be at the cost of all we value most highly now. The case will be no better with an optimistic interpretation. Neither the sensual paradise of Mohammed, nor the living spectres—ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα—of the land of Vril, nor the bestial overman of Nietzsche, would be welcomed in exchange for our present life of mingled strength and weakness, and joy and suffering, by any among us who deserve respect. Without the belief in a future which is external to the natural course of evolution, final extinction would, on all reason-

able grounds, be preferable to immortality; and this, though not always openly professed, or even clearly recognized, is the genuine sentiment of all who reject that belief. The promise of an existence which is not desired is of no effect as a stimulus to action; it is devoid of all practical value, and it falls into oblivion. CH. I

To conclude: Our value judgements, when interpreted by the light of history, force on us the conception of a cosmic drama, of which we know neither the beginning, nor the end, nor the guiding principles; and in which we should take no more interest than stocks or stones, were it not that his conscience dictates to each of us the part he is to play, his self-consciousness assures him of his freedom to comply or to refuse, and his religion promises him a reward for faithful performance. And that reward is for him, and for his philosophy, the real final end of his conduct.

One more observation, of considerable importance, is suggested by the preceding line of argument. If we survey the various forms of evil, we find it possible to divide them, roughly, into two classes. Some, such as war and criminal justice, and the slaughter of animals for food or for sport, are the results of tendencies which are in themselves bad, but they are not regarded by an unsophisticated moral judgement as serious offences, and often not as offences at all. Other products of the same tendencies, such as the gladiatorial games, and the prolonged and useless tortures which were inflicted

CH. I on their victims by the Italian tyrants, are altogether abominated. There can be no doubt about the distinction. The man, who, risking his own, takes the life of an enemy in fair fight, is not viewed with the same feelings as even a child who torments a butterfly. The first may sometimes be admired; the second must always be blamed. That this distinction is in fact made, cannot, I think, be denied, and it is safe to conclude that a distinction in judgement is based on a distinction in practical effect. The conclusion will be correct. A man's character is not debased by a tiger-hunt, but it is by the infliction of unnecessary pain on domestic animals. The suppression of bull-fighting is justified, not in the interest of the bull, but in the interest of the spectator. I venture to suggest the following explanation.

The proposition that the growth of good and evil is equal at all stages of evolution is true only of evolution as a whole, and when regarded as a single complex fact: as the proportion of night and day remains the same from year to year, though it varies from month to month. It is necessarily untrue of any single moment in the course of the process. The mechanism of evolution is such that if the opposed forces were ever exactly balanced, movement would cease. A state of perfect equilibrium admits of neither advance nor retreat; there will be no direction to activity, and no final end; and without a final end there can be no values, and no systematic representation of the principles of conduct.

The necessary condition of movement, or change, is a disturbance in the equilibrium by an excess over the other of either of the conflicting forces. The disturbance, however, must not exceed certain limits. The excess, whether of attraction or repulsion, must not be so great as to preclude the possibility of a return to equilibrium, by a recovery of the opposite force or tendency. If it were, there would be no more evolution of the kind we are acquainted with: that is, by the parallel growth of opposites. We must further conceive that, when the disturbance is occasioned by the excess of one of the opposed tendencies, the evolution will always be in advance, and when by the other, backward. If both operated in the same direction, there would be no distinction of ethical value. CH. I

The whole question, then, is one of direction. It is a necessity to all life that both the conflicting principles should be in active existence, and that the departures on either side from an exact equilibrium should be within narrow limits. One will always nearly balance the other, but when the good principle predominates there will be more life, and when the evil principle predominates, less life. The direction will give its character to the whole process, and materially affect our judgements on all the constituent factors within it, including those which in themselves are bad. When the good principle leads we shall tolerate, and may even in some cases admire, so much of the evil principle as contributes to progress by rendering it possible. No better illus-

CH. I tration can be chosen than that of personal equality. Equality, in the abstract, is a good; inequality is an evil. Both are essential to life. No civilization is possible except at the cost of political and social distinctions, of unhealthy and degrading occupations, and of personal service rendered by men of one class to men of another. Again, the most comprehensive opposition of ethical tendencies is that between self-assertion and self-repression. Of these, the first is often admired, but it is never regarded as a virtue, and its affinities are with the most degraded forms of moral corruption. Its opposite, when unrestrained by self-assertion, descends to no lower depth than that of the idle self-torturer, whose worst fault is that he is useless to evolution.

In this I think we find a clue to the explanation we are in search of. If, of two classes of action which have this in common, that both proceed from the same evil principle, some may be regarded as venial, whereas others are always reprobated, it is because the first are essential to advance, and, in their absence, the products of the good principle would themselves become corrupt; whereas the others can never act in subordination to the good principle, or contribute to the realization of the good end. When we proceed to inquire what constitutes extreme and unredeemable badness, we shall find it impossible to explain it as an extreme or excess of the evil impulse. This might perhaps be most clearly exemplified by reference to a class of actions in regard to which the moral judgements impose

reticence; but cruelty will serve our purpose well enough. Cruelty, it will be remembered, is not the infliction of pain on others, but satisfaction at the sight of it; and that kind of satisfaction occurs in weak characters as often as in strong, or perhaps oftener: the strong are proverbially merciful. The explanation must be found, not in the strength of the impulse, but in its perversion or aberration; that is to say, in its diversion from its natural end. When action is perverted, the false end must be an end in itself, and incapable of being used as a means to another end, even though that end be debased. The only phenomenal end which answers to that description, and is always and necessarily an end in itself, is pleasure; and pleasure, as we have seen, is not the end of any natural impulse, but a sanction or reward for success in all. CH. I

We have, therefore, two distinct sources of evil: one, those of the natural impulses, inherited by man from his remotest ancestry, whose general tendency is to impede advance—but which are necessary to system, or orderly evolution; and the other, the perversion of the impulses from their natural end. The Stoics recognized the second of these sources of evil, but overlooked the first. With them all natural impulses were good. Nevertheless, that there is a conflict between the various natural impulses is a patent fact, which, when once stated, it is impossible to deny—we may instance liberty and constraint, or fear and courage—and the conflict can only be systematically represented by referring the several

CH. I incidents to two conflicting principles, one of which we label good, and the other, evil. If there were no conflict, there would be no place for the conscience as an umpire. In ignoring this, the Stoical explanation was obviously incomplete. But it was less incomplete than the explanation which ignores conflict of all kinds, and makes the distinction between good and evil merely a question of degree. That would hold good if pleasure were the sole end of action, and not on any other hypothesis. It is true, therefore, only of perverted action, and not of any action that is directed towards a natural end. And, it must be remembered, pleasure is the only conceivable universal end within the world of experience. This much, however, must be said in reparation. Though pleasure, as an end in itself, is always bad; as a feeling, and when allied with other ends, its affinities are with the principles of goodness. Like liberty, it promotes action; whereas pain, like constraint, represses it. But both are equally necessary.

There is one more difficulty which must not be passed over. I shall be charged, no doubt, with inculcating the immoral principle, 'Let us do evil that good may ensue,' and this will be identified with the maxim, 'The end justifies the means.' A little consideration will show that there is not a word in the preceding pages that excuses the commission of moral evil; and that, if the end justifies the means, it is not in the sense in which those words are commonly used. Our aim has been, throughout, not

to construct rules of morality, but to declare and to explain those rules as we find them. Whatever the conscience (as expressed in those rules) dictates is good. But the conscience dictates the defence of our country by armed force, the punishment of criminals, and a large number of other classes of action which, unless they are dictated by our conscience, are bad, but which, when so dictated, satisfy the only criterion of moral goodness which we have, and are therefore good. When we punish a criminal we do a good act that good may ensue; both the means and the end are morally good. And the goodness is never disputed except when the denial of free will has overthrown the authority of the conscience. In these conditions it is certain that the end justifies the means; but it does so by giving it a genuine, and not merely putative or reflected goodness: and, as the commands of morality are categorical, no man is entitled to infer from the goodness of an end the goodness of a means which is not approved by the conscience, and which is therefore immoral. CH. I

But even this is not a complete statement of the case. If it is in the competence of the conscience to convert a bad motive into a good one, it would seem to follow that there must be some other criterion besides the conscience, and two independent kinds of good and evil. From this difficulty we are rescued by our interpretation of the facts of evolution. That showed us that, of two conflicting principles, both of which are equally necessary, when one takes the

CH. I lead, evolution is in advance; when the other, in retreat. It also showed us that our sympathies are with the course of forward evolution. At this point the conscience intervenes, and teaches us: first, what is the nature of the principle whose lead is in the direction of our sympathies; and, secondly, in what conditions the opposed principle must be allowed to operate. The latter then becomes good in itself, because it is necessary to the survival of the good principle, and stands in the same relation as that does to the final end of evolution. In both cases the conscience is the sole arbiter, and sole source of our beliefs.

CHAPTER II

HYPOTHESIS OF TRANSCENDENTAL ORDER A NECESSARY COMPLEMENT TO ETHICS

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I NOW propose to take up the argument at the point to which it had been brought in the third chapter of my essay on the Ethical Aspects of Evolution, and to attempt to trace in outline the ethical connexion which subsists between the religious beliefs of humanity and the general solution of the problem of conduct which was offered in that work. There is no class of beliefs which has exercised in the past, and is likely to exercise in the future, a more constant and powerful influence, and no account of the general principles of human conduct is complete if it fails to take notice of them. At this point it is unnecessary to draw out in detail the distinction between religion and morality, but we may recall its leading feature; that is, that one defines a man's relations with God; the other, his relations with his fellow men: and that one has for its end the fortunes of the individual soul; the other, the future evolution of the race. From the religious point of view, the principle of causation is primarily the Divine will, and the human will, only in subordination to that: for ethics the causation is purely human. Of science, which is the third great instru-

CH. II ment in human evolution, it will be enough to say, first, that it dispenses with all theories of causation, and relies exclusively on the postulate of uniform sequence; and, secondly, that, whereas the effects of religion and morality are personal, and their aims to elevate and strengthen the human character, the practical function of science is the invention and improvement of the weapons, with the assistance of which men extend their dominion over their environment. Ultimately, the distinction between religion and science is based on the division which distinguishes ideas derived from our internal, from ideas derived from our external experience. The first are beliefs, and fall within the province of philosophy, in the most general sense of that word; the second are facts which are derived from sensation, and are dealt with by science. Science deals exclusively with the concepts which it derives from external nature, or the environment; and, both in its selection from the infinite number of possible concepts, and in the method by which it marshals them, it is guided by its need of protection against the medium from which they are drawn. Religion and ethics, on the other hand, are concerned solely with the concepts of internal experience, and it is their business to raise the personality in the direction of an aim of which no man has any clear conception. If a man devotes himself exclusively to one of those aims, or even makes an unfair distribution of his attention, the end which he neglects must suffer: and so, ultimately, must the end which he prefers.

In a previous essay[1] a distinction was drawn between improvements which are brought about by human design, and the natural evolution of living organisms. It was pointed out that in the former case there was always a known final end, whereas in the second there was none. When a man sets about to improve a conveyance or a billiard ball, or a sheep or a sugar-cane, we know with fair exactness what end he aims at: in the case of natural evolution we do not; we are unable to see one step ahead. In a subsequent chapter we found an explanation of the apparent aimlessness of natural evolution in the fact that it consists in the parallel development of opposite and contradictory tendencies. A growth in 'all directions, in which no individual element can be shown to be favoured beyond the others, is not a process towards an end; it has no assignable purpose'. We found, however, that though there was no discernible end, forward evolution exhibits one continuous and inseparable feature, that is, a development of force or power. This cannot be accepted as a final end, in the first place because it has no limit, any more than number has; and, secondly, because, whereas the function of an Ethical end is to enable us to discriminate between good and evil, force may be employed indiscriminately in the service of either.[2] CH. II

[1] *Ethical Aspects*, p. 33.

[2] I have purposely refrained from attempting to define 'force', and have employed, loosely, other expressions, such as power, or influence, to denote the same concept. Had I ventured to

CH. II This, however, falls short of being a complete account of the process of evolution. Not only does that process fail to distinguish with its permanent partiality any one of the countless tendencies which make up its complex whole; but the whole itself moves along no single direct line; being sometimes in the direction of the further accumulation, and, at others, of the degeneration, of force. Decay and corruption are as common as healthy growth, and death as common as life. Hitherto, a general survey of the long distance between the nebula and the age in which we live discloses an advance which has been maintained over the whole system, so far as it falls within our cognition; but not over each one of the constituent parts. At one time, or in one place, the principle of growth, and at others the principle of decay, has been predominant, but, over the whole of the immense period, and within the limits of the universe, so far as it is revealed to our experience, there has been a large net balance in favour of growth. That growth does in fact constitute the whole of our actual, though not of our potential, knowledge, including our knowledge of good and evil. And, should the process return on itself, our knowledge also, taken as a whole, would share in the general decay.

It might perhaps be thought reasonable to expect that a direction which has been maintained for so many countless ages was now firmly established,

use it, I should have preferred the Greek word δύναμις, which is free from scientific implications.

and that a return in the opposite direction is too purely speculative a danger to be worth taking account of. If, however, we remember that the net result is due to the accumulation of slight and hardly perceptible advantages; that the principle of decay has never been far behind the principle of growth, and has often taken the lead; and that even now the two principles are so nearly neck and neck that it is impossible for any living spectator to pronounce with confidence which is foremost; it is likely that our certainty as to the final result may be considerably abated. The interplay between the innumerable pairs of conflicting opposites may be summed up in the relative positions with regard to one another of the two great opposites of growth and decay; of which one is never much in advance of the other, or retains the lead for long. It is possible that, if we ventured to project our thoughts beyond the limits of our actual experience, the balance, over the whole universe, may always remain exactly the same; as the general level of the sea remains unaffected by the height of the waves, and the depth of the depressions between them. Speculation of this kind is unfruitful; but we should be justified in the inference that what is certainly true of particular races or nations may also be true of the human race as a whole. CH. II

How then is ethical theory related to this general view of the universe of knowledge? Our answer is this. Good and evil, which are the two universal antagonistic principles of ethics, are partial aspects

CH. II of the two antagonistic principles of growth and decay, under one or the other of which all phenomenal movement is subsumed. Under the religious aspect, the same division is represented by the conflicting concepts of holiness and sin; and of faith and unbelief.

In ethics and religion, our only certainty with regard to any proposition that may be put before us is in our resultant mental attitude. A proposition may set up emotional or affective states of any degree of strength, from horror to simple aversion, or from enthusiasm to mild approval; and these may be followed by physical states: disgust may produce nausea. With this class of reactions we are not at present concerned. Our intellectual reaction to the same class of stimulus will be one either of belief, or of disbelief, or of doubt. As to which of these it is there can never be any more question than there can be of the physical fact of sickness. When a man, after satisfying himself as to its meaning (for there must be at any rate the appearance, to him, of a meaning), assures himself that he believes a proposition to be true, or disbelieves it, or doubts, that is an ultimate fact, which, so long as it lasts, it would be absurd to dispute. The mere fact that a man believes is certain; exactly what he believes is never certain.

Our first step, then, must be to discover the universal property which determines pure belief, by itself. Until that has been done we can have no clear idea of the meaning of any proposition that

relates to values, though we may be quite certain that we believe it to be true. Let us take as an example the proposition that freedom is a good thing. As to the fact that we believe this there can be no manner of doubt. We are ready to lay down our lives for it. But it is not less certain that we have no clear conception of what we mean by freedom. Of this, no more convincing proof could be offered than the patent inadequacy of the explanation which has been left us by a writer who was one of the most ardent, and, at the same time, one of the most thoughtful of its champions—I refer, of course, to Mr. J. S. Mill. If the meaning had been generally known, he would not have taken the trouble to write; that it was unknown to himself, he shows by what he has written. When, however, we have ascertained, from a review of value-judgements generally, that the determinant of values is evolution; and have also discovered that evolution consists in growth; and that growth generally is conditioned by the simultaneous growth of opposites; the conception of freedom becomes clear, and there is no longer any difficulty in attaching a definite meaning to the proposition that freedom is valuable. This, of course, is not the same thing as rationalizing the belief. The ultimate determinant, or final end, is still, and is likely to remain, unknown. It is not, therefore, a kind of explanation that would extinguish enthusiasm. CH. II

Another illustration may be permitted. Kant selects, as his typical example of the categorical

CH. II imperative, the precept, Thou shalt not lie. For the practical application of this precept it is an obvious necessity that we should know what a lie is. Until we do this, the precept is practically unmeaning. If we define it as the wilful statement as true, of a proposition which is untrue, the following difficulty arises, namely, that we have no generally accepted test by which we can distinguish between truth and error. The same proposition may be true if tried by one test, and untrue if tried by another of equally common acceptation. It would be superfluous to recount the numerous and often contradictory standards to which propositions may be referred—logical coherence, correspondence with fact or with natural law, agreement with a divine command or with the conscience, utility, are among them—and until we decide which of these is universally applicable (for philosophy cannot stop short of universals) we are unable to say with certainty that any particular proposition is true or false; and the word 'lie', when thus defined, remains unmeaning. If, however, we define it as the statement by one man of what he believes to be untrue, with the intention of inducing another man to believe it to be true, the difficulty disappears. Every one knows when he believes, and when he intends.

When, then, the object of thought is to inquire what gives its direction to life, and how our actions are governed, the first thing we must ascertain is, what do men believe? And we shall first get general answers, such as: I believe that freedom is good.

But, however firm and confident the belief may be, we shall find that no two people attach the same meaning to either of the terms: they will not agree as to what is meant, either by 'freedom' or by 'good'. The most conflicting definitions have, indeed, been proposed for both by the most highly reputed authorities. The reason for this is that beliefs are natural growths, and, like other natural growths, are not exactly alike in any two different individuals. They represent tendencies, at that period of their growth when we become concious of them; and not only do the specific tendencies vary, but so also do their interpretations, which are, each of them, tinged by relations with other and different tendencies within the same individual character. The business of philosophy is to deduce an interpretation which represents the feature which is common to all, or to the great majority of the individual interpretations. This will not exactly agree with the belief of any single individual; and with many it will differ very widely. CH. II

Let us now proceed to inquire how it comes that we react in one way to one proposition, and in another to another; why we believe this, and doubt, or disbelieve, that. The commonly accepted explanation, which tells us that we believe a proposition because it is correctly inferred, according to the rules of thinking, from some other proposition, is obviously insufficient, if only for the reason that it is a matter of everyday observation that the strongest beliefs are those which are set up by propositions

CH. II which run counter to all the accepted laws of inference. The correct answer, stated in the most general terms, is that we believe a proposition because it is in accordance with our interests—the will is father to the thought. By interest is meant not merely material interests, but everything, from cribbage to quaternions, that can engage a man's voluntary attention, so as, ultimately, to result in action. The word voluntary is used in this context to exclude external compulsion. Interest is the reflection in consciousness of our internal needs.

The proper task of philosophy is the discovery of universal rules for the discrimination between truth and error, and between good and evil. The application of the rules to special circumstances does not belong to philosophers, but calls for another order of mind. Philosophers are not likely to be successful as kings. Now, the recognition of interest as the determinant of belief, though a long step on the way, does not give us the criterion we are in search of. We find the wildest contradictions on all subjects, from the most trivial to the most important. The beliefs of party politics, which pretend to logical demonstration, and ought not, if beliefs rest on reason, to be beyond it, give an example which is daily forced on our notice. The discovery that they are based, not on argument, but on interest, does not, by itself, help to make up our minds which side we ought to favour. For that we must find answers to two further questions: first,

what are the universal determinants of interest? CH. II
and next, why has one line of conduct a better claim to our favour than another? All these questions are born of conflict. If there are conflicting beliefs, and if beliefs are determined by interest, it follows that there must necessarily be conflicting interests and conflicting needs. Without conflicting interests there would be neither doubt nor dispute, nor any sphere for philosophy. Nor, indeed, would there be belief or disbelief.

The answer to the first question which is raised in the preceding paragraph is this: the determinant of conscious interests is always a purpose; or a final end regarded as an incitement to action. The universal determinant of interest is therefore a universal purpose or final end. This, again, though another step forward, gives us no criterion. It helps us by indicating in what direction the criterion must be looked for. If a good will is one which is determined by a good end, and a bad will one which is determined by a bad end, the quality which distinguishes a good will from a bad will must be found in the ends of action.

Our second question, then: why is one interest or line of conduct preferable to another? resolves itself into a comparison of ends of action, and may be restated in this form: why is one final end preferable to another? Or, as we have as yet no warrant for going beyond facts, why do we prefer one final end to another? The only fruitful way of approaching this question is to pass in review our

CH. II preferences themselves, and the judgements in which they are expressed.

The review of all kinds of judgements which are made by men on human conduct as determined by aims, or final ends, has been the leading interest of all my previous writings. The conclusion, it will be remembered, was this: that the universal determinant of all such judgements is the relation which is borne by conduct to the final end of evolution. If our conduct advances that end, it is good; if it opposes it, it is bad. But, in order to complete this answer, and make the criterion intelligible, we must be able to add, with some practical approach to definition, what that end is; and that, it is quite certain, we have not yet succeeded in ascertaining. We are as completely in the dark with regard to the final end of ethical evolution as we are with regard to the ultimate result of natural evolution. To say that it is perfection merely states the same problem in other words, for perfection is only another word for the emotional or aesthetic or utilitarian aspect of the final end itself. It is not harmony, inasmuch as reduction of conflict is only another word for retrogression: nor is it happiness or pleasure; and that for two reasons: first, because evolution shows no predilection for either when compared with its opposite of misery or pain; and secondly, because the adoption of happiness as an end of conduct is impossible; and the adoption of pleasure leads in the direction of decay.

How, then, it will very properly be objected, if

values depend on approximation to a final end, and if (as is certainly the case) we have not even the dimmest or vaguest conception of what the universal final end may be, is it possible to discover a universal calculus for the ascertainment of the value of any particular line of conduct? The impossibility is obvious, and may at once be admitted. But the reply to the objection is simple. The reasoning on which it is based reverses the proper direction of thought. Values are already given us, and not only have we no need to deduce them, but every attempt to do so must necessarily lead to disaster, both logical and practical, by substituting a partial end for the universal end which our purpose requires. Values are as much the immediate data of our consciousness as colours are; and it would be as reasonable to attempt to deduce colours from the dialectics of a black surface, as to deduce values from an imaginary ideal. The proper procedure is to start from values, and, using them as the basis of our inquiry, deduce what conclusions we may. The conclusions to which such an inquiry leads us do, in fact, reproduce, with all reasonable exactness, the conclusions which have been drawn, by a different method, from a consideration of the mechanical evolution of nature. CH. II

The belief that our value-judgements on conduct are determined by its relation to growth, or increase of power, and not by the resultant pleasure or pain, was recommended, with some copiousness of illustration, in my first essay. A subsequent examination

CH. II of the two qualities which stand at the head of all ethical values, that is to say of justice and political freedom, brought into relief the following facts: first, that they both are constituted by a balance between opposite and conflicting principles; and, secondly, that their value can only be explained by the consideration that they favour the natural growth of communities; though we are unable to foresee the end towards which that growth is directed. The conflicting principles which together constitute justice are personal equality and personal inequality; and it is valued because it is an essential condition of freedom. The dependence of freedom itself on the principle of opposites is twofold. In the first place, it is constituted by a balance between liberty and control; and, in the second place, the maintenance of that balance is conditioned by the balance between personal equality and inequality which constitutes distributive justice. The ethical value of political freedom is owing to the fact that it is the essential condition of the growth of communities. The universal end of the growth of communities is the end of evolution.

For clearness we must distinguish three classes of values. All values depend on approximation to a final end. There are two principal final ends which every one may realize for himself in this life. One of these is pleasure; the other glory. Pleasure is the reward of successful action of all kinds; glory, by which is meant the good opinion of our fellows, is the reward of self-assertion. The

pursuit of glory may be denoted as ambition. CH. II
Neither pleasure nor glory can be used as a means to a further phenomenal end; and neither entitles a man to be called good. Now the aim of ethics is to detect that end, the approximation to which constitutes the value of goodness; and that end, we have concluded, is the unknown end of evolution. We have thus three classes of value: the Hedonic, those of ambition, and those of goodness; corresponding to the three ends of pleasure, glory, and ethical progress. All other ends, such as health or wealth, are only valuable as means to one or an other of these. Pleasure and glory are phenomenal, and, when the pursuit of them is qualified as good or bad, it must be with reference to some other end which is not phenomenal.

Concord or discord with the process of evolution is, then, the criterion of which we were in search. But, it will be urged, even this is not of much use, unless we are furnished with some definite formula or formulas for distinguishing with regard to any specified line of conduct whether its relation is one of concord or discord. The point is not so important as it may at first appear. There are two general rules which make guidance by inference superfluous, or even misleading. The first of these is, obey the commands of your conscience: this is the rule of morality. The second is, bring to the highest pitch of efficiency, and exercise to the utmost, your highest qualities: this is the rule of the ethics of ambition.

CH. II If you are in doubt as to what qualities you have been endowed with, you must again inquire of your inner consciousness. That is not a question of ethics, and you may, no doubt, be led astray by vanity, or by misplaced humility, or by other sources of error. If you are in doubt as to which of two qualities is the higher, you must refer to the ethical judgements of humanity.

There are, as we have seen, three possible causes of degeneration in man: either the predominance of the evil principle; or the deficiency of either principle in a pair of opposites; or misdirection. Of the two former enough has been said already: a few words may be added on the subject of misdirection. Everything that can be conceived as a possible end of conduct must fall under one or the other of two classes; it must either be an object of desire or not. The objects of desire are pleasure and happiness; the others are the ethical processes which are summed up by religion in the single word, love; love of God, and love of your neighbour. Desire is an evolutionary accretion, in the consciousness, on the natural tendencies of humanity; and its function is not guidance, but reinforcement. Of its two objects, happiness can never be made the object of direct pursuit. Pleasure, on the other hand, can be made the object of direct pursuit, and it then, instead of reinforcing another end, assumes for itself the guidance of conduct. This is what is meant by misdirection. It may show itself in many ways, but in its commonest and most imperious

form it is the pursuit of riches; money being, or being usually regarded as, the universal equivalent of pleasure. The avoidance of pain must be condemned, in the same way, as misdirection. All conduct, in so far as it is ethically good, will be indifferent both to the desire for pleasure, and to the dread of suffering. Personal distinction should perhaps be added as another object of desire, and possible source of misdirection. CH. II

Thus far I have not gone beyond the facts of experience. I have confined myself to an abstract statement of all those facts, as they appear to me, which seemed to be relevant to an explanation of our judgements of good and evil, of approval and condemnation. But there is still one question, and that perhaps, though the most remote, the most practically important of all, which remains to be considered. It is, what is the common end to which all our judgements of value have reference? To this question the facts of experience give us no answer. The commands of conscience are independent of inference, and are directed towards no known ends. The interest of ambition is the accumulation of force which may be directed indifferently by good purposes or bad. Pleasure is properly not an end, but the reward for success in the pursuit of ends which may be either good or bad; and its value, when it is regarded as a reward and not as an end, depends, like that of happiness, entirely on the value of the ends.

Seeing, then, that experience gives us no clue, we

CH. II are at liberty, if we choose to disregard the ethical judgements, to refuse to carry the inquiry further. The plain fact of a continuous process, with an evolution of force, will indeed impel us to the assumption of some kind of underlying principle; but, as we are unable to detect any trace of an aim beyond its own growth or decay, we may deny that it has such an aim. If it were true that growth showed any unequivocal tendency to outstrip decay, we might indeed credit that principle with so much reason as to design its own development: that is to say, the development of a colourless force. But even this is not permissible if we confine ourselves to the testimony of experience. Experience gives us no reason for believing that growth has established a permanent lead. On the contrary, it rather discourages any such expectation. Our hypothetical principle must therefore be absolutely blind and unreasonable. Perhaps the best way of conceiving the world-process would, in that case, be as a gigantic circle, beginning in nothing, and ending in nothing; and giving rise during its course to the illusion of a growth which appears to culminate half-way, and then to yield place to the illusion of decay. Such a process is, no doubt, conceivable, but it leaves the distinctions between true and false, and good and evil, without an explanation. If a man believes in that, he can believe in nothing else. The process, as it presents itself to our observation, is composite, and involves the simultaneous growth of two conflicting principles. If there be no end beyond the

process itself, and our feelings have no other determi- CH. II
nant beyond sympathy with that process, there is no conceivable reason why they should not impartially reflect both its elements; and be equally strong, and of the same character, whether the direction is of advance or of retrogression. There would then be no permanent distinction between good and evil. That there should be a distinction of attitude, such as that of approval or disapproval, and that that distinction should be reinforced by the utmost intensity of emotion of which we are capable, are facts which we must either set aside as immaterial, or explain by the hypothesis of a transcendental final end. But, if they are immaterial, so must all else be: for it is in them, and them only, that we find the concept and the standard of value.

Inasmuch, then, as we discover no final end in experience, we must either give up our ethical beliefs altogether, or assume an end which is not in experience. An end which transcends experience is a necessary hypothesis which is postulated, whether we recognize the fact or not, in all ethical inquiry, and without which all conduct must be, ultimately, unreasonable. Thus far we are led by the light of discursive reason, and history enforces the wisdom of obedience. It shows by examples which it is impossible for the dullest to misunderstand, that as long as we respect the commands of our conscience, and the promptings of our ethical sense, we shall remain free, and the masters of our fate; but when we reject those, and follow, instead,

CH. II after the objects of our desires, we shall surely become slaves both to ourselves and to others. We have set before us the choice between life and good on the one side, and death and evil on the other.

This, then, is the conclusion which is forced on us by a review of the facts of experience; when our minds are impartial, and we are unbiased by the illusions which are bred in us by the love of pleasure and the dread of pain. The only answer we can give to the question why any specified conduct is good, is that it subserves the end of evolution; and to this we may add that that end is promoted by the accumulation of force. When, however, we proceed to ask what that end is, we have no answer, except that it is not to be found within the limits of experience. We must therefore postulate an end which is external to experience. A continuation of the same line of thought will necessarily suggest the assumption of a transcendental personality. For the concept of an end of action necessarily implies an intelligence which discriminates one result from another, and a will to pursue the end which is preferred; and intelligence and will together constitute personality. The following considerations will, however, show that, having reached this point, we can proceed no further. No questioning of the facts of experience will help us to understand the nature and attributes of the personality, the bare existence of which we have been compelled to assume.

A final end is an idea which, when it is presented to the human mind, takes effect in action designed for the realization of that idea. For example, a pleasure is a final end when, on being presented in a man's consciousness, it induces that man to lay plans, or take active steps, to obtain that pleasure. A man's conduct is purposive when it is directed towards the attainment of a final end. Now the first and most essential incident in purpose is a free choice between alternatives. If a man whom I am obliged to obey orders me to act in a certain way, my action is not purposive, even though I should have acted in the same way had I been free. We have here two distinct concepts: freedom from compulsion, and choice of an alternative. Of these, the first may be easily, and is indeed always, attributed to a cosmic government, but it is not clear how the second can be. The presence of an alternative implies the operation of some agency external to and independent of the person who makes the choice, and this operation, again, must be purposive. We thus get as clear a *recessus ad infinitum* as we have in the case of a scientific series. A first purpose can have nothing to choose between, and, having no choice, must be either determined or wholly inexplicable. CH. II

In other words: in order that a man may choose pleasure (supposing that to be his final end) there must be something which is not pleasure for him to reject. The alternative is given him, and is not made by himself. In order that he may choose at

CH. II all, the circumstances from which he chooses must be provided by some independent agency, for it is a plain contradiction to say that he purposely creates incidents which are opposed to his own purpose; and this holds good of all purpose, however far back it may be placed. In this respect, therefore, the cosmic purpose, which our needs compel us to postulate, differs from all purposes which we are acquainted with or can conceive. Whether it be free or determined, it is, in either case, not a purpose in the same sense of the word in which we apply it to our own action. It must, indeed, be free, but it cannot be conceived as having a choice.

Again, choice implies a principle of selection to which each of the alternatives may be referred, and by which it may be tested. The test will be the degree to which each of the alternatives agrees with, or participates in, the principle of selection, whatever that may be; for example, if beauty be the principle, its degree of beauty. Both these operations require intelligence, and free choice and intelligence together constitute a personality. Moreover, the principle of unification demands that the end should be single, and the principle of economy that the personality should be single, for it would be absurd to postulate two or more persons, each with identical aims and characters.

Another requirement in the cosmic final end is that it must be something that we should approve of, or that should satisfy impulses which we approve of in ourselves. This has no direct connexion with

the needs of unification, for those would be satisfied by a single evil end, if that could be demonstrated; but proceeds from the ethical side of our nature, which will not submit to be contradicted by the concept of the cosmic final end. It is this which compelled the philosophers of Greece to exclude the traditions of their race from their ideal of education, and it constitutes a fatal flaw in all animistic religions and their derivatives. When we inquire what is the purpose of cholera, the answer, destruction of life, does not satisfy us, but we either give up the question as insoluble, or we take refuge behind some theory of evolution, which, *pro tanto*, is teleological, and not scientific; or, and this is more frequently the case, we borrow a transcendental explanation from the domain of theology. It is not necessary that the final end should be goodness; it might, for instance, be beauty, or intellectual perfection; nor, indeed, need it be clearly conceived at all. We are satisfied if we feel confident that we should approve of it were it known to us. The idea of 'blessedness' is empty of all experiential content, but it has served, nevertheless, for many, as the guiding purpose of their lives. Of human purposes, on the contrary, there are many of which we heartily disapprove. CH. II

There is another difference between the meaning of purpose, when that word is employed with reference to a cosmic agency, and when it is applied to ourselves. What is our purpose in human action is not the total result of that action, but only that

CH. II part of the results on account of which it was decided on. When a man forms a design, he is actuated only by the representation of the desired result. To all the other, undesigned, results he is indifferent. Some of them may force themselves on his attention, but, if they conflict with his design, he either disregards them or abandons it. Of by far the greater number he must always, of necessity, remain in ignorance. An agent who designs only a part of the facts of existence is not a universal determinant. Either we must postulate a second active force with another purpose, to account for the results which do not form a part of the design of the first agent, or we must admit that the purposive explanation is only partial, and that those parts to which it does not apply are chaotic. But this amounts to an abandonment of the purposive explanation for exactly those facts where it is most wanted. What men ask for is not an explanation of those facts of which they approve, but of those which they dislike.

Human purpose fails to account for not only by far the greater part of the results of human action, but also for a considerable, if not the greater, number of those actions themselves. Nearly all the organic processes go on without our consciousness, and consequently without our purpose; our emotions are almost entirely independent of our will; it is only when they are weak that they can be inhibited. It is seldom that we are able to excite them by deliberate intention, and, when we do, they are

wanting in strength, and only a poor pretence of the unpurposed feeling. All our inherited modes of action, including small tricks of manner, are quite independent of our purpose; of the greater part of them we are not even conscious. It has, indeed, been doubted whether any of our actions are really determined by conscious choice, even when that appears to be a certain and obvious explanation; at any rate, no line has yet been drawn by which we may distinguish actions which could never be performed automatically. But none of these limitations applies to the conception of a cosmic purpose. That must explain all the facts of experience, including all our actions and all the consequences that flow from them. And some such purpose we are compelled to postulate, even though it should be proved that human purpose, as an active principle, is an illusion. CH. II

Though, therefore, we are compelled by our intellectual needs to postulate a governing agency to the universe, and to invest that agency with the essential attributes of personality, it is clear that the personality must be entirely different from our own and from all of which we have any knowledge.

Beyond this point the argument cannot be carried. It does not prove the existence of a transcendental personality, or even make it probable; for the hypothetical assumption of an unknown fact does not justify any conclusion either for or against its real existence. Still less does it support any predication of qualities or of motives. All such predications

CH. II must be drawn from the concepts of experience, and the only defence we have for framing a hypothesis of this nature is that those concepts must be inapplicable. Our argument only cuts away the ground on which it stands, if it conceives the personality as good, or as finite, or possessed of any other positive attribute which is drawn from experience. It cannot even deny it the possession of such attributes. Its position is that of complete ignorance.

At this point the functions of religion commence. In ethics we deal with phenomenal facts and hypotheses: for conceptions of reality we must appeal to religion. It is religion that gives assurance of the real existence of the unknown God, and sets forth, as far as they may be known, His nature and His operations. It is not within the competence of moral philosophy to test, by the use of its own methods, the truth or falsehood of religious beliefs; but it is within its competence—

First, to compare them with its own conclusions, and ascertain how far the two confirm or contradict one another; and

Secondly, to inquire in what way they have influenced, and are likely to influence, human character and history.

The aim, then, of the following pages is not to examine the claims of this or that religious belief to be regarded as reasonable with reference to the conclusions of this or that system of metaphysical ontology: any such attempt would be, for reasons which I hope to indicate, a waste of time. What

will be attempted is to detect the nature of the influence for good or bad, which religious beliefs, whether true or false when judged by intellectual standards, have exercised on the history of mankind. This task, though difficult, is not absurd. It will involve a comparison of religious and ethical beliefs, but not with the object of determining the truth or the falsehood of either. With rational metaphysics it has no concern whatever. When ethical and religious beliefs concur it will justify the supposition that we have made some progress towards the unification of knowledge. CH. II

The subject-matter of ethics are all those beliefs which have an influence on human conduct, and through that on evolution generally. Questions of origin do not concern it, except so far as beliefs relating to origin have an influence on conduct. Whether the beliefs of religion are the products of evolution in the same sense as our physical conformation is, and subject to the same laws, is entirely beyond its province, but the influence on conduct of any belief on that subject is not, and that is a point which it is bound to investigate. In the same way, the mere fact of agreement or contradiction between religious and ethical beliefs must have a material effect on conduct: agreement will strengthen, and contradiction enfeeble, the practical influence of both. When a man has decided on a particular scheme of ethical belief, he should proceed to inquire what are its relations of agreement or contradiction with the various beliefs of religion: but it is not his business

CH. II to express an opinion as to the merits of those beliefs when judged by any other standard. The preliminary assumption on which the whole of this argument rests is recommended on the same grounds. The equal growth of good and evil is the only supposition that does not contradict the ethical judgements. Of its agreement with fact it is enough to show that it is probable.

