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THE STRUCTURE
OF LIFE

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THOU MUST VENTURE

THE STRUCTURE OF LIFE

by

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is based on a course of six lectures given during the autumn of 1943 at St. Hild's College, Durham, to the clergy of the diocese. The lectures have since been revised and re-written, and a good deal of additional material has been incorporated. The book which results is offered to the readers as a study in the Christian ethic and the contemporary situation. Its argument is that the basic principles of the former can be confidently reaffirmed in face of the complexities of the latter, but only as those principles are first re-stated in terms of these complexities.

Modern man—unless he is able to deliver himself over to some fanaticism, political or otherwise—is oppressed by a sense that all his knowledge is infected with relativity. He has learned to what an extent his thinking is conditioned by his historical situation, his social setting, and the psychological type to which he belongs. Where his fathers saw the world in black and white, he sees it in various shades of grey. Is there any room, therefore, in his life for the urgency of moral decision? Can we any longer maintain with Emerson “the sovereignty of ethics”?

The first chapter gives an affirmative answer to this question and thus clears the way for a consideration in the two which follow of the Christian ethic, its sources and historical development. The fourth and fifth chapters deal with the various standpoints which fall within the Christian ethic as a whole, the sub-types of which it is composed, and with this the first part of the book concludes.

The second part is composed of two chapters which deal with questions of principle which are intermediate between the broad generalisations which have hitherto been discussed and the consideration of particular problems which is to

follow : these are the concept of natural law and the vexed question of the relation between the material and spiritual aspects of human life.

The last three chapters deal with particular problems in the form in which they meet us at the present moment : marriage and the family, individual liberty in its relation to the State and society, and so on. The selection and treatment of the topics in question have been governed by two considerations. In the first place, it was thought best to omit anything the discussion of which might quite well be rendered out of date within a few months by the passage of events, though that meant the exclusion of much which is of interest to writer and reader alike. In the second place, I have made no attempt to be exhaustive, but rather have sought to bring out what seemed to me lacking in previous treatments of the subjects in question ; I see no value in repeating what has been said well many times already by others.

While the treatment is mainly philosophical and theological, the book is not written for specialists only, but for all who wish to get beyond the perplexities of the moment to the fundamental issues.

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P.S.—I am grateful to the Rev. A. C. Neil, M.A., for many valuable criticisms and suggestions, also to the Rev. A. F. Bayly for reading the proofs. Permission has been given to reproduce in Chapter X a few paragraphs from an article which appeared in the *Guardian* some time ago.

CHAPTER I

ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE

IT is presumably because my duties take me regularly by train from Newcastle upon Tyne to Durham that the view of the latter from the railway line has stamped itself upon my mind as a picture of the human situation and those salient features in it with which these pages will be concerned. In the first place, does not the city with its streets and houses half display and half conceal the incidents and vicissitudes which make up our life from day to day, its composite pattern of family affection, individual occupation, and group-interest? Above this rise the cathedral and the castle as representing the two powers by which order is introduced into the flow of events. The one brings to bear upon the life of the city standards which derive from a region beyond its immediate concerns, while from the other emanates the authority of civic rule, regulating, and where necessary, coercing its various interests and activities into at least an outward semblance of peace and harmony.

1. CITY, CASTLE, AND CATHEDRAL

What complicates life for the city-dweller is that he is set in this way under two authorities, and that there is no guarantee that in their claims upon him they will agree. The religious vision has to be brought to bear, not merely upon the detail of personal conduct, but upon the rigid structures of organised society. It is here that the shoe pinches: how be honest in business, truthful in diplomacy, and humane in war? Moral action does not take place in a vacuum, nor is it the mere shaping of a material which has no form of its own: rather is it the manipulation of something which at times can offer most stubborn resistance.

But it is not only that the castle stands for the necessities which are imposed upon us by the mere fact of our existence in this world ; it is also itself a moral authority. Here, in fact, we come upon what Bergson has described as “ the two sources of morality ”¹: these are social organisation and religious insight. Their deliverances may agree but more often they diverge. In the Old Testament, Tamar defends herself against the importunity of her half-brother with the plea that “ no such thing ought to be done in Israel ”²: there is a common standard to which appeal is possible, since both are members of the same nation. But when Joseph in Egypt finds himself in a similar situation, he has no common ground with the temptress except the fact that, as human beings, both stand before an all-seeing God : “ How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? ”³ Finally, the prophet is driven into isolation by the discovery that what is “ done in Israel ” cannot be reconciled with what is right in the sight of God. Such is the changing pattern of relationship between social obligation and religious vision.

But that is not all. An equally serious difficulty is that the status of the cathedral proves, on consideration, to be much less secure than we at first supposed. Let us imagine two persons paying a visit to it. The first is a tourist, who is interested in the building for its architecture, its historical associations, and so on. In his eyes it is representative of the Church of England, a body in which he has no particular interest, so that the cathedral stands for him as merely part of the organisation of one form taken by one particular religion out of the many which are in the world. The second is a worshipper, who enters the cathedral to join in the service which is being conducted as the tourist leaves : as he kneels in his place, he is in the presence of a spiritual reality which claims his total allegiance and which he would confess as that which sustains his life.

¹ *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1935).

² 2 Sam. xiii. 12.

³ Gen. xxxix. 9.

Is the tourist right when he views the cathedral with a measured interest as one instance of a large class—the Church of England as one out of many churches, and Christianity as one out of many religions? Or is the worshipper right, for whom it is of unique worth and what it stands for lays upon him an absolute claim? That the morality of the social group is infected with relativity, none would deny: must we now make the same admission of the other type, the morality of the prophet?

All moral authority—and it is as a source of moral authority that we are dealing with religion at this point—is at once relative and absolute. It is rooted, that is to say, in a particular historical period and a particular society; Buddha and Amos have to be seen against their respective backgrounds to be rightly understood. At the same time, the demands which it makes are unconditional; as Kant emphasised, there is no morality where there is not a categorical imperative. Christianity itself is, from one point of view, the particular form in which religion has appealed to the Western peoples, but its own account of itself is that it is the revelation of the one true God. Were one tourist only or worshipper only, perhaps no problem would arise; it is of the very nature of such a study as the present, however, that it must seek to co-ordinate these two standpoints, to show how it is possible for moral authority to be both relative, because rooted at every point in the limiting conditions of life in this world, and absolute, because witnessing to an order of reality which is not of this world.

2. ETHICAL TYPES

Let us begin by accentuating the problem, by surveying the wide range of ethical types which command, or have commanded at some time, men's allegiance. Probably no complete classification is possible. At any rate, this will not be attempted here.

(a) In the first place, each civilisation in the course of its development shows how one system of ethical values is displaced in whole or part by another. Thus in the West we can distinguish between the ethic of classical antiquity, that of Christianity, and that of the modern world. Some might regard the medieval ethic as a distinct type, others as a fusion of the classical and Christian types. Similarly in India various successive types are described by such an authority as Professor E. W. Hopkins,¹ and in Japan the Shinto cult, the Chinese classics, Buddhism, and the West have together created the standards which govern life to-day.