And it cannot be too often insisted that the inquiry throughout is practical and not speculative. When ethical considerations suggest the hypothesis of a transcendental link, whereby to connect, under a single concept, all the innumerable ends of experience, all that is meant by the term transcendental is that it is not susceptible of definition in terms of phenomenal concepts. A philosophical definition of the transcendental is a contradiction in terms. It is religion, and that only, which asserts its existence, and supplies the definition. Of the rational truth or falsehood of a religion we have no test, and the attempt to supply one destroys the religion, and deprives us of the only corroboration we have of our ethical hypothesis. What then, if we are debarred from a rational examination, is left for us to do? The direction of our inquiry is indicated by the observation that there are many schools of ethical thought, and many different religions; and it is quite within our competence to compare the actual and probable effects on conduct, which are, or may be, derived from each of the various views of this life, and of the life, if any, which follows it, which

are offered us by religion and by ethics respectively. Thus we may find that one ethical school will be in general agreement with one religion, and another with another religion. And, as, in our view, the test of goodness is elevation to a higher plane of life, we shall, as a matter of course, prefer a religion whose practical effect is elevating, to one that contributes to stagnation or decay. CH. II

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS RELIGION?

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RELIGION, like justice, and other terms which stand high in the respect of men, has been applied to feelings and beliefs to which it has only a very slight relation, or no relation at all except that of being an object of respect. It must, in the first place, be distinguished from moral excellence. Philosophers like J. S. Mill and Spinoza, who are justly respected for the beauty of their moral sentiments, have been termed religious, though they rejected the current religious beliefs, and put no others in their place, and were therefore entirely free from the specific experience which is attributed to them. That religion and moral excellence are not the same thing is proved by the fact that in the same individual character they are often found in inverse quantities. Unbelievers are not necessarily immoral; neither is a strong religious sentiment incompatible with any stage of moral endowment, from the highest to the very lowest.[1] Nor can a philosophic system be

[1] Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography gives an extraordinarily vivid picture of a character which is intensely religious, and not wholly ignoble; but, at the same time, completely destitute of morality.

CH. III regarded as a religion merely because the author has invested it with a title, and clothed it in ceremonies borrowed from religions whose legitimacy is undisputed. Neither the Positivist worship of humanity, nor the official worship of Reason in revolutionary France, has any just claims to the title. Both were purely artificial, and had no more life, or philosophic interest, than the nondescript floral decorations of a lady's bonnet. By religion, in this essay, is meant any one of those organized systems of belief in the supernatural which has been held, without inquiry, by large bodies of men, and has been regarded by them as their religion.

The forms of genuine religious belief are innumerable. They vary from age to age in response to the requirements of the particular stage of civilization to which they belong, and to the mental constitution of the race which professes them, and it at first seems hopeless to disengage any single trait which is common to all of them. It has usually been by philosophers that this task has been undertaken, and it is, indeed, to them that this, like every other problem of classification, properly belongs. But here they labour under a special disqualification. Their minds are already occupied by the formulas of other branches of thought, which are not only distinct from, but sometimes, as in metaphysics, in conflict with the general propositions of theology. They find it difficult to escape from the influence of misleading prepossessions; and this is especially unfortunate when they are dealing with ages in

which the distinction between philosophy and religion had not yet been clearly recognized. They can hardly avoid the mistake of identifying religion with philosophy. With some it will take the form of an ethical, and with others of a metaphysical system; but in neither case will their conclusions satisfy the religious wants of humanity, or bear even a distant resemblance to any of the religions which men actually profess. CH. III

All religion is based on an emotion. That emotion is worship, and the necessary conviction without which worship is impossible is belief in the existence of a personal God. Worship is easily distinguished from other emotions, such as love, or fear, or moral approval and disapproval, though all these, and many others, are often excited by it. It finds its expression in praise and adoration, or in supplication with the hope of attaining what we desire, and averting what we dread; and all these must necessarily be addressed to a personal being, of power superior to our own. Magic is not religion, because it does not appeal to, or necessarily presuppose, a personal object; and if there is such an object, the attitude towards it is not one of prayer or praise, but of coercion. Thus there are two necessary elements in the conception which underlies worship, and differentiates religious from other forms of belief: first, personality; and, secondly, superior power; and a religion is living, and has value, in so far as its beliefs are such as to excite and support the emotion of worship.

CH. III There is yet a third qualification in the object to which it is addressed, without which there can be no worship. That object must be Divine, or superhuman. Language, which, in such matters, is rarely at fault, has plainly recognized the distinction, and labelled the religious emotion as worship; while it applies the terms respect or admiration to the corresponding ethical emotions. We worship God; respect a good man; and admire a great man. A religious man would be shocked if he were told that he admired or respected God—the terms would appear to him inappropriate and inadequate; and though men have, no doubt, been worshipped, it was not before they had been invested with supernatural attributes, and, ceasing to be men, had been promoted to the rank of Demi-gods. I can recollect no instance where men have invested an individual, whom they believed to be of purely human origin, with the full attributes of divinity. The worship of living men can never be sincere, and the worship of the Roman emperors did not so much supply a religion as supplant all religions.

To these views it will no doubt be objected that they are contradicted by both the great religions which had their birth in India. In one of these the supreme being is impersonal: in the other the concept is wholly dispensed with. In Brahmanism the deity is the real substrate of all things. A deity which is the substrate of all the facts of experience can only be realized as a metaphysical abstraction, and it is the common conclusion of all metaphysical

thought which deals with reality as a single principle underlying all things, that such a principle can have no attributes; nothing can be predicated of it but negatives. This is indeed the conclusion which has been reached by Brahmanism, the only great religion which is ostensibly pantheistic. According to the orthodox definition, 'whatever is, is in reality one; 'there truly exists only one universal being called 'Brahman, or Paramatman, the highest self. This 'being is of an absolutely homogeneous nature; it 'is pure "Being", or, what comes to the same 'thing, pure intelligence or thought. Intelligence 'or thought is not to be predicated of Brahman as 'its attribute, but constitutes its substance: Brah-'man is not a thinking being, but thought itself. 'It is absolutely destitute of qualities: whatever 'attributes or qualities are conceivable can only be 'denied of it.'[1] It is not even entitled to be called good. An educated Brahmin once remarked to me when we passed a lovely child on the road, 'The mind of a child of five years old is like the mind of God: it knows neither good nor evil.' CH. III

In a conception like this the emotion of worship finds nothing to take hold of. A pure negation can neither excite to action, nor purify from sin, nor enlighten in perplexities, nor console in sorrow, nor support in the presence of danger. I may again quote from Prof. Thibaut's admirable introduction to the *Vedanta Sutras*:[2] 'Though this form of doc-

[1] Professor G. Thibaut, *The Vedanta Sutras*, p. xxiv, in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxiv.

[2] l. c., p. cxxvii.

CH. III 'trine has been the one most generally accepted by 'Brahminical students of philosophy, it has never 'had any wide-reaching influence on the masses of 'India. For that, it is too little in sympathy with the 'wants of the human heart, which, after all, are not 'so very different in India from what they are else-'where. Comparatively few, even in India, are 'those who rejoice in the idea of a universal non-'personal essence, in which their own individuality 'is to be merged and lost for ever, who think it sweet 'to be wrecked on the ocean of the Infinite—

'Così tra questa
'Immensità s'annega il pensier mio
'E il naufrago m'è dolce in questo mare.'

The gods to whom worship is paid, and whose shrines throng every village with incredible profusion, are themselves part of the phenomenal world, and will share its final dissolution. Each of these has his special purpose in the processes of nature, and is invested with the characteristics appropriate to that purpose. But, under all this wealth of forms, there runs a strong current of personal monotheism, which constitutes the living essence of the popular faith. The rude village distich—

No one calls upon the Father; every one calls Mother, Mother;
Every judgement in Her courts proceeds from Him, and from no other.[1]

[1] Mái, Mái sab kihu kahe, Bábá kahe na koi;
Mai ke darbár men jo Bábá kahe so howe.

Cf. Κοὐκ ἐμὸς ὁ μῦθος ἀλλ' ἐμῆς μητρὸς πάρα, Eur. fr. 487, quoted by Prof. G. Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 132.

expresses the inmost conviction of nearly every one, whether he be learned or illiterate. Of the world to which the gods belong, to say that it is on the whole good would contradict the most deeply rooted sentiments in the national character, and every page of their sacred writings. The supreme end of action, according to them, is to escape from it. Nor do these popular beliefs present any real inconsistence with the most orthodox form of the Vedant. That, instead of deifying nature, as is the tendency of modern Pantheism, denies it all trace of reality; and instead of attempting to connect the illusion of movement with a principle of absolute quiescence, leaves the gap to be filled up in any way which the religious needs may indicate. CH. III

Buddhism resembles its great parent or congener in containing two easily distinguishable elements, one philosophical, the other religious. The ethical system, which it was the Buddha's mission to preach, leaves no place for either religion or metaphysics. If the Buddha and his followers regarded it as a religion, and this they no doubt did, it was because they had not recognized the distinction, and all abstract thought on the problems of life was classed by them under that single category. Practical Buddhism, far from being a godless religion, affords the strongest evidence we have of the vitality of the religious principle, and of the necessity of worship as an ingredient in human nature. Blind to the glaring inconsistency with the fundamental principle of its faith, it early adopted, or devised for

CH. III itself, a Pantheon as populous as that of the Brahmins; with a worship rivalling that of the Roman Catholic Church in the splendour and variety of its ceremonial; and having for its head the humble preacher of atheism — now invested with all the attributes of a god. In their foregrounds of natural polytheism overshadowed by an inexorable nemesis there is a strong general resemblance, much though they may differ in other ways, between the religion and ethics of Buddhism and the polytheism of the Greeks. The most important practical difference lay in their views as to the value of life; one condemning it utterly, whereas the other was, on the whole, cheerful.

Philosophy and religion differ throughout all their manifestations. Philosophical certainty is only attainable after a long course of laborious study and mental strain: religious faith comes at once, and as a flash of illumination, resembling, in this respect, love at first sight. Religious belief is in the highest degree effective in kindling the emotions both of the masses and of individuals; it endows men with a power beyond themselves, and spurs them to exertions of which, without it, they would be incapable. Exactly the contrary to these are the psychical accompaniments of a metaphysical construction. To the masses it appeals not at all, and is a byword for all that is uninteresting. To the thinker himself, the intrusion of any emotional interest in the pursuit of the truth is a hindrance, and the feeling of satisfaction, when a problem is solved, is calm and

temperate, and adds little or nothing to his power as an agent. Neither the philosophic nor the scientific temperament accords well with emotion of any kind, and least of all with worship. They detest mystery, and make it their single interest to dispel it wherever it is found: whereas, a mind which is saturated with religion is indifferent, if not hostile, to philosophy, and cannot breathe for long except in an atmosphere of mystery. With not indeed all, but the great majority of mankind, intellectual conviction and religious faith are mutually destructive. CH. III

A more extended view of the facts of human nature will show us that all those beliefs which excite the strongest passions, and stimulate either individuals or masses to efforts such as, in popular language, may be described as superhuman, resemble worship in resting immediately on an irrational or transcendental basis. For our first illustration we may take the belief in personal equality. This is plainly contradicted by experience, and, if true at all, must refer to a transcendental, and not to a phenomenal, personality. Nevertheless, it has been the guiding principle of all political development from monarchical rule to democracy, and it threatens, unless checked, to end in the stagnation of socialism. It is unnecessary to give instances of the violent emotions, rising again and again to frenzy, with which it inspires those who are under its influence. Every page of the history of Greece, to take one country only, is full of them. We may next take

CH. III freedom, and the group of conceptions which are ancillary to it, the chief of which are justice and patriotism. It has already been shown that the very high respect with which these are regarded by all men admits of no scientific explanation, and can only be accounted for by reference to a final end, of the nature of which we have no distinct conception. Yet for all these a man will lay down his life, willingly, and without hesitation; or, if he refuses, he will be called a coward, and be visited with contempt and ignominy.

None of this is true of those classes of action, the value of which (whatever its ultimate explanation may be) can be calculated without reference to a transcendental standard: that is to say, where the standard is utility, and success depends on a rational application of the law of uniform sequence. No one can be a martyr to prudence. If he were, he would be imprudent; the idea is self-contradictory. It may be admitted that, in a very true sense, there have been martyrs to science; men who have sacrificed their pleasures, and even their lives, to the pursuit of scientific truth. But, for one who has given his life for this end, there are tens of thousands who have given theirs for religion, or for freedom, or even for a point of honour. And this merely numerical difference, striking though it is, is not the only one, or even the most important. If we consult the ethical sense, we find that the general judgements of approval or condemnation which men pass on the observance or the neglect of their

religious or their moral or their political obligations, are almost entirely wanting in the case of the pursuit of science. No one is branded as a coward, or exposed to scorn and ignominy, because he refuses to face a scientific problem, or to maintain a scientific certainty. CH. III

Facts of this magnitude and universality are not to be disposed of by a contemptuous reference to the folly and ignorance of the masses, or the supposed barbarism of our near ancestors. Whether they fall in with or contradict our views of what is reasonable, they have a meaning. Their practical effects have been enormous. The Crusades, to take an unequivocal example, were based on religious enthusiasm; and the civilization to which that movement gave the first impulse has been moulded throughout by the same influence. No conscientious inquiry into the meaning of life can ignore them; and the only fruitful method of dealing with them is to ascertain what is their practical operation, and compare it with that of the processes of scientific thought. The radical difference of function I believe to be this: that, whereas the various branches of teleological thought have for their purpose the development of the human mind itself, the object of scientific thought is the development of its control over external nature. These are distinct ends, and it is quite possible that one may be advanced at the expense of the other. We may perhaps say that science provides weapons, and emotion the power to use them; and that, if we

CH. III pay exclusive attention to either, we sacrifice, not only the end we have neglected, but also, ultimately, the end we have preferred. The same conclusion is susceptible of a still more abstract statement. The universal final end is transcendental; the universal function is phenomenal; that is, increase of force. Religion and science have the same final end, but different functions, which are both subsumed under the universal function. The function of religion is the evolution of internal, that of science, of external force. Either of these functions may interfere with the other, and the final end is sacrificed unless both are efficiently discharged.

The specific emotions which are connected in the human mind with religion and morality are enthusiasm, and the sense of exaltation with which it reacts to the presentation of grandeur or sublimity either in thought or in nature. These again are dependent, both for their origin and for their continued vigour, on a sense of the infinite, which transcends all definite conceptions, and eludes the classifications of scientific psychology. It is this association which led Kant to couple the starry heavens without and the moral law within. They both suggest infinity. In a similar spirit the arches and ornaments of a Gothic cathedral have been compared to an avenue of beeches, with its soaring trunks and delicate tracery of leaves and sunlight.[1] They both give rise to a feeling of solemnity and exaltation of spirit. The sense of the infinite is the

[1] *Times* leader, June 9, 1909.

life and soul of religion; and it is there invested with a peculiar value, as it is chiefly through religion that the emotions which proceed from a sense of infinity can be communicated to the poor and the uneducated. These are the emotions to describe which the term 'elevated' has been appropriated by common consent. The same observations are true even of the martyrs of science. The higher their competence, the clearer will be their recognition that the remote results of their labour are hidden from them by an impenetrable veil; and it is in this faith in the unseen that they find their strength. It will be necessary to revert to this point at a later stage in this essay. For a comparison between the functions of religious and scientific thought, it is enough to repeat that the office of the former (as of all branches of thought to which the teleological method is appropriate) is to raise the mind to the realization of its highest possibilities by putting before it the conception of a process which has no visible end. CH. III

The sole concern of science is with the objective world, including the physical processes of the living body; and it realizes its ends by the application of the law of uniform sequence. Its method is mechanical, and rests ultimately on mathematics, or the abstract science of rhythm: a method from which, as we have repeatedly insisted, the study of subjective processes gains no assistance. Elevation of character may be a preliminary condition to its successful prosecution, but the production of character

CH. III is not an element in its final end. If a sense of elevation is produced, the result is not incidental to the process itself, but arises from the magnitude and unexpected nature of the facts disclosed; and the wonder ceases as soon as the facts become completely intelligible. The direct end of science is twofold: first, to ascertain so much regularity in the processes of external nature as to enable us to predict their recurrence with a reasonable degree of certainty; and, secondly, on the basis of that knowledge, to devise means for making the processes of external nature subservient to human purposes. For both these objects it has need of exact finite quantities. For the concept of infinity, which involves the negation of all positive quantities, it has no use at all.

Many of the dangers of an attempt on the part of science to extend its empire over the field of ethics are dealt with in my essay on Free Will. There are, however, two which are common to religion and to ethics, and which may be fitly noticed here. They affect by different ways, but in the same direction, the evolution of mind. In the first place, the sentiments of wonder, or awe, or reverence, are among the most potent agencies in the elevation of aim and character. These are inevitably extinguished by knowledge. The marvels of wireless telegraphy excite no awe, even in the most ignorant, because it is known that they can be explained: nor, for the same reason, do the feats of a conjurer; it is known that they are not miracles, but may be

performed by any one who has their secret. Science is continually narrowing the range within which these powerful sentiments can operate. So long as it confines itself within its own sphere, this conversion is on the whole advantageous, for, in bringing it about, it removes one of the most effective of the obstacles to its own progress. Science will not advance so long as men are contented with awe and wonder when they contemplate external nature: their object ought to be to bend it to their purposes. But when it transplants the process into the field of religion, it enfeebles human nature by robbing it of a source of strength which cannot be spared; and it in no way helps itself. CH. III

Its effect on education constitutes another and more general danger in the undue expansion of the scientific spirit. Education is to the human character what experiment is to science. It promotes and directs its development by an artificial selection of experiences. In the case of education, the selection is twofold: first, of those germs of qualities within the total complex of the character, which it is desired to nourish and strengthen at the expense of other and less desirable qualities; and, secondly, of the pabulum, whether intellectual, or artistic, or ethical, or religious, or in the form of physical exercise, by which growth along the sele ted lines may be promoted. The expansion of the scientific interest beyond its own borders brings about a complete inversion of values throughout the whole scale of human character. Those qualities will be

CH. III disregarded which excite 'what are agreed to be the most exalted types of ethical emotion, such as awe, veneration, and enthusiasm'; and for them will be substituted 'those tendencies which make for a secure and pleasant existence', and which provoke a feeling in the onlooker 'which is rarely strong, but oscillates about the point of indifference, being at some times a little above it, and at others a little below'.[1] Self-sacrifice and contempt of pain will fall out of the ideal, and their place will be taken by the pursuit of wealth and social consideration. Art, except so far as it ministers to the lower motives of decoration and luxury, will find no appreciation; no place will be left for religion; and, in the domain of intellect, the pursuit of knowledge will deliberately exclude the pursuit of wisdom. In a word, ideals of utility will take the place of the ethical end of evolution.

An unbiased consideration of the whole problem will convince us that a continued advance in civilization is indissolubly connected with the maintenance in sufficient vigour of both these processes. Religion, as will be seen, cannot subsist without dogma, and the unchecked growth of dogma puts forth a dense tangle of unintelligible beliefs, which not only acts as a bar to scientific advance, but, in the end, stifles both the emotion of worship and the voice of conscience. Without the living spirit of religion, without morality, and without weapons, a nation has already relapsed into a state of barbarism.

[1] *Eth. Aspects of Evolution*, pp. 105, 103.

It is unnecessary to dwell longer on this part of our subject. In an age when the scientific current of thought is prevalent, the evil effects of superstition are not likely to be either overlooked or underestimated, and there is no more need of calling attention to them than there would be to parade the dangers of the scientific tendency before a court of inquisitors. CH. III

The dangers of a one-sided growth of science are however serious, and take many forms; and though little attention is paid to them in our times, they are hardly less obvious than those which are brought about by a one-sided growth of religion. The general tendency is not in the direction of increased elevation of character. On the contrary, it issues in the production of pigmy types, such as the Dresden-china manikins of recent American fiction, undistinguished either by great virtues or great vices. Not, indeed, as savages are, for the savage state contains within it the germs of civilization; whereas the new creatures which are evolved by degeneration have no other prospect than extinction, at a more or less distant future. Extinction might indeed be averted, or indefinitely postponed, if the dream of scientific ethics could be realized, and war be eliminated from among the possible modes of relation between human societies. For this, however, it would be necessary to get rid of all distinctions of nationality, and merge the whole of humanity in one state under a single government. There would then be no distinctive national ends

CH. III and no freedom: for the whole value of freedom is derived from its relation to a national end. Again, one of the chief incitements to scientific inquiry is the need of protection against human enemies. This need would disappear, and science itself would suffer. It may be added that the discoveries of science are easily communicated; and its secrets may be learned, and used, by men in a comparatively low stage of civilization. As long as any tribe were allowed to subsist beyond the control of our universal empire, the degenerate empire itself would always be in danger of subjection.

The degeneration of character, which is the ultimate consequence of an exclusive devotion to science, follows directly on the absence, or the limitations, of a scientific ideal. Speaking strictly, science, though it has a distinct aim, can have no ideals of its own. All ideals are in the nature of objective representations of personal qualities which are regarded as attractive or valuable. They therefore exclude qualities which are not either attractive or valuable. On the other hand, the aim of science is universal; that is to say, the completion of the universe of knowledge. It excludes nothing, and has no preferences or comparative values, and, consequently, no ideals. Again, the aims of science are outward, and have for their practical end the conquest of external nature. With the conception of a complete and perfect character, whether human or divine, such as constitutes the ideals or final ends of religion and ethics, it has no concern. Finally,

as we have more than once had occasion to point out, when, in obedience to the imperative needs of human nature, it adopts an ideal from the realm of ethics, that ideal must always be based on pleasure. The alliance between Epicurus and Democritus is reproduced in our own days by the alliance between science and hedonism, and is not fortuitous. And the Epicurean ideal always has been, and still is, opposed to elevation of character. CH. III

There is another consideration which must not be neglected in an account of the relations between science and religion. The ethical value of science itself, like that of every other process, depends exclusively on the value of its final end. When that has ethical value, science is itself valuable; when it has none, though it may have utility, it ceases to have value. Now it follows from the intimate connexion between science and hedonism that there is no other process in which the danger of misdirection is equally great. So long as science is occupied with the prosecution of noble ends—that is, of ends which are in harmony with evolution—its value is among the highest. But as soon as it is misdirected, and, leaving the ends of evolution, applies itself, instead, to the promotion of pleasure, or the avoidance of pain, though it may still be called useful, it can no longer be called ethically valuable. In the invention of luxuries, and of machines which save trouble without increasing efficiency, it makes itself the servant of degeneration, and brings about the decay, mental, moral, and physical, of those who

CH. III come under its influence. From this danger it can only be secured by the elevation of character which proceeds from worship. In order that it may be good, and not evil, its ends must be dictated by ethics, and its action ennobled and purified by religion. But this influence must be indirect, and not extend, beyond the character of the man, to the processes and conclusions of his reason. Scholastic philosophy, in making science the handmaid of theology, overlooked the distinction between their respective functions, and was as wrong in subordinating science to dogma as our age is in subordinating dogma to science.

The form of conviction which science employs for the furtherance of its ends—that is, for the conquest of external nature—is knowledge; and knowledge is produced by the successful application of the scientific method to external nature. The form of conviction which is needed by religion, as well as by ethics, for the furtherance of their common end, which is the elevation of human nature, is belief; and belief is not merely indifferent to scientific proof, but directly opposed to it. Thus it comes that the foremost and most vital interest of religion is to keep itself aloof from science, and maintain intact the barriers which separate it from scientific thought; seeing that even the faintest infusion of scientific probability will impair its emotional effectiveness, and a complete rationalization destroy it altogether. Such statements as 'credo quid absurdum, quia impossibile', involve an undistributed middle; not all

absurdities command belief; but the negative form, CH. III
'non credo quia non impossibile sive absurdum,' is a sober expression of a psychological fact. When once a belief has been accepted as essential to worship, the more convincing the scientific refutation, the stronger will be its hold on the mind of the believer.

An excellent illustration may be taken from the history of our national faith. The most formidable of the enemies with which early Christianity was called on to contend were, not the decaying creeds of the past, nor the official worship of the Emperors, but neo-Platonism on the one side, and on the other the rationalizing tendencies within its own borders. It is proverbially hazardous to conjecture what might have followed had events been other than they were; but it is at least probable that, if the distinction between the Creator and the creation had been lost sight of in a philosophic Pantheism, Europe might have witnessed the same divorce between the higher beliefs and worship which has been the misfortune of Asia. The distinctive features of Christianity would have been merged in philosophy, and the working religion of the masses would have been formed by the revival, under some slightly modified form, of the ancient faiths which it was the mission of Christianity to supersede. If, on the other hand, the Church had yielded to domestic foes, and the Arians had succeeded in the long controversy which was decided at Nicaea, the Christian religion would have been substantially

CHAP. III identical with that of Mohammed—a faith which appears to be incompatible with advance beyond a comparatively low stage of social evolution. The heat with which the exclusion or admission of the single iota in the Creed was debated was more than justified by the overwhelming importance of the issue. That the orthodox formula was inconceivable —and this is what was objected to it—is really the strongest possible evidence of its truth, if by truth we understand efficiency in guiding the worship of men in the direction of their highest aspirations.

There is another formula, well known in the East, where the omission or retention of a single letter has been the occasion of heated controversy, and of fierce persecutions; and which might decide the whole destiny of a civilization. I refer to the distinction between *hama ust* and *hamazust* ('all is he,' or 'all is from him') which sums up the dogmatic distinction between Pantheism and Monotheism. We shall have much to say about the practical effects of each of these contradictory forms of religious belief; and our conclusion will be that, when judged by their effects, both together are true, and neither is true by itself.

As a belief, in order to serve as the basis of worship, must be irrational, so, in the same way, a belief once formed loses its vitality as soon as it is exposed to criticism and analysis. No man who has once honestly examined the logical validity of the articles of his faith can thenceforward be moved by them in the same way as before. He may,

indeed, continue to hold them true, but it will be as articles of reason and not as articles of faith; and the influence of reason on conduct is much less powerful and less certain than that of faith. Ethical beliefs have the same characteristic; they, too, lose much or all of their coercive force as soon as they are questioned. The mere attempt to discover a rational ground for regarding patriotism or justice (for example) as obligatory principles has always the result of weakening their practical efficiency. When once it is admitted that they are open to doubt, they are in fact doubted, as soon as they are opposed to the conflicting impulses of self-love. The main function of the systematizing intellect in the province of religion is so to define dogma as to exclude rationality. When attacked by rationalists it is unable to employ in its own defence the same kind of weapon as is used by its adversaries. Its only legitimate answer is to tell them: 'Whether you are right or wrong on your own premisses is not my concern; but you may be quite sure that your success will mean your own ruin as well as mine.' It cannot prove itself to be reasonable, nor can it prove by its own methods that the attack is unreasonable; and victory, in that arena, is a greater misfortune to it than defeat. The necessary result of a victory which is gained by the employment of scientific weapons is either Deism or Pantheism. Each of these is the prelude to atheism, and to the establishment of scientific methods of explanation over the whole field of thought. By defeat, on the

CH. III contrary, religion loses nothing. The respect of its own followers is not thereby forfeited; and it must have already lost the respect of its enemies. In the following pages no attempt is made to establish, with regard to any religion, either the truth of its dogmas or the reasonableness of its practices. All that is attempted is to examine the relations, whether of harmony or of discord, between various beliefs of religion on the one hand and of ethics on the other: with especial reference, of course, to what is the leading interest of the whole inquiry, their influence on evolution.

How then are we to discriminate the doctrinal absurdities which are worthy of belief, from those which are not? The answer is indicated by Bishop Butler in the title which he prefixed to his great essay. The truth of religious beliefs depends on their analogy to the constitution and course of nature; or, as I should state it, on their consonance with the process of evolution. A moment's attention will show the necessity of this principle of discrimination. It ensues directly on the discovery that feelings of sublimity and elevation are produced solely by objects of thought which are in consonance with evolution. The function of religious belief is to ennoble and purify the character. It must therefore be determined by the same considerations. In one way religion cannot fail to be an advantage. Mere worship, irrespective of dogma, is always a source of strength; but it is a strength which may be exercised either for good or for evil.

Other things being equal, a devil-worshipper will be stronger than a man who is his superior in morality, but an atheist. Religions may pull down as well as build up. Their force is given them by their spirit; its direction by their dogma; and when we speak of a religion as being in consonance with nature, what we mean is that its dogmatic beliefs do not contradict a right interpretation of nature. This, however, does not imply that they will be identical with such an interpretation: as has already been shown, they must be supplementary. CH. III

What is usually implied when 'harmony with the Universe' is spoken of, is a belief that the Universe itself is harmonious, and that a man gains inner harmony by being in tune with it. No belief can be imagined that is less favourable to religion. A sense of the harmony of external nature can indeed be produced, certainly by drugs, such as opium and alcohol, and perhaps by wilful blindness. It is a frequent concomitant of good living, prosperity, and freedom from care for the future. But this is not the soil on which religion thrives. It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven: the devil was sick when he thought of being a monk. Religion thrives best among the oppressed, and the destitute and the afflicted; among those who are most keenly aware of their needs and their infirmities, and of the discord which subsists between their needs and their surroundings, and whose minds are tormented by a sense of sin. Harmony with the course of the

CH. III universe does not imply the untruth that the universe is itself harmonious; and the conviction that it is is one of those beliefs which, as it is at variance with facts, is also at variance with religion. Philosophies which proceed from optimistic premisses must, for that very reason, be hostile to religion; and, as we see, they are. But a religion does not contradict nature when it promises harmony, or the absence of conflict, under conditions which transcend experience.

The first great need of a religion, if it is to reflect with fidelity the process of evolution, is that it should be, like that, a *complexio oppositorum*. It should find a home for all the essential contradictions which are discovered within evolution itself. Among these, the leading ethical contradiction is the parallel growth of good and evil; and this will be reflected in the religious estimate of the world of experience. That world will be described as neither good nor bad in itself, but both good and bad in the highest degree, according as it is used.

The attitude of Christianity with regard to this question will be dealt with more particularly in the following essays. At present I will only point out that in two respects it exactly resembles the course of nature itself. In the first place, it is susceptible of diametrically contradictory interpretations: in the second place, it holds out no intelligible (in the common meaning of that word) end or reward of conduct. Pessimist and optimist

philosophers alike, while differing on every other point, agree in asserting the concurrence of Christianity with their particular point of view. Schopenhauer claims it as a religion of pessimism: according to the theology of the same period, its teaching is summed up in the belief that the world in which we live is the best of all possible worlds. Both are wrong. What Christianity teaches, is that the ends and the rewards of this world are valueless: that is, neither good nor bad in themselves, but only with reference to an end which is not of this world, and of which nothing is known, except what is told us by religion itself. CH. III

Again, evolution, as we have seen, depends for its advance on a development of opposites, which cannot be carried too far, provided that, in every pair of conflicting principles, each retains sufficient strength to keep up an active opposition to the other. The religious ideal, which combines in one person the opposite extremes of humiliation and of glory, exactly corresponds with the ideal which is disclosed by an examination of the ethical judgements; and those judgements are the highest product of evolution, working through the human character. The whole history of the Church, from its infancy till now, has been taken up by an unceasing conflict between the principles of self-assertion and self-repression; the first being represented in the power of the priesthood, and the second, in continually repeated revolts against that power, from Montanus, through St. Francis,

CH. III down to George Fox and the Wesleys. And it is safe to add that the continued existence of the Church is bound up with a continuation of the same conflict. 'Primitive Christian beliefs reflected as in a mirror, and not unconsciously, the difficulties, and the contradictions, and the unsolved enigmas of the world of fact.'[1]

The strongest and most elevated of the emotions of which men are susceptible is that which is excited by tragedy, and tragedy is the exhibition of opposite extremes in the lot of the same person; when the highest worth and dignity are opposed to the lowest depths of suffering and ignominy. Moderate worth combined with ordinary misfortunes may excite pity, but pity is a far less powerful emotion than the intensity of love and horror which is excited by the representation of extremes of worth and disaster; and the effect is impaired by every descent from the extreme on either side. The annual commemoration by the Mohammedans of the murder of Ali and Husen, the son-in-law and grandson of their Prophet, and his rightful heirs in the Viceregency, gives rise to a far greater intensity of emotion than could be produced by any tragedy which makes no appeal to religion; and which is probably as great as can be excited by any drama in which the sufferers are purely human.

Again, by its indifference to phenomenal values, and steady concentration of its hopes and its efforts

[1] Hatch, *Influence of Greek Thought*, p. 124.

on the realization of a Kingdom which is not of this world, Christianity rises above change. It finds a home for every kind of ideal, and is equally well adapted to every stage of civilization, from the most primitive to the most complex. While it retains this characteristic, it should continue to lead the destinies of mankind; but, as soon as it identifies itself with any particular form of civilization, such, for example, as Socialism at one end of the scale, or a king ruling *iure divino* at the other, and sets up that as a permanent ideal, the movement in advance will be arrested, and decay and corruption will set in, both for itself and for the civilization with which it is identified. So long as it asserts its place above all human values, and indicates no definite final end, but only a direction, it will continue to be allied by a mutual sympathy with all movement in advance, and to be estranged by a mutual antipathy from the processes of degeneration. CH. III

Dualistic religions, like that of Manes, must be judged by the same test. In their recognition of two ultimate principles of good and evil, those religions faithfully reflect the character of the phenomenal world, where we discover an unending conflict between the same pair of opposite principles, with a continual increase of the forces engaged on both sides, and no clear promise of the victory for either. So far they are in agreement with the world of experience. Where they fail is, that they refuse to look beyond that world for the final end of conduct; and to that omission we may trace both

CH. III their partial success and their ultimate failure. The doctrine of a transcendental end will always be distasteful to the less elevated minds among the crowd, who are unwilling to face the exertions and the sacrifices which it demands of them; to such minds the comfortable rule, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die, has irresistible attractions. It is equally distasteful to philosophers, because it imposes limits on their inquiries, which they are slow to admit. It offends against the indolence of the one and the pride of the other, and a belief which contradicts it may always count on the support of a large number of adherents.

But, if the principles of good and evil are equal or nearly equal in power, as indeed in this world they are, it follows as a matter of course that an equal worship ought to be paid to both; to evil, as well as to good. Moreover, men whose aims are limited to the goods of this world will always identify evil with pain and temporal misfortune; and, as the fear of those is usually much stronger than the desire for good, the cult of the evil principle is likely to supersede the cult of the good principle. Again, the standard of good will be itself debased; for within the world of experience no more desirable end can be found than pleasure, and not only is the pursuit of pleasure, by common consent, inferior in point of ethical value to the renunciation of pleasure, but—being a misdirection of purpose, which puts the reward before the true ethical end—it is in itself an evil. For all these reasons a dualistic religion will

be out of harmony with the spirit of a progressive age; it will fail to satisfy its needs, and must sooner or later fall into disuse. In other words, it will not be true. CH. III

And this is because it makes no substantial addition to the conceptions of ethics. It hypostatizes the principles of ethics, and invests them with an imaginary personality, in precisely the same way as animism personifies the processes of external nature. But it falls short, as ethics itself must fall short, of a complete unification of our concepts, and it leaves us in the presence of two opposed principles, of which it is impossible to say, either why they should be opposed, or why one should be preferred to the other.

But, it may be urged, it will not be out of harmony with the spirit of degeneration, and its empire may be retained for an indefinite period in a stagnant or retrogressive society. In such a society, therefore, it will comply with the teleological test of truth. Our answer is, that in assisting a process of decay, it will be defeating the general purpose of all religion, which is the development or elevation of character and conduct. Success, by itself, is not the test of truth, but success in approximating to an end which is itself good, and therefore true, and the criterion of truth. A religion is only good or true when it is in harmony with the spirit of forward evolution, and promotes the same end. The survival of a religion is conditioned by its harmony with the spirit of the age. If that is in the direction of decay,

CH. III religion will itself degenerate—or, if the decay is brought about by the excessive growth of science, it may cease to exist.

Judged from its ethical aspects Pantheism is not open to the same objections which may justly be brought against Dualism. It offers no pair of opposing Deities to compete for the allegiance of worshippers, nor any temptation to serve evil rather than good. In estimating its practical value we encounter the following initial difficulty. No divine Providence can influence human conduct in one direction or another, unless it is invested with qualities borrowed from experience; and this investiture the Unity of Pantheism altogether refuses. Should it be invested with any, it must, logically, be invested with all; and, as these are nothing but a congeries of contradictories which annihilate one another, the worshipper who looks for guidance is no better off than he was before. In India, no hypostasis of human qualities, either partial or complete, has ever been attempted. The Divinity is entirely unmoral, and the belief, which, as has already been pointed out, is philosophical rather than religious, has no direct influence on conduct. What influence it has is negative. It explains the slight interest in ethical speculation which is shown in the indigenous literature; and the almost complete absence of religious motives, such as hope of reward or fear of punishment, in the life of the masses. Their moral sentiments, though not on that account weak or inactive, are purely unreasoning. Asceticism,

if that is to be taken as an exception, is derived from their pessimistic views on life, and those are no necessary adjuncts to Pantheism. But ethical growth is hardly possible without ethical consciousness and speculation, and a society where those have been blighted by the shadow of a metaphysical Pantheism is doomed to stagnation.

Buddhism resembles Brahmanism both in being a primitive natural religion, overshadowed by an advanced philosophical system which it can neither assimilate nor throw off; and, also, in denying all value to human ends. It differs from it in this, that its philosophy declines to recognize any real existence, such as the divine or the human self, and reduces the whole of being to a succession of events with no underlying reality, and connected only by an inexorable law of uniform sequence. The denial of real existence has been a bar to metaphysical speculation, and Buddhist thought is concerned mainly with problems of morality and psychology. The resultant growth has been a singularly pure and self-sacrificing rule of life. Its principal defect is the denial both of a substantial self, underlying the group of characters which constitute the phenomenal self, and of a substantial deity. The denial of reality in either form has a depressing effect, which, though it is favourable to a passive self-sacrifice, indisposes men towards that kind of renunciation which is demanded by difficult enterprises; and the virtue of the Buddhist is peaceful and indolent—amiable when seen in the quiet life of agricultural communi-

CH. III ties, but less admirable in the crowds of lazy monks and mendicants which it collects around its chief religious centres. Its closest affinities are with the beliefs of a strict system of science, but it has never achieved any scientific successes, because even those require the co-operation of other motives besides those of science alone; and it furnishes an instructive illustration of the barrenness of a morality which stands by itself, and is not enriched by the opposition of the motives of self-assertion.

The first element of strength in the religion of Mohammed is its alienation from the spirit of science. The exclusion of scientific methods of thought leaves faith unchallenged, and secures it from the debilitating influences of doubt and inquiry. Minds thus constituted retain to the end, and through all difficulties and discouragements, the native hue of their initial resolution. It derives a second source of strength from its appeal to the desires of its adherents. The assurance of a tangible and completely intelligible reward, which, even should it be missed in this world, must be fully paid in the next, feeds with fresh fuel the ardour of unreasoning enthusiasm. An unhesitating obedience to the commands of their leaders, combined with the prospect of the full satisfaction of their desires, made of the raw masses of Islam one of the most powerful engines of aggression the world has ever seen.