(b) Or one might look upon the great world-religions which exist side by side at the present time as each the source of a specific system of ethical value-judgments. There is a Buddhist ethic which can be set alongside of the Christian for purposes of comparison, with certain areas of agreement and other areas of divergence. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all derive from one and the same ultimate source of inspiration, yet in their understanding of such terms as "justice" and "love" each occupies its own ground. Even Hartmann, who has seen so clearly the diversity of ethical systems, has yet failed to recognise that the Orient in so many respects operates with standards which do not commend themselves to the West. The Chinese mind, for example, does not set the same value on physical courage as we do.

(c) There is such a thing as a national ethos: the word "freedom," for example, does not mean the same thing to a Frenchman, a German, and an Englishman. A paragraph from Rauschnig is worth quoting at this point: "In Great Britain compromise is the outcome of the practical recognition, deeply ethical and Christian in origin, that no man can be solely and entirely in the right, that no more than an approximation to the right is possible, and that this is

¹ *Ethics of India* (1924).

achieved in a compromise between many personal views of what is right. Compromise proceeds from the moral conviction that the individual person or party can never be in possession of absolute truth in regard to the things of this world. We Continentals, whatever our antecedents and our mentality, always feel that we are in possession of the sole and exclusive truth. We alone are right, we and those who think with us. Those who are not with us are either stupid or malevolent. Thus our political life breeds from the very outset political arrogance, intolerance, and dogmatism.”¹

(d) Similarly, there are sectional ethical types which appear within the nation and across national frontiers. In Galsworthy's play *Loyalties* we have an excellent study of these various standards, which are so many matters of class, education, or calling. Everyone knows that there is such a thing as the medical ethic or the sportsman's code : time was when certain obligations were regarded as incumbent on the man of good birth, but not on others. The ideal of the “English gentleman” was aristocratic in its origin, but by now it has filtered through to strata of society for which in the first instance it had no relevance.

(e) More fundamental than this is the difference which exists between the morality of the man and that of the woman. This, of course, changes with changing social conditions, but it is not yet established that the same degree of independence is required of the woman as of the man. Such expressions as “an effeminate man” and “a masculine woman” show that conduct which would be praiseworthy in the one sex is open to criticism in the other.

(f) Finally, the analysis must be carried a stage farther. Each of the main types breaks up on examination into a number of sub-types. Thus, within the Christian ethic we have very considerable diversity. What commends itself to the Quaker conscience might be rejected outright by the

¹ *The Beast from the Abyss* (1941), 62.

Catholic and the Lutheran. The term "Christian Socialist" means in one country a bold policy of social change, in another a compound of reaction and anti-Semitism. So the classical type includes within itself the Stoic, the Epicurean and the Cynic, as well as Plato and Aristotle.

Of course, it must be added that in experience we seldom meet with any of these types in an entirely pure form, except perhaps when they first come into existence. Diogenes was the complete Cynic, no doubt, but did any of his followers wholly escape the influence of rival patterns of living? The modern Englishman's moral standards include elements drawn from Aristotle and the New Testament; at one moment you can recognise in him the features of the mediæval knight, and at another he seems a convinced adherent of the creed that "business is business." The diversity, that is to say, is not only in the world outside us, it is also entrenched within ourselves.

3. THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ABSOLUTE

Is it possible therefore that the moral life is no more than a mosaic, with as many colours in it as it has fragments, and with no grand design to make out of it an ordered whole? Philosophy, which might have been expected to come to our rescue, does but aggravate the problem at this point. For in its effort to reach a finally valid ethical standpoint, it only adds to the confusion of systems. The Kantian ethic competes with the Utilitarian, and in the name of evolution a third thinker dismisses both, while Nietzsche proposes nothing less than a "transvaluation of all values." Ethical reflection does not after all yield a set of moral judgments on which all may unite, but rather leaves us with what we found by observation of the facts, a series of types, each of which authenticates itself to a certain number of sincere and thoughtful people. Is everything therefore in morality relative and nothing absolute? There are, I think, some

considerations which suggest that such a conclusion is unwarranted.

(a) The baffling variety of ethical judgments with which history undoubtedly presents us does not justify the inference that the distinction between right and wrong is itself not absolute. If, for example, I face an audience in a lecture and make use of the terms “left” and “right,” it is quite true that my audience will call “left” what I call “right,” and *vice versa* ; but at the same time we shall all regard the distinction between left and right as one which is fixed for each party and under no circumstances to be blurred. If I take passage on a ship, my fellow-passenger and I may differ considerably as to which articles of luggage should be labelled for the hold and which for the cabin, but we shall neither of us confuse the cabin with the hold, particularly when the time has arrived for going to sleep ! So the distinction between good and evil remains absolute even though all particular applications of it should be shown to be infected with relativity.

(b) While theoretically it is possible to deny that any norms are of absolute status, it is not in fact possible to live on the basis of such denial. The Marxist may affirm that there is no such thing as justice, but only the struggle till death between the interests of rival groups, exploiters and exploited. But on a political platform he will speak with something of the fervour and indignation of a Hebrew prophet, and the fury with which he throws himself into the class-war is only explicable if he is defending an absolute right and not the mere demand of the group with which he has identified himself. The National Socialist may aver that the nation is the source of all moral standards, but in his propaganda he will appeal for a more equitable distribution of the world's economic resources, as though there were a tribunal somewhere which could sit in judgment on various claims and find for the weak against the strong. Those who are ready to dismiss religion and morality as private opinions on which we must agree to differ are often among those who

are most eager for social change and who appeal to justice as the sanction for their programmes. Just as we can profess determinism but can only live by freedom, so ethical scepticism has to be suspended when the time comes for action.

(c) In what has been said so far, I have conceded perhaps too much to relativity for the sake of the argument. It is easy to exaggerate the extent to which standards fluctuate in the course of history and the degree in which they are dependent on social conditions. The Decalogue, on any hypothesis, was framed for a people still on one of the lower rungs in the ladder of civilisation : if they were not seminomads, they were tillers of the soil, newly settled on the land they had won by the sword. It is therefore only familiarity with its content which prevents our amazement at finding this simple code recognised as binding among the most advanced societies of our own day. The Ten Commandments have survived all changes in social structure during the three thousand years or so since they were first formulated, they have been translated into virtually every language and incorporated into a vast range of educational systems, one religion has handed them on to another, and it is a commonplace that the political struggles of our time and the war that devastates Europe turn in the end on the issue : for or against the Ten Commandments. The Russian experiment has shown, too, that the prohibition of theft is not bound up with the institution of private property : in fact, the sanctions attached to property where the State is the ultimate owner seem likely to be stronger than those which obtain in a capitalist country. Nor has the Russian revolt against the seven-day week with a day of rest on the seventh been any more successful, while one of the most dramatic changes in that country has been the return to traditional family loyalties and pieties.

(d) It may well be that the diversity of ethical types as known to us is best accounted for by the superabundant riches of the moral order which is revealed thereby. Does

not this need for its self-expression all the forms which are concealed within the bosom of this spatio-temporal world? There is in it a vitality and fertility which are simply inexhaustible, as there is a depth of meaning in which ever fresh soundings require to be taken. One can find abundant illustrations of this outside the moral sphere. A work of art reveals fresh beauties as one changes the point of view from which it is regarded: Mount Fuji—as any Japanese will say—needs to be seen under a variety of atmospheric conditions before a full appreciation of it is possible: a philosophy like that of Plato yields new suggestions to each generation and to each reader. The reality with which we have to do in moral experience may be of such a quality that it flows into countless channels, taking in each its own course yet one and the same stream in them all. The existence, in other words, of so many moral perspectives, each with its own description of the field it surveys, may be the only possible way in which justice can be done to what is seen differently from each angle, yet is in itself one and absolute.