But for these advantages it pays dearly; for it

cuts itself off from further advance along both lines of natural evolution. Its hostility to science makes all increase of knowledge, except what it may borrow from others, impossible, and, by its rejection of a transcendental end, it condemns itself still more hopelessly to paralysis and death. CH. III

CHAPTER IV

SPIRIT AND DOGMA

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Our next task will be to trace the operation CH. IV
of the two opposed principles on whose mutual interaction the health and vitality of all religions depend. One of these is intellectual, and finds its expression in dogma; the other is emotional, and, for want of a more comprehensive term, may be called, after its most advanced stage, mysticism. The emotion to which the higher developments of worship have the nearest affinity is love. It begins by investing its object with all the attributes of perfection, and it aspires to a complete fusion with it, and the loss of all subjective independence, or distinction. God, for it, is all in all, the profound and essential unity of all that exists; and its philosophy, when it has one, is always pantheist. The intellectual side of worship borrows the attributes with which love has clothed its object, and deals with them by the same process which the scientific reason employs in dealing with the data which are furnished by the senses. It objectifies them, and, as the qualities themselves are personal, the hypostatic foundation is necessarily a person, or as many persons as the religious needs of the community may dictate. The intellectual tendency of unification,

CH. IV when left to itself, is in the direction of Monotheism.

We thus find in every religion two opposed tendencies: one emotional, which is in the direction of Pantheism; the other intellectual, which is in the direction of Monotheism. Either, when left to itself, destroys the religion which gave it birth. The first merges the Creator in the creation, and leaves nothing to which worship can be addressed; the other reduces him to the level of a man, and extinguishes the distinctive religious emotions. In short, the emotional destroys the intellectual element, and the intellectual destroys the emotional; but neither can subsist for long without the other.

In religion, as in all other branches of thought, it is the emotional tendencies that come first, and break the way for the intellectual processes. The method, of course, like that of ethics, is teleological, and not scientific; and the whole character of a religion, including its dogmatic framework, grows out of the tendency on which it is based. If the ruling tendency is good, the religion will be good: if evil, bad. The alternative principles which have served as the foundations of religion are love and fear. Love is a good principle, and the religions of love are good; fear is an evil principle, and the religions of fear are bad. It has been said that perfect love casteth out fear, and it is equally true that unqualified fear extinguishes love; but, in a realm of phenomenal ends, it is impossible that either principle should maintain its influence if it

wholly discards the other. The religion of love must still retain an element of fear, but it must continue to assert the primacy of love, and it must use fear for the promotion of the purposes of love. CH. IV

The first service which is rendered by love to the dogmatic definitions of religion is the attribution to the Supreme Being of the qualities of omniscience, omnipotence, and perfect goodness, without which worship is impossible. In the same way as the love of a fellow creature invests its object with all the attributes of perfection, and cares nothing for the estimates of impartial bystanders, so does the love of God invest its object with all the highest qualities that the mind of the worshipper can conceive, and is indifferent to the cool criticism of philosophy: and, whether the object be human or divine, the estimates of love are justified by the strength and elevation of purpose which they communicate to the character. To revert for a moment to the doctrine of the mean: what could be more ineffectual as an ideal, than a God with limited powers and moderately warm affections? Of the religions of hate it may be observed that, though they may regard their god as omnipotent and omniscient, they cannot, without patent insincerity, describe him as all-good.

For the purposes of worship the ascription must be purely intuitive, and not rational, or derived inferentially from a contemplation of the works of God as made apparent in nature. All such inferences challenge argument, and, if the challenge is accepted, are helpless. 'Though Seneca, Epictetus,

CH. IV 'Marcus, reached the thought of God's love of man, 'man's love of fellow men, and loving obedience to 'God, nevertheless it remained but a thought con-'ceived, of little vital force, because this love was 'recognized only as reason, and not as springing 'from the heart.'[1]

Again: in the same way as the ethical reaction at the sight of a benevolence that costs nothing is weak, so also is the appeal to the religious emotions of a Divine love which is not completed by a Divine self-sacrifice. And the strength of the reaction, in both cases, is proportionate, not to the greatness of the gift, but to the completeness of the sacrifice. The gift by a poor widow of all she has is of higher value than thousands which are contributed by the goodwill of a millionaire.

No other solution, which would be compatible with worship, has ever been given of the apparent contradiction between the all-goodness, omniscience, and omnipotence of the Deity, and the mass of sorrow and evil which is disclosed by experience. It is, I think, certain that, unless God is invested with all three of these apparently inconsistent attributes, He will cease to serve as an object of adoration for the great majority of civilized men. Any demonstration, therefore, such as may easily be drawn from the phenomenal world, that He is limited either in goodness, or in wisdom, or in power, is practically equivalent, so far as that majority is

[1] H. O. Taylor, *Ancient Ideals*, ii. 394.

concerned, to a denial of His existence, and to the elimination of worship as an active element in their character. Other explanations are inadequate. The definition must be given by love, or not at all. CH. IV

The difficulty is not disposed of by the assumption of a Being who is conceived as immanent in, and himself a part of the world, and as subject to the laws which he has framed for its maintenance. Not only to the great majority of mankind, among whom I must count myself, does this fail to convey any intelligible meaning, but, in any case, it calls on us to pay our tribute of praise and adoration to a Deity who, though he may embody all the good, at the same time embodies all the evil in our experience, and whose benevolence is conditioned by the lowest depths of malice. This is a concept which may indeed excite a religious fear in the minds of savages, but it is in flagrant discord with the emotions of love and adoration which give its character to the worship of civilized men. Every form of worship which rests on this basis runs counter to the ethical end. The adulation which proceeds from fear is no more elevating to the character when it is addressed to a Deity than when it is addressed to an earthly tyrant. The qualities to which it is most nearly akin are cowardice and insincerity. And the effect will be the same, whether the belief remains in its primitive form of simple animism, or rests at the intermediate stage of dualism, or is worked out to its logical conclusion as pure Pantheism. In none of these is the Deity transcendental, and, in

CH. IV all, the practical influence on the mind will be debasing.

The philosophical concept of the Deity as a being to whom no predication is applicable, while it seems to elude both the categories of phenomenal and transcendental, is at least impersonal, and on that account, if on no other, refuses to lend itself to the purposes of worship. As has been shown in the case of India, it will be unable to compete for popular acceptance with a crude polytheism; and that again, when acted on by the impulse of unification, will give rise to the concept of a vague personality which stands at the back of the gods of the world of experience, and is endowed with qualities without which no points of contact between itself and that world can even be imagined. As soon as it is called on to take part in human thought and action, it must inevitably clothe itself in human attributes. We have in this, no doubt, a flagrant example of that superimposition on the real of the attributes of the unreal, against which we are warned by the philosophy of the Vedant as the source of all false knowledge.[1] But that, instead of being a valid objection to it as an article of faith, is a distinct recommendation. For, in order to preserve its command over the emotions, religion must keep clear of metaphysics. Which, we may ask, has been the more valuable—the barren metaphysical formula of the Hindu, or the living faith which has moulded the civilization of Europe?

The genius of the Hindus was not blind to this

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxiv, p. 3.

difficulty, and admitted that, though in its real nature Brahman was without difference, attribute, relation, or form, all these properties must be transferred from the world of sense, and assigned to it for purposes of worship.[1] But the compromise was never clearly worked out by philosophers, and it entirely failed to satisfy the people for whose benefit it was devised. They have always neglected Brahman as an object of worship. Worship is an emotion, perhaps the strongest, and certainly the most elevated, of which men are capable; and no emotion, whether strong or weak, can be excited by a convention. It calls for something more substantial than a legal fiction. A turnip lantern ceases to terrify as soon as it is known for what it is. This is true, to some extent, of all symbolism. When it is explained that an object of worship is not what it gives itself out to be, but merely a sign for something else, it ceases to command faith. Faith, to be efficacious, must be sincere, and without reservation, and will be satisfied with nothing short of absolute reality; and without a faith of this kind, there can be no worship. This, however, is no bar to the assertion, by a transcendental religion itself, that certain portions of its service are symbolical of truths which are too exalted for human comprehension. By admitting even the possibility of attaining a complete knowledge of reality within this world, it would abandon its transcendental character, and fall into line with science. But it is a very different matter to represent

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[1] Th. Deussen, *System des Vedanta*, p. 222 sq.

CH. IV as merely emblematical what a religion expressly asserts to be a statement of fact. The most deadly hostility could find no surer device for depriving religion of all vital force than by impugning the literal reality of the objects of its worship.

When Schopenhauer remarked on the metaphysical need (*metaphysisches Bedürfniss*) which, he says, is common to the uneducated classes all over the world, he failed to distinguish with sufficient clearness what are in fact two entirely independent purposes. It is true that the object of metaphysics is to ascertain and define reality; but it is only metaphysics, in the usual and legitimate sense of the word, when it pursues that object with a definite ulterior purpose, and by special methods. The final end, on account of which metaphysical reality is sought, is intellectual—that is to say, to distinguish between intellectual truth and error; and the method by which it seeks to attain this end is, usually, a dialectic of concepts, which rests ultimately on a classification of the data of experience. With the elevation of character, as a final end, it has no concern, either direct or indirect; though it is probably an essential element in the evolution of the powers of the intellect. That is its ethical function, and there is little doubt that it may discharge that with success, even when it fails to realize its conscious purpose. The value lies in the search itself. The object has not yet been attained, and men are none the worse, indeed they are much the better, for the failure. For in this case they can do

without what they seek, much better than they can do without the effort of pursuit; and they can't have both. CH. IV

Entirely different, both in its aims and in all the incidents of its development, is the demand for a knowledge of reality which is set up by the needs of worship. The aim of this, as we must again insist, is not to attain intellectual certainty, but to elevate the character; and, in order to realize this aim, it is of vital consequence that it should avoid even the semblance of the scientific exactness which is demanded in metaphysics. Its value, again, does not lie in the intellectual process of investigation, for no process of this kind is involved. There is no approach, and no conclusion; but the conviction is immediate, and comes at once as a flash of intuition. And it is the conviction itself which is valuable; both in itself, as faith, and, also, in the direction which it gives to activity generally. The distinction between these two needs and the kinds of reality which they demand for their satisfaction is radical; and it is of the utmost importance; inasmuch as it lies at the root of all the differences between religious and metaphysical dogmas, at all stages of their evolution. It may be conjectured, with some probability, that it was from religion that philosophy derived, in the first instance, both its conception of reality, and its ardour in the pursuit of it. For in those days it was religion that set the tune for philosophy to dance to.

I here use the word metaphysics in the sense in

CH. IV which it is commonly used by philosophy, that is, to denote the metaphysics of science. But there are, in fact, two metaphysics: one, that of natural law, which, within its own province, has no concern with any hypothesis which goes beyond the facts of experience; and, another, the metaphysics of final ends, which necessarily transcends those facts. The first, for its special purposes, is quite independent of the second, though it is ultimately derived from it. And when either denies the validity of the other within its own province, it strikes a deadly blow at the evolution of thought generally; inasmuch as evolution, taken as a whole, depends in equal measure on the evolution of mind and character, and on the evolution of that special kind of knowledge which enables us to withstand the aggressions of our environment. Of two essentials it is useless to ask which is the more important, but we may observe that, in conditions of evolution, it can hardly be expected that a knowledge of reality can be attained by science.

Science can take account of the past only, and has no insight into the future; and, whatever direction evolution may take, it brings forth something new and incalculable. Even retrogression does not reproduce the past. All the predictions of experimental science are hypothetical, and postulate, as part of the cause, an agency which is not itself calculable.[1] It follows that, in this state of perpetual flux, every philosophy must, at least in some slight

[1] Cf. *Eth. Aspects*, p. 213.

particular, be obsolete before it is published. Every philosophical religion must, for the same reason, soon become obsolete, and, on one point or another, out of tone with its environment. It is of vital consequence, therefore, for this reason, as well as for others, to all religion, that it should keep clear of contemporary philosophy. CH. IV

The reality which is demanded by the needs of religion has two aspects, according as it faces towards morality or towards science. The first of these corresponds with the ethical aspects of human thought, and supplements them; the second, with the metaphysical. With the ethical side of thought it is usually in close alliance. They have the same function, that is, elevation of character; and the method of both is teleological. Even their differences involve no contradiction. One has no further end than the realization of the phenomenal ends of evolution; the other places its end in a life after death. And the reality which is established by religion supplements and completes ethics by furnishing it with an explanation which is external to its own processes, and of which, unaided, it could form no conception. The attitude of religion to metaphysics is opposed, though it need not be hostile. Neither its aims nor its methods are the same, and its main concern on this side is not conciliation, but to defend its own territory against the invasion of scientific methods and concepts.

The subject is so many-sided that it seems impossible to pursue any special line of thought without

CH. IV occasional digressions, and we may here delay our direct line of inquiry in order to consider, very briefly, some of its more concrete relations with science. The alleged interferences with the order of uniform sequence which have attracted the most attention, and have been most frequently the subjects of controversy, are the miraculous manifestations of supernatural power; including, besides the ordinary miracles of healing and the like, such supreme instances as the Resurrection, and the vision which converted St. Paul.

None of these is in logical contradiction to the law of uniformity. The contradiction, if any, is practical, and with reference to the present state of knowledge only. Science itself can place no limit on its own powers, or indicate any concrete achievement (except that of reversing the course of events, so as to make the future precede the past) which is necessarily beyond its competence. Hume's argument from the incredibility of a report which contradicts experience would, a few years ago, have been as valid against wireless telegraphy as against any of the recorded exercises of supernatural power. To people who lived before the discovery of electricity no greater miracle could be imagined than immediate conversation between friends at great distances. It is true that, at present, elaborate instruments are required, but that may be only a passing phase, and economies have already been effected which go far to encourage that expectation. When the human intellect has attained so great a pitch of perfection

that it can construct with minute exactness, from the total conditions of a moment, both the future and the past, it should also have attained so complete and exact a knowledge of nature as to be able to influence events in any conceivable direction; and frustrate, if that should please it, its own forecasts. Omniscience, if knowledge implies power at all, implies omnipotence, and when science objects to miracles that they contradict the law of uniformity, it overlooks this implication. In order to give logical form to its objection to miracles, it must attack the concept, not of omnipotence, but of power in even its lowest manifestation. It must deny the existence either of a human or of a divine personality. But these are questions which are entirely beyond the competence of its own methods; and with regard to them it has no logical justification for pronouncing a judgement, either negative or affirmative. For all it knows, there may be personalities, both human and divine; and one human personality may be greatly superior to another in power; or the human and the divine personalities may be combined in one. All these questions are entirely beyond its purview, and, as pure science, it has no logical right to an opinion on any of them. The power of effecting a miracle, however great, stands on exactly the same logical basis as the power to satisfy even the commonest of our wishes in every-day life. Given the bare existence of power, it becomes a mere question of degree. CH. IV

But the claims of religion will not be satisfied by

CH. IV the admission of rare exhibitions of a force which, though highly magnified, may after all be the same in kind with that which we attribute to ourselves. It requires us to believe that the transcendental personality makes its influence felt, as an initiating cause, in the production of every one of the least of the events of daily life—in the death of a sparrow, or the loss of one of the hairs of a head. The logical difficulty here is far more serious than in the case of miracles; and, so far as I can see, our choice is limited to one of two possible explanations. Either we may accept both causality and uniformity as concurrent and alternative explanations of the same events. In that case, to the man who accepts both, the causal or religious explanation will, of necessity, appear as the real explanation; while the scientific explanation will be regarded as temporary and provisional. Or we may accept one of the numerous variations on the solution which was offered by Epicurus; and define the Deity as the great first cause, which, having once started the chain of events, immediately lost all interest in it, and leaves it to work itself out with inexorable regularity. This, however, leaves no room for worship, and, for all practical purposes, is undistinguishable from atheism.

We must now return to the main line of argument. It will be remembered that we distinguished two separate aspects in the process through which religion discharges its ethical function of raising to a higher level the activities of the human character:

first, the communication of increased power, and, CH. IV
secondly, the determination of power in the right direction.

A man of weak convictions is not of equal value with a man whose convictions are strong; and the stronger his convictions, the greater will be his value as an active force. But this is true only of convictions in so far as they have a direct bearing on action, and in those cases where for 'strength of conviction' we may substitute 'strength of purpose'. Again, all purposes which have an ethical value, whether that value be positive or negative, are ultimately directed either towards or against an end of the nature of which we have no conception. Such convictions are, in fact, principles of conduct; and when they cease to be that, they lose their value. The conviction, in a man who betrays his friend, that treachery is abominable, only exposes him to the greater contempt: when a man believes in the goodness of God, and sins wilfully, his belief ceases to be meritorious. And there is this primary difference between convictions which are also rules of conduct, and purely intellectual convictions; that the former are always in some degree tinged with emotion, whereas the latter are never. This difference is reflected in the distinction between approval and assent. Approval or disapproval are the terms we use to signify our mental attitude with regard to conduct; assent or dissent, with regard to a purely intellectual or scientific proposition. The first are always emotional, the second, never. In one case

CH. IV the power is derived from strength of will, or of personality; in the other, from knowledge.

Another respect in which convictions relating to conduct differ from those of science is that they must be impervious to argument. However strong a man's conviction may be of the truth of a scientific proposition, he must be prepared to abandon it, without a trace of regret, on the production of sufficient evidence that it is unsound. His proper attitude is to be completely open-minded. Exactly the reverse is true of beliefs in ethics and religion. Their value, merely as beliefs, and independently of the value of their contents, consists in their strength; and strength, as a quality of beliefs, is nothing else than the capacity to resist all inducements to give them up as rules of conduct; whether those inducements take the form of argument, or of the opposition of the lower considerations of desire or fear. The stronger a man's faith, and the less tolerant it is of examination, the stronger will be his character, and the greater his power of influencing circumstances. And this is true even of a belief whose contents are opposed to evolution, and, therefore, evil. It will still strengthen a man's character, and increase the power with which he can influence circumstances. But, in that case, the value will be negative, or evil. For (as has already been pointed out) though increase of power is the universal function of evolution, the value, or goodness, of the power evolved depends altogether on the direction in which it is exercised. Every religious belief must

therefore be considered in both of two different aspects: first, with regard to its influence in strengthening the character; and, secondly, in regard to its influence in elevating it, or driving it in the direction of forward evolution. CH. IV

In order, then, that we may have worship, we must have faith in a real object; in order that the object may have ethical value, and purify the character, it must be transcendental; and in order that it may discharge the function of strengthening the character, it must be incomprehensible: it must not be defined in terms which, by entering into the current intellectual views on reality, are now, and are likely to remain, the subjects of controversy.

The most essential qualification of a religious belief, in the last of these aspects, is, we may repeat, that it should be unassailable by scientific arguments, and in order to erect an impregnable barrier between itself and science, its first step must be to purge itself of mathematical relations. All science rests on number, and all beliefs which admit numerical relations lay themselves open to scientific scrutiny. It is this that accounts for the fact, that, in all advanced forms of faith, God is invested with the attribute of infinity—infinity, in this context, meaning transcendence of mathematical relations. Usually, the bare concept of infinite is enriched by making it equivalent to infinitely great; an addition which is suggested by the tendency, in an age of forward evolution, to admire everything that is great, whatever its moral value may be. With

CH. IV reference to its effect in elevating character, the addition is probably justified; but the justification with reference to strength of faith is not equally clear. The qualification of infinity by a phenomenal idea, such as that of greatness, can hardly fail to bring with it ideas of space, and the Hindu solution, which makes the Deity at the same time infinitely great and infinitely small, is perhaps more satisfactory for purposes of worship. Or a solution may be adopted like that of Pascal, when he defined the Deity as an infinite sphere of which the centre is everywhere, and the circumference nowhere. All that is required is a mathematical self-contradiction. The objection to a numerical qualification tells with equal force against polytheism, and dualism, and a strict monotheism.

It is not our intention to attempt the impossible task of completing the outline of a universal religion. All we want is to make it plain that there is a fundamental distinction between the metaphysics of religion and the metaphysics of science, and that it is an essential condition of forward evolution that that distinction should not be lost sight of. Scientific thought ends in conviction; religious thought begins with it—*credimus ut intelligamus*—and its chief aim must be to formulate its beliefs in such a way as to exclude the possibility of infection from the beliefs of science. Religious beliefs are given by a special form of what, from a philosophical point of view, may be described as intuition, and which advanced religions recognize as revelation, or a direct

communication from God. When the influence of Greek thought on Christianity is discussed, due prominence is not always given to the fact that the radical conceptions of Christian dogma had been already supplied in the primitive tradition, before the commencement of the era of discussion and growth. Its leading metaphysical dogmas were as old as its morality. The evolution of rational metaphysics, like most other kinds of evolution, means increased complexity: the Greek thought which was encountered by nascent Christianity was highly developed, and extremely complex: every new complexity and refinement in rational thought constituted a fresh danger to the primitive religious dogma, and called for increased refinement of definition. This was, in fact, the nature of the influence of Greek metaphysic on Christian dogma. It forced upon it a complexity and minuteness of definition which, in ruder ages, might not have been called for, and religious dogma met the need, not by assimilating the conclusions of rational thought, but by excluding them.[1] CH. IV

There is yet another misconception to be guarded against. It arises from that failure to distinguish between religion and philosophy which we have had so many occasions to refer to. The dangers to which

[1] 'Each heresy condemned was a well-meaning, though presumptuous, attempt to offer an explanation of the Godhead conceivable for the human mind. In each case the Church replied by formulating a mystery to be believed by faith, but, strictly speaking, inconceivable and incomprehensible for our finite intelligence.' Odysseus, *Turkey in Europe*, p. 228.

CH. IV a new religion is exposed when it allows itself to be infected by the philosophical beliefs of its contemporaries, are absent in its relations with their religious beliefs. However great their novelty may be, all new religions must be in agreement on many points with the existing religious conceptions of the people to whom they address themselves. To the present day, the success of a missionary will be largely dependent on his practical recognition of this important truth, and on his being enabled to divine what he may accept, and what he must reject, in the religion of the people to whom he is addressing himself. This is a point on which misunderstandings are common, and it is worth while to elucidate it by examples.

The relapse into superstition which followed the return to religion on the part of the later schools of neo-Platonism is a matter of history. The same process was exemplified, on a much larger scale, by the religious outgrowths from the metaphysical and ethical Nihilisms of the Vedant and of Buddhism, respectively. In both cases religion was born again in rank and degraded forms of the primitive worship of Shiva and Kálí, representing the forces of destruction, which had been the religion of the aborigines before their conquest by the nobler race; and the religion of the Aryans, as represented in the older Vedic hymns, was completely superseded. The sequence in this case was: first, a noble and conquering religion, which, instead of developing on religious lines, was overwhelmed by philosophy,

and then, the re-emergence of the religious impulses, CH. IV
in the lower and degrading forms which it was the mission of the purer Aryan religion to extirpate. In the same way, neo-Platonism, after having superseded, (so far as it was successful,) Christianity, exhausted its original impulse in a return to the grosser superstitions which Christianity had already superseded.

When, on the other hand, a religion, which is not rational, adopts into its own system the more elevated of the irrational beliefs of its predecessors, and thereby raises them to its own level, the process is in the opposite direction. It is in the direction of advance, and not of retrogression. Nothing could be more perverse than to put on the same level the Tantric abominations of Thibet and the saint-worship of the Roman Catholic Church. They are as wide apart as the two civilizations whose religious aspects they represent. In the case of Buddhism the basis was philosophical, and the religious element which it adopted was degrading: with Catholicism the basis was religious, and the engrafted worship was elevating, and appealed to the nobler parts of our character—to love, and not to fear. The same experience is likely to be repeated. A purely rational interpretation of life, when, in order to escape the reproach of atheism, it makes concessions to the religious instincts of its times, takes refuge in some primitive, and usually obscene, form of animism; and, in our own day, we may not unreasonably expect that the degeneration of Christianity into

CH. IV a philosophic Theism would give place to a similar reaction.

The primary importance, then, of religious dogma, is this: it satisfies the universal craving for a certainty of reality, which was noticed, but imperfectly understood, by Schopenhauer. Without such certainty there can be no worship; and without worship, no religion, and no prospect of a further evolution of character. Again, no such certainty can serve as the support of worship, unless it rests on faith, and not on reason. Directly it is rationalized, it loses its power of exciting emotion; and worship is the most elevated form of emotion. Finally, the growth and complexity of dogma must be correspondent with the growth and complexity of rational metaphysics, against the aggressions of which it is its vital interest that it should be armed at all points. It is on its success in attaining these ends that religion depends for its bare existence. Some metaphysics it must have, or there will be no worship; but as soon as it has admitted into its metaphysics any considerable tincture of rationality, the whole body becomes tainted. At no distant date the religion will cease to exist, and a philosophy will stand in its place. Nor is this all: for, soon after the failure of worship, the philosophy itself will disappear. A mongrel faith, born from the forced union of rational with irrational metaphysics, will bear within itself the seeds of disruption, and will stand no chance of survival in competition with the legitimate philosophies of its era. Moreover, there is yet another reason

why, by becoming rational, it throws away its pros- CH. IV
pects of life. All rational philosophies are based, ultimately, on the flux of phenomena, and must, with that, continually change. Religion deals with what transcends that flux; and it must keep itself apart from it; and, with the aid of its ethical concepts, above it.

The definition of the essential dogmas of a religion, such as is required in an era of advanced thought, so as to preserve their vital energy by the exclusion of rational justifications, is a task of extreme difficulty, and demands an even greater subtlety and accuracy of thought than is called for or exercised in the ordinary metaphysics of the schools. Intellectual eminence, if not a positive disqualification, is, at least, a source of danger. Professor Harnack remarks,[1] with reference to the early struggles of Christianity, 'they were made all the harder by the fact that 'many Christians—and just, too, the most prominent 'and talented—made common cause with the enemy, 'and themselves embraced the dualistic theory.' Origen, the greatest of them all, was never further removed from Christianity than when he reached his highest flights of speculation. The battle was won by the undistinguished masses; and their leaders were qualified, not so much by power of intellect, as by strength and sanctity of character. They had indeed the certain conviction that by that belief, and that only, could the individual soul be saved in a world to come; but not one of them could have

[1] *What is Christianity*, p. 199.

CH. IV had any clearer mental anticipation of the results which made evolution prefer, for her purposes in this life, an irrational before a rational system of beliefs, than the wasp—to take a humble object for comparison—can explain to itself why it always stings a caterpillar on the same part of its body, or foresee that only in this way can its own offspring be kept alive.

It is no matter for surprise that beliefs so gained are held with an ardent fanaticism, and enforced with a merciless severity, which are wholly foreign to the Porch or to the Academy. Irrational belief, in its effect on the emotions, makes no choice between those which support and those which impede a further general movement beyond the plane to which it has raised the minds of its believers. It intensifies impartially all the emotions; and the same movement which brings forth higher powers of love and self-sacrifice, gives increased power and intensity to the emotions of hatred and cruelty. What it is that maintains a general advance is a secret which no one has penetrated; but it is a necessary provision against the arrest of evolution, that all the opposite principles should maintain a fairly even rate of growth. If science is greatly outdistanced by faith, faith itself is corrupted, and, of the two conflicting principles within itself, persecution becomes stronger than love and self-sacrifice. When science prevails, the emotions are atrophied, and the political and social institutions which are founded on them

are endangered. In either case civilization is arrested. CH. IV

It would be impossible to exaggerate the value of dogma to Christianity in all stages of its history. Not only has it supplied the definition of the object of worship, without which no kind of worship except a degenerate mysticism is possible; but, besides discharging this primary function, it has also been the bulwark behind which Christianity has defended itself against all hostile beliefs, philosophical or other. If it had thrown away that shield, it must have perished in the earlier days of conflict; and in the times of triumph and secularization it was still indispensable. A purely spiritual religion has never survived for long its initial impulse, and if the Church had become Montanist it would soon have gone the way of that and of all the innumerable revivals of modern times. It is dogma which connected them all by a continuous chain, and has imparted to each its distinctive Christian character. That Christian dogma, after the adventures and vicissitudes of twenty centuries, and in spite of the misguided zeal of so many of its rationalizing defenders, should still retain unimpaired its primitive irrationality, is a fact of the profoundest significance. The living undercurrent of popular religion from which revivals take their rise would have died up with the disappearance of the Church, and of its sacred writings. Revivals apart, there could have been in ordinary conditions no such saints as have distinguished Christian communities in all ages

CH. IV down to our own; and the piety of the common people, if it were derived from a return to paganism, would have been of another and a lower type. What has become of the 'simple village religion of Palestine'? The Ebionites have gone the way of the Essenes, and the Crescent has driven out the Cross from the region where they once flourished. That we are Christians to-day is due to the profound dogmatic inspiration of St. Paul; and, without that, their names, and the bare fact that such people ever lived, would have long ago been lost to memory.[1]

Religion, when it is purely personal, and emancipated from the control of an objective system of dogmatic beliefs, has always found its highest expression in mysticism and asceticism. Mystics and ascetics are the cosmopolitans of religion. They are the same all the world over, and under all forms of faith. Except in the matter of dogma, there is no essential difference between the Christian monk and the Hindu or Mohammedan ascetic. I quote without alteration a description of the first by Professor Harnack.[2] 'The man who practises 'silence and purity, who shuns not only the world, 'but the church of the world, who avoids not only 'false doctrine, but any statement about the true, 'who fasts, gives himself up to contemplation, and

[1] If you look through the index to Dr. Hatch's learned work on *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages on the Christian Church* you will find the name of Paul of Samosata, but you may search in vain for Paul of Tarsus. The heretic is applauded, but the saint forgotten.

[2] *What is Christianity*, p. 242.

'steadily waits for God's glorious light to dawn upon CH. IV
'his gaze, who attaches no value to anything but
'tranquillity and meditation on the Eternal, who
'asks nothing of life but death, and in such complete
'unselfishness and purity discovers the fountains of
'mercy—this is the Christian.' And this, I would say, down to the minutest details, is the Hindu saint. For him too, 'the whole system of sanctified secularity has vanished.' He cares nothing for the Caste system, and draws no distinction between the Brahmin and the Sudra, but holds himself superior to both; and, what is more, he has his claim allowed. If there is one word I might wish to alter it is 'mercy'. Wha the Hindu saint awaits is 'grace';[1] and this, perhaps, is equally true of the Christian.

The resemblance, however, continues only so long as the state is purely passive, or quietist; and, if unselfish, it is at the same time, and in the same degree, indifferent to others. A pure mysticism excludes all worldly aims whatever—selfish and unselfish alike. This is the condition of all mystics, Christian or Hindu, so long as they are mystics, and nothing more. It is in a further stage, beyond and succeeding to mysticism, that a distinction begins: and that distinction is due solely to dogma. The Hindu ascetic may, and very often does, give up his course of self-inflicted tortures; but this is because he feels that his end has been achieved, and that he is already master of himself. He has no other

[1] Deussen, *System des Vedânta*, p. 90.

CH. IV object in view. With the best of the Christian mystics this is not the case. With them, the conquest over their passions is only a preparation for the real work of life. That work is a devotion to the highest interests of their fellow men; and it is derived, as a duty, from the dogma of the Incarnation. No participation in the divine nature approaches completeness, unless it extends to its sufferings and their purpose. With the Hindu both the dogma is wanting and the corresponding duty. The Hindu mystic has no system of dogma; his religion, if it is to be called by that name, is pantheistic, or rational, and he has no concern with the religious interests of his neighbour. Hinduism abounds in mystics, but, though it exercises a strong passive attraction on outsiders, it has no propaganda. Its mythology is not dogmatic; belief in it is optional.

The external end of the Christian saint, when he has one, is the Church; and the Church and dogma are indissolubly connected, both in their origin, and throughout their existence. Finding in the Church a field for the activities of self-abnegation, he communicates to it a portion of the same spirit, and preserves it from an exclusive devotion to ends which are of this world, and not, as the ends of a religion which claims universality must be, transcendental.

Next to its irrationality, the commonest of the charges which are made against dogma is that it restricts the liberty of the worshipper, and robs

worship of its spontaneity by forcing it along prescribed channels. A further charge, growing out of the first, is that a complicated system of dogma and ritual is far beyond the comprehension of the ordinary worshipper; that it will be liable to corruption and decay, unless a special body of men are set aside, whose sole and peculiar office it shall be to preserve its purity and direct its evolution; and that the body or organization that is constituted for this purpose will inevitably step in between the worshipper and the object of his worship, bringing about, in time, a priestly tyranny, which, of all forms of degeneration, is admittedly the worst. CH. IV

All these charges overlook the fact that the law of the progression of opposites holds good in religion also. On one hand it is true that dogma may be made an end in itself; and, in obedience to a mistaken estimate of the value of logical completeness, be developed far beyond what is required for its preservation from a lapse into philosophy: or the same course may be prompted by the supposed interests of the ruling class within a religious body. It is also true that in both cases dogmatic belief may supplant worship; and stifle the emotions which it is its office to stimulate, and to guide in an upward direction. But it is equally true that in the absence of dogma, religious emotion can never rise much above the level at which it is found among savages; and, that if, after having once reached a high development, dogma is destroyed,

CH. IV worship must rapidly descend to that level, or disappear altogether. Throughout religious evolution, dogma takes the same place that is taken by law in political life; and enmity against both law and dogma is inspired by one and the same spirit of destruction. There can be no freedom without a proper adjustment between spontaneous worship and dogma. By confining the spontaneous emotions along certain channels, it is no doubt a form of constraint, but it is a constraint without which there can be no health. Freedom from dogma, like anarchy, does not admit of evolution so long as it lasts. Evolution only begins with the introduction of dogmatic beliefs.

We have already remarked on the extreme subtlety and refinement to which dogma is driven by its plain duty to defend itself from a lapse into rationality. A great historian has compared Christian dogma to the bridge, as sharp as a razor, which leads to the Mohammedan paradise. We have ventured to compare its definition to the instinct which guides a wasp in its selection of the nervous ganglions of its victim. Its conscious religious aim was the salvation of the individual soul. Its unconscious ethical aims were: first, the maintenance of worship in any form; and, secondly, to prevent its assuming forms such as those which in Arabia condemned it to stagnation, and in India drove it back on the primitive concepts of animism. If salvation depends on religion—and in fact, it has no meaning apart from it—the connexion between dogma and salva-

tion is plain and intimate; for there can be no religion without dogma, and no salvation without religion; but it is quite safe to say that the men who defined the dogma were in complete ignorance of its ethical significance, and of its importance to the ends of evolution. They were certainly not aware that the omission of an iota from their creed might condemn Europe to the stagnation and decay of Islam. CH. IV

A parallel difficulty occurs even in lower forms of religion, where dogma, instead of being metaphysical is merely ritual. No kind of worship has ever been able to maintain itself for long as a definite religion, in distinction from the vague emotions of the individual, without the consecration of a special class for the preservation of the distinctive beliefs with which its life as a special organism is bound up. There must be a priesthood, if there is to be a religion in the sense in which we have defined religion at the commencement of the preceding essay.

The degeneration of spirit which sets in with the decay of dogma and ritual is reflected in the difference between the Gothic cathedral and the Nonconformist chapel. The first of these represents the religious emotion when it has been maintained at its highest level by the support of dogma and ritual: the second reflects the same spirit, when, after a brief recrudescence, it has again relapsed through the absence of those salutary, and, indeed, indispensable restrictions, and the flame of devotion

CH. IV burns low, or dies out, in an intellectual vacuum. Again; it is by its cathedrals and its gorgeous liturgies that Christianity retains in its service the traditions of chivalry, honour, patriotism, and martial heroism, which, though alien to its dominant principle of self-effacement, are equally necessary to its survival in a world of conflict; and through them it continues to appeal to tempers which are indifferent, or even hostile, to its distinctive spirit. If it had not been for them there would have been no awakening in England after the spiritual night of the eighteenth century.

The same ignorance of the future of evolution which hides from its authors the ethical significance of the dogma which they formulate, demands from its special guardians that they should exercise an extreme vigilance in maintaining its exact form, and repressing any deviation, however trivial it may appear, in its relation to the ends of science. To the guardians of dogma every part is, and must be, of equal value. The loss of a single brick from any part may, for all they know, endanger the whole edifice; and, with it, the whole future of the civilization of which it forms an integral part. These are facts which are disclosed by retrospection, and after the event. Without an insight into the future course of evolution, which is not vouchsafed to men, they could never take effect as conscious purposes. But it is precisely beliefs of this kind—that is, beliefs whose influence on the future is great but

unforeseen—which have the firmest roots, and are safeguarded with the keenest jealousy. CH. IV

The supreme importance of the interests involved; their unscrutability; their insusceptibility of rational defence; and the tremendous strength of their appeal to the emotions, combine to overpower in the minds of their guardians any scruples as to the means which they deem necessary to their effective discharge of the task which is committed to them. Neither the inhibitions of the conscience, nor the ethical principles of religion itself, are allowed to stand in the way. And, unfortunately, they enlist in their support an ethical principle which is irreligious, and immoral, and opposed to any form of transcendental religion; that is, the love of rule and riches—a powerful ally, but one which, sooner or later, is likely to take the lead into its own hands, and must then ruin the cause which it was called in to defend. The pursuit of earthly domination condemns religion to the adoption of forms and methods which may be good and efficient at the time, but which are a part of that world wherein everything that has life must either change or perish; and which, when incorporated in an absolute system, must conform to the universal law, and perish. The religion which adopts them must either give them up, or permit their natural growth withir its own system; but, in either case, it will sacrifice its claim to be absolute and infallible; or, and this will be the usual course, it will cling to them without permitting change; and its lot, in that case, will be

CH. IV even worse; for it will be brought into direct conflict with both the moral and the scientific elements in evolution. Its victory in this conflict will condemn the whole society to stagnation, and from having been an engine of the highest good, it will be converted into the most powerful of all engines for decay and destruction: by its defeat, on the other hand, it will forfeit its respect, and its hold over worship; and its former worshippers will be left without any religion, whether good or bad.