(e) There is a further possibility, one which cannot be established but only suggested. It may be that the various ethical types do not arise in haphazard fashion, but are the result of a process of increasing discrimination. The moral genius, the prophet, here plays the part of discoverer: a new world swims into his ken and he returns from his lonely adventure to report to others what he has seen, so that they in turn may go in to possess the good land. There is of course the extremely important difference that, whereas in the case of the physical world, we can map out the various areas which have thus been discovered and see them as parts of one whole, nothing of this kind is as yet possible in the case of the moral order. The existence of ethical decision as we know it seems bound up with this ambiguity in our ethical knowledge. Responsibility, it may well be, lies most heavily upon us where we have to choose, not between good and evil, but between differing forms of the

good. But with this we shall be concerned in what follows. It will suffice here to point out that just such a process of increasing discrimination is familiar to us in the realm of aesthetic values ; it would seem as though Petrarch's experience of wonder and awe on a mountain-summit marks a new level in the appreciation of natural beauty.¹ The history of philosophy, too, is not what it is often thought to be, a mere welter of rival systems ; there is an order in it which becomes evident on closer study. This is not, to be sure, the same steady accumulation of knowledge with which the progress of the natural sciences has made us familiar ; rather is there in the succession of philosophical systems a clarifying of ultimate issues, so that we see ever more plainly the alternatives between which we must choose. So history may well show us the presentation, under a profuse variety of forms, of the moral ground-pattern of our existence, just as the choice between Yahweh and "strange gods" recurs at every level in the life of Israel and confronts even the modern Jew as that between fidelity to tradition and assimilation to the world about him.

4. THE NATURE OF THE ABSOLUTE NORM

The conclusion to which this whole discussion is meant to lead us is that the two concepts, absolute and relative, are not to be regarded as antithetical but as complementary. The absolute is not that which is outside all relations but that which is adequate to all relations ; no other account of it does justice, at any rate, to the facts of moral experience. One may call attention to the parallel in physics as modern research has developed it. Max Planck protests against the abandonment of the field, here also, to mere relativity, and argues that "as a matter of fact, the concept of relativity is based on a more fundamental absolute than the erroneously assumed absolute which it has supplanted. . . . If we admit

¹ Burckhardt : *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (1921), 302.

the concept of relativity at all we must admit the acceptance of an absolute, because it is out of this that the relative concept as such arises.”¹ What has happened, he explains, is that we have attained to a more satisfactory understanding of the absolute, we have not abolished it.

So it is with the new knowledge we have gained of the extent to which ethical norms are conditioned by the social environment in which they arise. We must break altogether with the notion of an absolute standard as one which is the same at all times, for all persons, and under all circumstances. Such a standard, isolated as it would be from the changing pattern of human life, would be quite useless as a guide to conduct. What we need is surely a standard which will enable us to make the right adjustment to the succession of situations which constitutes our life, while remaining one with ourselves in all these differing occasions. We need in fact to employ some such distinction as that which Mannheim draws between relativity and “relationism.” All our knowledge is socially conditioned, it is quite impossible for the individual to isolate himself from his historical position and to gain a purely objective view of truth. That does not mean, however, that he has no access to truth, any more than the fact that I can only see an object from my particular angle, and you from yours, means that neither of us ever sees the object in question. In the sphere of ethical reality, we are dealing with something which cannot be apprehended apart from, but only in and through, social and historical conditions. The absolute meets us as incarnate in our human modes of existence, as translated into the speech of our world in one or other of its many forms ; but it is none the less absolute for all that.² The standards with which we operate are not themselves absolute, but in operating with them we do in fact work with the absolutes—such is the position at which we arrive.

¹ *Where is Science Going ?* (1933), 94f.

² *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), 70.

It would seem, however, that here a change in terminology is called for. We can scarcely bring out the significance of this position unless we cease to speak of laws and norms and speak instead of persons. The kind of absolute I have been describing—an infinite capacity of adjustment to changing situations combined with the preservation throughout of its own inherent character—is something which can hardly be conceived of except in terms of personality and its activity. The genius of Shakespeare, for example, consists in his ability to breathe life into the most varied human types as he fashions them, while at the same time setting upon each the stamp of his own peculiar genius. There is a flexibility here, a power of adaptability and improvisation, which we cannot find in laws or standards. So in cricket, the master-batsman is not the one who has learned all the rules, but the one who has reached such a point in skill that he knows as if by instinct the exact way in which to meet each ball, however often the bowling may be changed. None of us would be attracted to the teacher who answered all questions with the same formula : the person who commands our admiration is the one who knows just how to deal with each questioner as he comes along.

Considerations of this kind lead us accordingly to think of the moral absolute as in the last resort a personal life, the life of God himself. Only so can we do justice to the need for creativity, spontaneity, and originality in the moral realm. These are clearly required of us, since no laws are adequate to all circumstances and even what we call our principles may serve at times rather to stereotype life than to give it power. God himself as he enters into relation with us from moment to moment—how better can we formulate the moral absolute than this? He alone is perfectly adequate to all our circumstances, and what we call our moral laws and principles are so many rough definitions of his character as we need it for the direction of our lives. They have their place, of course, for nothing would be farther

from what is here intended than to atomize life into a series of disconnected moments in each of which we can look for some "chancy" direction from a supernatural source. God is not whim nor caprice; there will therefore be a fundamental uniformity and consistency in the guidance we derive from him, though in him, as elsewhere, the present is never to be regarded as merely a new edition of the past.

If therefore we are to find an adequate statement of moral authority, we must be content with a two-fold one. We shall have to speak both of a personal response to God's direction in the ever-changing circumstances of our life and of obedience to moral laws, the realisation of ideal values in this world of time and space. This dual formulation of the position corresponds to the necessity we are under of using now personal and now impersonal terms to describe the nature of God. For the prophets, he is both person and law, as in the Gospels Jesus speaks now of God as Father and now of his kingdom. Each form of expression serves as a safeguard against some perversion to which the other is liable. Thus there is a danger that we may interpret life wholly in terms of obedience to commandment, and we need therefore to be reminded that in the last resort it is something quite other than this, the creative response of the individual to a living God who guides him. On the other hand, how often has this latter conception been grossly abused, so that men have given a divine sanction to their own impulses and prejudices? The moral situation always includes an element of the permanent and an element of the new and the unique: so that we require a terminology which will enable us to combine these two as together making up a whole. There is in many minds, of course, a prejudice against this conclusion, on the ground that it is dualistic. I suspect, however, that our bias in favour of a one-track approach to truth is something which is not likely to be justified by experience.