Thus we find the following sequence: No religion without dogma and without ritual can rise far above the primitive unorganized aspirations which are common, with only slight differences, to all mankind, and become, in the words of the opening paragraphs of the preceding essay, 'one of those organized systems of belief in the supernatural which have been held, without inquiry, by large bodies of men, and have been regarded by them as their religion.' The primitive emotion of worship demands a personal God; and the first stirrings of thought give birth to an imperative need for a definition of the nature and attributes of the Person to whom worship is paid. If this definition is denied it, we may indeed retain the primitive religious emotion, but it will be incapable of evolution, and it will remain practically the same everywhere. There will be no differentiation, and, even if the religious spirit may survive, there will be none of the Religions such as form the subject of this essay. But the growth of dogma, however necessary, contains within itself

a double danger to the spirit of religion: first, that of extinction; and, secondly, that of misdirection, which, after all, is only extinction deferred, and may be compared to the prolonged course of a fatal disease. The first danger is a lapse into rationality; for rationality is inconsistent with emotion, and extirpates that element in our character out of which the whole growth of religion springs. It is, therefore, directly fatal. CH. IV

The second danger, misdirection, is the adoption of a line of belief which contradicts the aims of forward evolution. And there are two ways in which this may be brought about. A religion may start in the wrong direction, with aims that are opposed to evolution; this will be the case when it sanctifies the aims of self-assertion. Or it may start in the right direction, and its course may be subsequently diverted. The causes of this diversion are two. First a rejection of dogmatic restraint which, by emptying the religion of its distinctive meaning, reduces it to the uniform conditions of savagery. This cannot rightly be called excess; for the religious emotion is at least as strong in mystics like St. Theresa who accept dogma, as in others who reject it. Indeed it is probably stronger. The second form of misdirection is what has just engaged our attention. We may briefly summarize its history: The defence of dogma against rationality demands an extreme subtlety and complexity of definition. This, again, calls into existence a special organization for its defence; and from this institution,

CH. IV as every one knows, the following results may ensue: The personal interests of the guardians themselves, and the peculiar character of the beliefs which they defend, are at one in inducing them to confirm their position and enlarge their authority, by forcing the definition of dogma to unnecessary lengths, and by extending ritual into transactions of daily life which have no proper connexion with worship. In acting thus, they will substitute the secular ends of self-interest for the eternal ends of religion and morality. They will at the same time crush spontaneity of worship, and encourage religion in the commission of excesses which outrage morality. Whether, in the judgement of ethics, religion is to be the highest of goods, or the worst of evils, depends in the first place on the relative strength of its internal competing impulses. Dogma without spiritual worship is as much a greater evil than spiritual worship without dogma, as political tyranny is a greater evil than political anarchy. But a sufficient armature of dogma is essential to the evolution, not only of religion, but of the whole civilization of which religion is an integral part; and in the tendency to depreciate its value we must recognize the spirit which displays its hostility to evolution generally by attacking differentiations of all kinds. Evolution proceeds by the growth of opposite principles. There can be no permanent progress without both religion and science; and no permanent religion without both the faith which is spiritual, and finds its expression in love, and the

faith which is intellectual, and expresses itself in dogma. The first identifies the Creator with the creation; the second distinguishes them. The distinctive ethical character of a religion—what makes one good and another bad—is, for all that are above the level of devil-worship, dependent on its dogma. CH. IV

CHAPTER V

ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS DOGMA AND THE LEADING ETHICAL TENDENCIES

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It will make it easier to understand what follows if I begin with a very short account of what I mean by the leading ethical tendencies. By that term I denote the two great groups of impulses which make up the conflicting processes of self-repression and self-assertion. Of these, the first have their origin in the conscience; the collective term under which their effects on conduct are subsumed is morality; the criterion by which they are judged is given by the values of goodness; their sanctions are happiness and remorse. The other, that is, self-assertion, dates from the beginnings of life; its values are those, not of goodness, but of greatness; if a general term is wanted for its effects on conduct, ambition would perhaps answer the purpose as well as any; its sanctions are glory and contempt. Each is equally essential to evolution; and the main question for ethics is, which should take the lead in order that evolution may advance: for the tendency which takes the lead gives its direction to the whole process. Finally, the affinities of

CH. V self-repression are with pessimism: those of self-assertion, with optimism.

Ethics is the philosophy of values. All ethical beliefs, without exception, have for their practical function the determination of conduct, and all, whether they belong to the province of religion, or of ethics properly so called, depend ultimately on the answer we give to the question: is life—that is to say, the life of experience—worth living? Within the world of experience does good prevail, on the whole, or evil? To this momentous question (for the two are the same, expressed in different words) ethics gives no direct answer. The ethical reactions, and the judgements, particular or general, which are based on them, discriminate between single acts or intentions, or classes of either, and label this one as good, and that as evil; but they are silent as to the value of life as a whole. Nor does philosophy offer us a final solution. That, as has already been shown,[1] with the means now at its disposal, can give us nothing more satisfying than a probable assumption; and our own answer, which served us as a premiss for all the speculations which followed, is, as has been admitted, nothing better. A categorical answer is given by religion, and by that only; and if a man has no religion, his beliefs on this, the most vitally important question he can ask himself, must either rest on conjecture, which is not a very stable foundation, or they will be

[1] *Ethics of Evolution*, chap. 1.

largely at the mercy of his digestion. It is true that the prevailing tone of feeling will vary from race to race, and in the same race at different periods of its history; and that every line of thought, and the private judgements of each individual, will be strongly affected by it; but it is in religion alone that it will find a permanent and authoritative expression. CH. V

In their answers to this question religions are far from being unanimous, and, if we were to seek guidance from the religious spirit generally, we should not find it. Stated in their simplest terms, the answer given by some is that the world, on the whole, is bad; by others that it is, on the whole, good; while others assert indifference, that is, that good and evil are about equally balanced. These answers may be regarded as the fundamental premisses, which serve as the bases of the ethical system of each religion separately. They differ from ethical theories chiefly in this point; that instead of being mere assumptions, they are asserted as dogmatic truths, and they only assume a distinctively religious character when they are supplemented by a theory of life after death. In their views as to the nature of a future life, religions are as much divided as they are in their views as to the value of life on earth.

The more important of the points of difference, so far as they give a distinct ethical character to the religious system of which they form a part, are the following:

CH. V (1) Existence in a future state may be either personal or impersonal.

(2) The future state may be in this world, or in one not essentially differing from it; or it may transcend phenomena.

(3) It may or may not be the scene of reward and punishment for actions done in this life.

(4) The personality may be a separate principle, distinct from phenomena; or, as with some schools of modern psychology, it may be nothing but the bundle of phenomenal properties which we recognize as an individual.

(5) The rewards and punishments, when their scene is laid in a future life, may either be of the same kind as the rewards and punishments of this life, or they may not. In the first case, they will be pleasure and pain; in the second, they must transcend our powers of conception.

The two great religions of the East—Brahmin and Buddhist—agree in an uncompromising pessimism, which extends to all stages of life, whether present or future. They consequently agree in regarding release from life, of any kind, and at every stage of existence, as the only reward worth having. They differ on the following points. The Brahmin asserts an individual personality as a permanent element in phenomenal life, which continues without break throughout all succeeding phases of existence, until it is extinguished by absorption, either as a reward to the individual, or at the next of the recurring cataclasms of all things. The

Buddhist entirely denies individual personality either in this life or in another. The two systems agree in enjoining self-denial as the only reasonable rule of conduct, but they differ most materially in the grounds on which they recommend it. The Buddhist regards it as the direct means to the coveted reward of extinction: to the Hindu it is recommended as a means to the acquisition of power in this world, and of making the best of a bad job. The loss of individuality, to him, is not the reward of works, but of a true belief, which is communicated by grace, and not as a reward for merit; though works (i. e. self-denial) may occasionally superinduce a state which is favourable to the reception of grace. CH. V

The most important ethical distinction between Brahminism and Buddhism is that, though both condemn self-assertion, Buddhism is by far the more uncompromising. In parting with the conception of reality, it abolishes the distinction between real and illusory values. All values are equally illusory; and there is nothing to strive for but escape from strife, and from effort of all kinds. Hinduism, on the other hand, acknowledges a single real value, which it places beyond the reach of effort, and, along with it, recognizes a series of phenomenal values, which are only attainable by self-renunciation. The means, being self-renunciation, are inconsistent with the pursuit of pleasure; which, indeed, is, in any case, unattainable. The only alternative end is power, and the attainment

CH. V of power is conditioned by active austerities which tax to the utmost the capacities of human nature. This is a conception which has many affinities with a reasonable scheme of ethics. Its principal defect lies in the denial of positive transcendental values. Buddhism shares the defect and rejects the affinities. Both condemn self-assertion, but only one condemns activity. Brahminism stimulates activity, provided it be along proper lines, by the offer of a reward, which, though not real, is neither contemptible nor devoid of attractions. That reward is not pleasure, but advance in the scale of evolution. A man who kills a cow or a Brahmin will be reincarnate as a dung-beetle, or something even more loathsome: by feeding Brahmins, or, still better, by extreme austerities, he may rise to be a god; but, in neither case will he escape the long round of growth and decay. The system resembles an evolutionary ethics, when built on a pessimistic foundation, and devoid of any religious superstructure. Buddhism is the gospel of decay and annihilation.

The next great group of religions are those of Greece and Palestine. These, though widely different in their ontology, resemble one another, and contradict the religions of the Farther East, in asserting that the world is, on the whole, good. They also had in common the dawnings of a belief in a future state of personal existence, which, however, was not yet real, but a mere shadow of the realities of this life. No word corresponds more

nearly to 'Hades' than 'Sheol', and the contrast between the brightness of this life and the gloom of the life to come, is as common in Homer, the bible of the Greeks, as in the Hebrew scriptures. CH. V

Their ghosts he sent to Sheol:
Themselves he left a prey to dogs and vultures.

And again:

Commend not death to me.
I'd sooner serve a starveling churl on earth
Than rule the teeming myriads of the dead.

Except in very exceptional cases, too few to affect the hopes and fears of the multitude, the next world was not the scene of rewards and punishments. The prosperity which was the reward of virtue, and the failure and misery which were consequent on vice, were of this world. All human interests were extinguished by death. The concentration of all effort on worldly ends, coupled with the assurance that the world was itself good, and the repository of all values whether good or bad, issued in an extreme development of the principle of self-assertion.

But, though it may be impossible to disprove an abstract belief, like that in the general goodness of creation—and indeed the belief is as active now as it ever has been—it is not easy to resist the evidence of concrete instances; and the faith in a necessary connexion between virtue and prosperity is so frequently contradicted by particular experiences that, in an age of inquiry, it must soon lose its vitality. The only resource for a religion which retained its faith in earthly values, was to shift the scene of their

CH. V realization from this world to another. This great advance, after a long period of controversy, was finally effected by Mohammed, who retained, indeed, the original scale of values, but shifted the scene of rewards and punishments, and the central end of action, from this life to the next, investing the shadowy personalities of Greece and Palestine with a life and dignity which were superior to those of mortality. The ends in this world and the next were the same; that is to say selfish; and the principle of self-assertion was raised beyond the reach of rational objections. The general beliefs of optimism, like all beliefs as to the value of this life as a whole, are at all times impervious to argument; and the teachings of experience, which are the only teachings by which those beliefs can be discredited, are put out of court, when the scene of reward is removed beyond the range of observation. Other advantages were that it enlisted the aid of the imagination for those higher spirits who were deaf to the appeal of the senses; and greatly magnified the attractions to those who were not; while it substituted the ardour of faith for the temperate desire of a reward that is fully known and appreciated. The beliefs of optimism received the highest, and most complete expression; and, with them, the practical tendency of self-assertion.

Prior in time, but later in evolution, Christianity took the final step of shifting, not only the scene of reward, but also the scale of values, from this life to another. Even if the Kingdom of God were to be

realized on earth, its values were not the same as those of the life we now lead, but superseded them. The expression 'Neque nubent' gives the key to the whole difference between the ethics of Christianity and those of its predecessors in evolution. In making the real end transcendental, and surpassing all values, it did not condemn the ends of ethics, or interfere with its values: its only effect was to convert them from absolute, or ultimate, ends into proximate ends, subserving, for the individual, some higher end beyond the grasp of knowledge, though not of belief. By this step it added a new source of strength and elevation to the character of the individual, without discrediting the ends of ethics. CH. V

The strength of character of which we owe the final stages to religion, is dependent, in its earlier stages, on ethics. The conversion of a Hottentot to Christianity may indeed raise him above the level of his unconverted brethren, but it will not make him the equal of the civilized man, unless he has already imbibed long draughts of the ethics of civilization; and, unless those draughts are of wholesome wine, religion will be of little use to him. Thus, the value of the religion will depend, not only on the fitness of its dogmas to support worship, but, in an equal degree, on its selection of the ethical principle for the guidance of all other conduct which is not worship. An optimistic religion will prescribe self-assertion as the sole guide of conduct for both worlds, and will lift that principle

CH. V to an undisputed predominance over the opposite principle of self-repression. It is probably impossible wholly to eradicate any one of the deep-seated instincts of humanity, and it would certainly be unjust to deny to Mohammedans all traces of what we mean by conscience; but in the transactions of daily life, the only duty they consciously recognize is their duty to God, and to his vice-regent on earth. In all other transactions, such as do not directly affect that, each is at liberty to follow his own advantage. It is unnecessary to show that a belief like this must disqualify for social, and any other kind of concerted action. The Believers can only be held together by an authority which is despotic.

Of the two opposites, self-assertion and self-repression, it is beyond question that, though both are equally necessary, and each of them necessary at its highest degree of development, it is self-repression that must take the lead, and dictate its final end to self-assertion. A man must assert his powers to the utmost, but it must be in the interests of his fellows; of his Church or his King, or of his country; and not of himself. This is, no doubt, the view which is taken by the ethical judgements generally. Much though the achievements of self-assertion may be *admired*, *goodness* is predicated of self-denial only. Self-denial, however, does not stand alone. It must be supplemented by a further qualification. In order that self-denial may be ethically good, it must be altruistic, or accompanied by devotion to the interests of others. In order to

be good, a man must both deny himself and assist others, and, in order to attain the highest possible degree of goodness, he must (as is the case with all ethical action) exert both self-repression for himself, and self-assertion in the interests of others, in the very highest degree. There is no question of a mean. CH. V

It is commonly recognized that the change which has been brought about by Christianity within the realm of ethics is of a kind which may be denoted as a transvaluation of values, but there is no general agreement as to the meaning of that phrase. It may be hoped that the foregoing inquiry may help us to give it a more definite meaning. Speaking generally, the changes which have been effected by Christianity in this department of belief appear to me to be twofold: first, the superimposition of a completely new system of religious values on the old values of ethics; and, secondly, the substitution, within ethics, of the values of self-repression for the values of self-assertion.

It is the former of these beliefs which constitutes the peculiar ethical differentia of Christianity, and distinguishes it from all other religious systems. No other religion has attained to the conception of a realm of values which is beyond the values of evolution, though it does not, in this life at least, extinguish them. It tells us to make the higher values the ultimate end of all our conduct, but it adds that we can only realize the values of the Kingdom of God by the pursuit, while we are involved in the

CH. V business of an earthly existence, of the lower values of evolution. This may seem to contradict the monkish ideal, and, as a pure conception, no doubt it does; but, in practice, the total withdrawal from earthly affairs was never made a universal precept, and, since, at any rate, the days when it became imperial, all the greatest saints of the Church have been men who made their mark in one or another of the higher walks of life. It could only acquire or retain oecumenicity by the adoption of all the ethical values. The conception of a Church militant on earth, and of the heathen as pagans or civilians, would be abhorrent to all the religious thought of the Far East. But the Christian Knight was more truly the living ideal of the middle ages, than the monk who sought his own safety in a complete seclusion from earthly aims. The latter may be called holy, but he has no use for his conscience, and he cannot rightly be called good. Even the typical monk and ascetic, H. Suso, held that the ideal life on earth is like that of a knight, and must be devoted to the spiritual interests of others.

In this we find the highest application of the distinction between merit and reward. The desire for peace, or rest, or harmony, is not a virtue: it is not approved by the moral judgements. No man is ever called good because he avoids exertion. The 'great refusal' makes a man the scorn both of God and of his enemies. Such a man is fit neither for heaven nor for hell. For the purposes of evolution, retirement from the world is no better than suicide.

The saying of Heracleitus, *ἀρηιφάτους θεοὶ τιμῶσι καὶ ἄνθρωποι*,[1] is the final judgement both of morality, and of religion, whether it be Islam or Christianity. The only conceivable justification of the universal craving for harmony is to regard that as a reward. When made the object of direct pursuit, it reverses the direction of evolution, in which all progress is made through conflict: when regarded as a reward for efficiency in conflict, it stimulates activity in the right direction. Inasmuch as the reward, if laid on earth, is fortuitous and rarely attained, it loses its attractiveness unless it is guaranteed by being located elsewhere; and, because the whole value of earthly happiness is conditioned by conflict, it must be of another kind. In this way happiness, which is of the lowest ethical value as a motive, is converted by religion into highest value as a reward. CH. V

It may at first appear that, in substituting self-repression for self-assertion, Christianity had been anticipated by the religions of the Far East, and that, in this respect, the revolution which it brought about was not universal, but confined to the religions in the immediate neighbourhood of its own birth-place. Its resemblance to Brahminism is, however, only superficial. For the vast majority of worshippers the principle of self-assertion is given an entirely new meaning in the later religion by the addition of a positive transcendental final end, which preserves in the future life the separate personalities both of God and of man. The absorption of the individual in the

[1] The slain in war both Gods honour and men.

CH. V universal is a solution which can satisfy only that rare order of temperaments which are radically mystical; to all others it makes no appeal. It is, moreover, like all mysticism when it is not under the control of dogma, destructive to religion itself. In denying all real distinctions, it makes the distinction between God and the worshipper purely phenomenal, and prayer and worship of all kinds become as illusory as all the other processes of life, and equally destitute of real value. The end of pleasure is discarded as unattainable, and the only phenomenal end that is left is power. This, then, either in the present, or in one of the chain of equally illusory states of existence which follow it on earth, is the sole purpose of all religious practices. By this process of thought all values are indeed illusory; but the ultimate end of all conduct in this world is self-assertion in the highest degree.

The self-repression of morality, and religious devotion itself, are combined and concentrated on the single end of the power of the individual worshipper in this life; and that end is itself valueless. The practical outcome then of Brahminism is to restrict all positive ends to this world; to cut out pleasure altogether; and to make self-repression the means, and self-assertion the end, in all conduct. Whereas Christianity distinguishes two worlds, and makes self-repression the norm and end of conduct in this world, and transcendental happiness the reward in the next; in this way reconciling the aspirations of the individual on his own account with his duty as

the member of a race in evolution. To blame a man's conduct as selfish when he seeks his own salvation is to confuse religious merit with ethical value. Every man must rest his ultimate hope, not in the future of his race, of which indeed he can know nothing, but in the reward to himself. That reward, however, can only be deserved by self-sacrifice. There is no short cut. CH. V

On its ethical, and apart from its dogmatic side, the 'Kingdom of God' is the sole concept which is distinctive of Christianity. All its other ethical conceptions it shares with one or another of its competitors; but in this it stands alone. In its love for humanity, and this is usually seized upon as its distinguishing feature, it does not go beyond religions which, on either side, are so radically contradictory, both to itself and to one another, as the pessimist atheism of Buddha, and the optimistic theism of Islam. It may be objected that the Theocracy of Islam was also a kingdom of God; but the aims of that were human, and its kingdom, in all essential aspects, was the same as the kingdoms of men. Nor, on the other side, were the Christian ascetics of Egypt and elsewhere either better or worse than, or different in any material characteristic from, the ascetics of the Farther East; but no other religion has produced characters of the type of St. Ambrose, or St. Bernard, or St. Gregory the Great.

It is to the conception of a realm of transcendental values beyond the sphere of evolution that it owes both its success in the past and, as far as it is possible

CH. V for men to judge, its prospects for the future. It is the only religion which has not reached the term of its own evolution within a very short time after its birth; and which still, after an interval of nearly two thousand years, retains its empire over all the progressive races of humanity. This is its practical distinction. Its theoretic distinction is that it is the only form of religion which realizes the expectation expressed at the beginning of this essay, by exhibiting a complete agreement with the ethical philosophy of evolution.

It was remarked in my essay on Happiness (p. 134) that Christianity put itself at a disadvantage in its contest with the Mohammedans by refusing to assure its soldiers of the crown of martyrdom as a reward for death in battle. The reason is now plain. The prize of battle is an earthly kingdom, or earthly power, and has, therefore, no interest for Christianity. What the martyrs died for was the kingdom of the faith, which was not of this world. The fruit of participation in contests for earthly power would have been an early arrest of growth. In identifying itself with a temporal cause Christianity loses sight of its transcendental end, and descends to the same level as its adversary. If, in its struggle with Islam, it had stimulated its soldiers by the offer of a religious reward, it would have paid for a doubtful advantage in the field by the sacrifice of its distinctive superiority as a religion; and, whether victorious or defeated, it would have been equally the loser, for it would have exchanged

the Kingdom of God for the aims of Mohammed. CH. V
The result would have been the same as an open conversion, and it would then have parted with its fitness to take the lead in the evolution either of individual character, or of social order. So far from rewarding the slaying of an enemy, even in a war of religion, it made it an offence, and demanded a nominal penance.

If, as we hold, the reactions of the conscience are not to be tested by reference to any known phenomenal end, and—being independent of all considerations of pleasure and pain—are categorical, and must be obeyed on their own account, and without regard to consequences; they, so far, correspond exactly with a religion which rejects all wordly ends as worthless. The only point on which they differ is that the religion asserts as a fact, and holds before each individual worshipper the assurance of, a transcendental reward, in a world which is beyond phenomena; and thus adds a positive end, where the conclusions of ethics are merely negative, and exclusive of known phenomenal ends. Ethics demands the hypothesis of an unknown end of conduct. Religion promises a reward which is not of this world, and which, if itself regarded as an end, cannot possibly be brought into conflict with the realization of an ethical end to which it also stands in the relation of a reward. This agreement is recognized, and clearly asserted, by transcendental religions.[1] 'Quidquid fit contra conscientiam aedi-

[1] W. S. Lilly, in *Fortnightly Review*, Nov. 1911.

CH. V ficat ad Gehennam,' and 'He who acts against his conscience loses his soul' (Cardinal Newman). If one man is a mystic, and another a man of action, it is owing, in each case, to a conscience, or a vocation, which prescribes the particular duty. On the other hand, morality which makes earthly happiness the end of conduct is instinctively hostile to religion of this kind and to the conscience alike. Mayor Bailly expressed this claim forcibly, but quite accurately, on a memorable occasion. 'When the law speaks, the conscience should be silent.' Or, as Rousseau exclaims, 'République Chrétienne! Chacun de ces deux mots exclut l'autre,' which is unquestionably true, if the republic goes to science for its dogmas, and bases its rules of conduct on optimism. Lord Shaftesbury makes much of the conflict between religion and morality; but his morality was hedonist, and on that account of necessity at variance with all religions except those which, like Islam, accept the values of the phenomenal world.

Nor can there be any conflict between the particular judgements which are passed by religion and by ethics respectively on the conduct of individuals. Religion gives the value of life as a whole; ethics the values of special lines of conduct: religion deals with the universal final end of all conduct; ethics, as the philosophy of the ethical judgements, does not go beyond the proximate final ends of experience: religion deals with the rewards and punishments due to the individual in respect of his conduct as a whole; with this the ethical judgements have

no concern, dealing as they do, with the unknown future of the race. The religious command, 'Thou shalt not condemn,' in no way contradicts the necessary function of ethics to pronounce a judgement on the values of particular classes of acts or intentions: nor does it stand in its way, when the ethical judgement, acting through the law, and guided by the principle of equal values, apportions special rewards and punishments. But it no doubt forbids the ethical judgements to trespass beyond their rightful jurisdiction by condemning or acquitting an individual as a whole, and apart from particular acts or qualities. The execution of a spy, or of an outlaw, involves no condemnation of his morality as a whole, nor does the imprisonment of a thief. Even on the question of the freedom of the will, the contradiction between religion and ethics is only apparent. The ethical judgements postulate freedom, not on merely speculative grounds, but because, without it, they cannot even come into existence, and it is a vital necessity to their acceptance and their influence; but they would go beyond their province if they asserted the freedom of an individual to be what he is as a whole. His value as a whole is beyond our knowledge, and would still remain beyond it, even if, what is not likely, we were able to give a completely accurate account of all his phenomenal qualities, and to value each of those with the minutest accuracy. For the self, as a whole, is not the same thing as the whole bundle of its recognizable properties. CH. V

An appearance of conflict may, however, arise

CH. V when the distinction between the respective provinces of religion and ethics is overlooked, and compliance with rules which are meant to do duty in one province is accepted as a sufficient acquittance for the demands which are made by the other. This class of fallacy is exemplified by the maxim, 'Laborare est orare,'—a confusion which is very common in the great writers of the nineteenth century, who raised their voices against the rank hedonism of their times, without having anything to put in its place. That hard work is not the same thing as religion is obvious. It has nothing to do with worship, and very often conflicts with it. Many monks who are devoted to religion may be charged with sloth, and, on the other hand, many of the hardest workers are entirely destitute of religion. Nor is it necessarily a virtue. Its value lies, not in itself, but in being an indispensable condition for efficiency. And, again, the whole value of efficiency (or the power to produce effects), like that of force generally, is dependent on the direction of its aims; and labour, or effort, however strenuous, when it is addressed to the realization of a bad end, is not virtue. The utmost that can be said for it is that labour, or effort, though it is neither religion nor virtue in itself, is an indispensable condition for the attainment of the aims of both. Which of the two, worship or hard work, will be preferred depends on the prevailing tendencies of the time. In an age of secular aims, the industry of Martha will be more highly esteemed than the devotion of Mary.

It is a fallacy of the same kind to suppose that true benevolence constitutes a sufficient discharge for all the demands of religion, and that it is, in fact, the only religion which is worth having. Now, in the sense in which these words are used, 'true benevolence' is not a religion at all. Religion is a body of beliefs which have directed the worship addressed by large masses of men to a personal Being, superior to themselves in power. But it is not inconsistent with the truest benevolence, of the kind intended, to be entirely destitute of any such belief. The worship of Humanity, if designed to invest benevolence with the exaltation of spirit which is the peculiar product of religion, fails of its purpose. It has never been the religion of large masses of mankind: and never can be, because it is not natural but artificial. Nor can it ever inspire the emotions which are peculiar to religion, because it is a mere abstract conception, from which we can fear nothing and hope nothing in its relations with ourselves. Mere ritual, apart from a living faith, has no more inspiring influence than the furniture of a cathedral, apart from its spires and arches. Moreover, like hard work, benevolence without qualification has no necessary value, either ethical or religious. To be good in either sense it must be joined with self-denial. Father Damien would not have been a Saint, if, instead of going himself to the island of lepers, he had sent a qualified medical practitioner; and, if, for the care of their souls, he had sent a missionary, it is the missionary who would have deserved the honour. CH. V

CH. V The confusion is of daily occurrence. Contemporary literature is saturated with it; as it is also with the kindred error that all violent emotion is religious. All irrational action, that is to say, all action which is directed towards an end of which we have no distinct knowledge, is, so far as the end is unconscious, reinforced by emotion: and the emotion may be equally strong, whatever the nature, or the value, of the process. Mere strength of passion affords no indication either of the source from which it proceeds, or of the direction in which it flows. It may be religious, and concerned with the salvation of the individual; or ethical, and concerned with the future of the race; the religion may be either self-assertive or self-repressive; the ethical tendency may be either creative or destructive; but, in all these cases alike, there will be an accompaniment of emotion, and in all it may rise to the utmost intensity of passion. Emotion, by itself, affords no test of value, though it may be a sign of importance. The degree of intensity to which it rises may afford a rough indication of the importance of the issue in its bearings, in either direction, on the unknown end of life. To describe the destructive fury of the French Revolution as religious would be an abuse of language. Religion, in any form, was hateful to it.

Before a tendency can properly be described as religious, it must be related in some way to the service of God. The tendencies which are thus related have not always been the great ethical

principles of conduct. Much more often, especially in the early stages of religion, they are such as may be embodied in formal rules of worship, designed with the ostensible purpose of placating a Deity of the same tastes and passions as his worshippers; though, as is often the case with dogma, the real purpose may be to strengthen the hands of the priests, by making them the repositories of a stock of occult and incommunicable formulas. This opens out a tempting field of inquiry: but I must content myself with the remarks, first, that ritual resembles dogma in being at the same time necessary and liable to abuse; and, secondly, that its worst abuse, when it sweeps into its net all the common routine of domestic life, is not due to any excess of the religious spirit, but to its misdirection; and that it ends in the extinction of that spirit as a living force. CH. V

On proceeding to the higher groups of tendencies, we have found that in the perennial conflict between self-assertion and self-repression, religion has sometimes ranged itself on one side, and at others on the other; according to the views it has held as to the general characteristics of our life after death. Its eschatology has determined its ethics; or, at any rate, the two have been reciprocally connected. When the coin in which the final reward is paid has been of the same mint as earthly rewards, the ethics have been self-assertive: when it is of another and unknown type, the ethics have been self-repressive. In the absence of religion, there

CH. V will be no dread of extinction, no thought of reward or punishment apart from the direct aim of action, and no beliefs on the subject of a future life.

In religions of the class which I have termed transcendental, the recognized virtues are always of the same class as those of morality, and differ only in being raised to a higher level by being brought into relation with the conception of a Being who is in all respects superior to humanity. And we must remember that the precepts of morality are always generalizations from the single and particular imperatives of the conscience. For our first illustration we may take the virtue of Faith. The need of this is peculiar to conscience among the non-religious springs of action; for that only, by excluding all known ends, demands a purely unreasoning obedience. Transcendental religion is equally exclusive of rational justification, but it provides its faith with a rich and varied content. It is true that without faith there can be no religious emotion of any kind, but faith has not the same intimate connexion with the ethics of self-assertion, and the demands which are made on it by the official creed of Islam are an irreducible minimum.

When we leave faith, and proceed to the distinctively self-denying tendencies, the contrast is clearer and more complete. Within the province of morality, self-restraint in sexual relations is a virtue; the opposite tendency, that is, self-indulgence, is not a virtue, though it is not always a vice. In other

words, self-restraint may be, and often is, enjoined by the conscience absolutely, andas a duty; whereas self-indulgence, though for certain purposes, and under certain definite restrictions, it is often permitted by the conscience, is never enjoined as a duty and on its own account. One can never be a vice: the other is never a virtue. Beyond this stage morality does not take us. But the introduction of religion makes a very material change in the government of our conduct. If the class of motive to which religion allies itself is that of self-denial, the only values it will recognize in framing its ideal are those of virtue: if, on the other hand, its alliance is with the motives of self-assertion, it will extol the values of ambition, and overlook, or even contemn, the values of morality. The maxim, 'Quidquid fit contra conscientiam aedificat ad Gehennam' will apply in one case, but not in the other. CH. V

The machinery through which religion communicates a particular direction to conduct is that of ideals. The pursuit of an ideal has been proposed by some writers as a test of virtue; but it suffers from exactly the same defect as the recently proposed criterion of 'working' as a test of truth. All beliefs (and ideals are only a particular class of beliefs) may work either good or evil; they may either elevate or debase; and to deny that a man may pursue a low ideal, or that a degrading belief 'works', would be absurd. In the case we are now considering, religion, in adopting the moral virtue of continence, strips it of all the limitations which are imposed on

CH. V it by the ethical law of opposites, and raises it to the absolute ideal of perfect chastity. In doing this, it merely prescribes an ideal, which need not operate as a universal rule of conduct in societies which are still subject to the laws of evolution. It does not refuse its rewards to men who have complied with the lower law of morality, even though they may have fallen short of the higher level of religious perfection. The religion of self-assertion, on the other hand, far from setting up any ideal of chastity, takes little account of the ethical restrictions on self-indulgence, and confines the legislation of the conscience within the narrowest practicable limits by permitting a multiplicity of wives and concubines.

Now, it requires no demonstration that, if an ideal has any practical influence whatever, the addition of a religious ideal to the original ethical tendencies of an individual, or of a race, must make a material difference, and powerfully affect both their conduct, and the course of their subsequent history. It is, moreover, clear that the direction of that influence will be determined by the character of the ideal. Both religions, moreover, reinforce their abstract teaching by the exhibition of concrete examples of the realization of their respective ideals; which at the same time stimulate imitation, and call forth the activity of the will by proving that the aims are not mere counsels of an impossible perfection. It is clear that this alliance, so long as it lasts, must turn the scale in favour of either of the two conflicting tendencies: that, where the beliefs of Islam domi-

nate, the lead will be taken by the tendencies of self-assertion; and, with Christianity, by the tendencies of self-repression. When a nation retains the government of an alien race, and at the same time postpones its own interests to theirs, it gives an example of the subordination of self-assertion to self-effacement: when a man preaches peace and good-will in the interest of his own trade, he reverses the precedence. Everything depends on the end. And it must be remembered that only a slight predominance is required in order to determine the direction of the whole. The extinction, or even the hopeless defeat, of either tendency, whether of evil or of good, would bring the whole process to an end. If you pull up the tares, you will pull up the wheat with them. The immediate question is not one of life and death, but of more life or less life. CH. V

Religion, to conclude, discharges for the rival tendencies of morality and ambition precisely the same function as it does for the rival theories of optimism and pessimism. For the hesitating and unstable conclusions of a rational induction, it substitutes a clear and authoritative decision. It is true that the answer is not always the same, but, whatever it may be, it is a matter of faith, and not of knowledge; and it may be relied on to serve as the basis of strenuous and consistent action for individuals, and still more for multitudes acting in unison. It may perhaps be objected that no authoritative decision is required, and that the superior claims of morality are always recognized. But the

CH. V facts are not so. Even in Christian societies, Swinburne and Nietzsche have innumerable followers, and a respectable philosopher like Prof. Sidgwick finds it hard to make a case for humility and obedience. But the answer which is given by Christianity is not ambiguous. Its highest ideal is a lamb in the hands of the butcher: its highest official title is *servus servorum*. Nevertheless, while putting self-abasement first, it is not unjust to the claims of the opposite tendency. Pascal says: 'Christianity enjoins man to acknowledge himself 'worthless and even abominable, and at the same 'time to aim at resembling his Maker. Without 'the counterpoise which each of these injunctions 'forms with the other his elevation would make 'him unduly proud, or his abasement unduly abject.' What we are thankful for is the hope, not of happiness, but of glory.

This, then, is the conclusion. There are two main tendencies, and both are equally necessary. In the course of evolution sometimes one takes the lead, at other times the other. When self-assertion takes the lead, the movement of evolution is in the direction of decay; when self-repression, it is in the direction of advance. The predominance of either is determined, where there is a religion, by its alliance with religion. The destruction of religion, with the total elimination of religious motives, is conceivable, though history has given us no example on any considerable scale. Should that contingency ever be realized, it is, I think, certain that self-

assertion, with its extensive apparatus of phenomenal rewards, would very soon gain the lead and keep it. Another contingency, and one of which history has given examples, is the destruction, not of religion generally, but of a specially developed form of religion. In that case, a higher form, when it has been destroyed, is replaced by a lower form. But the higher religions are allied to self-repression. In either case, then, whether all religion be eradicated, or only the higher form of religion, the motives of self-repression will be weakened, and evolution will be put back. CH. V

We now come to rewards. Rewards differ from ends of action in the same way as a potter's wages differ from the pipkin which is on his wheel. When a man diverts his intention from his end of action to the reward, the former must suffer, and the reward, too, is jeopardized. If Fabius had put glory first, his country might have been lost; and, with it, his own name. The rewards of action are happiness and glory, and one or the other of these is the object of every man's desires; but, if he makes them his end of action, they divert his attention from his work, and he is less efficient. On the other hand, as men will not work without wages, neither will many men exert themselves to the utmost without the prospect of a reward.

Neither happiness nor glory, as we understand them, can be offered as a reward by a religion of self-repression. Pleasure is the only form of happiness that can be obtained by direct effort, and the

CH. V great majority of pleasures are exclusive of participation with others. 'Angustae atque inopes divitiae, quas non habere totas pluribus licet, et ad quemlibet sine ceterorum paupertate non veniunt.'[1] Moreover, the pursuit of treasure upon earth is condemned by the principle of self-denial, and a religion cannot consistently offer as a reward what it condemns as an end. Even more distinctly the glory of this world is an end of self-assertion. It follows that a religion of self-denial must either forgo rewards, and leave out of account the desires of its followers; or it must distinguish them from earthly rewards, and place them in another state of existence.

[1] Quoted from Boethius by Mr. W. A. Butler in his translation of the *Purgatorio*, p. 167.

CHAPTER VI

ASCETICISM

To be sufficient for oneself, and consequently to have no need of society, without at the same time being unsociable, i.e. without flying from it, is something bordering on the sublime; *as is any dispensing with wants.*

KANT, *Kritik of Judgement*, p. 145.
(Bernard's translation.)

CHAPTER VI

ASCETICISM

ASCETICISM possesses this peculiar interest, that of all the principles of human action, there is none in regard to which the contradictions of well-informed opinion still are, and for a long time have been, more uncompromising. CH. VI

'Ask either the Greek or the Roman Catholic 'Church in what consists the most perfect Christian 'life, and both will reply: in the service of God, by 'the renunciation of all the goods of this life, of 'property, of marriage, of personal will and personal 'honour, in short in religious retirement from the 'world, in Monasticism. The true Monk is the true 'and most perfect type of a Christian.'[1]

Contrast with this: 'As every quality which is 'useful or agreeable to ourselves or others, is, in 'common life, allowed to be a part of personal merit; 'so no other will ever be received, where men judge 'of things by their natural, unprejudiced reason, 'without the delusive glosses of superstition and 'false religion. Celibacy, fasting, penance, mortifica-'tion, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude, and the 'whole train of Monkish virtues; for what reason 'are they everywhere rejected by men of sense, but

[1] A. Harnack, *Addresses and Essays*, i. 83.

CH. VI 'because they serve to no manner of purpose; neither 'advance a man's fortune in the world; nor render 'him a more valuable member of Society?'[1] We are reminded of the contradictory judgements on the value of life generally, which divide mankind into nearly equal camps; the partisans on either side regard their own case as self-evident, and do not condescend to argue with their opponents. An inquiry into the origin of the principle in dispute, and its effects in practical life, will perhaps leave us with conclusions that are less extreme.