There is, however, a third possibility between the two

which have just been outlined. This is the formulation of moral principle in such terms as will conserve the personal character of the relation out of which it arises. This is that quest of the one great commandment on which all else depends which we find reflected in the New Testament and on which the rabbis had already engaged. As the Golden Rule the formulation is rich in suggestion but not wholly satisfactory : there is enough of the commandment about it to set us imagining circumstances in which it would break down. But the same objection cannot be brought against the maxim : “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” for here a synthesis of obligation and inspiration is effected. He who loves his neighbour will not need to be bound by rules as to how he is to act towards him ; his own love will prompt him as the occasion arises. Further, what is so fertile in imagination or so rich in initiative as love ? He who has this in his heart will indeed fulfil the law.

There is still, however, one point in connection with this view of God as the absolute moral standard which should not be passed over. It is the familiar problem : Does God will the right because it is right, or is it right because he wills it ? Is God the source of moral norms or do they exist apart from him in the eternal order ? Here it seems to me that the limits of our thinking are revealed, and we must have recourse to that dualism of expression to which reference has been already made. To suppose that falsehood would have been a virtue had God chosen so to ordain or that reverence to the moral law is reverence for a morality which exists apart from him—to state either of these positions is surely to reject them at once. It is one and the same reality with which we have to do when we worship God in prayer and when we serve the ideals which have won the loyalty of our consciences. No statement can be true which would imply a separation between these and none is possible which would absolve us from the necessity of this double formulation.

5. THE CONFLICT OF TYPES

The picture with which this chapter opened brought vividly before us the fact that human life is governed by more than one authority, and that between these rivalry and conflict are possible. What has been said above of the diversity of ethical types, each with its own set of claims upon us, will have gone to strengthen the impression that there is a problem here which admits of no simple solution. We are in fact confronted by what is usually called "the conflict of values," the situation which arises when we know ourselves to be confronted by two distinct sets of obligations and see no way to harmonise them ; we must of necessity choose one and reject the other. The recognition of this inescapable element of tragedy in human life seems to come more easily to the German than to the Anglo-Saxon mind : perhaps it is our genius for compromise which comes to the rescue, or rather, which blinds us to the truth. It is not merely that there are competing ethical systems as arising out of the various world-religions : here we can be satisfied probably to choose one and to reject the other. But the conflict between the classical and the Christian values is one which is forced upon us by the very nature of Western civilisation and it has worked out for some in life-long agony. I think, for example, of Kierkegaard, whose problem it was to live between Socrates and Christ. In his *Agape and Eros*, Nygren has shown how this conflict of *motifs* has appeared and reappeared throughout the history of Christianity. It is possible, no doubt, for some among us to deny to one of these ideals any positive worth, but where this is carried out to the logical conclusion life becomes restricted and barren. It would seem rather as though we are meant to live through and learn by the tension which is thus set up, as though the growing-point of the soul is where conflict arises, responsibility is exercised, and sometimes guilt is incurred.

"Ethical antinomies are part of the structure of life ;

they are not merely introduced into it by our guilt. It is rather the unknown powers of life itself which lay this guilt upon us. The laws which govern life have in them a dialectic, and in the personal value-judgments at which we arrive this dialectic exposes us continually to collisions from which we emerge not without some stain upon our souls. We may be inspired by an ideal of how life might unfold as a complete, unbroken totality. But how often does economic necessity clash with the wishes of love, or the will to truth with the will to realize some other genuine value ! How often does the effort after an inner aesthetic harmony of the self clash with the stern demands of life in the state, industry, or society ! There is no means by which we can explain away these antitheses. They are there, and out of them springs the tragic quality of our life. For life is through and through tragic.”¹

The problem which Spranger has formulated in these words is one which presses upon us all. Who has not known the difficulty of reconciling his conscience as a Christian to what is sometimes required of him as a business man or a citizen ? The disintegration of life has become a terrible reality in our day, and a man's own self is in danger of being broken up into many separate and incompatible selves which he assumes according to the part which is required of him at the moment. He is one man in his office, another in his club, and a third at home : those who see him first in the one place and then in another are sometimes heard to say that he is not the man here that he was there, and they are right. In such a state of things the unity of the personality becomes questionable, and the divided self which is needed for the complex business of modern life shades off into the divided self which stamps one as a case for the psycho-therapist.

The superficial moralist is tempted to stigmatise all the conflicts and soul-stresses of modern man as so many shame-

¹ Spranger : *Lebensformen* (1922), 314.

ful compromises and to urge upon him the ideal of consistency and unity. Nor need we doubt that much of the discord within a man's life may be due to an unwillingness to act out in some particular set of relations what outside of those he knows to be right. He may be unwilling to order his life in the market-place by what he acknowledges in the church : this is so much evasion and we need to face the fact, particularly where we ourselves are guilty of it. But as Spranger has insisted, these antinomies belong to the very nature of our life : the moral order as we know it is discontinuous and not all of one pattern. The effort after sincerity does not, for example, dispel the conflict between the religious and the political values ; it serves rather to make us all the more conscious that the two are for our experience incompatible in certain important respects.

We are moving here towards the fundamental religious issue, that of polytheism or monotheism. For what else is this admission of the conflict of ethical types than the recognition that life as we know it is governed by a number of authorities, between which agreement cannot be guaranteed ? And what is that but the re-introduction of the polytheism we had thought gone for ever ? We may smile at Homer's picture of the gods waging war at Troy : but when we say that our Christian duty points us in one direction and our family obligations, our economic needs, or our political loyalty in another, are we not very much in the same position still ? Perhaps the conflict of values is a more serious threat to the unity of the personality than the conflict of the gods ever was.

We can now re-define polytheism and monotheism as they offer themselves to us to-day as alternatives for the government of conduct. Polytheism is to accept as final the division and conflict to which attention has been called, to acquiesce in the partition of life into so many spheres, each under its particular moral authority. Monotheism, on the other hand, is to live and act in the faith that all this is

grievous indeed, but not ultimate, that the moral order which is also the nature of God is one in him and that as we wait and are faithful it will become one also for us. Monotheism is the protest against the disintegration of life with which we are threatened : we believe that the " unknown powers of life "—to use Spranger's phrase—are ultimately subject to God's rule and that it is our task to co-operate with him to make that rule effective in this world.

Perhaps we have so long accustomed ourselves to seeing in ethical monotheism a religious commonplace that it will be strange to us at first to think of it in this way, as a conviction to be won at great cost and to be held in face of many facts which apparently deny it. It can only be held as a conviction if it is at the same time accepted as a rule of action. But we stand to-day where the prophets of Israel stood when they asserted the unity of God in spite of the seeming confusion of history and the imposing might of heathen empires and their gods. Perhaps what we imagined was but a stage in the development of religion is in fact the essence of the human situation. There are ages which have concealed this from men; we are fortunate in being born into an age in which the issues are terribly plain for all to see, either the disintegration of life or faith in one living and sovereign God.

6. THE STATUS OF THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC

It only remains to answer one question, that of the claim which can be put forward on behalf of the Christian ethic. In the light of what has been said so far, are we justified in asserting that the Christian ethic is absolute and final ?

The question, to be sure, is less simple than it seems to be. In the first case, the whole argument so far goes to show that the Christian ethic can no more than any other be regarded as absolute in the sense of all-inclusive. It represents a selection from the total wealth of values which make up the moral order and the life of God. As we shall see in the

sequel, the *locus* of Christian action is where the specifically Christian values impinge on values of another origin. It is in these frontier-situations that life becomes at once problematic and fruitful. The Christian spirit presupposes the natural and secular values of family life, business, the local and national community, etc., as the matter to which it is to give form.

In the second place, we need to bear in mind that the Christian ethic does not exist as such, but only as taking shape under certain historical and social conditions. No one is a Christian *simpliciter*, but a Christian of some particular tradition, an Anglican or a Quaker or a Plymouth Brother. Unless we are very vigilant, we shall find that the claim of absolute worth which we make for Christianity is in fact such a claim on behalf of our own set of ideas about Christianity. I confess frankly at the earliest possible stage in this discussion that when I speak of the Christian ethic I mean that ethic as I understand it myself, and one hardly needs the virtue of modesty to perceive that that is not absolute ; one needs only a modicum of common-sense.

The Christian ethic on which one can act—and I am only interested in it in so far as that is possible—is always something limited, circumscribed, and personal. The status which it enjoys is therefore ultimately a matter of personal conviction. Does it or does it not win from me a total commitment ? Do I find here the fixed point on which to stand amid what otherwise would be a welter of conflicting claims, an interminable competition of standards ? My judgment on the status of the Christian ethic turns on the answer I give to such questions and not on the results of a comparative study of numerous ethical systems. True, such a study should be made : in particular, no one should be allowed to evade the encounter in his own thought and action of the Christian and the classical attitudes to life. But the time must come when a decision is called for and one binds oneself to this allegiance or to that. And the

decision has to be taken by many who have neither the time nor the equipment to make such a study.

Yet it is not accurate to speak without qualification of what thus takes place as a decision. One must add that the decision is in no sense capricious, nor even in the nature of a will-to-believe—that poor surrogate of our time for a living faith in God. There is behind it the recognition of an objective fact—that for me this complex of values shines with a light which no other possesses. The standpoint from which the decision is reached is that of the worshipper—to revert to an earlier illustration—but that of the worshipper who has come to the cathedral constrained by the reality which is manifested there. His standpoint, of course, is not the final one. History records the extravagances and fanaticisms to which the worshipper is liable : he needs to preserve something of the standpoint of the tourist, the man who is aware that no manifestation of God must ever be mistaken for God himself. But it is as worshipper he must live.

If it is said that this is to expose ourselves in the major concerns of life to the hazards of personal conviction, the reply is simple. That is according to the nature both of life and of morality. But at the risk of repetition I must point out again that personal conviction is something very different from private opinion. The starting-point of this whole study is that of ethical realism, that there is a world of objective values which do not abide our question but which stand over against us in authority. Conviction is the discernment on our part of this authority, and readiness henceforth to order our lives by it.

To sum up : the attitude which is incumbent upon us as moral persons in this world is one compounded of confidence and humility. Confidence, because conscience bears witness to a moral order which is of absolute worth and which is independent of our recognition of it. Humility, because the witness of conscience is blurred by the medium through

which it passes, the social conditions under which we live and the defects of our own selves. Assurance is granted to us, but not infallibility : we may misapprehend values as we sometimes mistake one object for another. We have truth enough to live by, but not enough to justify us in imposing ourselves on those who differ from us. We do not possess absolute knowledge but we have knowledge of an absolute.

CHAPTER II

AUTHORITY AND CONSCIENCE

ACCORDING to the position reached in the last chapter, we have to reckon with two factors, one subjective and one objective. The subjective factor is conscience, by which is meant not some mysterious faculty capable of giving infallible guidance, but the individual himself as passing moral judgment upon past acts or the possibilities of action in the present. Such judgment will be based on a number of considerations, ranging from a calculation of the probable consequences of action to the inexplicable but constraining imperative of an "I can do no other." The objective factor is the specifically Christian area of values. These, as we have seen, do not exhaust the wealth of the world of ethical reality, but they are recognised as highest, as the central values around which all the rest are to be ordered. The Christian conscience does not manufacture, it discerns, the Christian standard; on the other hand, had there been no such standard there would have been no such conscience. The two are correlated, as is the case with the sensitiveness of the artist and the particular type of beauty to which he seeks to give expression.

What then is the source of the Christian standards? In the teaching and personality of Jesus we have the historical events which constitute at once the revelation of certain moral values not hitherto discerned either in such fullness or with such clarity and the creation of that type of conscience to which these values authenticate themselves. Hence the peculiar authority with which this section of history is invested: hence also the problem of the relation between this authority and the right of conscience to accept and to reject what is offered to it in accordance with its own

honest judgment. It seems to some people that the Christian does not in reality follow his own conviction of the truth but takes over his judgments ready-made from an external authority to which he has promised submission. Is this so?

1. THE TEACHING OF JESUS

Let us begin the consideration of this problem with a very brief sketch of the ethical teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. There are many ways in which this might be done. We might, for example, set out from the concrete ethical problems which confront us all—in personal relations, in the family, in the State, etc.—and ask what direction he has to give on these. What I propose to do here is to seek to recover the creative intuitions which come to expression in the Gospels, so that we may observe the process by which new moral valuations come to the birth.

It is necessary, of course, always to bear in mind that Jesus does not think of his teaching as sufficient in and of itself: it is to a considerable extent a revision of what the law and the prophets had already given to his people. To put the matter paradoxically, we may say that one of the most important parts of the message of Jesus was what he did not say, and did not need to say, because it was already in the minds of his hearers. In addressing a Jewish audience, he could presuppose the prophetic summons to social righteousness, as he could presuppose their evangel of the unity of God. Again, the teaching of Jesus has so much in common with that of the rabbis, that the two can legitimately be regarded as alternative developments from what is to be found in the Old Testament. The ethic of the imitation of God, the summons to instant obedience to his will, the close connection which is established between religion and morality—these are some of the many features in the Gospels which belong rather to the inheritance which Jesus took over than to his original inspiration. It is with the

latter that I am concerned in what follows, though that must not be taken to imply that all that is dealt with was outside the ken of Judaism in the first century.

(a) To begin with, we find in the Gospels an immense and liberating simplification, the simplification of duty in terms of love. It is quite true that Hillel had already given the Golden Rule in its negative form : but a difference of form is here also one of content. The passage from the avoidance of evil to the creation, out of an inner spontaneity, of the good, is a movement from bondage to freedom. It is true also that the Torah was not statute-law but the will of a gracious God as revealed to his covenant people in instruction for the conduct of life, and that, as more than one of the psalms shows us, it could be an occasion for thanksgiving and joy to the devout Jew. But there have been those at other periods than the first century who have felt it a burden which they could not bear : these were among the weary and heavy-laden to whom Jesus was able to offer rest by his revelation of a love in God which kindles love in the hearts of men. He who confronts the changing situations of life in the spirit of the injunction to love his neighbour as himself has a flexibility, a resilience and a creativity which make him an initiator and not merely an imitator in the sphere of ethical enterprise. The conduct of life ceases to be a task and becomes an adventure in which the future stands open but guidance is assured.

There are two sayings which are of peculiar importance in this connection. The words : " The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath " ¹ release those who accept them from servitude to institution and tradition and make possible the government of life by an inner, rather than an outer, law. When it is said that " whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him," ² the shadows of fear are dispelled which have so long beset the spirit. No longer the victims of accidental circumstances,

¹ Mark ii. 27.