Originally, the word signified any regular practice directed towards the attainment of a special end. Plato says: 'Only the want of those qualities which 'may be acquired by attention, and practice (*askesis*), 'and instruction is visited by indignation, reproof, 'and punishment.'[2] In a narrower sense, it is applied to the preparation for an athletic contest, such as a boat-race or a wrestling match, and then two elements are distinguishable: first, the actual practice of the act in which excellence is desired (like the practice of a set piece of music), and, secondly, the observance of rules of living, which by imparting bodily strength and vigour, contribute indirectly to the same result. The great majority of ends admit of no direct practice, and for the general purposes of life, the indirect element is by far the more important. When a man aspires to become a great general or statesman, it is not in

[1] D. Hume, *Concerning the Principles of Morals.*

[2] *Protagoras*, 323 D.

his power to arrange for a daily course of campaigns or parliamentary struggles: for those he is dependent on conditions which are for the most part beyond his control. What most men will strive after is the perfection of those special qualities which they foresee are likely to be of use to them in that course of life to which they are called. The painter will train his eye, the musician his ear and his hands, the athlete his sinews, the philosopher his intellect, and nearly all will aim at the maintenance of health. Whatever the object may be, it cannot be attained without the repression of many impulses, the due satisfaction of which would be productive of pleasure; and the highest forms of excellence demand the complete, or almost complete, renunciation of all ordinary satisfactions. They admit no competition and must reign alone. The pleasures of society, of the family, and, often, the good opinion of neighbours, must be renounced in their favour. Even pain and sickness, except so far as they may be disabling, become matters of indifference. CH. VI

The calculation of profit and loss, which is the distinguishing feature of prudential conduct, is entirely absent where the ultimate end is excellence of any kind. That excellence is often sought for its own sake, and not for the sake of any resultant pleasure, seems obvious. When a man's mind is set on some great ambition, he refuses to pay any regard to the number and quality of the pleasures he may be called on to sacrifice on the way; he will succeed at any cost. Here, no doubt, there is

CH. VI renunciation; the renunciation of all aims save one, and of all the pleasures that their satisfaction may be expected to produce. The retort that he really gains by avoiding the pain of an unsatisfied impulse, even if true, is beside the point, for what concerns us here are his conscious motives, and that is not one of them. Moreover, it is impossible to say whether it is true or not. Not only does it never occur to him to attempt the calculation, but neither he nor any one else could work it out if they tried. It must always remain an unverified assumption. To renunciation in the pursuit of the aims of ambition the term asceticism may be applied without obvious impropriety; but the renunciation is incomplete; one end is reserved, and when that is attained, the self-imposed habits of restraint are no longer necessary, and may be abandoned. They form no integral part of the character.

The practice of asceticism is often ascribed to a diseased vanity, or to indolence; and these, no doubt, may be among the motives which induce men to adopt its outward observances. The desire of applause, and of the material advantages which it may be made to yield, will be balanced against the trifling inconveniences of an affected holiness, and it will be decided that the former are better worth having than the rewards, and the latter of less account than the pains, of a life of honest labour. In such cases, again, there is no genuine asceticism; what we have is a low type of prudential conduct, which as soon as its true character is discerned,

excites disgust instead of approval. The practice is extremely common, especially in countries where the religious and social medium is unfavourable to true renunciation. Among a people like the Mohammedans, whose aims in this world are conquest and glory, and whose reward is a Paradise of the senses, the pretence of a life of self-denial must always be more common than the reality. That there should be even the pretence is mainly due to the influence which is exercised on their conquerors by subject races who are alien to them in temper, in intellect, and in traditions; and a warmth of climate, which removes most of the drawbacks of nakedness and of life in the open, is common to all countries where a false asceticism flourishes. In England, not only is the climate unpropitious, but a native aversion to asceticism has been confirmed, first, by commerce and a utilitarian theory of conduct, and, again, by a long and intimate acquaintance with the peoples among whom its counterfeit is most common. We are led, therefore, to extend to true asceticism the condemnation which is only deserved by its degraded imitation. That so much respect should be gained even by that, might suggest a doubt as to whether the reality must not possess some genuine value. CH. VI

It has been alleged that there can be no complete renunciation of all pleasures. Mr. Green remarks, 'No ascetic philosopher, as far as is known, has 'supposed such renunciation' (of the total of pleasures) 'possible, or if possible to be of value

CH. VI 'merely on its own account. It becomes possible 'only through the prevalence of desire for some 'object other than pleasure.'[1] The meaning of this, I venture to think, would be clearer if the distinction between will and desire were more rigorously observed, and the word 'desire' appropriated exclusively to that affection of the mind which directs it towards the realization of pleasure, as an end. In the case of asceticism there are at least two motives, which are distinguished by admitting no semblance of choice, and therefore no purpose at all; and to which the attribution of an object of desire in any sense of that word, is clearly superfluous and improper. The first of these is religious excitement; the second, weariness of life.

To illustrate the first kind of motive, I cannot, I think, do better than recount facts which happened within my own immediate experience.

A young Brahmin, not long out of his teens, good-tempered, good-looking, and prosperous, and happy in the possession of a newly married wife and infant boy, appeared in my camp one morning with an arm raised perpendicularly above his head. To all advice and expostulation he had one answer, 'the goddess Bhawáni had appeared to him in a 'dream, and had ordered him to do so. It was 'useless for us to remonstrate, as even if he wished 'to disobey her, he could not; he could not lower 'his arm if he tried.' And in that position of what to most people would be unendurable pain, he

[1] *Prolegomena*, p. 282.

remained for two days and nights. He then so far yielded as to allow himself to be laid in a cart, with his arm still extended, and carried to consult a well-known and highly respected ascetic, who lived in the neighbourhood. After a fortnight's absence he returned, smiling and in his right mind. The holy man had persuaded him that his dream was an illusion. In this case it seems impossible to impute any purpose or deliberate choice. There was nothing in the circumstances to justify the action on a calculation of algedonic profit and loss; there was not even an intelligent end of any kind. If it be asserted that obedience to the goddess was the motive, and her favour the end, it must be remembered that the command was peremptory, and that disobedience was impossible. There was therefore really no choice, and without choice there can be no intelligent purpose. Nor can insanity be suggested as an explanation, except by an arbitrary ascription to this particular conduct: on all other points the young man's judgement was eminently clear and sober. CH. VI

The second motive is weariness and distaste of life. This, too, may be frequently observed in Oriental countries, where the principle is clearly recognized, and its practical operation too common to excite surprise. In the West, among the nations of southern Europe, where the Catholic faith still prevails, it is hardly less common, and at one time, if not now, added numerous recruits to the monastic orders. Here, too, the renunciation is absolute and

CH. VI involuntary. There can be no choice where all ends are rejected impartially, and where the motive is irresistible; for, when once a man is overcome by it, he has disqualified himself from pursuing any reasonable end whatever. It is true he may still busy himself with ends that are projected into some other state of existence, but such ends are religious, and independent of calculation. They cannot be prosecuted except under the influence of faith, a principle which is the direct contradictory of reason, or calculation of any kind. Indeed, in all consistent religions whose informing principle is contempt of life, the future after death merely continues and completes the aspirations of the ascetic in this world. The end is either annihilation, or existence without consciousness, or a transcendental bliss, which, as an object of desire, is barely distinguishable from unconsciousness. A man who retains any desire for pleasure or positive satisfaction of any known kind in another world, is not genuinely averse to it in this.

Both these causes, however, are sporadic, and though they are common enough to call for notice in a paper which aims at anything like a complete account of the subject, they are not, by themselves, sufficient to explain the more general and important of the manifestations of the ascetic principle, which are found, usually, in connexion with religion: such, for instance, as the monastic orders, the institutions of fasting and penance, and the varied, and sometimes atrocious, tortures which have, in

many societies, taken a leading place in the education of the young. For these we must look for some more comprehensive explanation. CH. VI

The specific practices of asceticism—abstinence from flesh and from strong drinks, fasting, chastity, and the total renunciation of carnal gratification, as well as the severer forms of self-discipline, are at first recommended as pleasing to God. An advance in knowledge shows us that each and all of these abstentions, when practised with moderation, are, or under appropriate conditions may be, attended with practical advantages. A total abstention from flesh or from alcohol becomes for many, in advanced life, an essential condition of health. A moderation in other kinds of enjoyment, which for most men cannot be realized without a severe struggle, is necessary at all periods of adult life; and the same thing is true, at all periods, of the gratification of the simple instincts of hunger and thirst. All these kinds of abstinence are susceptible of a hedonic explanation, and are recommended on grounds of expediency. They pass out of the province of religion; and the feeling which is inspired by the sight of them is never very powerful. They are respectable, but no more.

In order to deserve the divine approbation, it was always, and still is, necessary to carry the same kinds of practice far beyond the limits of moderation, to a point at which all claim to the sanction of prudence must be abandoned. Even, however, at this point it is possible to discover an ethical

CH. VI justification, which, though not incompatible with the claim to a divine reward, is independent of it. That justification, and its attendant dangers, will be the subject of the following pages. It will be found that the fruit of asceticism is strength and elevation of character. And it is this that explains its alliance with religion; the hostility of science; and its popularity among races whose leading interest is personal dignity. There is no reason to suppose that, at the time when the practices were originally adopted, any but the immediate results were foreseen; and these were certainly not pleasurable. It is probable that all the varied asceticisms of India, the country where that tendency has received its most complete development, and from which it has spread, chiefly through the agency of Buddhist missionaries, into the most distant regions, had their rise among the primitive, half-savage races whom the Aryans found in possession when they crossed the Indus. It was only later, as in the case of Sparta, that the uses began to be clearly discerned; and it may still be doubted whether, if tested by the standard of pleasure and pain, there is any clear balance of gain over loss. In fact, we may be certain that there is not, and that the gain is purely ethical.

On the individual, the effect of a genuine asceticism is to purify and strengthen the character to a degree which is almost incredible. A man who has voluntarily endured, perhaps for many consecutive years, the severest privations and physical

torments, if his intellect survives the ordeal, returns to his former surroundings with a complete and unfeigned indifference to all their petty interests. He is purged (to quote Hobbes's account of pusillanimity) of the desire of things which conduce but little to his ends, of the fear of things which are but of little hindrance, and of the irresolution which loses the opportunities and the fittest occasions of action. He has learned to pursue his course without flinching and without distraction. His superiority is manifest, and is willingly conceded by the men with whom he associates. He speaks with authority, and not as others do. His personal ascendancy, his courage and his tenacity, make him an incomparable instrument for the execution of any purpose, whether good or evil. CH. VI

The Hindu intellect, following its characteristic bent, conceived that this acquired strength must increase without limit in proportion to the severity of the torments; and invented fables of men, who, by long and more than human penances, became stronger than the gods themselves. The endurance of pain and fatigue, of hunger and thirst, and of the extremes of heat and cold, and all the cruel discipline of a Spartan or Red Indian warrior, are inspired by a more practical appreciation of the same principle; and no education in which it is neglected is likely to produce heroes. The frequent, and sometimes protracted fasts which are prescribed by all the great religions, are addressed to the same end; and so is the mortification of the flesh by penance.

CH. VI By such exercises, not only does a man qualify himself by increased strength of character for his daily intercourse with his fellows, but he may also rise to an elevation of feeling which qualifies him for the higher forms of worship, and brings within his reach a mystic communion with the Divine Nature.

To this picture there is of course a reverse. The effect varies with the character of the individual, and the same course which will make one man a hero, will leave another a brute. For most men, excessive self-torments, even when not carried so far as to produce insanity, tend to become debasing; they make a man indifferent to the higher impulses, and incapable of sustained exertion. There may still be outbursts of violent activity, but they are short-lived, and usually dependent on the stimulus of drugs. When the practice is carried to a still further stage, it ends in stupefaction and insensibility. A single visit to a river-side fair in India will make us acquainted with examples of every kind: the holy man, decently clothed in cotton dyed with saffron, whose sole possessions are his staff, his rosary, and his bowl for alms, and who is the respected adviser and arbiter in disputes among people of all ranks, from the Raja to the cultivator; the turbulent bands of naked fanatics ripe for sedition and murder; the emaciated semi-conscious devotee, reclined on a bed of pointed spikes, or with both his clenched hands raised above his head, and the nails growing through to the back; and lowest of all

the sturdy and insolent mendicant who has adopted the ascetic line of life as his trade. As might be expected, the inferior classes constitute the numerical majority, and the unfriendly gaze of Western philosophy has been apt to overlook the nobler exceptions. CH. VI

A danger peculiar to asceticism is that the abandonment of earthly ambitions brings with it emancipation from law. To a man whose sole purpose is escape from all the interests of this world, good and evil become indifferent. In order to counteract this, two conditions are generally necessary: first, it must be joined to obedience, and submit to a strict discipline under an external authority; and, secondly, it must be directed to a good end. Each of these, no doubt, introduces a material modification in the idea of complete renunciation, as two different interests are retained, that of the monastic order itself, and that of the purpose it is designed to serve. Nor can it be said that either of these limitations is universally necessary (many great ascetics have been independent of them), but they are generally required, if for no other purpose, at least to prevent the corruption of the original impulse. Of the harm that may be done when discipline is wanting, and the aim is not good, the monks of Egypt furnish one out of many examples; but the decisive value of the end itself is nowhere more strikingly illustrated than by the Jesuits, whose effect on history, whether for good or for evil, has been of the highest practical importance. When their task has

CH. VI been the reclamation of untamed savages, and the spread among them of religion and enlightenment, the result has been almost wholly good, and any one in search of examples of sublime courage and self-devotion could not do better than consult the record of their work in Canada and in the Far East. In Europe, where their aims have often been political rather than religious, the benefit has not been equally unmixed. This is perhaps the place for remarking that the hermits of rural solitudes, who prefer the peaceful pleasures of the country to the excitements of the town, are not really ascetics. They have renounced nothing that they cared for, and except, perhaps, as a not very effectual protest against luxury and excess, their example is of little value.

In its more obviously social aspects, the chief functions of monastic asceticism are, first, the maintenance of an ideal which is opposed to the worship of Mammon and the corruptions of luxury; secondly, that interchange of thoughts and commodities between distant regions which is of vital necessity to the growth of a civilization; and, thirdly, the preservation of the belief in the natural equality of all men. The monastic orders, both in the West and in the East, are logically compelled by their professed contempt for worldly distinctions to welcome all men as recruits, without respect of race, or caste, or social position.[1] After admission, these distinctions cease to be remembered; whatever

[1] Some Hindus, however, recruit only from the twice-born.

their origin may have been, all the members are now equal; and a salutary object-lesson is presented to the outside world. Again, emancipation from family ties sets free the universal impulse to wander; enough of human frailty is left to demand the solaces and the security of companionship, and to suggest precautions against the dangers and the opportunities of solitude. Small parties, bound together by common vows, travel from country to country, carrying with them the latest news, and a knowledge of foreign institutions and customs. To these causes western Europe has to be grateful for the maintenance, through many centuries, of a common culture, and the ideals of a common humanity, and common allegiance to Emperor or Pope. In India the results are not less valuable: the caste system finds an effective antidote; and the veneration, which is willingly rendered by all classes, shows by concrete example that neither birth, nor power, nor wealth, nor any social distinction can claim an equality with holiness. This lesson is daily before men's eyes. I have myself seen two of the greatest nobles in Oudh, both of high caste, with incomes that would support an English dukedom, and dazzling from head to foot with brocade and jewels, rise from their seats when a little half-naked ascetic entered the room, and refuse to be seated except with his permission. Distant trade is maintained by troops of roving celibates, who, having no homes to detain them, carry grain and other natural products from one

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CH. VI province to another; and the spirit of a common nationality, which, whatever may be said to the contrary, is still strong in India, is fostered by the same agency. Any movement of a really national character would be wholly dependent on their mediation.

The part taken by the great monastic orders in the history of western Europe has been admirably described by Professor Harnack, in a recent essay,[1] to which I am indebted for much of what follows. Early in its existence, the Christian Church (and with that the prospects of civilization were indissolubly bound up) was confronted by a dilemma which could not be evaded, and which offered the choice between alternatives, either of which threatened her existence as the representative of an oecumenical religion. If she followed her manifest destiny, and set herself in the place of the falling Empire as the leader and guardian of Western civilization, its politics, its trade, its education, and its social institutions, she must renounce the distinctive features of her ethical teaching. The world was no more ripe then than it is now for the adoption of the Christian ideal in the affairs of daily life, and with the loss of that ideal, she would lose her religious character, and descend by insensible steps into the position of a purely secular ruler. If, on the contrary, she retained and enforced her ideal of self-sacrifice, and the rejection of worldy interests, she might endure for a time as

[1] *Das Mönchtum*, loc. cit., vol. i.

the creed of a small and unimportant sect, but she must renounce her higher aspirations. In becoming oecumenical she would cease to be a religion; in remaining a religion she lost her hopes of oecumenicity. In either case her future as a Church appeared to be doomed. From this difficulty she owed her escape to the appearance in Europe of monasticism, an institution hitherto peculiar to the East, which entered on its new functions through the gate which connects the East with the West. The monks of Egypt continued, and carried to extremes never intended by the Founder of their religion, the ideal of an ascetic life. Their example spread rapidly over the other provinces, and the ethical side of Christian teaching was safeguarded, while its political development received full scope. In its new home it was an exotic, and the conditions were in many respects unfavourable to its survival; in particular, the strenuous optimism and individuality of the northern races were wholly alien to its spirit; and it repeatedly died down, only to send up a fresh growth when the occasion demanded it. In the sixth and seventh centuries it was united with obedience, and reduced to system in the great monastic houses which were founded on the rules of St. Benedict; in the eleventh, a revival of its activity stirred the whole of Europe, and, by uniting its several nations in the Crusades, laid the foundation of modern civilization; two centuries later the mendicant orders came to the rescue of the Papacy, and saved the religious and political unity of the CH. VI

CH. VI Church; and the fourth and last great revival took place when the Order of Jesus sprang into existence as an antagonist to the pagan tendencies of the Renaissance. The very conditions which appeared to threaten its existence proved in the event to be the source of its peculiar strength. A continued and equable permanence under rigid rules would have denied it the capacity of accommodating itself to the requirements of an advancing civilization; but this peril was obviated by recurrent periods of decay; and each new revival was infused with the spirit, and conformed to the needs, of the era in which it occurred. In its Eastern home the permanence of monastic rules is adapted to the corresponding permanence of the social conditions. Western monasticism has to thank the uncongenial soil on which it grew for the distinction that it has a history; whereas in the East it has none.

When transplanted to a religious atmosphere, the principle of renunciation is often pushed to its extreme consequence: the object is the salvation of the individual, his escape from the world, and his mystical union with the Deity. To attain this end the most merciless torments are needed, and justified. St. Simeon of the pillar, and countless other devotees of Egypt and India, whose penances are less generally known, but not less revolting, are examples. The aim in these cases is purely self-regarding: there is no thought of the interests of others, and, though their powers of endurance may excite a certain degree of admiration, it is doubtful

whether, in India at least, where I can speak from personal observation, they are regarded as better men than their neighbours. CH. VI

Ethical respect is reserved for ascetics whose aims are different from these. The business of the world has hitherto been carried on, and, as far as we can see, is likely to be carried on in future, on a basis of compromise. No single principle is allowed an unrestrained activity, and renunciation which is not tempered by the retention of some worldly interest is of little, if any, value. The compromise in the case of the principle we are discussing enjoins the complete sacrifice of a man's personal interests of all kinds—his pleasures, his ambitions, and his family and social duties: celibacy and poverty are the vows which cut him loose from the ties of home and society—but it exacts from him a regard for an end which is not personal. For the successful working of this compromise between renunciation of the world, as far as its interests are personal, and devotion to an end which is not his own, the devotee must learn to merge his own will in that of an organized community. In all movements, the original impulse must indeed be given by an individual, but their continuance and effectiveness are dependent on the concert of many individuals acting under the commands of a leader. It is to the recognition of these principles that the Church of Rome owes the assistance she has obtained from the monastic orders at all the decisive crises of her history. The monks of the West, instead of

CH. VI directing their practice exclusively to the salvation of their own souls, made their immediate aim the establishment on earth of the Kingdom of God. This aim gave scope for the widest and most varied activities. The tasks which it imposed were, first, the reform of the monasteries themselves, and the restoration of the Christian ideal among bodies of men who, by a rapid falling away, had ceased to differ in anything but their celibacy from the most worldly of their neighbours. The second was the reform of the laity, the preaching of righteousness to Christian and heathen alike, the introduction in secular affairs of as much of the spirit of religion as they could admit, and the ministering of its consolations to all who were in need of them, and, finally, to uphold the strong arm of the Church, for whom and by whom the whole task was to be accomplished. For all this vast undertaking the monastic orders were specially qualified, not only by their singleness of purpose, but even more by the strength and elevation of character, which has already been insisted on as the most valuable result of an ascetic training. 'Hildebrand took from the cloisters for 'his agents precisely those whose self-dedication to 'unworldly aims was most thorough; for he knew 'that only that man would help him to conquer the 'world who hated it most, and was most anxious to 'escape it.'[1] He did not share the Scottish philosopher's opinion that the 'monkish virtues served no manner of purpose'.

[1] A. Harnack, loc. cit., i. 124.

For the production of that kind of character which the Church required, no severity of self-discipline could be excessive. If the world is to be moved, it is not the peaceful anchorite, whose life is devoted to the contemplation of God, and whose humble wants are supplied by Nature or by unsolicited alms, who has qualified himself for the task; but the fierce and pitiless self-torturer, who sits throughout the heat of a tropical summer surrounded by a ring of blazing faggots, or starves himself to the point of death, or stands waist-deep in the mud, the willing victim of swarms of venomous insects. The only limit to asceticism of this kind is the preservation of sanity and life, and even that must be disregarded, and left to the care of Providence. Thus only, or by means like these, may a man attain to the greatest possible strength of character, and to the most unquestioned ascendancy over the wills of others. CH. VI

But the ethical value of the force thus acquired depends, like all ethical values, on the value of the end to which it is devoted; and an ascetic life may be embraced for the prosecution of ends which are not good. Some of the most usual ends may be passed in review, with the caution that two or more may contribute to the same action simultaneously, and that the classification is largely ideal. The simplest of all is the distaste for life, which has already been noticed, and the desire to escape from its pleasures and its pains indifferently. This impulse might perhaps find its practical

CH. VI outcome in suicide, were it not for the feeling that with escape from this life, we are by no means assured of escape from the net of existence, and that a self-inflicted death, instead of quenching, may only intensify the torments of our lot. Whatever we may think of the metaphysical value of this belief, its ethical justification is complete and certain; for suicide is the one comprehensive treason against evolution, which leaves no room for repentance. And it is this, because it is the most complete misdirection of conduct that can be conceived. If freedom from pleasure and pain is desired, it must be aimed at, like all objects of desire, as a reward for the prosecution of ethical ends, and not by direct pursuit. It must be gained by the exercise of the highest and most intense activities, and not by the total extinction of activity.

Complete renunciation for the sake of a transcendental reward is liable to the same objection as suicide, but in a different form: for, whereas the reward to be earned by suicide is negative, or escape from pain, the reward which is set before asceticism, though it may not be pleasure, is a transcendental happiness; and even this, as has been shown in my essay on Happiness, is not a good end in itself, but only incident to the prosecution of a good end. Of this we need look for no better illustration than the life of St. Paul; whose end was the spread of the Gospel; who was indifferent to all considerations of pleasure and pain; and who, though not indifferent to a heavenly reward, no more took that for his end

of action than a sailor, who keeps his eye fixed on the north star, while his whole mind is bent on bringing his cargo to port. Both with suicide, and with self-torture for the hope of paradise, the motive is algedonic. The conduct in both cases is prudential, and not ethical; in neither case are the ends of evolution forwarded; and in neither are the ethical judgements interested. Or, if they are, it is in the same sense as they are interested in great crimes, as for example, in that supreme thief,[1] immortalized by Homer, who surpassed all men in theft and perjury. The admiration is of the same kind as is set up by all conduct, whether it be good or bad, which approaches the superhuman. CH. VI

In order, then, that an ascetic life may command the highest feeling of admiration on the part of others, it must combine a total disregard of both pleasure and pain with the most strenuous exercise of all the faculties, in the promotion of an ethical end: that is, of an end which promotes civilization, and raises mankind in the scale of evolution. And the way in which it promotes such an end is by raising and strengthening the human instrument by the mediation of which it is to be brought about.

In order to complete our survey of the subject, it is necessary to hark back for a moment to a class of conduct which has been noticed in an earlier part of this essay. It would perhaps seem arbitrary to refuse the name of asceticism to the self-denial, the

[1] *Odyssey*, xix. 395.

CH. VI strenuous and patient toil, and the indifference to the threats and the solicitations of pleasure and pain, by which men qualify themselves for the prosecution of great ambitions. Nevertheless, we see that, though conduct of this kind does not leave us wholly unmoved, the emotion it excites is weak, and not comparable with the fervour of admiration which is set up by the resultant achievements. What men admire in Napoleon is not his early training, but the conquests for which it was the preparation. The one was creditable, the other, stupendous. The explanation is instructive. The true ascetic has no conscious end but to please his God; and when he undertakes a task which is distinct from self-subjection, it is still in the service of God. His aim throughout is irrational and transcendental. The strength of character which fits him for that service forms no part of his conscious aim, but, like happiness, is incidental to its successful prosecution. With the asceticism of ambition it is otherwise. The aim is set in this world: at the best it is power or glory; at the worst, pleasure; though, in this last case, it ceases to deserve the respectable name of ambition, and becomes mere prudence. The whole process is rational, and falls within the comprehension of the intellect; and like all conduct of that kind it does not set up any strong emotion in onlookers. The achievement itself does set up a strong emotion; both because it is great in itself, and still more, because its results to mankind are incalculable, and cannot be connected with any

rational purpose: least of all, with the desire to make them happy. CH. VI

Thus we find that ascetic action, when it attains its greatest results, is completely dissociated from desire; and, that it is most highly esteemed when it is directed towards an end which is neither of this world nor personal to the actor himself, but imposed on him from without.

In my first draft of this essay I devoted a few pages to a study of the Jogis of India, but afterwards, not thinking that it was worth the space, I cut the subject out. Lately, however, in certain quarters both in Europe and in America, its claims to attention have been much exaggerated, and a brief notice may not be wasted.

The initial distinction between the Jogi and the true ascetic lies in their aims. The aim of the ascetic is the suppression of desire, and his undesigned reward is strength of will. The aim of the Jogi is strength of will, and he seeks to attain that directly by physical exercises which, in themselves, have little or no ethical meaning—such as the artificial regulation of his breathing, the fixed contemplation of his navel, and many others of the same kind. If he has any further end beyond the culture of his will, it is usually to gain influence, or reputation, or hard cash, by the exhibition of his accomplishments to those who are likely to be impressed by them. It would be unfair to say that these practices are wholly infructuous: on the contrary, the results are sometimes in the highest

CH. VI degree astonishing. The case of a Jogi who, at Lahore in the reign of Ranjit Singh, survived burial for a full month, under conditions which made fraud impossible, is well attested. They certainly obtain a surprising command over the special physical function to which their régime is directed: but whether they gain any special strength of will, or any exceptional command over external nature, is extremely doubtful; and if their ulterior object is the respect of their fellows, they fail. The general effect on their character is rather to debase than to elevate it, and among the more intelligent of their countrymen the feeling with which they are regarded is the reverse of sympathetic.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE CONNEXION BETWEEN METHOD AND FINAL END

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No comparison between the belief in free will and the belief in determinism will be complete if it forgets to call attention to, and place in a clear light, the conflicting conceptions of value which are derived from two conflicting postulates as to the nature of the final end of conduct. One man may believe that the universal final end of conduct must be looked for among the facts of experience: another will deny this, and believe that the true final end lies outside the bounds of experience, and beyond the reach of our conceptions and our definitions. We need not stop to repeat the account which we have already given of the various considerations which appear to tell for or against either of these two conflicting postulates. All that we need insist on is that they give rise to two different and conflicting scales of value: that the gods of one belief are the demons of the other; and the same conduct, which one qualifies as virtuous and wise, will be qualified by the other as bad, or, at any rate, as unreasonable. It follows from this that no practical scheme of ethics can be of the slightest use or value, or even barely intelligible, unless it makes

[1] With this may be read the second part of the essay on 'Measurements' in *The Ethical Aspects of Evolution.*

CH. VII it quite clear to itself, and to its hearers, whether the final end of conduct is to be sought for within the bounds of experience or beyond them. For the same kind of conduct, which on one supposition deserves approval, will, on the other, deserve reprobation.

Nor, until it has distinctly realized what its choice of end has been, can ethical inquiry take a single step in advance; for its choice of end must determine its choice of method. All inquiries, in all branches of thought, have the choice between two possible methods—the scientific and the teleological. It is impossible that both these methods should be employed at the same time for the solution of the same problem. The problems, indeed, are radically distinct. One method applies to all questions of the class—How did this come into existence? The other applies to the question—Why does this exist? It cares nothing for antecedents, and it infers existence, if it troubles itself with questions of that kind, from the necessity of the belief to our life and growth. A mistaken choice of method, that is to say, the attempt to solve any stated problem, in any branch of thought, by the use of the method which is not appropriate to it, is in its operation wholly futile and vicious. It is this latter point that I hope to develop in the following pages. We must begin by indicating briefly the principal differentiating features of each of these methods.

What is essential in the scientific method is its dependence on the postulate of uniform sequence,

or, as it has been inaccurately named, the law of causality, or of determination, or of necessity; all of these terms implicating concepts of purpose, or of controlling force, which the postulate, when clearly understood, excludes. With a slight and practically unimportant reservation, this postulate, when regarded as a law, may be accepted as absolute, and within the limits of its application, universal. That reservation is that it makes no allowance for evolution. In stationary conditions it might be regarded as universal. But evolution implies slight changes in the data of thought, of which the law can give no account, and which, indeed, contradict it. These changes, however, as they are continuous, do not affect the value of the law from age to age, and though we have, of course, no right to say that the law will never be superseded, neither have we any reason to suspect that its validity, such as it is now, will ever be affected by evolutionary changes in the data, as distinguished from the processes, of thought. Moreover, it must be remembered that the changes in the data of thought are so slow as to be practically imperceptible, and that they no more invalidate the application of the law of uniform sequence, than the presence of surds invalidates the conclusions of mathematics. CH. VII

The postulate of the scientific method being uniform sequence, its organon, or instrument for application to individual facts, by means of which it arranges them in classes, and draws conclusions,

CH. VII is number. It is true that a close examination of this statement will bring to light many insoluble difficulties, of which perhaps the chief is that it seems to involve the identity of a cause with its effect, but the fact remains that all our predictions that have a reasonable degree of certainty rest on a numerical basis, and that, where there is no number, the law of uniform sequence remains an inert and practically meaningless supposition.

Now number is abstracted from rhythm; and rhythm is the property of all concepts which are susceptible of being divided into equal units of space or time: and this susceptibility is common to all concepts which are derived from our senses; and is absent from all others which are not so derived. This, then, is another limitation to the universal applicability of the scientific method. It is of universal validity for those concepts which are derived from our sensations, but it has no application to concepts which are not so derived; and, though we have no reason to deny that any proposition, however nonsensical, may gain a meaning at some remote future, we have no better grounds for supposing that the application of scientific method may some day be extended to the problems of conduct, than we have for predicting that time will some day flow backward. It is true that there are still classes of sensation which have not yet been so classified, but the analogy from those which have already been reduced to law is so strong as to justify the belief that not only they, but also all others of the same kind which may

emerge from the fields of nescience, may be similarly dealt with. With all our concepts which are not derived from sensation, analogy points in the opposite direction. Not one of them has a distinguishable rhythm, or has been reduced to natural law; and the probability that none of them ever will be, is at least as strong as the opposite probability in the case of what are called natural phenomena. CH. VII

An illustration may be taken from the marks which distinguish man from woman. About those which are physical, and form the subject of science, there is no dispute. A long beard was sufficient evidence that Sir John Falstaff was not a washerwoman. What is the nature of the mental distinctions is a permanent subject of controversy, and it is even denied, by some, that there are any.

In its struggle for supremacy, the scientific method relies on one or two incontestable advantages. The first of these is that the sense of rhythm is the same for all men. That twice two makes four is true all the world over; and every one who can count will give the same number of beats to the same interval of space or time, independently of all peculiarities of racial or individual character. It follows that the conclusions of science have a universality which cannot be claimed by those of ethics, and set up that feeling of reality which is derived from an association which is constantly repeated, and always the same; thereby gratifying one of the fundamental needs of human nature. Moreover, the conclusions of science are in the nature of predictions, and,

CH. VII when rightly deduced, are invariably confirmed by experience. In this respect also they are independent of differences of personal character, being perfectly what is called objective. And in matters to which the method is appropriate they raise a corner of the veil which hides our future, thereby gratifying another of the most importunate of our needs. Ethics, on the other hand, makes no predictions at all; and the predictions of religion are indefinite, and are usually indebted, both for their acceptance and for their interpretation, to special endowments. However strong the evidence of their truth, it may be denied by an atheist; but no one ever doubted that a lighted match will explode gunpowder. These recommendations constitute a strong inducement to extend the postulate of uniformity over series of fact to which its method does not apply; and with regard to which it is neither true nor false, because it is unworkable, and cannot, therefore, be tested.

The test of truth in science is not to be found in the objective certainty of the fundamental hypotheses (such as the atomic constitution of matter, or the conservation of energy) which colligate its various lines of thought; nor in the objective reality of the data with which it deals. The first are usually admitted to be no more than provisional postulates, which must be given up as soon as they are contradicted; and the second are not susceptible of proof, or indeed of any other definition, except that of mathematical measurement. A scientific conclusion

is true when it rests on an accurate measurement of its data, and is deduced by a right use of mathematical methods. Its function is prophecy, and its prophecies will be confirmed by experience when it satisfies those conditions, but not otherwise. In other words, it works because it is good; and not, conversely, is good because it works. The test is purely formal, and quite independent of any purposive selection, or even creation, of the data. It would be a misuse of terms to call either a method true, or a proposition good. The method is good because it serves the end of defence against our environment; the proposition is true when it conforms to the method, and untrue when either the measurements or the calculations are wrong. Measurements are wrong when they contradict our sense of rhythm; and calculations when they contradict our axioms. Truth is not the same thing as goodness, but subordinate to it; as has always been recognized. I venture to suspect that logic may be an unconscious attempt on the part of the human mind to construct, for the philosophy of values, an instrument of the same exactness as mathematics. CH. VII

The facts, or concepts, to which the scientific method is inapplicable, are those of our internal experience; and their common function is, not the discovery of the future, but the determination of conduct. In a very real sense, they condition the use of the scientific method as a whole, inasmuch as the distinction between internal and external experience is itself purely teleological; and the pursuit of

CH. VII objective knowledge is a kind of conduct, the choice of which is determined, like all choice, by internal factors. All these concepts must be dealt with by the teleological method; and the fundamental postulate of that method is change, or evolution, or the absence of uniformity. The two fundamental postulates of science and ethics are thus contradictory; but, of the two, the postulate of change is the more comprehensive, and more accurately represents what may be termed reality. For the processes of science are always vitiated by what in mathematics would be called a surd. In order to be practically useful, change must be conceived as regular, but not necessarily as uniform, or at the same pace. Regular change at any pace or in any direction, but converging towards, or diverging away from, the same end is evolution. What binds together all the various lines of evolution is convergence towards a single end. This again is a postulate, and without it thought is impossible, for the alternative is chaos. The sole determinants then of all conduct whatever, including the selection of the scientific method for purposes of investigation, are the internal phenomena of ourselves; and the postulate which we must assume for dealing with those phenomena is, not uniformity, but change.

The organon, corresponding to rhythm in the scientific method, which conditions the application to facts of the postulate of change, or evolution, is value. In what we mean by value there is nothing abstruse or mysterious. Everything is a value that

creates a preference, and all our action is determined by preference. Even when the action is involuntary, the preference is there, though it may exist in the mind of another person; as when a master orders his servant to dig potatoes; and we have as clear a right to assume preference in the unconscious processes of the mind, as we have to assume rhythm in those processes of external nature which have not yet been reduced to scientific order. Conscious preference is the feeling which pronounces in favour of one out of two conflicting needs and beliefs; and all vital action grows out of conflict. Comparative values are ascertained by referring the things to be compared to a final end, and deciding with regard to each of them to what an extent it promotes or runs counter to that end; or is in harmony with, or contradicts, the processes by which that end is attained. In moral dilemmas the decision is given, after an adequate representation of relevant facts, but without calculation, by the conscience. In questions both of ambition and of prudence, the end is known, being, in the first case, glory, and, in the second, pleasure, and it follows that, in both, calculation is required. If for pleasure, which is the satisfaction of single impulses, we substitute happiness, which is the satisfaction of all, both may be realized as transcendental rewards. But, as a phenomenal end glory has a much higher ethical value than pleasure; inasmuch as it is associated with the higher forms of exertion, whereas pleasure is associated with the lower. CH. VII

These processes are the subject-matter of ethics,

CH. VII and in none of them is there any trace of rhythm. They are strictly continuous, and it follows that, as rhythm is the indispensable organon of science, the idea of a science of ethics is as absurd as the idea of an ethics of the differential calculus. Both are what Herbert Spencer would call pseud-ideas. The conclusions of the teleological method are not exact; neither have its values the universality and objectivity of number. No proposition in ethics, not even that life is preferable to death, has the universality of the proposition that two and two make four. In these respects it is at a disadvantage, when compared with science, as a competitor for popular favour. But it has one decisive advantage: it is elastic. In the same way as the fundamental postulate of uniformity demands exactness in its conclusions, so does the universal postulate of change demand elasticity, or the absence of exactness. Without elasticity it would be as little able to make use of its fundamental postulate of change, as science would be to dispense with exactness in the employment of mathematics. A second advantage which favours the teleological method is its appeal to the emotions.

Emotion is a universal concomitant of value judgements; and, in that connexion, has the effect of promoting the translation of the judgement into action, and of intensifying the energy which is thrown by the agent into the pursuit of his purpose. It is, I think, true that action and emotion are necessary correlatives; though the proportion between

the value of the end and the strength of the emotion may not be constant. Emotion is, therefore, of the highest possible value, but only in subordination to the value of the end. For all values, it cannot be too often repeated, are entirely dependent on the value of the end of action, and energy, when directed towards a bad end, is itself bad. This is true of the pursuit of science itself. No man can effect much, even there, unless he enters on his task with a strong faith, and strong, if colourless, emotion. But of the process exactly the contrary is true. Emotion in the application of the scientific method to facts is certain to vitiate the result; and there are no values. For the processes of science, the smallest facts, and those which the selective genius of action would be sure to overlook, stand on the same level with those whose magnitude at once forces them on the attention. Ethics has no concern with external facts, and very little interest in minimal values. If science seems to have values they are borrowed from ethics; and when one fact is more highly prized than another, it is because it satisfies some need or aspiration which is not to be measured by number, and which lies beyond the range of the scientific method. With science, emotion precedes activity and sets it to work, but it does not direct its course: with ethics, it accompanies it to the end, and when it fails, the activity is crippled. CH. VII

But, it might be urged, science has an end of its own—that is, the defence of our race against its

CH. VII environment, and it must, therefore, be possible to compare different scientific results with reference to the degree to which each of them promotes that end; and thus obtain a scheme of scientific values. The argument would be sound if we could foresee the future of evolution; but this kind of foresight has not been vouchsafed to us. For example, we have no means of predicting whether the conquest of the air will turn to our advantage or to our disadvantage. The decision on that, as well as on all other questions of the same kind, will, so far as it depends on ourselves, be given, ultimately, by our ethical, and not by our scientific development. And in the same way as ethical development has no known end, and can only be gauged by the accumulation of force, which may be used for purposes which are either good or bad, so scientific development has no other known direction except the accumulation of knowledge, which may be used either for our safety or for our destruction. Where they differ is that our ethical reactions give preferences and values, whereas the processes of scientific thought do not.