² Mark vii. 18.

we have to guard against one peril only—the impulses from within which would prompt us to what might injure our fellows. In each case a whole set of regulations is annulled in favour of one simple obligation. Nowhere perhaps is this ideal set forth more attractively in the Gospels than in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the wayfarer who puts aside all considerations except that here before him is a man in need and who hastens to his help. This, Jesus says, is something which takes precedence in the sight of God of all those religious duties of which priest and Levite are the guardian. But for the fullest expression of what this way of life involves we must turn to Paul and to his glowing Hymn to Love in 1 Corinthians xiii. Love alone, he sings, gives worth to action, to knowledge, faith, and charity alike, love is infinitely resourceful and finally invincible, an inner spring whose waters will never fail.

(b) In the second place, the paradoxical truth that self-fulfilment is by self-surrender has never found clearer expression than in the words of Jesus. The imagery of the grain dying that it may bring forth fruit, the cross borne for the sake of others, the life laid down that it may be taken up again, the one lifted up that he may draw all to himself—these will remain with us to the end of time. This indirect approach to life, this law that our highest happiness comes to us unsought and shuns us when we make it an object of deliberate effort, seems so obvious to us who have been reared in the Christian tradition that it is difficult to understand how it was hidden from the wisdom of the ancient world. Freedom from self-consciousness is one of the major characteristics of the central figure in the Gospels and forms a striking contrast to the Stoic's deliberate cultivation of the divine element in his nature and the struggle of Buddha after deliverance. "With teeth pressed against each other, with his tongue pressed against his gums, he should by the exertion of his will overthrow, press down, destroy these evil thoughts"—such was the advice which Buddha gave to others from his

own experience.¹ Even the compassionate saviours of Mahayana Buddhism, those figures who come nearer than any others in the history of religion to that of Christ, have something calculating about them : their will to accumulate merit and then to transfer it to their needy fellows is at a lower level than the spontaneous self-giving of Christ.

(c) Thirdly, one of the most daring of the moral innovations in the Gospels is the proclamation of a mercy which lies beyond justice. This is the glory of God, for he sends his rain and his sunshine on good and evil alike, and declines outright to gratify our human demand for what we imagine would be a just world, a world, that is, in which a man's fortune would be exactly in proportion to his merit or demerit. It is also the glory of man, as when the father opens his heart and his door to the returning prodigal, or the employer follows the prompting of his own liberality rather than the requirements of the accepted wage-system. It can be both because it is manifested so clearly in the treatment by Jesus of his fellows. But to that we shall come in a moment.

What Jesus did may be expressed in another way, by saying that he not merely made forgiveness a moral possibility, but set it in the very centre of morality. That this was an achievement of revolutionary character is clear when we reflect how forgiveness appears, when judged from the purely moral standpoint. Hartmann's words in this connection are notable : " He who pardons a guilty person, compromises him spiritually. He denies his accountability. The presumption in washing away guilt, in discharging it, the admission of ' mitigating circumstances,' is at bottom a moral disfranchisement and a degradation of the man."² For Jesus forgiveness was something quite other than the admission of mitigating circumstances and thus it was not a moral disfranchisement but a moral renewal. For him, the essence of forgiveness is that it is at once the act of God's

¹ Quoted in Pratt : *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism* (1928), 42.

² *Ethics* (1932), vol. ii, 145.

holiness condemning sin and of God's love inviting the sinner to return. If it were the first without the second, it would be sheer judgment ; if it were the second without the first, it would be sentimental weakness. The combination of the two in the miracle of forgiveness is the ground of a new hope and the summons to a new duty.

It is a summons to new duty, because forgiveness is not merely for us to enjoy ; as we receive it from God, so we are to give it to our fellows. There is scarcely anything clearer in the teaching of Jesus than that our forgiveness by God is conditional on our willingness to forgive our fellows. That is built into the Lord's Prayer as one of its petitions, and it is presented in an extreme form in the parable of the unforgiving debtor, where the possibility is considered that the pardon originally given might subsequently be withdrawn when it was found that he who had received it was harsh and uncharitable towards his fellow-man. Yet it would be more correct to say, not that Jesus added one more to the sum total of human duties, but that he discovered a new realm for the activity of love. He preserved morality by being concerned with something which lay beyond morality as it was understood in his time. To do this, he had of course to expose himself to misunderstanding ; that he was the friend of sinners was the charge which his contemporaries brought against him, but it has become one of his chief titles to honour.

(d) Finally, we may speak of the power which lies in the renunciation of power.¹ Jesus set the law of the little company which gathered round him in conscious opposition to that which ruled in the outside world. Kings and rulers might measure greatness by the adulation they received and might use it to impose their will on their subjects, but his disciples must work only with the criterion of service. Here again we find the paradox that what we seek eludes us and comes to meet us when we are engaged elsewhere. Into

¹ Tillich : *The Interpretation of History* (1936), 197 ff.

a world in which men struggle for wealth or position or prestige, so that even the immediate followers of Jesus can think of his kingdom as providing gradations of honour and can be ambitious for the first places in it, there comes one who cares for none of these things. He is concerned to give and not to receive, to serve and not to be served, and as such he is strangely unlike all who are about him. But for that very reason he comes in the end, after men's initial misunderstanding and disappointment with him, to exercise over them a new and mysterious power of spiritual attraction. Men pay homage where they know they cannot imitate. So he comes to his throne in the hearts of men by the fact that he has refused every other throne which they have offered him. Probably the most striking expression ever given to this thought is in Kierkegaard, in the contrast he draws between the tyrant and the martyr. Greatly as they differ, they have at least one thing in common, the power to constrain men to follow them. But while the tyrant, ambitious to rule, constrains men by the power he wields, the martyr, humbly obedient to God, does so by what he suffers. So the tyrant dies and his rule is at an end, the martyr dies and his rule begins. He wrests power from the tyrant, not by adopting his methods, but by changing men's understanding of what is powerful.¹ So in Second Isaiah's vision of the Suffering Servant, the great ones of the earth rise from their thrones and acknowledge that the ultimate might is with him.

2. THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

But it is not only the teaching of Jesus which has been a power in the generations which followed him; there has been that also in his personality which has proved irresistibly attractive. With him there enters into the world something which cannot be defined except in terms of him. It is "the spirit of Jesus" or "Christlikeness." As Western

¹ *Journals* (1938), 856.

civilisation penetrates the East, it brings along with many other gifts of questionable value this new spiritual ideal, so that even a Hindu can find no higher praise for Gandhi than to speak of him as Christlike, and I have myself heard the same language used in Japan of a Buddhist teacher whose way of life was based on Tolstoi's precepts of non-possession and non-resistance. The Christlike quality of life is immediately recognisable and it is limited by no social conditions, as it crosses all racial frontiers. But it is unanalysable and no description can do it justice. Its basis is the character of the historical Jesus, though it is not to be identified merely with that ; rather is it the eternal in him released from the temporal limitations of life in a particular place and at a particular juncture in history, and so made able to enter afresh into each generation. The most that can be done is to pick out some salient features of that character as it meets us in the Gospels.

(a) The Gospel of Mark is a pamphlet rather than a book, and it is easy to read it through at one sitting and so gather from it the total impression which it must have made on those who first read it. The Jesus of whom it speaks is one who is invested with authority and exercises power : strength and not mildness is the most evident characteristic of him. In the opening chapter he is introduced to us as one who has absolute mastery over evil spirits, one moreover who has a secret which they have guessed but which they must not be allowed to reveal. He calls his disciples with a word and they leave all and follow him ; his teaching and his healings command the wonder and admiration of those who gather round him ; on the last journey to Jerusalem he leads his disciples boldly to an enterprise from which they shrink, and on the Cross the centurion salutes this dying man as the Son of God. The same consciousness of being in the world as one born to command meets us in the Sermon on the Mount. He sets aside not merely the traditions of his people but even the revelation of which they are the

guardians, and he does it all in the most quiet and matter-of-fact manner, as though what he were saying were something obvious and not the revolutionary utterance that it is. "Ye have heard that it was said . . . but I say into you."¹ It is as a royal figure that Jesus comes before us, and he is all the more kingly because his rule is of the spirit and his throne is in the hearts of men.

(b) The Sermon on the Mount is best read, not as a set of rules to be obeyed, but as a revelation of him who speaks it. It is his own vocation to which he gives expression, God's call to him personally is worked out in a pattern of life which he commends to others. The inwardness on which he insists shows us by what utter purity his own heart was ruled. While we have to recognise in judging our fellows that much may happen between the impulse to evil and the evil act itself, he could not thus distinguish between the acting of a dreadful thing and the first notion. He must be wholly dedicated to God and not even a thought must be entertained that would be opposed to him and his holiness. Such purity is not merely negative, and Hartmann is surely quite mistaken when he would identify it with the innocence of a child.² Purity arises, not before evil is met, but after it has been encountered. Evil has been driven from the heart, but by the expulsive power of love, which now comes in to take full possession. Temptation seems often to be resisted in an effortless way, because a self has been won to which its solicitations are wholly alien.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this purity is the attraction which it exercises for those who seem to be farthest from it, for the degraded and fallen who, Esau-like, have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. The woman who shrinks from the Pharisee comes to weep out her penitence at the feet of his guest. Where mere righteousness would condemn, purity will receive. It is as though purity is so firmly established in its own territory that it can

¹ Matt. v. 27 f.

² *Ethics*, vol. ii, 211 f.

invade that of evil as it will without fear and with the purpose of delivering those who are held in bondage there. There is a serenity about it, too, a deep inner peace such as is possible only to one who finds his security not in himself but in God.

(c) Compassion is one of the characteristics of Jesus most stressed in the Gospels. Especially is it prominent in Luke, with his interest in women and the poor. In his Passion-narrative Luke tells how on his way to Calvary Jesus stops to comfort the women who weep for him, and how in the hour of death he opens Paradise to the penitent thief. The multitude of Galilee excites his compassion, his heart goes out to these men and women among whom he had lived, and whose need he knows so well.

But the glory of this compassion is that it is given to individual persons in a way which singles them out for love and care. Scarcely anything can have been more contrary to the mind of Jesus than the habit we have of judging our fellows by categories. He thought of Zacchaeus and the Magdalene, not of the publican and the sinner, as others did. That is seen most clearly in the story of the woman taken in adultery, where Jesus deals in redeeming love with this individual human being and refuses to uphold the laws which would preserve society by her destruction. The fact that such treatment is in sharp conflict with the necessities of social life as we see them should not blind us to its originality and power : he who so acts is either one whose values are lower than those of society or one whose authority is from a source beyond it. It is at this point, of course, that the clash with the Pharisees became so acute ; they could not understand what they saw in action before them, a love which transcends justice and is prepared at times to defy it.

(d) We must include too in our account that radiance of spirit which is suggested by the word "grace." "Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace in the

New Testament has not yet lost touch with the personality of Jesus, the spell which he cast over those with whom he had to do and which is not annulled wholly by death. The Gospel which presents him as commanding and authoritative also relates how the common people heard him gladly and mothers brought their children to be blessed by him. Even so bookish and theological a writer as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has preserved a clear recollection of Jesus as one whose purity was combined with compassion and who gave men boldness to draw near to God. A modern novelist has put into the mouth of an educated Indian some words which indicate what the character of Jesus has come to mean to his people : " I will tell you what it is that we have not seen. Through these three centuries countless Englishmen have shown us courage, honour, justice. We are not forgetful of this, though we will not acknowledge it now. But hardly one, whether missionary or official, has shown . . . the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And until you can show us your peace, we will not believe in your victory."¹

(e) So we come finally to the secret of Jesus. As we have seen, Mark represents him as one with a secret which was not to be revealed before the time. It would seem that Peter's confession was the first indication that any of the disciples had divined the secret ; even then, they had but done this in part, for when the Master went on to speak of suffering as the next step before him, they could not accept that. Only before the High Priest and a few hours before his death did Jesus openly acknowledge what had been in his heart so long. He was cast in God's purpose for the rôle of his vice-gerent and king of men ; he was to be the pivotal figure upon whom world-history turned. The story of James and John and the request they made shows how he understands this destiny. His task was to suffer and die that God's kingdom might come : but what would

¹ Thompson : *An Indian Day*.

happen when that kingdom came was not for him to decide, he left it entirely in the hands of God. In other words, he accepted this honour in utter humility as the supreme opportunity for service. Messiahship meant to him, not power to be exercised over his fellows, but the point in history at which a supreme, incomparable act of service to God and man would be possible, and therefore he was willing for it. He was thus the highest expression we have known of what he himself taught, the power which lies in the renunciation of power.

(f) It was this which made possible the joy of which we must speak in any attempt to describe the character of Jesus. One of the charges brought against him was that he was too free in his social relations and he himself contrasted his conduct with the asceticism of the Baptist. The Sermon on the Mount reveals a delight in nature as the work and manifestation of God, and this lies behind his choice of country scenes and country life for so many of his parables. Even the suffering which was his destiny at the end was transfigured for him by the victory it was to serve, and at the last meal with the disciples he appointed a rendezvous with them in the kingdom of God. He accepted the traditional imagery of the Messianic Banquet as descriptive of the joy and fellowship which would re-unite them after his death : “ I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”¹

The writers of the New Testament have caught something of what was in the heart of their Master. In the Fourth Gospel, if the Lord bequeaths peace to his disciples, he promises them also joy.² “ Rejoice in the Lord alway : again I will say, Rejoice ” might be taken as one of the Pauline mottoes.³ The writer to the Hebrews again shows his understanding of the historical Jesus by speaking of him as accepting the Cross in joy for what he saw was to be its outcome.⁴ The personality of Jesus as reflected in the

¹ Mark xiv. 25.

² John xvi. 22.

³ Phil. iv. 4.

⁴ Heb. xii. 2.

memory of the Early Church was a radiant and victorious personality.