To put the matter briefly. Our thought begins with concepts. All concepts are gained by differentiation, or, what is the same thing, by definition. The process begins by distinguishing one individual from another, and is complete when it distinguishes a class from every other class. Whether or no complete definition is attainable, is immaterial: at any rate, classes can be made as distinct as we want

them to be. Classification, from the very beginning, is guided by purpose: we cannot represent it to ourselves as proceeding at random; and the initial purpose is forward evolution. All the products of differentiation, whether single facts or classes, fall under one or the other of two main classes. They belong either to the external world, or to ourselves. The quality which distinguishes these is that the first are rhythmical, or divisible into mathematical intervals; whereas the second are continuous. All processes within the former, whether of classification or of inference, are mathematical: within the latter class they are directed by the same final end which lies at the root of all thought. It is true that all purpose postulates a future: a final end would cease to be a final end as soon as it was realized; but the predictions of science are definite and lie within the world of sense. They assert that a certain association of events which is followed by a certain effect in the present, will, if repeated, produce exactly the same effect at any future moment, however remote: whereas the predictions of ethics are in the highest degree indefinite. All they tell us is: act thus, and it will be well with you; act otherwise, and it will not be well. They do not tell us what is meant by 'well', or when, or where, or how, the prediction will be realized. It is, therefore, more convenient, as well as more in conformity with the popular use of the word 'prediction', to refuse them that designation. Their promise is certainly not limited to the world of sense. Finally; though a rough

CH. VII uniformity of sequence between motive and action is postulated in all ethical inquiries; that uniformity gives us no assistance, either in classifying values, or in distinguishing final ends.

We may illustrate our meaning by a few observations on the effects, on fiction of all kinds, of the ethical and the scientific tendencies, respectively. The aim of fiction, so far as it is ethical, will be to raise and purify the character by an appeal to the higher emotions, and to this aim everything else will be subordinate. The pervading tone will be sublime and pathetic. The hero must be cast in a heroic mould; otherwise he will either fail to interest, or he will excite contempt and disgust, which are not elevated emotions. The plot and the incidents will be designed with the intention of calling into play, and throwing into the strongest relief, the noble qualities of the hero. The whole treatment will be broad and dignified, and will avoid irrelevant detail, which would distract the attention of the reader from the main purpose. All this is true, in the main, of tragedy and of comedy alike, the essential distinction lying rather in the choice of *dénouement* than the choice of aim. If tragedy is usually regarded as the higher form of art, it is because the qualities which are called forth by adversity are more heroic in themselves, and shine with a brighter lustre. The sight of a good man overwhelmed, through no fault of his own, by disaster, will have a more powerful and more elevating effect on the emotions of a spectator, than

the same man when he is crowned with wealth and honours. Savonarola on the rack and at the stake excites an emotion which is both keener and more elevated than if he were represented in a cardinal's hat. The representation of success is the proper task of comedy, and it can only be redeemed from flatness by that alliance of emotion and wit which constitutes humour, and retains a large infusion of the pathos which is an essential element in tragedy. The sole ethical criterion of this class of fiction will be the elevation of its aim, and its artistic value will be measured by its success in bringing about the realization of that aim. Both the end and the means must participate, in some degree, in sublimity.

So far as it is moved by the scientific spirit, fiction has no place for sublimity, or for the ethical values generally. Its appeal is not to the emotions, but to the intellect; and its aim is not to elevate the character, but first to excite, and then to satisfy, the instinct of curiosity. This end may be gained by the plot alone, and success will then be mainly dependent on the multiplicity and complexity of the events; or, and this is usually regarded as the higher form of scientific fiction, the same end may be attained by the minute and accurate analysis of character. In this case again the interest will depend chiefly on the multiplicity of the details. Breadth and simplicity of treatment will be out of place, and will tend to defeat the end of the writer. Such fiction will be indifferent to the moral worth

CH. VII of its subject. From a scientific point of view a knave is as interesting as a man of honour; or, if there is a preference, it is for the knave; for one of the reasons which make a surgeon prefer a dog to a man for vivisection. Pathos is an effect which is conditioned by economy, and by the rejection of everything that is out of place or discordant. The scientific imagination will endeavour to produce the same effect on the emotions by the accumulation of detail, and the greater the accumulation, the further it will be from success. The uncompromising delineation of a complete human character, which follows him day and night, into his bed-chamber and to the consulting room of his physician, must fail to excite compassion. The strength and the weaknesses of its subject will be too nearly balanced, and, as no two human characters are exactly alike, many of its failings will differ from our own, and will excite our disgust or our derision. In ethical fiction, a veil must be thrown over all failings except such as enhance the effect of the nobler qualities. Judged by scientific canons, the procedure will be dishonest. There would be much in the life of the good Samaritan which would detract from our admiration for his benevolence. That part of his history must be suppressed.

There can be little doubt that, when judged by its relations to evolution, that is to say, by its bearing on the best interests of humanity, the preference must be given to that form of fiction in which the aim is predominantly ethical. The aim of science,

as we have already said, is to throw light on some of the conditions of our existence in the future, and to provide means for dealing with them. Toward those aims it is obvious that fiction can contribute nothing. It has, therefore, no scientific value. From its ethical aspect, the influence of scientific fiction on our personal development can hardly fail to be detrimental. The mere gratification of a useless curiosity sterilizes the mind, and, when all values are neglected as unimportant, the lower will soon displace the higher. These are not opinions, but facts of daily observation. Fiction is at its best when it engages the scientific spirit in the service of ethics, and invests its characters and events with a reality which will enhance the effect of the ethical end, without distracting the attention of the audience. It will then reflect the whole process of forward evolution, which subordinates science to the purposes of ethics. When it allows the scientific spirit to overwhelm the ethical, it reflects the processes of decay. The opposition is of commanding importance, and lies at the root of all questions concerning the relations of the community as a whole to the literary activity of individual citizens; but, for the present, we must return to facts. CH. VII

Final ends, in all cases, grow out of preferences. The term, final end, means in the first place nothing more recondite than the explanation which a man gives to himself for preferring one course of action to another. When he asks himself why he prefers the Riviera to the east coast of England, he may

CH. VII reply: because it is warmer. Warmth, however, when regarded as a fact of experience, has only a scientific interest. It only gains value when it is considered with reference to its effects on human beings; and its general value will be merely a transcription from those. A diamond, when regarded as an object, has no greater value than a chunk of sandstone: its whole value is derived from the distinction which it confers on the man who possesses it. Philosophy, then, must inquire what are the subjective effects which make warmth preferable. Among other possible answers, it may be told that it favours health, or that it promotes enjoyment. Either of these has a sufficient degree of generality to be called a proximate final end. But they may easily conflict. Not all enjoyments are healthy, and not all physic is pleasant to the taste. Neither can be accepted as a universal explanation of even so ordinary a preference as that for the Riviera. Some people go there for health; others for pleasure. To the first health, to the second pleasure, is the final end. A value becomes a final end when, on being presented to the mind, it determines action. The business of philosophy is to discover the universal final end, under which all the proximate final ends of action may be subsumed, and co-ordinated one with another.

With this inquiry science cannot have the remotest concern. It is debarred by its own necessary assumptions from taking a part in it. Preferences have no meaning or importance unless they

determine action. A purely inert preference, or mere velleity, is of no practical interest, unless it is regarded as a possible spring of action in the past or in the future. But action implies change, either effected or resisted, and the consideration of change must necessarily be excluded in the application of a process which postulates uniformity. If 'will' be used to denote the origin of action, that, too, is necessarily excluded from scientific thought. Merely to posit the existence of will contradicts the fundamental postulate of that method. For without change there can be no will. We have already seen that the processes which are directed towards an end are continuous, and wanting in rhythm. And we thus find that all questions of final end contradict the scientific process both in its fundamental postulate of uniformity and in its necessary organon of mathematics, or abstract rhythm.

Science, however, that is to say, men of a scientific cast of mind, will always be blind to these difficulties and disqualifications, and will attempt to bring under their own method the phenomena of the human consciousness which are concerned with action. To this they are determined, in the first instance, by the natural tendency of their minds; and their choice will be recommended by the superior exactness and certainty of their method, where it can be employed. Another, and perhaps still more convincing recommendation is that it will appeal to their own vanity, and to that of their audience. By asserting that all experience, whether

CH. VII external or internal, is essentially the same, and subject to the same laws of uniform sequence, they exclude the supposition of all independent force. They thus leave to mankind an undisputed primacy of power, and flatter him with the dream of universal knowledge. But they ignore the inconsistency of engrafting the alien concept of power on a system of absolute uniformity, and they fail to recognize that, instead of demonstrating the primacy of man, they really reduce him to the same level with the blind forces of nature—the pestilence, and fire and tempest. Primacy is a question, not of number, but of value: values are wholly dependent on final ends; and with final ends science cannot possibly have any concern.

Man is regarded, throughout these essays, as a complex of conflicting tendencies, and his health, or welfare, has been identified with his advance in evolution. That, again, we have found to be conditioned by an equal growth of all the leading tendencies which our reason enables us to distinguish as proceeding from an apparently undifferentiated substance. His health, that is to say, his continuous advance, is at all times in danger from irregularities in growth; and irregularity consists in excessive growth of one or another among the conflicting tendencies, and the consequent decay, first of its opposite, and, finally of all the other tendencies which, collectively, make up the complex. The tendencies which fall into the background do not at once disappear, but continue to subsist in

subordination to the tendency which has become unduly predominant, and, it must be added, in logical contradiction with its postulates. Thus we have seen, in the preceding paragraph, that the concept of power survives in the system of science, where it has no use, and whose postulates it contradicts. Another concept which shares the same fate is that of final end. A final end implies change, and therefore contradicts the scientific postulate of uniformity; nevertheless, though it is logically inadmissible, practical considerations compel science to admit it. CH. VII

In the absence of conscious final ends, human beings would be no more capable of purposive action than if they were automata. This is, indeed, the condition to which they would be reduced by the full realization of the extreme demands of science. Evolution would then be finally arrested. The demands of evolution, so long as it continues to be an active force, will, therefore, necessarily impel scientific thought to the adoption of a universal final end of action; and this, as has been explained elsewhere, will always be pleasure. To this choice there are, indeed, two initial objections. In the first place pleasure is a subjective phenomenon; it cannot be measured, and it lies outside of the application of the scientific method. The second objection is that pleasure is not, originally, an end of action at all, but a feeling which is attached to success in the realization of an end of action, in the same way as pain is attached to failure. Nevertheless, pleasure is a phenomenon, and, on that

CH. VII account, it is acceptable to a method which deals with phenomena only. It is true that it does not belong to the class of objective phenomena; but science, in asserting its claim to deal with ethics, implicitly denies the distinction between objective and subjective. Finally, it must be admitted that pleasure, though not properly an end of action, may be made one.

That men actually do pursue pleasure for its own sake, and without regard to ulterior considerations; that they prefer one kind of pleasure to another; and that there are, therefore, hedonic values, are propositions which we have no reason to deny. Were it still true that pleasure never acted except as an indiscriminate reinforcement to all impulses, it would be the impulse itself which must always be regarded as the determinant. But there are innumerable cases where the impulse is satisfied without attaining its end; and, in those, the determinant, or purpose, so far as it is conscious, is pleasure for its own sake. The end of marriage is offspring, and pleasure is added as a reinforcement to the colourless impulse. It often happens that the natural end of the impulse is neglected, and the reward is substituted as an object of pursuit. Or, again, men will go on eating, for the sake of the pleasure, long after the appetite is satisfied, or sit down to eat when there is no appetite. It would be waste of time to pile up instances.

We may be allowed a further observation on this question. It may happen that an impulse is so

sudden and overwhelming as to exclude deliberation. CH. VII
On this kind of action the judgements of ethical philosophy have varied. It is perhaps the safest opinion that, unless the inability to resist is due to a habit which was at first voluntary (and this is far from being always the case), the action must be regarded as purely involuntary, and animal, and, therefore, irresponsible. We find, indeed, that, in cases where the inability to resist has been produced by habit, there is usually time for deliberation, and a clear determination to resist; but that neither is effectual. The occasion may be foreseen, but, when it arrives, the determination fails. In such cases the impulse is irresistible in the end, but it is not sudden and overwhelming. This suggests a distinction between the animal and the purposive elements within the same process, which is applicable in nearly all cases of everyday conduct. We may revert to hunger as our illustration. A man must eat, and the whole course of that impulse, from birth to satisfaction, may be purely animal, and deserve neither praise nor blame. But he may have a choice as to the means by which it is satisfied. The food may be chosen either because it is wholesome or because it gives pleasure, and, in this matter, the man is certainly responsible. If he is determined by considerations of health, his end will still be ethical: if by the prospect of pleasure, his end will be pleasure, and the natural end, which is life, will be forgotten.

There is yet another form of misdirection: that

CH. VII is the pursuit of glory as an end in itself. I have distinguished this class of conduct as ambitious or self-assertive, and have included under that heading the pursuit of all forms of influence, literary and artistic, as well as political or social, in which success is dependent, not on the will, but on the possession of natural gifts; and where the ethical value is determined, not by the success itself, but by the further end to which success is turned after it has been achieved. No general account of the bearings of conduct on evolution will be even nearly complete, if it fails to give an account of the main channels along which this tendency may discharge itself.

The sight, or apprehension, of success, in action which is prompted by motives of ambition, sets up two kinds of mental reaction, of which the first may be distinguished as admiration; and the other, as ethical approval or disapproval. The distinguishing feature of forward evolution in general, and independently of its moral value, is the accumulation of force; or what, for want of a better word, may be called greatness: and, as this commands the admiration of mankind, so will the success of an individual in the pursuit of it. Admiration will thus be paid to actions which are great or distinguished in themselves, even when their ulterior tendency may be to overthrow or to destroy civilization. This quality in the human mind to admire anything that surpasses all previous experience, even when the result is clearly mischievous, is illustrated by every page of

history. The hope of admiration as a reward is easily converted into the pursuit of admiration on its own account. Success, in that case, is neither good nor bad in itself. It is judged by its consequences, and without regard to the admiration which it has set up.

This, then, is the distinction between admiration and ethical approval. Every civilization, and every individual human achievement, may be regarded by itself as a stage, or single fact, in evolution, and may be appraised either by a comparison with its past, or with reference to its promise for the future. The feelings which are aroused by our comparison with the past will be admiration, if the achievement rises above the previous level, and contempt, if it falls below it. But, from the nature of the case, there will be no reference to a future end. Ethical values, however, are necessarily relative to an end which is to be realized in the future; and they have no concern with the past, except in so far as its influence may extend beyond the era on which the judgement is being passed. A civilization (or individual achievement), however advanced, and however admirable on that account, will be judged as good or bad according as its tendency is toward further advance, or toward decay. All ethical judgements postulate regular change or movement, in one direction or another, with reference to some point which is conceived as being in the future. Admiration postulates no movement in advance of the point which has already been reached. Conduct, then,

CH. VII which has no ulterior end besides power, or the admiration which is its reward, has no positive ethical value whatever. The pursuit of it is neither good nor bad: the achievement is of the same kind, ethically, as the austerities of St. Simeon Stylites. As a protest against softness and luxury it may meet with approval, or it may be condemned as a waste of force.

It is only when regarded as a means to some ulterior end, that power acquires an ethical value. Whatever form it may take, whether as political or military pre-eminence, or as riches, or as art (and under this term I include literature), power may be employed either ill or well, and is, in fact, as often devoted to ends that degrade as to ends that elevate. And at this point we must draw a further distinction. The ulterior end of political power, or riches, by reference to which it will be qualified as good or bad, must be something exterior to, and differing from, themselves. Art, on the other hand, though it may often be pursued for purposes which are wholly external to itself, such as riches; or for decoration, in which case one art becomes the handmaid of another; may also be pursued on its own account, and with no external object.

We may take riches, considered as a special form of power, as an example of the truth that the value of power, generally, is conditioned by the end to which it is devoted. A man, like Ricardo, may pursue wealth only as a means, and retire from the pursuit as soon as he has amassed as much as will

leave him free for the prosecution of other aims. In his case, the end, from the first, was the advancement of knowledge, an end of high ethical value, which imparts its own value to the means by which it is attained. If his object had been the corruption of the legislature, his pursuit of riches, as a means to a bad end, would itself have been bad. Again, his aim might have been display, or the credit of having created something in the nature of a record. His object then would have had no reference to the future, and no ethical value, either good or bad.

Finally, as in the case of a miser, money may be valued as an end itself, and without reference either to the past or the future. Conduct of this kind proceeds from a clear perversion of impulse, and, on that account, is always condemned. In all the above cases the standard of judgement is ethical. Against these we must set that very large class of actions, exceeding all the rest combined in at least apparent importance, in which riches are pursued as a means of pleasure, or for the avoidance of pain, or, in short, for luxury of any kind, in small things or great. In these, the standard is pleasure. It is very seldom that any one of the above motives operates singly in the direction of individual conduct; or that the individual himself is aware without the severest self-examination, which of them has the predominant influence over his own. And it is the same with nations. When Napoleon called us a nation of shopkeepers, he did not mean to deny us the possession of other springs of action. He only

CH. VII selected the one which, in his opinion, was predominant.

Art and literature, like riches, may be pursued either as a means or as an end in themselves. They may be used as a means to promote the political ends of a party, or of a despot, or of a rebellion; or to further the personal ends of the artist himself; and those ends may be either power or riches. When used as a means, their value will be derived from the value of the end to which they are addressed. When pursued for their own sakes, they differ most materially from riches. The whole value of riches is derived from what they can purchase. They are of use only as an equivalent, and the equivalents for which they may be exchanged are, without exception, objects of the world of experience, which either have no ethical value at all, or no independent value by themselves. They can buy the means to power or pleasure, but they cannot buy things like virtue or wisdom or happiness. The value of riches is always as a means to a phenomenal end; which end may, it is true, become either good or bad when it, in its turn, is treated as a means to a further end. But, as an end in themselves, riches are absolutely devoid of all value whatever, whether phenomenal or ethical. And, in saying this, we merely repeat the judgements both of prudence and of morality.

With art, on the contrary, the highest value is attained when, like virtue, it is pursued for its own sake, and not with the object of realizing any known

ulterior end. It may then be said to aim at its own perfection. But perfection in art resembles the end of evolution in this respect, that our conceptions of what it is are bounded by the highest point which has already been attained, and do not reach a hair's-breadth beyond that. Unless we postulate some further, unknown, end, which has not yet been attained, there is no room for further evolution, and no real perfection. We may, if you like, instance the Sistine Madonna as the highest achievement of art; but no one will say that progress beyond it is impossible; still less, that the final end of art is to reproduce it. Another necessary condition of perfection in art, as in ethical evolution generally, is a multiplicity of ideals. No single ideal, known to us now, could combine the aims of the Dutch and the Italian schools of painting; and if one were discovered, and adopted as universal, there would again be an end to evolution. No room would be left for genius, or a creative imagination. The distinction, then, between riches and art, as objects of valuation, is this: riches have no value except as means to a known end, and derive their value from that; art only attains its highest value when it is not used as a means to any known end. CH. VII

This short analysis of motive is far from being complete, and it would be easier to continue than it is to desist; but it is perhaps sufficient to support the remark that, throughout the whole range of human conduct, there are two ends, and two only,

CH. VII which are furnished with scales of value, and which, therefore, admit of being dealt with by the teleological method. One of these ends is within our experience, and is pleasure; the other is external to our experience, and cannot form a part of our knowledge, though it may of belief. The first question in all ethical inquiries is, which of these two ends furnishes us with the criterion by which we do, in practice, distinguish good from evil? To this all other questions are subordinate. Kant and Herbert Spencer agreed in postulating an unknown basis of knowledge, but they differed in their location of the end of action. The first placed the end of action in the unknown, and found the criterion of value in the commands of the conscience; the other placed it in the known, and made pleasure the standard of value. Notwithstanding their agreement in taking the unknown as their starting-point, the difference between their ethical systems is fundamental, and finds expression in conflicting judgements on nearly every class of conduct. The practical value of every system of ethics, as well as of every special line of conduct, depends exclusively on the nature of its final end. All attempts to supply a metaphysical basis are really irrelevant. The metaphysic, if one is wanted, should follow the ethics, and ultimately, like the ethics, be derived from the ethical judgements.

There are many objections to the recognition of pleasure as the universal final end; but the more important of these have been stated elsewhere, and

the only criticism which I wish to insist on here is the following. In the first place it may be admitted that the claim is plausible; for not only is pleasure the invariable concomitant of all successful action, but it is also, by perversion, the actual final end of many kinds of action; and it is easy to overlook the distinction between its function as ally and its function as principal determinant. Again, though there are many other final ends within experience besides pleasure, they are all of them partial and conflicting, and none has even the appearance of a title to be regarded as universal; so that Hedonists are, in a way, justified in asserting that pleasure is the only conceivable final end which can be regarded as universal. But, though all this be granted, we are as far as ever from the discovery of a criterion between good and evil. We should still, for example, have no reasonable ground for a preference when the conflicting systems of Kant and Herbert Spencer are offered for our choice.

This follows as a necessary consequence from the selection of any phenomenal end as the universal end of action. If we take pleasure as that end, and hedonism postulates that no other end is even conceivable, all action, without exception, will be determined by the prospect of pleasure. But the value of an action is always derived from the value of its end: value arises from conflict, and, if the end is always the same, there will be no conflict, and no distinct kinds of value. All action will be of the same

CH. VII value, and the distinction between good and evil will disappear. If it be answered that there are degrees of pleasure, and our choice ought to be determined by the prospect of the greatest pleasure, it will still remain true that our choice is only between degrees of the same object, and that if the greatest pleasure is good, so also is the least, though in a lower degree. Moreover, there are the old objections: first, that if by greatest we mean most intense, the most intense pleasures are attached to conduct which all men rate at a low value; so that, if our conduct is scientifically determined, we not only ought to, but must, behave ourselves like beasts; and, secondly, that if the difference is one of quality and not of intensity, this implies a difference of value of which science can give no account. Nor is the case altered if we accept the suggestion that pleasures are produced in such unmanageable quantities that one crowds out the other, and that our duty (if the word be pardoned) is so to act as to secure the most. The conflict is still between pleasure and pleasure, the net result can be nothing but pleasure in greater or smaller quantities; and there will be nothing but goods, or degrees of good, to make our choice from.

To sum up: the acceptance of the scientific method as universally applicable condemns us to select our *summum bonum* from among the goods of experience. Among those goods there is only one on which our choice can fall, and that is pleasure: the selection of pleasure (to omit other obvious objec-

tions) effaces the distinction between good and evil, and leaves us destitute of all scales of value, and all reasonable grounds for preferring one theory of ethics, or one class of action, to another: the selection of any other final end, from the world of experience, even if that were possible, must have the same result. We are thus brought round, by a review of the practical consequences, to the same conclusion as we drew from the statement of the formal character of the method itself. No method which is based on postulates of uniformity and mathematical necessity can find a place for the concept of value. That concept postulates regular change, or evolution, or want of uniformity; and it is the necessary implement for working out all theories of human conduct. A final end is an integral part in every ethical system: a method without a final end is vitally defective, as it does not help us to discern good from evil. The same thing is true of all systems which adopt a final end from the world of experience; and a system which combines the teleological method with a phenomenal final end is not only useless, but self-contradictory as well.[1] CH. VII

We must distinguish between the consequences which flow from the belief in pleasure as the universal end, and the value of pleasure as one among

[1] I have not considered happiness as a possible final end, because it is generally admitted by philosophers, and universally felt by the laity, that happiness can only be realized as a reward for goodness, and that its direct pursuit is useless.

CH. VII a number of proximate ends. It is the first of these, that is to say, the value of the belief, which has engaged our attention in the previous pages. The relative value of pleasure, when compared with the value of other proximate ends, resolves itself into the question; is the pursuit of pleasure good or bad? does it promote or retard the realization of the final end of evolution? This question has already been dealt with at large in other parts of my inquiry. But we have still to remark that, if the universal final end of action lies outside the limits of experience—and this is a hypothesis which it seems impossible to avoid—the recognition of a distinction between good and evil, which applies to all classes of conduct whatever, amounts to the assertion of a phenomenal dualism within the bounds of experience.

This seems all that need be said about the effect on ethical theory of the belief that pleasure is the sole end of conduct. It destroys all ethical distinctions, and, with them, all possibility of either a science or a philosophy of conduct. A few words may be added about the effect of the same belief on religion. If pleasure is the only end of action, it must also be the end of Divine action. But this supposition is directly opposed to experience, and it is doubtful whether any human being could address his worship to a deity whose acts were so frequently inconsistent with his aims; but with no worship there is no religion. Again, supposing this difficulty to be overcome, the worshipper would be

restricted to pleasure as the object of his prayers: his religion, in that case, would be degrading; and, as elevation is the only test of a religion, false. Religion demands an end which is humanly inconceivable; and only then will the Divine end and the end of evolution agree. CH. VII

Note.

Under the general term 'glory' I include all the rewards of self-assertion; not only the hope 'that the clear spirit doth raise to scorn delights and live laborious days', but also such humbler ambitions as that of the tradesman to stand well in the opinion of his fellows, the lady to win admiration by the costliness of her apparel, and the almost universal desire for social success. These aims may easily be distinguished from pleasure. A higher standing in society is desired for its own sake, and not for the prospect of superior felicity, and posthumous fame cannot be identified with pleasure of any kind. As a motive, glory is perhaps as common as pleasure, but no school has ever set it up as the *summum bonum*. The best account of it I am acquainted with may be found in the fifth book of St. Augustine's *De Civitate*. In that, he ascribes the sacrifice of his sons by Junius Brutus to '*amor patriae laudumque immensa cupido*'! but, whatever explanation Brutus may have given to himself, the real determinant, in that case, was probably a pure sense of duty, with no ulterior object.

CHAPTER VIII

FREE WILL AND DETERMINATION

Lo maggior don che Dio per sua larghezza
Fesse creando, e alla sua bontate
Più conformato, e quel ch' ei più apprezza,
Fu della volontà la libertate:
Di che le creature intelligenti
E tutte e sole furo e son dotate.

DANTE, *Paradiso*, v. 19–24.

Everywhere, as we pass from the ancient to the modern, we find what the fashionable philosophy calls differentiation.

MAITLAND, *Constit. Hist. of England*, p. 165.

CHAPTER VIII

FREE WILL AND DETERMINATION

MODERN determinists are in the habit of discredit- CH. VIII
ing the belief in free will, by calling it antiquated or barbarous; implying, if antiquity is the sole objection, that a belief which has stood the test of many centuries is less likely to be true than one which is new and untried. But, whether this be the case or not, their chronology is itself at fault, and the relative antiquity of the two doctrines is not what they suppose it to be. Determination was pushed by the Hindus to its extreme limit in the Sankhya philosophy, which was cotemporaneous with the dawn of serious thought in Greece, and may have been the parent of the Pythagorean theory of numbers. That philosophy did indeed admit the existence of a personal self, but as a mere mirror, which reflected events without influencing them, and, therefore, could in no way interfere with the succession of cause and effect.[1] Buddha, at a not much later date, dispensed with this empty shadow, and left nothing in existence but the chain of events, connected by inexorable law. Among the Greeks themselves, Leucippus and Democritus, and their followers the Epicureans, presented the theory of determinism

[1] R. Garbe, *Die Samkhya-Philosophie.* Leipzig, H. Hassell, 1894.

CH. VIII in its most uncompromising form. 'Materialism is as old as philosophy, but not older,'[1] and the philosophical recognition of free will followed at a much later date.

If the objection is, not its antiquity, but its loss of practical influence—and the two things are of course quite different—the mistake is much more serious. Philosophical determinism, though existing side by side with its rival, has never had any appreciable influence on practical affairs. It is not obsolete, if only because it has never come into use. Free will, on the contrary, is the basis on which all the most important beliefs and institutions of society have been constructed, and it still retains its guidance of the relations between man and man, in all cases where human actions are regarded not as bare events, but as events which have a value. Whether he recognizes it or not, the most strongly convinced determinist is, in this respect, on exactly the same footing with the believer in free will. He habitually acts as if that doctrine were true, and cannot, indeed, act otherwise. He is angry with, and may be punishes, a servant who, through negligence or malice, breaks a valuable cup; but he is not angry when the misfortune could not be helped, or when he hurts his foot against a stone; and, if he is, his anger is unreasonable and brutish. Even Mr. Mill does not escape; for he tells us that punishment is justified when a man's 'will is in a thoroughly hateful state'. A more consistent determinist would

[1] F. A. Lange, *History of Materialism*, i. 1.

have reminded him that gangrene of the mind, CH. VIII
even more than gangrene of the body, deserves pity, and not hatred.

Mr. Mill's expression would have been less open to objection if he had used the word 'disgusting' instead of 'hateful', because that would have transferred the judgement from the category of morals to that of aesthetics; and aesthetics has no use for the concepts of free will and responsibility. It puts man and beast and vegetable on the same level. All three may be disgusting, but only the first can be hated. A man does not deserve punishment merely by exciting disgust, or, if he does, the offence is against the pleasures of his fellow men, and not against their morals. To modern tastes it is probable that St. Anthony the Great would have proved disgusting; but no serious man would judge him a criminal. His punishment might have been social ostracism, but not prison.

Whether the will is really determined or free is a question we do not propose to take up. It is not easy to feel an interest in problems which we suspect of being either unmeaning or insoluble. With the question of the effects of a belief, either in free will, or in determinism, it is otherwise. These may be investigated with some prospect of success. The inquiry might take two distinct lines: it might trace the effects of the belief either on abstract thought or on practical conduct. The first of these questions has been dealt with elsewhere, and it has been shown that the application of the methods of

CH. VIII determinism to problems in which subjective factors are implicated must necessarily be unfruitful. We need not consider that question again. Our present purpose is to apply to the doctrine of the freedom of the human personality the same method which we have used in discussing the problems of religion. We will begin, in the same way, with the remark that, for the purposes of ethical inquiry, all that concerns us is (1) what men believe ; and (2) in what way conduct is influenced by specific articles of belief. The question of the scientific truth of this or that belief is altogether irrelevant to an inquiry which has for its object the classification, under a single governing principle, of all the various springs of human conduct; for all the actions of men are guided by their practical interests, and never (at least ultimately) by their scientific reason. If it is in the power of his beliefs either to raise a man to the stars, or to sink him to the pigsty—and this is the necessary postulate of all teleological thought—it would be superfluous to inquire into their relations with the law of uniformity. In the clash of such mighty practical interests, metaphysics must hold its peace; and we are unmoved by the silly mock-heroics about its being better to be damned with Plato than to be saved in the company of less eminent teachers. What that means, if it means anything, is that it is better to be a pig with a belief in 'Ideas' than an angel with a belief in free will. Science, it is true, gives information about the future, without which men's relations with their environment can never

rise above the stage of barbarism; but it supplies no ends. The ends must already be there before its information can be put to use. It is then used as a means only; and when it influences choice, it is by indicating whether an end is attainable, or which of two conflicting ends is the more easy of attainment. Even in this capacity, its use is neither universal nor of supreme importance. In order to succeed in the highest enterprises, a man must erase the word 'impossible' from his vocabulary, and set at nought the warnings of experience. CH. VIII

It would be absurd to doubt that all men who are normally constructed, and not under the influence of a perverse philosophy, do believe in their personal freedom. The proposition 'I am free to act in the way I think best' is a rude translation into words of a feeling which is common to all men, and as much a part of their organic outfit as their arms and legs. The question why they should have that feeling is as purely teleological as the question why they should have any other part of their organism, and a man who would persuade us that the feeling is unreasonable, and should therefore be dropped, takes up much the same position as the fox in the fable, who recommended his friends to drop their tails. A philosopher who imagines that he has got rid of the belief still retains the feeling, and acts on it habitually.

What then, it may be asked—if the feeling survives after the belief is lost—do we gain by taking for our subject the belief, instead of the feeling

CH. VIII itself? A full answer would open up the whole question of the functions of thought and language; and all that need be said here is—

(1) That its expression in a proposition which functions as an article of faith, is the natural form which is taken by every feeling or instinct, as soon as it becomes conscious; and that, when this natural development is denied it, the result is that, sooner or later, the feeling itself atrophies. This is seen very clearly in the case of religion, where the impulse to worship decays, as soon as the beliefs in which it clothes itself are destroyed by a rationalizing philosophy: mental growths differ from physical in being much more variable, and more liable to distortion and decay.

(2) When the institutions and customs which are based on the belief, and which are the final stage of evolution from the basal instinct, are attacked by the scientific reason, it is, and must be, the belief itself, and not the instinct, which forms the centre both of the attack and of the defence. To attack the belief in free will is to prepare the way for the extinction, or the degradation, of the sense of autonomy.

The products of this class of crystallization, like everything else in nature, are never exactly the same, but vary from moment to moment, and from individual to individual, and in the same individual at different stages of growth, according to the character of the individual and the interests of the moment. The result is a chaos which, unless

definition intervened, would render impossible the communication of abstract thought from man to man, and from age to age; and which would neutralize the higher functions of language. CH. VIII

An excellent illustration may be found in the loose employment, among ourselves, of the word 'fear'. The concept of fear has its roots in a certain kind of instinctive behaviour in the presence of danger. When an animal, even at the stage of development when it cannot be credited with susceptibility to pain or pleasure, is threatened with loss of life or limb, it may behave in one of two ways: it may either avoid the danger or meet it. When the tendency is to avoid danger, by running away, or shamming death, or otherwise, the tendency becomes permanently associated with a specific form of emotional reaction; and that, as soon as it comes into consciousness, we label fear or cowardice. When, on the other hand, the tendency is to meet, or oppose, the danger, it becomes associated with another kind of emotional reaction; and that, when it is kept in hand by foresight, we label courage, or, when not so modified, audacity. Fear, or the tendency to avoid danger, is opposed to forward evolution: it is condemned by the ethical judgements, and is branded as disgraceful in the highest degree. Courage, for the opposite reason, is approved by the ethical judgements: it is always admired; 'vim temperatam Di quoque provehunt in maius.' About audacity men are not unanimous, but it is never despised, and there are circum-

CH. VIII stances where it may be preferred to courage. The Victoria Cross is earned by an extreme, and not by a moderate or calculated bravery.

We are often told that the large armaments of our time have for their cause the fear of war. We may be permitted to examine this opinion in the light of the preceding analysis. Now the only circumstance in common between fear and preparation for war is the apprehension of danger, and the same apprehension is, to the same degree, a necessary condition for courage. Without danger there can be neither fear nor courage. What distinguishes the two emotions is, not the circumstances in which they arise, but the tendencies to action which are set up by one and the same external stimulus: that is, either flight or opposition. Now, when a nation prepares for war, its intention must be to oppose the danger, and the resultant emotion is courage. The word 'fear', then, is employed in a sense which is diametrically opposed to that in which it is commonly and properly understood. It would follow that the soldier who keeps his powder dry should be court-martialled for cowardice; while another, who conceals himself in a ditch while his comrades advance, should be decorated. This particular perversion of meaning is common in our times, and it is no doubt prompted by a strong impulse to avoid war, and to discredit warlike preparations. But it does not stand alone. Similar perversions are to be met always when contradictory interests are involved, and in no case are they more

prevalent or more mischievous than in the current conceptions of freedom—whether it be political freedom or ethical. The only protection is by definitions, which, without aiming at extreme exactness, must be at least sufficiently exact to exclude opposites. CH. VIII

We see then that the proposition which we have chosen for our text is open to two objections; (1) The word 'fear' is used in a sense which directly contradicts the sense in which it will be understood by the hearer, inasmuch as it is used to represent an emotion which is always denoted by the term courage. This is a psychological fallacy. (2) It promotes action which contradicts the moral judgements and reverses evolution. This is moral falsehood. It will, I think, be found that this sequence is invariable, and that the misuse of terms in psychology will always lead to moral falsehood.

We will now proceed, first, to propose what we believe to be the true meaning of 'freedom of the will'; and, secondly, to enumerate some of the accounts of it which are open to the above objections, that is, that they do not represent the feeling of which the word 'freedom' is an interpretation, and, further, that they lead to immoral conduct, and are therefore ethically false.

In describing the will as free, what we mean is: first, that it has a causal influence in determining conduct; and, secondly, that its action is not susceptible of being included or calculated among the empirical antecedents to the immediately consequent event; nor is it itself influenced by the

CH. VIII empirical events which immediately precede it. It does not form a link in a chain of empirical causation. It follows that, with all the events which are conceived as being influenced by it, the empirical antecedents may be exactly and exhaustively known, but we should still be unable to predict the event; or, to state the same idea in a different way, the same empirical antecedents may occur on two different occasions, and the results may not be the same. Every act of the will initiates a new series of events. Antecedent to action there may be many different motives, and the number may be added to daily. One of the functions of punishment is to supply a new motive which shall compete with others already in existence. The stronger motive will result in action. But what constitutes its relative strength? On this point the determinist will probably say, the resultant pleasure or pain. This explanation, at any rate, is now seen to be inadequate. The believer in freedom holds that what gives one motive the victory over its opponent is its selection by the will, and that it is that which constitutes what we regard as its superiority in strength. The mere circumstance that a choice is determined by the will is, indeed, no test of its value. If the will is good, the choice will be good, and the action good: if evil, bad. In cases of free choice, the action may indeed be determined immediately by the motive, but the motive has no force of its own, and the ultimate determinant is the will.

It is by these considerations that the freedom of

the will is brought into connexion with the phenomena of the conscience, and with the problems of good and evil generally. The conscience, as we have indicated elsewhere, it not itself a motive, but the colourless umpire between two conflicting motives. It furnishes no other inducement to action but obedience to itself; and it always throws its weight, which, with a good man, should be irresistible, on the side of that motive whose resultant action is in the direction of forward evolution. It is, therefore, the phenomenal representative, or equivalent, or vehicle (for we can form no clear idea of the interactions which subsist between the real and the phenomenal) of the good will. A good will, then, is (for practical purposes) identical with the conscience, and the good man is he who is disposed to obey it: the bad will is what prompts men to select motives which the conscience rejects. CH. VIII

We are thus enabled to attach a clearer meaning to the noble lines with which Virgil takes his leave of Dante on the threshold of Paradise:

> Libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio
> E fallo fora non fare a suo senno.[1]

There is a freedom to do ill, and a freedom to act rightly, and, in all of us, the will lends its influence sometimes to one class of action, and at others to the other; but the freedom which has an ethical value is that state of the will which brings about, first, that proper adjustment of the impulses of self-assertion and self-restraint which conditions the

[1] Dante, *Purg.* xxvii. 140.

CH. VIII greatest possible output of activity; and, secondly, the concentration of all the motives in the direction of advance, and the extinction of all conflicting motives. This is an ideal state which is never realized in the world of phenomena. While that connexion lasts, the will indeed is free, but it is not perfect; it is neither wholly right nor wholly healthy; and it may lead a man astray. In the same way as Aristotle recognized no other kind of happiness as worth striving for but that which is derived from the exercise of the faculty in which we most nearly resemble the gods, so does Dante identify freedom generally with that kind of freedom which possesses the highest ethical value.

The above is a statement, as clear and uncompromising as I can make it, of what I conceive to be implied in the popular doctrine of the freedom of the will. But we still require a clear comprehension of what is denoted by the will which is said to be free. In psychological writings the term 'will' is usually employed to denote the phenomena of choice, determination, and conation, which precede action in the human consciousness; and it is objected to people who are persuaded of its freedom, that they leave these phenomena wholly undetermined. Such people are therefore called indeterminists. This is not a correct statement of the doctrine as I understand it. Believers in the freedom of the will agree with the strictest determinists in holding that those psychological facts to which the term 'will' is appropriated are completely determined;

where they differ is in holding that in the determination of all action that is called voluntary there is a wholly incalculable element which is not within the boundaries of the empirical world, or subject to its laws. The believer in freedom might add that, whereas the phenomenal antecedents might or might not have a scientific value, the ethical value lies precisely in that element in the determination of which we can form no scientific conception. CH. VIII

I may take this occasion to notice the charge that thought along these lines is anti-intellectual, or retrogressive, or, in rhetorical language, obscurantist. Nothing could be more remote from the truth. To limit the jurisdiction of the scientific reason is no disparagement of the intellectual processes generally. On the contrary, it greatly enlarges their scope. The mere act of delimitation discovers a new province, more extensive than the other; while it brings to light new, or hitherto neglected, processes of thought. Instead of narrowing our range of beliefs, it saves from extinction the great majority of existing beliefs, which, equally with the beliefs of science, are the products of a long course of evolution; and it removes an effective bar against the development of thought in the future. In showing that reason is not restricted to one method only, it discloses another method, concurrent, and in some respects superior. The enemies of freedom are not those who assert, but those who deny, the freedom of the will, and they are at the same time the enemies and the destroyers of every kind of

CH. VIII differentiation. The philosophy of evolution looks to the future; to developments rather than to origins. Beliefs which are irrational when co-ordinated by the law of uniform sequence, become rational when referred to the concept of a universal purpose; and this is true, not only of particular beliefs, but of evolution generally.

It will be observed that the will is used in two different senses: sometimes to denote the phenomena of volition, and, at others, to denote their transcendental determinant, the self; and that when freedom is predicated of the former it is in the sense that they are not completely determined by any law of which we have scientific knowledge. Whenever we use the word 'choice' we imply the causality of a non-empirical self. A decision which is completely determined by antecedent events is not a choice. In that case a man is said to have no choice. The sense of determination is a psychological fact, which can only come into existence after the determination is made, and not before.

It has been argued that when the choice of a particular line of conduct has been determined by a motive—if, for instance, a man has selected a course of action because he believed it to be his duty—his decision has a cause, to wit, the motive; and that he is then not free in the only sense in which the determinist must deny freedom. If this is indeed the whole doctrine of determinism, the advocate of free will has no reason to dissent. A motive, every one must admit, is a necessary feature

in all reasonable action. Moreover, if a man acts without a motive he is an automaton, and in the case of unmotivated action, if there is such a thing, it is likely that, were the precise nature of life understood, a complete explanation might be furnished by the law of uniform sequence. Whether it is motivated or automatic, every action has a phenomenal antecedent, which may be regarded as its cause. So far the libertarian is in full accord with the determinist. The question which divides them lies further back, and behind the motive. It is (as we have already indicated) this: when two motives conflict, what governs the decision which accepts the one and rejects the other? The voice of duty never makes itself heard except as the ally of one of two conflicting motives. The whole point in dispute between the two schools of thought is: what determines the selection of that motive which has the sense of duty for its ally? There must be some determinant besides the sense of duty itself, inasmuch as it very often happens that the injunctions of duty are disregarded, and that the motive prevails which duty condemns. According to the libertarian, the selection, when there is a choice, is made by the free will, which may be either good or bad. If science has any explanation I have not seen it. Its usual course is to cut the knot by a denial of the existence of a choice. CH. VIII

There can be no doubt that the sense of self-determination, of which we are all immediately aware, does, in fact, mean the freedom to adopt

CH. VIII either of two conflicting motives which are presented simultaneously, or consecutively, in our consciousness; and not merely the freedom to exert conation, after the choice is made. The latter view would be not only a misrepresentation of fact, but also obviously absurd. For it implies a second choice after the first has been completed—the choice, to wit, between prosecuting the line of conduct which has been decided on, or leaving it unprosecuted; and, as there can be no choice except between conflicting motives, this postulates a second pair of motives to choose between; and so on *ad infinitum*.

There is another interpretation of the term which must not be left unnoticed: that is to say, the view that action, or the will to act, may be called free in so far as it is determined by the varied constituents of a man's own character, and not by external forces. Freedom, it is said, is equivalent to self-determination. This treatment of the question, though it rests on the authority of no less a name than Spinoza, is characterized by Kant as a wretched subterfuge,[1] and it certainly is misleading. There would be a fundamental distinction between determination by one or the other of these two classes of antecedent, if there were any fundamental distinction between the classes of antecedent themselves, and in that case the appropriation of the word 'freedom' to one class rather than the other might perhaps be justified on the questionable principle that a man

[1] *Analytic of Pure Practical Reason*, p. 266; Abbot's translation, p. 189.

may use what terms he likes, so long as he leaves no doubt as to his meaning; but, as a matter of fact, there is no such fundamental distinction between external and internal antecedents when regarded as mechanical determinants of conduct. The internal determinant is the character of the actor, and that is being moulded every moment of his life by forces over which he has no control. No man of sense will believe that a fundamental distinction is constituted by the fact that the external influence was exercised two or three steps back, instead of directly, on any special action. CH. VIII

Moreover, the term self-determination, if the self is nothing but the aggregate of its own empirical attributes, and if all empirical events are governed by one and the same principle of causality, is devoid of meaning. Whether the determination came from within or from without, in both cases alike it would be empirical or mechanical. The whole ground is already taken up, and the self, as an individual active influence, would be a mere phantom, entirely destitute of teleological significance. It would be as inert as the consciousness of the Agnostics, but with this difference, that it is not, like the consciousness, an empirical fact whose existence it would be absurd to deny. We must therefore reject this definition, not so much on the ground that it is illogical, but because it evades the issue. To say that freedom is a particular kind of empirical determination is no answer to the question; is there no other kind of determination except the empirical? Should it ever

CH. VIII be shown, and that is not likely, that the idea of freedom was at first suggested by a distinction between two empirical processes, we should even then be no nearer to an answer.

There is another explanation, which does not transcend, at least in intention, the phenomenal world, but which, as it is rooted in dissatisfaction with the rigidity of the mechanical explanation, is a nearer approach to what we require, and is in one sense more valuable, and in another more dangerous, than the mechanical explanation itself. It deserves, therefore, a careful consideration. It is, if I understand it aright, the following: Even in the processes of external nature, men of science do not assert the complete absence of spontaneity; why, therefore, should they refuse to admit a similar element of spontaneity in the processes of thought? We may perhaps recognize this spontaneity in the voluntary effort to attend, independent of the collision of impulses which it accompanies, and contributing energy to the result. The object, then, of conscious effort would be 'to deepen and prolong the stay in 'the consciousness of innumerable ideas, which would 'otherwise fade more quickly away. The delay thus 'gained might not be more than a second in duration, 'but that second might be critical—it might seal our 'doom.'[1] The effect of this appears to be that the law of uniform sequence is not universal, but only occasional, and that though it is sufficiently prevalent to establish long odds in favour of any result that

[1] Prof. W. James, *Principles of Psychology*, i. 453.

may be in conformity with it, the betting would never be on a certainty, even though we were fully acquainted with all the cognizable factors in the problem. CH. VIII

We may hasten to express our high sense of the value of this conception and briefly indicate wherein, in our opinion, its value lies. What, then, appears to us to be valuable is its recognition of spontaneity as a factor in the processes of thought and of external nature alike. That it is to be found in the processes of external nature is not only admitted by most men of science, but is, further, essential to any clear conception of evolution. Evolution, as has elsewhere been pointed out, is not a rearrangement of existing factors, but the coming into being of new ones. Now the mechanical law is limited in its range of application to changes in previously existing facts: of new facts, which have not yet come into being, it can take no cognizance. If, then, there is such a process as evolution, the operation of spontaneity is a necessary hypothesis. It follows from this that mechanical law is not an ultimate universal fact. Its value is hypothetical, and lies solely in its utility as a method in dealing with the existing order. The ultimate fact, both in external and in internal processes, is spontaneity; and spontaneity means nothing but freedom from mechanical law.

So far the processes are on the same footing. But in practice, and it is in practice alone that we are at present interested, there is this essential difference. Ultimately, indeed, all changes, even in external

CH. VIII nature, must be accounted for by some principle of evolution which, in the present state of our knowledge, we are unable to reduce to law, and which we must therefore regard as spontaneous; but immediately, and in practice, we find a uniformity in succession between one strictly defined event in the external world and the event next following it, which, though complete exactness can never be demonstrated, is sufficiently exact to enable us to make reasonably certain predictions. Not only is the truth of this law demonstrated by the widest induction, but its application, in cases where it is applicable, is justified by the value of the results. Even this, moreover, is not all that can be said in its favour. The experience which has become conscious in men, and has by them been formulated as a law, extends to the beginnings of life, and operates as a guide in the lowest forms of regulated interaction between animals and their environment. Like the contradictory belief in freedom, it has descended to us through countless ages, and we are equally unable to divest ourselves of its influence. Its daily employment in our dealings with our inanimate environment blinds us to the underlying principle of spontaneity; for which, indeed, in those transactions, we have no practical use.

None of this is true of the processes of the mind. Not one of these has as yet been reduced to scientific law; and though, in our dealings with our fellows, we are compelled to act as if those processes were regular, it is with a diffidence which is often justified

by the results, and which offers a lively contrast to the reliance we feel on the promises of natural law. On the other hand, all our social beliefs and arrangements, our religion, our morals, our political institutions, and our laws, are based on our belief in spontaneity and in its related concept of responsibility. These have never been reduced to natural law. The attempt has never been made except by men of science, or of an allied school of philosophy. In every case it has failed; and success would subvert the foundations of our civilization. The distinction is no doubt an acquisition of the human intellect. If we are blind to it, we descend to the intellectual condition of the puppy, who is ignorant of the difference between the certainty that hot broth will scald its mouth, and the high probability that the uplifted lash will descend upon its ribs. CH. VIII

Thus, while it is no doubt true that for both classes of phenomena—that of extension, as well as that of thought—both classes of causality—that of law, as well as that of freedom—must be recognized; they are not invested with the same relative importance in both. On the contrary, in passing from one province to the other, their relative values are reversed. In the realm of extension, law; in the realm of thought, freedom occupies the foremost place, almost to the exclusion, in each, of the opposite method of explanation. Of this fourfold proposition, one only of the members is likely to be disputed; that, namely, which asserts spontaneity in the processes of external nature. By extreme

CH. VIII determinists, it would no doubt be denied. Whether it is really true we need not stop to consider, but it seems to be necessarily implied in the concept of natural evolution. The proposition that our civilization is actually based on the recognition of personal freedom, is one which cannot be denied by any one who has the slightest respect for facts. It may indeed be asserted that it ought not to be; but it cannot be denied that it is so in fact.

Thus, it does not satisfy our requirements to assert that, though over nearly the whole field of experience the reign of a natural law must be conceded, there still remains a small class of phenomena, inconsiderable both in number and in importance when compared with the variety and range of the remainder, in which the reign of law cannot be conclusively demonstrated; and that within that narrow and insignificant province, but not elsewhere, we are at liberty to indulge in our native propensity to believe that we have an independent personal existence, and are something more than the complex of phenomena which we relate with that person. Whether that be true or not, it is not what we mean when we speak of liberty to choose. The mere power of fixing the attention is quite a different thing from the power to exercise a deliberate choice between two conflicting impulses; and in those cases where a deliberate choice is of most value, that is to say, where we are asked by duty to repress impulses of overwhelming strength, the interposition of a self, thus limited, would be of no efficacy. The

gift, in short, is not worth having. We should still be met by the old argument from presumption. We should be told that this was not the first time that a reservation of this kind has been made, and had proved untenable: that it has been the habit of the upholders of spiritual powers and influences to claim as their province all those phenomena which had not yet been classified or reduced to natural law; and we should be asked whether so trumpery an idol as the power to arrest the attention for a period of, at the most, two or three seconds, was likely to escape the fate which had overtaken predecessors of far greater pretensions. CH. VIII

Finally, the concession necessarily presupposes the free choice for which it appears to offer itself as a substitute. What, we must ask, determines the individual in the selection of that one out of many conflicting impulses which he will assist with prolonged attention? It must be either blind chance, in which case the concession would be worthless; or the same class of consideration as would have guided the choice had the special spiritual influence not been there; and in that case the self is superfluous, or at the best, it is no longer independent, but a submissive and unquestioning slave to natural forces. What, in fact, are we to understand by spontaneous? If it means wholly undetermined, we introduce an element of chaos, which is more or less important in proportion to the range of its application: if we mean determined by a transcendental cause, we are, in a restricted sense, libertarians;

CH. VIII and beside these two there is no other meaning which could distinguish it from mechanical.

To recapitulate: when we speak of our actions as free, we do not mean that they are wholly undetermined; nor by 'will' do we mean the feeling of conation which follows on choice of motive; nor do we mean that our selection is of our actions themselves independently of their antecedent motives; nor do we mean that action is free when it is determined by subjective motives and desires, and unfree only when determined from without; nor, finally, do we mean that freedom may be predicated only of a small class of mental processes, which are really or apparently spontaneous, and, as such, not to be explained by their empirical antecedents. What is meant is, that, in all cases of voluntary action, the determination is by some kind of influence which is external to, and does not form a part of, the processes of empirical law; and that this influence operates, not directly on our actions, but on our decision between conflicting motives, in such a manner that our actions, though the motives may be the proximate empirical causes, are ultimately determined by a form of causation which is not empirical. Finally, it is believed that this influence, which is external to the universe of phenomena, is individual and personal, and we identify it with ourselves, regarding it, indeed, as our only real and personal self.

Before passing on to the next section of our inquiry, we may indicate, very briefly, the province

within which the activity of the free will is asserted, and the class of events which are influenced by it. In order to do this, it will be necessary to retrace in outline the conclusions we have elsewhere stated as to the origin and functions of the moral judgements. We have already attempted to show that it was not possible to bring those judgements under any explanation by natural law, and that, unless we could discover a teleological explanation, we must abandon the attempt to reduce them to order. We have, therefore, no choice but to employ the teleological method, whether we like it or not. It appeared, nevertheless, that a survey of the world of experience discloses no universal end towards which all our actions, or even those only of which we approve, are directed; but that, on the contrary, it raises the strongest presumption against the existence of any such end. But teleology, without either purpose or final end, is sheer nonsense, and in no way superior, for purposes of explanation, to the absence of method, or chaos. It follows that we have no choice but to assume the existence of a final end, which is not to be found within the world of experience, and which is, therefore, unknown to us.

Although, however, the end itself is unknown to us, we are left in no doubt as to the direction which our actions must follow with a view to its realization. That is pointed out with sufficient clearness by our ethical or moral judgements; and that direction is the path of forward evolution. That this is their function there are no grounds for doubting, and

CH. VIII there is no other way of accounting for them that will survive the test of serious and impartial criticism. These judgements fall into two classes: one of these, which may be distinguished as the purely ethical, interprets the feelings with which we regard genius and other great qualities which are the gifts of fortune and not to be attained by purposive effort. The other class is constituted by the moral judgements, which are prompted by the sight of obedience or disobedience to the commands of conscience, and to the moral law which is founded on those commands. It is in the province of morality, and there only, we must assert the activity of a free will: that is to say, of a free choice between the better motive and the worse. A good will promotes, and a bad will retards or sets back, the progress of evolution; but there is no need to assume that either can affect its direction by a hair's-breadth in any other way, or impress on it any desired character, or deflect it in the slightest degree to this side or that of its pre-established course. A man's motives are given him. He may choose between them, but he does not create the dilemma. This agrees with the purely formal character of the conscience, which merely commands or forbids, without promising anything or revealing any trace of phenomenal colour; presenting, in these respects, a complete contrast to desire.

It is indeed clear that the whole scheme of free will, conscience, justice, and freedom, is one of organic connexion, and that one part cannot be

given up without the sacrifice of all the rest. The whole of morality, with the moral judgements, is based on the conscience, and the conscience, it cannot be too often repeated, is not an impulse connecting a known stimulus with a known end, but an arbiter between two such impulses when they conflict; accepting one, and rejecting the other, without giving us any reason for its discrimination. The conscience is a phenomenon, inasmuch as we are all aware of it, and it exhibits all the characteristics (variability, &c.) of phenomena, but, not being an impulse, and having no other stimulus besides the conflict of motives which calls it into play, it cannot be determined except by some agency of which we are not aware. It follows, again, that the choice to do evil is equally free; for, if we are free to accept the biddings of conscience, we must be equally free to reject them. But criminal justice is based entirely on morality, being, by definition, equality in moral values between the offence and the punishment. That, therefore, rests on the unknown agency which guides the conscience. Finally, political freedom is necessarily conditioned by justice, and is itself the necessary condition of forward evolution, and of all that makes happiness valuable. We therefore find that the freedom of the individual, in his social and political relations, together with his prospects of the reward of happiness, is connected by an unbroken chain with his freedom, as a transcendental personality, to find his expression in the conscience, or against it.

CH. VIII Throughout this essay the word 'ethical' is opposed to 'prudential', and the latter is identified with the use of the scientific method and, consequently, with the denial of free will. The affinity between science and expedience rests ultimately on the ascription of universality to some known end of conduct. There would at first sight appear to be no need that the end should be pleasure, but, in practice, it always is; for philosophers who adopt as their end an ideal perfection can never give a clear definition of what that ideal is, and if they did, they would fall into the error of prescribing a universal end, and thereby, as we have repeatedly shown, arrest the course of evolution. Happiness may indeed be hoped for, but as a reward only, and never as the direct end of conduct. Whatever the end of expedience may be, it has, in being known, this advantage for science, that there is no obvious absurdity in the pretension that it may some day be realized, like the art of flying, by the use of scientific methods: whereas the same pretension cannot be made when the end which is posited is not known. The ethical method, on the other hand, when the end is placed beyond the confines of experience, must rely primarily on an analysis of the ethical judgements on conduct; and they again necessarily postulate freedom, inasmuch as they do not come into existence at all except on the sight of conduct which is believed to be consequent on a free choice. The opposition then between morality (or ethics) and expedience is essentially the same

thing as the opposition between free will and determination; and that again is the same thing as the opposition between a transcendental and a phenomenal final end of action. CH. VIII

We may now pass on to some of the practical objections which have been urged against a belief in the freedom of the will.

Of these, the one that is perhaps most frequently insisted on is this: that the recognition of an unaccountable element of causality would prevent our calculating the results of our conduct, and paralyse our activities. An obvious answer is that we are now in that state of uncertainty. People do not suppose that they have a sure prevision of the consequences of their actions; but their activities are not thereby paralysed, or even enfeebled. The activities of the best men are limited by their powers, and sloth is due to the love of pleasure or the dread of exertion, and not to intellectual uncertainty. The prudent man is he who is prepared for unforeseen contingencies; and a man who felt the same certainty as to the results of his own or another's conduct as he would as to the results of a chemical demonstration would speedily fall behind in the race. Our recognition of a supersensible determination, and of our consequent inability to predict with certainty or completeness the results of human action, far from paralysing, operates as a stimulus to our energies, by giving play to the powerful emotions of faith and hope. A rigid calculation of what was possible would shut the

CH. VIII door on that emotional heat which, in its lower forms, is the excitement of the gambler, and in its higher, one of the most valuable of the elements of our strength. Unless we habitually exaggerated our chances of success, those chances would not be half as great as they are at present. Our very illusions are among our most useful assets. Should the dreams of science ever be realized, men, instead of being more powerful, would be far less powerful than hey are at present. The energy of unreasoning enthusiasm will have become extinct, and unreasoning enthusiasm is a much stronger incentive to action than any emotion that is consistent with scientific certainty.

The needs of daily life are satisfied with a degree of exactness which is far short of what is required for the purposes of science. The man who, in order to test the wear of an engine, keeps a register of the distances it has traversed, can afford to disregard the minor denominations of yards and feet. If he keeps accounts with the object of regulating his expenditure, he has no need to enter every small coin he has received and paid out. His purpose will be fully attained by a rough record, and he will save his time for other and more important employment. But, in the calculations of science, a slight inaccuracy, such as would have no importance in daily life, is sufficient completely to vitiate distant predictions, and to introduce confusion into all related branches of knowledge. The rough regularity which is all that is wanted for our practical purposes, and which,

in their case, is all we can make sure of, is not to be regarded as identical with mechanism, and does not necessarily exclude the causality of freedom. The mere fact that such a rough regularity, greatly inferior to what has been ascertained in the operations of external nature, may be noticed in the course of human action, is not sufficient to establish an identity of law between the two kinds of process. CH. VIII

It is true, no doubt, that men in daily life frequently act on the unconscious supposition that human conduct is determined by mechanical law; but it is no less true that men of science act on the equally unconscious supposition that, at least in many cases, it is not so determined. Men of science will indeed go much further, and consciously admit teleological considerations in a scientific argument, not necessarily to its disadvantage; as is shown by the remarks of Priestley and Harvey, quoted on p. 83 of my *Ethical Aspects*. Finally, even if our knowledge of the connexion of our motives with their antecedents on the one hand, and their effects on conduct on the other, were so accurate as to enable us to predict future actions with certainty, we should be no nearer than we are now to an explanation of values.

There are other arguments, which are based on the familiar device of crediting an opponent with an absurd opinion which he never professed, and then going through the solemn farce of demolishing it. Such are the following: a volition is a perfectly undetermined choice between two motives. When

CH. VIII it is over no trace of it remains behind; therefore it is absurd to blame a man except at the moment when he is under the influence of it. Directly he has brought off his murder, and turns his mind to refreshments, he is neither better nor worse than other men. Nor is he more likely than any one else to repeat the offence; therefore it would be wrong to single him out for punishment. For the same reason it would be absurd for a man to feel shame for any past action of his own. There are many other conclusions from the same premiss, any one of which would serve as a *reductio ad absurdum*, and it is in fact absurd, and is held by no one. Every one, whether he be determinist or indeterminist, holds that volitions are determined by the self; the question which divides them is: what is the self? Arguments like the above are addressed to the uninitiated. *Decipiantur.* But it is precisely here that the practical mischief comes. No one need care what views are held by a philosopher, so long as he keeps them to himself. It is the multitude that really count. As we have already made clear, Free Will does not deny the determination of motives, but postulates, for that purpose, a permanent personality, which stands behind the discrete series of phenomena, and constitutes a connecting principle, which science has failed to discover.

But all these objections lie on the surface, and are derivative. The root of the opposition lies in an 'idea'—that is, the complete predominance of

the scientific method, to the exclusion of all others, in every branch of thought. And this, again, to go still farther back, arises from a general tendency, or determination of the mind, to abolish all qualitative distinctions, and, in doing this, to reverse the course of evolution. CH. VIII

It is plain that the admission of any kind of transcendental causality, such as free will, which cannot be reduced to natural law, contradicts the claim of science to universal dominion over the whole field of knowledge; and it may be said, with some confidence, that were this objection once disposed of, all others would soon cease to interest philosophy. Now, paradoxical though the assertion may sound, it is nevertheless true that the claims of science are far more difficult to maintain at the present time than they were before the publication of Darwin's great hypothesis of the survival of the fittest; and that they are left face to face with a new set of difficulties which are more formidable than any that could arise from a stationary conception of nature. Before proceeding to explain this assertion, we may remark that, though they are in the long run coincident, the practical value of a scientific theory admits of being considered apart from the question of its truth. To take a recent illustration, where both questions are still open. It is probable that the new mechanics, even if true, may have the effect of complicating astronomy, without obtaining an approximation superior in practical value to that given by the classical celestial

CH. VIII mechanics; and their superior convenience may still make it necessary to teach the latter, even when they are shown to be untrue.[1] But questions of value concern philosophy, and do not admit of being disposed of by scientific methods. The value of Darwin's theory may thus be considered apart from the question of its scientific truth; and the decision must be given by philosophy and not by science.

The task of science, generally, is to protect us against the environment; and a scientific account of evolution should teach us how to protect ourselves against evolutionary changes in the environment. But this would differ essentially from all known processes of science. Those have two terms—the cause and the effect; both of which are within our knowledge; but an advance in evolution means the production of a fact of which we have no conception; the facts against which science would be called to protect us are unforeseen changes in the environment. To repeat an illustration used in a previous essay; no snipe could have foreseen the introduction into its environment of sportsmen armed with breechloaders, and, so long as the danger remained unforeseen, no scientific genius, however greatly magnified in degree, could have provided against it. So, in our own case, the developments of evolution are neither conceivable in advance, nor calculable; and we are unable to take measures to meet them. The flaw in Darwin's

[1] *Monist*, July 1913, p. 393 sq.

hypothesis of the survival of the fittest lies precisely here. The word 'fittest' has never been defined, and never will be, until we know what is the external correlative for which fitness in the organism is desiderated. And, for complete fitness, we must be able to foresee all the, to us unimaginable, forms which the future may put on. CH. VIII

What is of value in Darwin's work is that he effected a revolution in our non-scientific beliefs, and thereby advanced the evolution of thought. An achievement of that kind is always recognized as the highest of which man is capable, and it will not be attained without a combination of the highest qualities. It is not, however, the qualities, however great they may be, but the achievement itself, which earns the title to fame. The discovery of America revolutionized European thought, and was an important step in evolution. In the case of Columbus it was the moral, in Darwin, the intellectual qualities that took the lead, but eminence in both kinds is indispensable. So also is imagination, but that, by itself, does not carry far. R. Hooke discovered the law of gravitation, and A. R. Wallace the law of survival, but neither was capable of converting the public, or of establishing a revolution in its beliefs. Nor, so long as that result is secured, is the reputation impaired by any intellectual flaw in the means. The fame of Columbus has not suffered from his mistaken belief that he would reach India; nor would Darwin's, should it be recognized that the expression 'survival of the fittest' is unmeaning.

CH. VIII And it is worth while to add that in each case it was its appeal to the emotions that gave the fallacy its practical value. Columbus promised the wealth of India; Darwin's appeal was to the hedonist and irreligious prejudices of the public of his day.

What the revolution consisted in was this. For a universe of knowledge, in which flux or change, though present everywhere, was now confined within permanent limits, was substituted the conception of a universe which has arisen from an undifferentiated first principle by a process of differentiation which is still active, and which may be continued for an indefinite future. Orderly growth has taken the place of stationary change; and the leading interest in thought has been transferred, from things as they exist at the present, to their histories in the past, and their potentialities in the future. Questions of what we are, have not, indeed, lost any of their importance; but they have been subordinated to new questions of how we became what we are; and how it comes, first, that we have survived, and, secondly, that we wear a form which differs so greatly from primitive types of life as we do from the amoeba. Thus it appears that Darwin's great achievement is, not that he solved any outstanding problems in science or in philosophy, but that he forced into the light a whole class of questions which had previously been unsuspected; and thereby started, first scientific, and then philosophical thought along new and unexplored channels.

The new thought took its rise in biology, and is

still mainly employed in questions belonging to that science. But its connexion with questions of philosophy, though as yet less clearly realized, is not less obvious. If our physical constitution differs from that of an amoeba, so also does our mental, and in no less a degree. Our thought, with its methods and our resultant beliefs, admits, no less than our nervous system, of being dealt with under the aspect of evolution, and this side of the process is of far greater importance to us than the physical; as evolution with men is almost exclusively on that line. Civilized man differs from the savage much more in his mental than in his physical development; and his superiority is to be found, not so much in his nerves or his brain, (where, indeed, it may not always be easy to demonstrate,) as in his accumulation of scientific knowledge, and in his ethical and religious beliefs. And, it should be added, his scientific knowledge, so far as it has been converted to use, may be acquired by a savage with far greater ease than his ethical and religious endowment. CH. VIII

It is not, perhaps, usually recognized that Darwin's work was itself a step in evolution, and one of the highest importance; and that its study is likely to yield more valuable results than an investigation into the physiology of microbes; though that too has its uses. Among the questions it suggests, the first will be—can the discovery itself be explained by reference to the law of survival? that is to say, is it an accidental variation which favours its possessors in the struggle for existence? An

CH. VIII affirmative answer would be of no use; for, when we call in accident, we give up the attempt to explain. We might then inquire what were the causes which produced that work as their necessary result. Here we should encounter the initial obstacle that, without exact measurements, no necessary connexion can be established anywhere; and that neither this work, nor its antecedents *in pari materia*, admit of measurement. A more hopeful line would be to inquire into the conditions in which that, and other works like it, have taken their rise. It might be found that political freedom, though certainly not a necessary cause, is, at any rate, a favourable condition. We might then be led to inquire into the meaning and conditions of freedom; and at each step in the inquiry we should be led further and further from a scientific explanation. For freedom depends on justice; and justice on a belief in free will.

Another question it suggests is: how are we to account for the very high appreciation in which it is held itself, and the fame which it confers on its author? This, indeed, is no new question, for the explanation of values has always been the leading problem of ethical philosophy, and it is one which hitherto has never been solved. The answer the new theory furnishes is, that it is highly valued because it is itself a step forward in evolution. And the same explanation will be found to hold good in the case of all other similar discoveries, and for all values, negative or positive, good or evil, in every department of thought and action.

But this is a conception which is wholly alien to a belief in stationary conditions of life. A belief in evolution supplies, what had hitherto been wanting, a universal final end which does not contradict the value judgements while professing to explain them; and, for the first time, it renders possible an intelligible theory of conduct. And it renders the further service of showing that there are other values besides those of science, and that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God. CH. VIII

CHAPTER IX

SOME PRACTICAL RESULTS OF THE SUBSTITUTION OF A BELIEF IN UNIVERSAL DETERMINATION FOR A BELIEF IN FREE WILL

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We may now proceed to the task of comparing the respective influences of Free Will and Determinism on social civilization, in each of its main branches of law and politics. And I cannot do better, in opening this division of the subject, than by redeeming the promise made on p. 20 of my essay on Justice, and inquiring what would be the practical effect of the substitution of scientific, or utilitarian, considerations for the ethical concepts of justice which have hitherto determined the definitions and penalties of criminal law. One or two of the points which were established in that inquiry may be recalled. In the first place, it is not a question of choosing between one form of justice and another, but of the abandonment of justice in any form, and the substitution of expedience in its place. Unless we make up our minds to use the word to designate anything we like, justice must imply some kind of equality: expedience has no concern whatever with equality in any of its forms. Another point to be remembered is that the descrip-

CH. IX tion of justice as 'vindictive' is a mere device *ad invidiam*—an appeal to ignorance and prejudice. Revenge, when it becomes justice, is emptied of all personal feeling. Punishment is no longer its end, but the means it employs to secure personal freedom within the State. That end it can only attain by adopting the principle of equality between offence and penalty. Whether it varies its method, or substitutes another final end, it is, in either case, at the cost of freedom. Its original purpose was to protect the State against either defect or excess in retribution. It will appear in the following pages that it still answers the same purpose, and that to abandon this safeguard in favour of expedience will open the door to dangerous lenity in times of peace and commerce, and to equally dangerous excesses at all other times.

The chief general considerations which give the superiority to the principle of retaliation in the selection and definition of offences are, I think, the following. The broad principles of ethics may or may not be eternal, but it will surely be admitted that they are far more enduring and less liable to fluctuation than the rules of expedience. If they were lost sight of in determining what actions are criminal, the penal code might be revised with every change of government, and punishment would become a party weapon. The guiding interest of Napoleon's criminal legislation was the establishment of his empire. The only sure means of elevating the criminal courts above the atmosphere

of mob law is to base their functions on the public sense of duty. To substitute expedience would admit in principle all the horrors of the Roman proscriptions. The community may be divided by differences in political theory, or by conflicting interests in trade and agriculture, or by classes, or by differences in religious belief, or by geographical or race distinctions, and in many other ways, but it is rarely unanimous in a single-minded devotion to the general interests of the State; and even when it is, the means by which that supreme end may be attained will give rise to fresh controversies and new lines of division. We are doomed by our nature, and by the circumstances in which we are placed, to take account of the future, and the risk of disappointment is much less when the motives are ethical than when they are prudential. In the case of ethics all we assume is continuity of action: that is to say, that principles which have hitherto led to ethical improvement, or, what is the same thing, progressive evolution, will continue to act in the same direction, even though it may be impossible to predict the form which that improvement will take. When our guide is expedience, we predict a concrete result, and then we are much more likely to be mistaken. CH. IX

Another and much more serious danger than the uncertainty of the results arises from the substitution of the lower for the higher scale of values. If history has any certain lesson, it is that a community that puts its trust in motives of expedience is no

CH. IX match for one which is inspired by the higher motives of morality and religion; and, even if the danger of hostile competition be left out of sight, the enthusiasm, which is a necessary mental condition for all great enterprises, would be wanting. The introduction of the utilitarian standard in penal legislation would probably be one of the last steps in the rejection of the higher motives in all the other departments of life. It would certainly not stand alone, and patriotism would be one of the first of the virtues to be condemned as useless. Unless the sacrifice of our lives and fortunes in the service of our country were enjoined as a duty, it would seldom be recommended by any other consideration. Occasions are rare when no composition could be made which would be less painful to ourselves; and we should leave all but the immediate future to take care of itself.

The establishment and maintenance of any system of punishment in a free State is, indeed, completely dependent on the sense of justice; and the one universal relation which connects all forms of justice, and therefore supplies its abstract definition, is equality. Whatever the concrete terms may be, the relation between them which constitutes justice is equality. Now it has been pointed out in my earlier essay that, in the department of criminal justice, the terms between which the relation of equality is predicated are the gravity of the offence, and the severity of the punishment; and, further, the gravity of the offence is judged by ethical

standards, that is, by the degree of ethical reprobation which it sets up. In case it should be objected that there are many acts which offend the moral sense without being criminal, it must be added that the further end to which even justice is subordinate is the maintenance of freedom—or of a social order under which men are free. There are many reasons which impose on us the choice of an ethical standard for this purpose. CH. IX

Before proceeding further, we must make it clear what is meant by the term 'expedience', and point out that it is used in two contradictory senses; one of which is expressed in Bentham's formula, 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'; the other in Hume's affirmation of the sacredness of property. The first of these is an assertion, in the widest terms, of the principles of equality and altruism: the second, an assertion, also in the widest terms, of the principles of inequality and selfishness. Both are equally mischievous, and for precisely the same reasons. Both assert a single principle out of a pair of opposites, and disregard the other; and both are applied to the attainment of secular goods, without regard to the ends either of religion or of morality. The result of the first is excessive mildness: of the second, extreme ferocity, and both are deadly to freedom. The first is the misdirection of the good principle, and it shall be given the precedence. Here utility appears as the philanthropist. Its other part, that of the custodian of vested interests, will follow later.

CH. IX To substitute the degree of danger to the public happiness on one side, and make that the standard for measuring the severity of the punishment, would lead to many absurd results, which have been pointed out by other writers. For one thing, more public mischief may be brought about by ignorance and carelessness than by open-eyed malice; they, therefore, deserve the heavier punishment. Again, it would be absurd to equate the happiness which accrues to the public through the prevention of offences, with the loss of happiness to the offender which is entailed by the punishment. Whether there would be any gain at all in any particular case may often be doubted; and, as both the loss of happiness and the moral degradation of the offender are beyond doubt, the public conscience (if the term may be excused) would at least insist that the public gain should be incontestably greater than the individual loss. All question of equality would be misplaced, and consequently, all question of justice. The same objection applies with equal force to the view that men should only be punished for their own good.

Punishments, when judged merely as painful, excite a pity for, and sympathy with, those who are condemned, which, though they are not the highest feelings of which men are capable, are ethically respectable, and exercise a strong and persistent influence on conduct. If the danger against which they are directed is near and obvious, pity may be overpowered by apprehensions of personal inconvenience.

When street robbery with violence is common, CH. IX
and any one may fall a victim on his return from dining with a friend, sympathy with the offender will be rare, however grievously he may suffer. But with the great majority of offences against the community the danger is remote; and with some of the most dangerous, the only warning we get is conveyed by the strong repulsion which they excited in our moral nature. The voice of pity will then make itself heard; and, especially if the moral sentiments are undervalued, will insist on the abolition of painful punishments in all but a few cases of immediate interest to the individual citizens. Not only will justice be misdirected, but it will be threatened with the loss of the weapon through which it commands obedience and respect.