3. CONSCIENCE AND AUTHORITY

What then is the relation between Jesus as thus described and the individual conscience? In essence, the answer to this question can be put in a sentence : Jesus is to be thought of as a stimulus to conscience and in no sense as a substitute for it. We thus rule out both the view of Jesus as a moral legislator whose precepts are to be accepted on authority and the " imitation of Christ " in the sense of an effort to reproduce the characteristic features of his earthly life. The disciple of Jesus is not one who is freed by him from personal responsibility but one who is enabled to accept this responsibility to the full. Indeed, we can only speak of his authority if we distinguish clearly between the authority which is exercised as guidance and that which puts constraint upon those who come under it. As Jesus was in his own time a champion of liberty, so it is as one who makes freedom possible in others that his influence is with us to this day. We therefore serve him best when we are most faithful to the witness of God in our own consciences, and nothing would be more repugnant to him than that we should be false to this in order to yield a forced obedience to something which we understood him to require from us.

The basis of Christian ethics is thus the *rapprochement* between the outward and the inward light, between the voice of God speaking in Jesus and the voice of God speaking in the heart. We have now to consider in greater detail just what this involves.

(a) The moral teaching of Jesus is the expression of what his own conscience discerned, and none of us can say that his conscience is as clear or as certain as the Master's. In other words, Jesus spoke out of a consciousness of God which is accessible to us only in a fragmentary way : what was for

him the sovereign reality of existence is often for us no more than a bold, perhaps an overbold, hypothesis. How then can we act as he acted, when what was bright to him is obscure to us? We must concede that the injunction not to be anxious for the morrow is beyond what is possible for us, just because we have not his unhesitating assurance of the Father's care. We must perforce live by our own consciences and not by another's, even though that other be Jesus himself; we are pledged to the truth as we see it, even though we are aware that other eyes have seen more deeply into truth than we have yet been able to do. That is the requirement of sincerity, and without sincerity no spiritual life is possible.

Yet one element in sincerity is the willingness to recognise that there is a larger, richer truth than we have yet seen, and to venture on what we long to be as well as on what we are. Often, therefore, we shall have occasion to cry: "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief."

It may be argued that such a difficulty does not arise if we think of Jesus as enunciating certain great moral principles which are of permanent worth, while leaving to us the detailed application of these. There can be no conflict then between principle and application. This is to suppose that there can be a statement of absolute truth divorced from any historical setting. But that, as we have seen, is not possible. Just as Jesus lived in Palestine and spoke in Aramaic, using the thought-forms and drawing upon the traditions of his people, so his insights and teachings were related to his environment, its tasks and problems. What we have in the Gospels is not a body of eternal truths but a number of ethical intuitions which refer in the first instance to his own time but are so great that they point beyond it and have power for us to-day. The ethic of Jesus does not move in a world of "*aeterna corpora*, subject to no change," but in a society with Roman soldiers who might impress one to carry a burden and creditors who might go to law to recover a loan.

What we have here is not the script of absolute values, but a translation of this into the thought and speech of a particular epoch : we then make our own translation by working back from this to the original which lies behind it.

(b) If this is so, it follows that in certain respects the ethical teaching of Jesus will be subject to limitations arising out of the fact that he spoke at a particular period of time and to one nation only out of the many then in the world. Such limitations are inescapable in the case of any historical personality. It would be to rob the work of Jesus of any reality to suppose that he did not deal directly with what was stirring in the minds of those to whom he spoke : in so far as they too were human, what he said will be of value for us also, but in so far as they were men and women of that day, it may well be that what met their need would leave our own unsatisfied.

A simple illustration of this is provided by the teaching of Jesus on marriage and divorce as related in Mark x. 2-12, a passage with the implications of which I have dealt elsewhere.¹ Jesus recognises the necessity for the Mosaic authorisation of divorce under the circumstances in which the law was made, but does not regard it as of permanent validity : in fact, he proceeds to abrogate it by appeal to what he regards as the original divine intention in the making of man and woman. This is not all, however. He enunciates the principle of the indissolubility of marriage, not indeed as a law, but as a spiritual ideal, something which follows from the nature of marriage as God's ordinance. But the Early Church qualified the Lord's teaching at this point and allowed marriage to be dissolved in the case of infidelity. "Everyone that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress."² The hardness of men's hearts still made it impossible to abide by the standard which was originally set up !

This might of course have been brought under the previous

¹ *Thou Must Venture* (1942), 109 ff.

² Matt. v. 32.

head as a case in which the first Christians were obliged to follow their own consciences even though in so doing they modified the teaching of the Master. The use I wish to make of it here is to point out that both they and Jesus before them recognised that even the most authoritative teaching is uttered under certain historical conditions and is limited by these, so that it cannot be carried over *simpliciter* into later periods.

Another instance is perhaps of greater importance. The society which forms the background of the Gospels was still of a simple character. The main economic problem would seem to be that of the debtor *vis-à-vis* his creditor, if we except that raised by the payment of tribute to Rome. Jesus regards wealth as the supreme peril confronting the soul, Mammon is anti-God, and for a rich man to be saved is well-nigh impossible. Only God who is omnipotent can work such a miracle as that would be ! We who are concerned with the problem of poverty, who have come into possession of an economic system capable of increasing enormously the general standard of living and wish to know how we are to use this for the common welfare, can find no guidance in the Gospels. Here is a new situation which we have to face in the spirit of Jesus.

A third point is of interest as showing how that conflict of types which constitutes the tragedy of human life is to be met with also in the case of Jesus. The severe strictures on the Pharisees which all three Gospels contain did not raise any difficulty so long as the traditional view of their hypocrisy and formalism was unquestioned. To-day however we are sufficiently familiar with the achievements of the Pharisees and the literature which they have left behind them to know that in the main they were probably as honest and as devoted as any men who have sought to do God's will in difficult times. We can see that the clash between them and Jesus was not that between error and truth, but one in which two forms of truth, so divergent as to be irreconcilable, stood over against each other. Mutual understanding

between the piety which rejoiced that God had given so many commandments, because then his servants had so many opportunities of showing their obedience, and the faith which turned to him in the simplicity of a child conversing with his father—this may be possible now, after the heat of the conflict has largely dissipated, but it was not possible in the actual moment of encounter. He who is overmastered by one form of God's revelation cannot enter sympathetically into a quite different form which is as dear as life itself to others. This is one of the laws of human life, and there is perhaps no more tragic illustration of it in history than that with which the Gospels provide us.

(c) Finally, there is the question of the sinlessness of Jesus to consider. Here I would agree with Niebuhr that sinlessness is a negative conception and in the nature of the case is impossible to establish. The point at which the limitations which inhere in being human shade off into moral shortcomings is known only to God and to oneself; where another person is concerned we are not competent to judge. We do better therefore to work with the positive conception of holiness, and by this we mean that the total sweep of the life of Jesus and in particular his self-offering on the Cross were in complete conformity with God's will. It is here that his perfection and his authority lie.¹ Modern criticism of the Gospels has made many of the details of what was done or said nineteen centuries ago uncertain, and there are still those to whom this causes grave disquiet. But the spirit in which Jesus lived and died—this shines from their pages as convincingly as ever, and it is here that we find the ground of Christian conviction and the standard for Christian action.

4. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

The Christian life can therefore not be reduced to mere obedience to instructions given in the past; there is no

¹ *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. ii. (1943), 75 ff.

release from personal responsibility but rather an inspiration which enables us