A higher position is taken by those who object to punishments that they are degrading; and, whatever the dreams of reformers may be, it is certain that this objection can never be removed, or seriously mitigated. The commonest form of punishment must always be imprisonment of one kind or another. Torture and mutilation, and a too frequent resort to the death penalty, brutalize the whole community in whose interests they are inflicted, and, except perhaps in the lower stages of civilization, are as injurious to public morality as the offences against which they are directed. Fines and forfeitures of property are effective only against a small class, and that not the class from which criminals are usually drawn. By imprisonment, society attains its end

CH. IX without serious injury to its own morals; its defects need not be obtruded on the public attention, and while it lasts, it keeps the criminal from mischief. These, with its use as a deterrent, are its recommendations. But for the criminal himself, though it may be less dreaded, it is perhaps, under some aspects, a worse penalty than death. The loss of freedom directly injures his character, and the injury is greatly aggravated by association with others who are suffering the same degradation. With these serious and inevitable drawbacks, both from its humanitarian and its ethical aspects, the only defence that is left for punishment is that of justice—that is to say, of retaliation in kind. The only reason which justifies society in inflicting moral degradation on one of its members is that that member has acted in such a way as to bring moral degradation on society. And for this purpose morality and freedom may be taken as equivalent terms on both sides of the account. Offences against the moral order may be punished by moral degradation, and attacks on freedom, by loss of freedom.

When indeed men have lost their sense of justice, and the moral indignation out of which it springs; and have been convinced, should that be possible, that the criminal is no more worthy of blame than the tempest or the pestilence, not only will punishment lose its justification, but it will cease to be inflicted. The pain is certain, and not less certain and inevitable the degrading concomitants; the hedonic gain to others who are not criminals

is usually uncertain, and pity will win the day. CH. IX
This is the view which is in fact forced on our attention both by humanitarians, and by the more conscious enemies of our existing social order.

To the Anarchist even the name of punishment is odious, and he demands its total abolition. As often as not, he writes under the influence of a personal experience, and is a better authority on its drawbacks to the criminal than on its uses to society. He may indeed exaggerate the one, and be blind to the other. But he clearly perceives that the main obstacle to his programme is the belief in free will.[1] The ideas of 'sin' and 'bad will' must be eradicated; and he overlooks the necessary implication that the ideas of virtue and good will must go with them; that the whole growth must be sacrificed, wheat and tares alike. In the place of the personal will we must install 'cosmical' and 'anthropological' influences—the climate, heredity, and the social environment—as the causes of crime; the criminals are to be spared, not only prisons and lunatic asylums, but even the milder annoyance of doctors and schoolmasters. The sole inconvenience to which they are to be exposed is that of a 'careful fraternal treatment' on the part of their neighbours. The proper aim of law, like that of medicine, should be prevention rather than cure. We must neither hate our criminals nor love them, but our conduct towards them must always be kind and attentive; otherwise, as experience assures us,

[1] Prince Krapotkine, *Russian and French Prisons, passim.*

CH. IX they will rob us or cut our throats. And, even if they do, it will be nobody's fault, not even our own.

The scientific use of the word punishment affords another illustration of the practical mischief which ensues on the classification of acts by their objective results: the right principle of classification being by motives, and then of motives by their results when regarded as final ends. The objective differentia of punishment which neglects all subjective qualification is the infliction of pain in return for a particular class of actions. To distinguish this from wanton injury, we must add that it is a class of action of which we disapprove; and we then obtain a complete scientific definition of punishment. But the definition is not ethical, because it contains no qualification by purpose or final end, and for purposes of appreciation it is quite useless. Now, when we examine punishments with regard to their motives, we find that they fall into two easily distinguishable classes, according as they are prompted by one or the other of two contradictory motives: Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and, from the same motive, a father chastens his children: but His vengeance is on them that work iniquity, and society punishes the enemies of order. The motive, in the first case, is love for the offender; in the second, hatred of the offence. The man of science overlooks the ethical distinction, and appreciates punishment as good or bad solely by the objective differentia of infliction of pain. This leads to the

absurd inference that we ought to love our criminals. CH. IX
To say that we ought to regard our children and our criminals with the same affection is absurd. As a matter of fact we do not, and the recommendation involves a complete reconstruction of our moral nature on the basis of our aversion to pain. The result would be, not the reform, but the destruction, of morality. We should no longer be moral agents. But, if pain is identical with evil (and this is implicated in determinism) the humanitarian view of punishment is logically inevitable. From a higher point of view, the injunction to love even the criminal is, like the injunction to absolute chastity, a counsel of perfection, and not even religion would wish to see it enforced under conditions of evolution.

It seems to follow that, if the punishments themselves are to be regulated by consideration for the interests of the criminal, the selection and classification of offences must also be guided by the same consideration. Some general principle of distinction, to tell us who is a criminal, and who is not, seems absolutely necessary; for we are all of us liable to go astray, and, without it, we should all be liable to punishment by the State. If susceptibility to improvement is to be the test, the logical consequences, though they have no doubt been foreseen by utilitarians, are likely to surprise people who do not belong to that sect. The hardened habitual criminal is of all men the most dangerous to society, but as there is little or no chance of reforming him, he will not be liable to punishment, and must be left to run

CH. IX his course. Segregation for life, though no doubt of advantage to society, would complete his moral ruin, and would therefore be indefensible: ordinary imprisonment, without being much better for himself, would mean moral ruin to others as well. As, then, he is not susceptible of moral improvement, and as the attempt might bring moral loss to other offenders, it is only by a confusion of popular thought that he is regarded as a criminal at all. A scientific classification would place him in quite another category, and treat him as a man who suffers from a disease, such as a cold, or the small-pox. Let us now go to the opposite end of the moral scale. Even the best men, and those who are of the highest value to society, are not morally perfect; but they deplore their faults, and wish to be freed from them. Here, if anywhere, the State will find promising material for its scheme of moral amelioration; and it will be its duty to deprive them of their liberty, to cure them of their defects, and to use them, if possible, for the improvement of others. These then are the true criminals.

It is indeed plain that the substitution of the interests of the criminal for the interests of the State breaks down the concord which at present exists between our moral sentiments and the penal law, and sets them, instead, in direct opposition. Our moral judgements represent our hatred for what endangers our freedom, and the strength of our reprobation is proportionate to the magnitude of the danger. The danger is greatest from those

criminals who are least susceptible to moral influences, and least from those who are most susceptible: our moral sentiments demand that the former, our regard for the criminal that the latter, should be selected as the objects of punishment. CH. IX

It is indeed difficult to exhaust the absurdities of the position. The connexion between responsibility and punishment is admitted, but the order is reversed. We are told that it is a crude popular fallacy to suppose that people deserve to be punished because they are responsible; and that the more enlightened view is that they are responsible because they are liable to punishment. Children and animals may be broken of their faults; therefore they may be punished; therefore they are specially responsible. This throws some light on the question of what kinds of wrongdoing may be punished by the State, and what not. Superficial defects which are easily cured would claim the attention of the law, in preference to deep-seated vices which are often incurable. No more need be said on this point. It is obvious that what children and criminal adults have in common is that neither are free. The first have not yet attained freedom; the second have justly forfeited it by attacks on the freedom of others. No free man may be imprisoned or subjected to physical violence while he remains free. To withdraw the safeguards of personal freedom which are now furnished by the rules of criminal justice, and invest with arbitrary paternal authority a central power which is unrestrained by paternal instincts,

CH. IX would be the worst form of tyranny. But the end of utility is the avoidance of pain, and that is not always compatible with freedom. It is regard for freedom which, in the case of an adult offender, prescribes a careful trial and a responsible tribunal: precautions which are not called for in the case of children who are not yet free.

Who, it has been asked, can tell us whether it is crime or punishment which has worked the greater suffering in the world? The question is not of a kind which admits of being answered, for the statistics on which a safe conclusion could be based are wholly wanting; but, fortunately, it is not relevant; and even if the pain to be charged against punishment were multiplied tenfold, the case against it would not be strengthened. There are indeed many incidents far worse than the suffering of the offender which may properly be objected against the means which are taken for the suppression of crime; such as his moral degradation, and the cruel and unmerited suffering which his punishment entails on his innocent wife and children. But the questions we must ask are these: if crime went unpunished, could the fair structure of society ever rise from the chaos of barbarism? and could it still be maintained if punishments were abolished? If these questions must be answered in the negative, the suffering which they inflict counts for nothing, however great it may be; and even the moral disadvantages must be accepted, provided that they are necessary to the end in view, and are not of a kind

that would bring about a general degradation to the society on whose behalf they are inflicted. CH. IX

It would be wrong to suppose that this line of argument implies an indifference to the moral effects of punishment on the criminal himself. That would be an inconsistency which an advocate of the claims of morality against those of utility is not likely to fall into. What is asserted here is that punishment is necessary; that to replace it by kindness, either now or in any near future, would be so dangerous to freedom that no society has the moral right to make the experiment; and finally, that moral loss to the offender, and to some slight extent, perhaps, to some of the persons who are entrusted with its immediate infliction, is an unavoidable incident. This moral loss to the criminal has hitherto been justified by the principle of retaliation, and it has no other reasonable excuse. Justice itself, in all its forms, is, in one aspect, an expression, and in another, a satisfaction of that primordial instinct for equality, either qualitative or quantitative, by which the social relations between man and man have always been, and still are, regulated; and which is the most essential condition of freedom.

We may now take leave of the humanitarian aspects of expedience, and proceed to regard it in its less amiable character as custodian of vested interests.

The advocate of utility might rest his defence on the practical effects of the criminal administration of the present day, and its superiority to what

CH. IX preceded might be urged as a sufficient vindication, without any appeal to more remote or general arguments. Its increased mildness, and that is the leading recommendation in the change, may, however, proceed from another principle which underlies both. Both the practice and the principle may be derived from the increased softness and shrinking from pain which characterize a commercial era. In a sterner and harsher age prudential motives may prompt even greater severity than ethical.

It is indeed certain that they would. The beneficent reform, for which Bentham deserves a large share of the credit, was in fact brought about by the substitution of the principle which he attacked, in the place of the principle which he regarded as his own. The atrocious punishments for theft which he found in force were based on the strictest regard for expedience; that is, expedience as understood by the lawgivers and rulers themselves. The consideration which led to their abolition was that they were in glaring contradiction to the principle of equality between offence and punishment—to the ancient rule, a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye. Those punishments originated with, and were maintained by, the propertied classes, and their object was not justice, but the protection of property. The cruel and tyrannous forest legislation of the Conqueror and his successors was based on the same principle, and would have been impossible, even for rulers like them, if they had had any

conception of, or regard for, the nature and claims of justice. And this is generally true of all the provisions for the protection of property up to the era of Bentham and Romilly. If a child could be sentenced to death for the theft of a lump of putty, it was certainly not because the punishment was thought to be commensurate with the moral gravity of the offence, but because property was so sacred in the eyes of the propertied legislators, that they believed that any severity was justified in its defence. The first impulse to the reform was not given by considerations of utility, but by the recognition of the principle of personal equality, and that brought in its train the recognition of equality between offence and punishment. For the recognition of personal equality Bentham should receive all credit, but equality and greatest happiness are principles which have no necessary connexion. It would have been impossible to calculate the bearings of either system on the general happiness of the community; but the offence against justice was plain, and it was the sense of outraged justice that insisted on a more appropriate retribution in the case of minor offences. Fortunately for us the reform has been permanent. If people are no longer transported for offences under the game laws, it is because our legislators and our judges are guided no longer by utility, as understood by themselves, but by justice.

The same lesson is taught by experience elsewhere. The only country known to us where the penal code is consciously and professedly governed

CH. IX by utilitarian principles, and where punishments are graduated with reference to the material injury done to the community, and not to the moral gravity of the offence, is China; and nowhere else is there cruelty more abominable. Again, the courts of the Holy Inquisition were guided by motives which were, in the main, strictly prudential. Their aims were to save the ill-starred subjects of their jurisdiction from pains far worse than any they could themselves inflict; and to check the spread of a deadly contagion. Nevertheless, their punishments were not distinguished by their humanity from those of contemporary tribunals whose principles were supposed to be 'vindictive'; and they certainly had none of the mildness which marks the punishments of our own times. It may indeed be doubted whether in those days order could have been maintained with as little inconvenience to the criminal classes as it is now.

It must indeed be obvious to all who are not blinded by the dread of enduring or inflicting pain, that the principal recommendation of justice is still what it was at first; and that the substitution of motives of expedience must usually have for its effect an increase of the sufferings which its advocates desire to mitigate. The original function of retributive justice was to control, and keep within bounds, the excesses of revenge; and to these may be added the excesses of terror, which is of equal strength as a stimulant to cruelty; and, again, the more calculating cruelties of greed and ambition. It was not

justice, but expedience, in alliance with one or another of these impulses, which prompted (to take only modern instances) the massacres of St. Bartholomew, of Glencoe, of September, and of the Red Terror. And are we so safe from atrocities of the same kind that we can afford to throw away the shield of justice? The temptations on the other side are strong; for expedience rarely fails of its end. It has been well observed,[1] 'torture is the 'surest method of discovering truth, and punishment 'deters, not by its justice, its celerity, or its certainty, 'but in proportion to its severity.' And the importation of altruistic motives only increases the evil; for the plea that 'it was done for the sake of others' breaks down the last barriers of shame. Finally, where all the safeguards hitherto provided by morality and religion are removed, the social order can only be maintained, if at all, by a great increase in severity. CH. IX

In short, the ethical principle of retaliation still serves the purpose for which it was originally designed. It provides a fixed standard, based on that principle of equality which is the eternal foundation of justice, and, through that, of all development that has a real value. If we abandon that, we must build on sand. We are at the mercy of every partial impulse which happens to rule the hour. Should we be governed by an unrestrained humanitarianism, and have no aim but the advantage of the criminals, our horror of pain will lead us to

[1] Lord Acton, *French Revolution*, p. 18.

CH. IX sacrifice the control, which, as a corrective to licence, or individual liberty, is as necessary as liberty is to true freedom, and we shall very soon relapse into the barbarism of anarchy. If, on the other hand, we substitute the material interests of the community, as bound up in the suppression of crime, our penal code and its punishments will themselves become barbarous. Whatever form the government may take, the result will be the same; for mobs are no less liable than despots or aristocracies to the baser passions. Acts will be classified as criminal with reference, not to their influence on the public morality, but to their probable effect on the material interests of the ruling body; and crime will be repressed with all the severity that can be suggested by greed or terror or hatred or religious fanaticism.

We may now pursue the same line of thought in investigating the respective influences which the opposed beliefs in free will and determinism are likely to exercise on political evolution, or the development of forms of government.

In the first draft of this essay I argued, as others had argued before me, that, inasmuch as the idea of merit was necessarily dependent on the recognition of responsibility, and as the sense of responsibility was necessarily conditioned by a belief in free will, the extinction of a belief in free will would, at the same time, destroy the idea of merit, and leave no valid reason by which a preferential claim, either to

reward or to punishment, could be established. CH. IX
This is in the main true, and it accounts for the aversion which is always felt by the advocates of personal equality to the doctrine of free will. But the relations between the two principles are not quite so simple as this statement of the case might lead us to suppose, and, in order to complete our theory, we must first distinguish clearly between the concepts of value, merit, and reward.

Value is determined with reference to a final end of action, and by no other consideration. Merit has reference to the personal interests of the agent: that is to say, to his claim to be rewarded. In the case of conduct which is guided by purely prudential motives these distinctions vanish. The reward (which must be pleasure in one form or another) is then the final end of conduct, and the concept of merit disappears. No one establishes a claim to reward by the successful pursuit of his own pleasure. And, we may repeat, though it takes us a little out of the direct line of our argument, the direct pursuit of the reward, instead of the ethical end, is one of the most fruitful sources of positive evil. We eat to live; and when we make pleasure the end, we reap ill health and miss the pleasure. Hence it comes that we prize money more highly when it comes as a reward than when it is gained by direct pursuit. The pittance which rewards whole-hearted service to Church or country is felt to be more honourable than millions acquired in commerce.

All conduct which excites the approval of the

CH. IX ethical judgement involves the concepts of merit and reward—reward being that result, following on his action, which is agreeable to the agent, but which he did not aim at, and could not have aimed at, without forfeiting his merit: while merit is his title to enjoy this result without having aimed at it. In this lies the universal distinction of ethical conduct. The aims and the reward are distinct. When a reward is aimed at directly, it ceases to be a reward, and the conduct, instead of being ethical, falls back into the province of expedience. Similar conduct, in the province of ambition, ceases to be ethically self-assertive, and becomes selfish. To repeat an example which has been used in a previous essay: when a general aims at victory, his claim is ethical; when he aims at a pension or a peerage, it becomes prudential and selfish.

Now, as has been pointed out elsewhere, ethical motives, as distinguished from prudential, fall into two classes; they are either of self-assertion, or of self-negation: and, in tracing the logical relations which subsist between socialism and free will, this distinction becomes of great importance. Motives of self-assertion differ from motives of self-negation in two respects: first, the rewards which are claimed by self-assertion are located in this world; and, secondly, the merit or title to enjoy them, is in no way affected by a belief or disbelief in free will. The appropriate rewards of self-assertion are honour, power, riches, reputation, and the like; and the merits, or those qualities which, when realized

in action, constitute a title to the rewards, are genius, or exceptional strength of mind or of will or of body. It is true that, even here, the qualities of self-negation, such as temperance, patience, self-denial, and many forms of asceticism, play an important part, but it is as means only. Of the special qualities which compete for the goods of this world, no one asserts any kind of connexion with free will. That a man should be a Napoleon, or even a Tom Sayers, is not dependent on his own choice, and is never supposed to be; any more than that it is within the power of his will to add a cubit to his stature. CH. IX

Now the ends of personal equality, like the rewards of self-assertion, lie in the phenomenal world. They are competitors for the same class of goods. It may indeed seem that the competition is somewhat unfair. No warmth in asserting your personal equality will prevent a prize-fighter from knocking you down, and numbers are not likely to prevail for long against genius; but this is not strictly relevant: what is relevant is that the jealousy or hatred which eminence inspires in the multitude has no real concern with the doctrine of free will, and need not spread to that. Of all the qualities which compete for the goods of this world, not one asserts any kind of connexion with free will.

When, however, we pass on to morality, or the conduct of self-negation, the case is different. In that province merit is dependent entirely on the

CH. IX postulate of free will. If there is no choice, there is no merit. This is not a question of what ought to be, or of what is reasonable, but a plain statement of fact. Without an imputation of choice, the mind refuses to complete the conception of merit. No one, without deliberate and conscious self-deception, can persuade himself that a man has merit, or deserves a reward, for acts which he performs under compulsion. And there is an equally fundamental difference in the character of the rewards. The meaning of self-negation is the rejection of the goods of this world, and it could not, without glaring inconsistency, demand as a reward what it rejects as a good. Its rewards are located, not in this world, but in another. It is true that morality has its sanctions even in this world. The reward of a good conscience is not of less value than the sweets of power, nor are the penalties of remorse less terrible than the torments of disappointed ambition. But these sanctions are of equal effect under all forms of government, and whatever the distribution of property may be. The rewards cannot be made the objects of competition, nor do they belong to that lower class of goods

Dove per compagnia parte si scema.[1]

Our conclusion then, so far, is the following.

Personal equality, in its political application, has no concern with any other world than the present, nor has it any concern with the rewards of a good

[1] *Purg.* xv. 50.

conscience; and it follows, on the whole argument, CH. IX
that there is never in any case, and whether the merit be of self-assertion or of self-negation, any possibility of conflict between that principle and a belief in free will. In those cases where there is a conflict between personal equality and merit, merit is not based on free will; and where merit is based on free will there is no conflict; for the spheres of reward are distinct. It is not, indeed, to be expected that, in practical politics, people will stop to draw distinctions which are not, perhaps, always remembered by professed thinkers. The partisans of personal equality will continue to include both kinds of merit in an animosity which is really deserved by one only. But the defence of that kind of merit which justifies distinctions of power and property must cease to appeal to a belief in free will (with which indeed it has nothing to do), and rely on the instinctive belief that payment must be in proportion to achievement; and on the knowledge that, unless it is, there can be no freedom, and no advance in civilization.

The relations between religion and socialism follow the same lines. It might have been expected that socialism, if we use that term to denote the principle of personal equality when pushed to its extreme consequences, in the determination of social and political relations between the citizens of an earthly state, would be united in the closest alliance with a religion which asserted the complete equality of all men, as the sons of the same divine Father, in a

CH. IX heavenly state. But experience shows us that this is not the case. Socialism is even more bitterly opposed to religion than it is to ethics. And for similar reasons. His public recognition of the Supreme Being was the first in the series of blunders which cost Robespierre his reputation, his power, and his life. 'Tu m'embêtes avec ton Être suprême.'

The explanation up to a certain point is similar in both cases. Religion, like ethics, has need of both the principles of justice, and asserts the existence of real differences of value between man and man, and of a just retribution beyond the grave, as strongly as it asserts their real equality. It is true that the real values of religion are neither judged nor requited in this world, and we are forbidden to pronounce an opinion on the real merits of our fellows. But this does not alter the fact that the preservation of both the constituent principles of justice is as necessary to religion as it is to ethics.

When we come to the question of rewards, the resemblance is less complete. It is true that the rewards of sanctity are located in another world, and that, so far, there is no competition between religion and socialism. But it would be a mistake to suppose that this exhausts the relations between the two. Religion as a state of the mind has very different external relations from religion as an organized system of belief. History shows us no instance of a civilized community of religious persons who have not been bound together by

the profession of a definite system of religious beliefs. All these systems have demanded for their preservation a special order or class of officers, such as priests, ulemas, or brahmins, who have pretended to at least a fair share of the goods of this world, and have usually enjoyed considerably more than a fair share. With competitors like these there can, of course, be no truce. The aims of socialism consist in an equal distribution of property and political power, and these are things to which the religious orders have never been indifferent, though the religious temperament is. The secular interests of a wealthy Church have usually made it the ally of the party of wealth, and turned its sympathies and its power in a direction which contradicts its true spiritual aims. The perversion began when 'Il primo ricco Padre' converted to the use of the Church the 'decumae quae sunt pauperum Dei'; and the poor are not slow to feel, and to resent the wrong. CH. IX

The relations then of socialism with religion are even more complex than its relations with morality. The former pair are closely allied by their common assertion of personal equality, and this agreement is likely to make itself felt when a triumphant Capitalism enforces and exaggerates the practical inequality of human beings. On the other hand, the necessary developments of dogmatic religion will always set the two at variance. This side of their relations will come to the front as soon as socialism ceases to despair; when its goal is in

CH. IX view, and it begins to contemplate the division of its prizes. As a child, socialism appeals to the sympathies of the Church; when grown up, it disputes its emoluments and its privileges. But religion must be accepted as a whole, or not at all: under the knife of rational criticism it ceases to live: you cannot take one half and leave the other; and socialism, which can never accept more than half, will never be religious for long together.

Nor will the effects of determinism be less disastrous in a capitalist state where the ends are not those either of religion or of morality.

The difficulties which beset the apportionment of reward to merit, when the reward is phenomenal or secular, are insurmountable. In the first place both merit and reward belong to the subjective division of phenomena, and are not susceptible of measurement. All equations between them must be wholly indeterminate, and the idea of an equation between two factors, neither of which admits of determination, is unmeaning.

It follows that any exact determination of equality between merit and reward is not merely difficult; it is impossible. Again; all subjective valuations are, and must be, coloured and distorted, to a degree which has no limits, by personal interests. From this it follows that even approximate definitions are as impossible of attainment as exact ones; except in cases where an umpire can be found who is unaffected by either of the conflicting interests, and who has the power to enforce his awards.

We may proceed to another consideration. All the phenomenal prizes of politics may be subsumed under one or the other of the two headings of power or pleasure. Of these, power is always pursued as a means to a further end, which may be either ethical or prudential. It is ethical when the power is to be used on behalf of the freedom or independence of the country, or of the moral or intellectual welfare of its people. For services of this kind, the only appropriate reward is the happiness which is given by a consciousness of the gratitude of the people who have been benefited. But happiness is not pleasure; the gratitude is as often withheld as rendered; and, finally, it must not be directly aimed at. The alternative end on account of which power may be desired is pleasure. Practically, then, the only phenomenal reward of political action is pleasure. And pleasure differs from all other phenomenal ends in being, not proximate, but ultimate. The pursuit of pleasure brings about a thousand unexpected by-products, but pleasure itself is not valued on account of any ensuing form of activity. CH. IX

Now, though pleasure is no more susceptible of measurement than any other subjective state, there is, nevertheless, a large class of pleasures which may be procured by means which are perfectly measurable. All those means to pleasure into the production of which human agency enters as a necessary factor, are procurable for money by those who want them; and money, being the only equivalent

CH. IX to any of the means to pleasure, is taken, first, as the equivalent to all the means to pleasure, and, finally, as the universal equivalent to pleasure itself. It is true that many of the best and most intense of our pleasures, such as those which are derived from the contemplation of nature, as well as the power to take pleasure in anything, have no price; and it is also true that the price which is paid for such pleasures as may be bought bears no fixed relation to their subjective value. All this may be suspected by most men, and clearly seen by many, but that will have little or no effect on conduct. The phenomenal reward which is aimed at by the partisans of merit must always be material wealth, or, more exactly, money.

Thus, if moral and religious ends are to be discarded, and political questions are to be dealt with by the scientific method, there are two factors, and two only, to every problem; that is to say, money, and the numbers of men who are to divide it; for they are the only factors which admit of being counted. Stripped of all the supposed illusions which we owe to a belief in freedom, the proper aims of every civilized community will be the accumulation of the greatest amount of that kind of wealth which may be converted into money, and the restriction of the people who are to share it to the least number which is consistent with the greatest production. And when they come to discuss the general principle by which the distribution should be guided, there will be two parties.

Some will recommend that all men should take an equal share; and others, that the existing proportions should be maintained; or that, if they were to be varied, more should be given to them that had, and that from them that had not should be taken away even what they had. CH. IX

The reduction of all objective values to the scale of hedonism, and the subsequent conversion of all hedonic values by the inadequate and fallacious standard of their market equivalent in money, will bring about a corresponding revolution in the valuation of individual citizens. No other kinds of value being recognized, the standard by which each man will be judged must be either his capacity for acquiring money or the amount of money he possesses. Further, inasmuch as the acquisition of money depends almost as much on luck and external circumstances as it does on subjective qualities, the accomplished fact of possession will tend to excite a higher degree of respect than qualities which promise, but do not necessarily command, success. Personal values will fall into the background, and if any survive it will be those which have no ethical value, because they are derived from their relation to an end which, though it may be useful as a means, has no independent value of its own.

The personal characteristics of individuals are strongly affected by the prevalent beliefs of the society in which they live. The whole of that section which is contributed by education is moulded by the beliefs of their schoolmasters. Whether

CH. IX the influence will extend to the inherited qualities of the race may be doubtful, but that is of little practical importance. Of two men who are born with exactly the same characters, if one is taught that the whole value of life is given by the beliefs of morality and religion, and the other that the whole value is to be sought in the mechanical processes of a system of uniform sequence, the finished products would be widely different in themselves, and their differences would be reflected in the societies to which they belonged. Again, in the competition between societies, success or failure will be reflected back on the conditions of individuals, and on the types of character which those conditions produce. Exclusiveness of either kind would be wrong, for a civilization can no more stand without science than it can without morals and religion, but our present subject is the danger which is threatened by the encroachments of determinism, and it is to that that we must specially address ourselves. The elimination of the higher values from popular beliefs is followed by the atrophy, in each individual, of those qualities which prompt the pursuit of those values; and the final stage of a nation, whose beliefs are based on a denial of free will, is a collection of individuals undistinguished from one another either by great virtues or great vices, but resembling one another in their respect for money, and well endowed with the instincts which lead to success in making it. A society so constituted would be incapable of further evolution.

NOTE ON THE MISUSE OF TERMS

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It is sometimes asserted by, or on behalf of, philosophers, that they are at liberty to employ any word in any sense they choose, provided that they leave no doubt as to the exact sense in which they use it; but it is certain that a licence of this kind, unless it is strictly limited to cases where some appearance of necessity can be pleaded, is likely to lead to great practical inconvenience, especially when the word thus arbitrarily dealt with has already, in popular usage, a different meaning of its own. Perhaps the commonest examples of this misuse are where a word which connotes a quality commanding great and general respect is used with a different connotation: as, for instance, when justice is employed as a cover for purely personal interests; or religion, to denote all kinds of elevated or violent emotion, even when it is entirely disconnected with worship. A more comprehensive illustration of this kind of abuse is when scientific thought conveys to its own service terms which have no meaning outside of the sphere of teleology; that is to say, which are unintelligible except in connexion with purpose and values. Numerous instances of this kind of misappropriation have been noticed in the course of this inquiry. It is

well worth our while to bring together the more important of them in one place. In this way only can we get a clear idea of the collective result.

In the forefront we must put the word 'cause', with its derivatives, 'causation' and 'causality', and the connected ideas of force and energy. Words of this tribe are originally, and properly, applied to the spontaneous initiation of a series of events, without any reference to events which precede it in time. Cause is correctly rendered by its German equivalent 'Ursache', or primary fact. It has no reference to the past. Science has wrested this term from its proper function in thought, and uses it to signify a link in a chain, which, though its immediate reference may be to the future, is as truly an effect as it is a cause, and whose very existence is dependent on a past which, if not endless, has no known commencement. The difference between cause and effect is, indeed, annihilated: they are nothing but different aspects of the same thing. In the same way, force and energy, which imply actual or potential effort, are used to signify actual or possible rates or modes of pure movement, to which the idea of effort is entirely foreign. Causality, indeed, though it has come to be regarded as a purely scientific concept, is, really, imported into that province of thought from ethics or religion. The only concepts that answer to our idea of causes are either God or the Self. It is they alone who by their immediate action produce effects. One event cannot produce or cause another event.

It can only precede or follow it. Causality is a general term expressing the mode of action of a will; and a will must be either human or Divine.

The next group of words which have suffered the same kind of violence are 'will' and 'desire', with the connected concepts of 'happiness' and 'pleasure'. The word 'will', when applied to human beings, has two senses. It may be used with equal propriety to designate either the principle which determines a choice between two conflicting motives—in which case, a good will would find its phenomenal counterpart in the conscience; or it may mean the sense of conation which is experienced in realizing an object after the choice has been made. But in neither case is it identical with desire—desire being the reflexion in consciousness of the diffused nervous excitement set up by the idea of a pleasure which may accompany the realization of an object of the will. In the same way, happiness and pleasure are quite distinct. Both are, indeed, epiphyses, or supplementary processes, which have been added by evolution to the primary motor impulses; but happiness is connected with the will directly, whereas pleasure is connected with the diffused nervous excitement, which is itself an outgrowth from the bare motor impulses. Happiness, when it is worth having, is the reward of that kind of conduct which promotes the advance of evolution: pleasure is the concomitant of all successful action, but its strength is in an inverse ratio to the ethical value of the

impulse. Its intensity is greatest when it attends the primitive impulses of sense, and least when it accompanies the highest exercise of the intellect. That is to say, strength and ethical value vary directly in the case of happiness, and inversely in the case of pleasure.

A third group of concepts, in which terms which necessarily imply purpose and value have been identified with scientific terms which are devoid of any connotation of that kind, are those which may be ranged under the two main headings of knowledge and belief. In defiance of the patent facts that belief is often stronger than knowledge, merely as a form of conviction; and that it always exercises a far more powerful influence within its own sphere —that is, in the direction of human conduct—it has been classified as a weak form of knowledge: or it has been represented as a preparatory stage in conviction, which a further accumulation of evidence might turn into scientific certainty; as if it were possible for any accumulation of evidence to convert a religious dogma into a scientific fact. A similar instance, on a low level of emotion, is the confusion of approval with assent—the first being our mental attitude in regard to human actions with which we feel ourselves in harmony; the second, our agreement with propositions which deal with external nature. The first belongs to the sphere of belief, and is emotional; the second to the realm of knowledge, or science, and is purely intellectual. Approval marks a low grade of the affections which

culminate in enthusiasm or worship: assent itself has no grades, independently of degrees of intellectual certainty. The only propositions relating to conduct to which it is possible either to assent or to dissent are—I, or you, or they, approve, or disapprove, of this or that action.

We have noticed the misappropriation of the term 'Justice' in common life to cover the claims of public or private interests with which it has usually no connexion, and is often in direct conflict. Philosophers have not avoided the same misuse of the term, when they describe as justice, a legal system having for its professed aim the promotion of material happiness. And this, as with other cases of perversion, involves a number of subordinate perversions of meaning, of which perhaps the most prominent, and the most mischievous, is the wresting of the term responsibility to mean nothing more than liability to punishment.

The list might be extended indefinitely, but the only other instance that need be brought to notice is Darwin's use of the concept of natural selection. This credits Nature with a human purpose and will, and, as I have shown elsewhere, goes perilously near reducing to nonsense the most important scientific theory of recent times.[1]

Thus we find a number of terms—causation, force and energy, will and happiness, justice and responsibility, belief and approval, selection and rejection—all of them implying, remotely or immediately,

[1] *Ethical Aspects of Evolution*, chap. i.

freedom and purpose, and belonging to that separate branch of thought which has been distinguished as ethics, transferred from that branch of thought to science, and applied to processes to which they are entirely foreign, and with which, for the most part, they can only be connected by distant and fanciful analogies. The transference is conscious only in part, or very dimly. A natural respect for the higher worth of happiness and justice may stand in the way of a clear recognition that, when pleasure is meant, or expedience, the higher classes of value must be left out of the account. But more generally it arises from the extreme difficulty which is found, even by men of science, of ridding themselves of the special forms of apperception which have been evolved for the treatment of those elements in our consciousness which are not amenable to science. It is closely akin to the personification of natural forces, and is a tendency of the same class, but running in an opposite direction, as that other tendency which, in a primitive stage of religion, leads men to ascribe life and will to the operations of nature.

The misuse of terms cuts both ways, and it would not be easy to decide on which of the two branches of thought it inflicts the more serious injury. The importation of terms which are always associated with emotion into a branch of thought, the successful prosecution of which demands a judicial serenity, introduces passion in a region where it can work nothing but mischief; and the tacit personification

of processes which are strictly impersonal degrades religion to a primitive animism, which reacts on science itself by depriving men of that elevation of character which is inseparable from elevation of religious thought; and without which no great work, even in science, can be accomplished. Again: the habitual transference of terms from their proper use leads to the decay and disappearance of the ideas for which they originally stood; and the loss is veiled by the survival of the words, after the ideas which they once represented have fallen into disuse. When the process has gone far enough, philosophic thought and literature, in which those ideas occur, become almost impossible; for the writer, when he employs the terms which are really appropriate, will be understood by the great majority of his readers as if he were using them in their new and inappropriate sense; and he runs a serious risk of being interpreted in a sense which is diametrically opposed to his true meaning. In this way, again, science undermines her own foundations. For, though science can only attain her results by using a method which discards values, the whole justification, both of the results themselves and of the method by which they are obtained, is, like that of everything else, its value in relation to forward evolution. Ultimately, science itself is a branch, and a most important branch, of ethics; but it proceeds, for its own special purposes, by a special and independent method. And this method, it may be added, is necessarily imposed on it by the character of the facts with which it is con-

cerned—that is to say, by the universality of rhythm in external nature; whereas it refuses to lend itself to psychical phenomena, where rhythm is unknown.

This is perhaps the right place for explaining a usage of my own. It has been objected to my employment of the word 'transcendental' that, when Kant uses that word, 'it never indicates 'a relation of our knowledge to things, but only 'a relation of our knowledge to our faculty of know-'ledge,'[1] and that, in that sense of the word, the expression 'transcendental personality' is entirely devoid of meaning. It is therefore suggested that my purpose would have been better served if I had used instead the word 'transcendent'. I readily admit my departure from Kant's usage; and, further, that, considering the eminence of his authority, it is desirable that I should expressly notice the fact, and add my reasons for employing the same word in a different sense. As a general excuse I would submit that, with the doubtful exception of Heraclitus, no thinker of mark has approached Kant in the disservice he has done to his own thought by the arbitrary and technical character of his terminology, and that to inflict the same usage on other systems, for which it was not designed, would prove an equal, or even greater, disservice to them.

In the particular case which has invited objection, my defence must be that I have been consistent with my own principle in following as closely as

[1] *Prolegomena*, Berlin edition, iv, p. 293. I am indebted for this reference to Mr. Joachim of Merton.

I could what appeared to me to be the popular usage. The word 'transcendent' is used by men of average education to signify an extreme degree of any phenomenal quality. They speak of transcendent genius, or goodness, or wickedness, if they wish to denote any one of those qualities when it has attained a degree of development such as has never, or seldom, been known before. This concept is, however, in direct contradiction to my meaning when I use the word 'transcendental'; inasmuch as it affirms the realization, in the highest possible degree, of the very qualities which it is then my purpose to exclude. Moreover, it is inapplicable to all the data of that form of experience which is dealt with by science: it is applicable to qualities only, and not to quantities. But both science and ethics, in my view, postulate an unknown substance which is external to the boundaries of experience; and of which, in consequence, we are unable to predicate any phenomenal attributes. Science postulates a first cause; ethics, a final cause: and the latter will also postulate a personality, a concept which is alien to science. But with regard to the attributes, either of the first cause or of the final cause, neither science nor ethics can give us any trace of information. Again, the bare concept of personality is abstracted from all attributes except that of purposive activity. Transcendent, however, as commonly used, is applied only to attributes; and to describe a personality as transcendent when it has no attributes would be absurd.

I have therefore preferred, for denoting a personality with no known attributes, to use the word 'transcendental', which, in popular use, is vague and confused in connotation, and which signifies little more than supernatural.[1] It will, no doubt, be objected to the concept of a personality without attributes that it is unmeaning. If by unmeaning we understand, as we must, inert, or devoid of function, the objection is valid; but neither science nor ethics will carry us any further. For a definition which will endow the concept with life we must go to Religion.

I have since drawn a distinction (cf. 'The Ethical Mean') between (1) the *unknown* end of the evolution of the race (Ethical), and (2) the *transcendental* end of the individual (Religious). Wherever I have written the *transcendental* end of Ethics, the word *unknown* should be substituted.

There are, in fact, three possible ways in which the final end of action (when it is not either pleasure or earthly glory) may be represented:

(1) As a known ideal, which is more or less distinctly conceived—like that of the Greeks.

(2) As an unknown result from a process which obeys phenomenal laws: that is, in science, the law

[1] I have just chanced on an illustration: 'Whatever Jehovah 'may have been conceived to be in His essential nature—God 'of the thunderstorm, or the like—this fell more and more into 'the background as mysterious and *transcendental*; the subject 'was not one for inquiry.'—*Encycl. Brit.*, 9th edition, vol. xiii, p. 399.

of uniform sequence; in philosophy, the law of the progression of opposites. This is the final end of evolution.

(3) A state which is neither conceivable nor subject to phenomenal law. This is the final end of religion. And this, in its relation to (2), may be regarded as a reward.

OXFORD: HORACE HART M.A.
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY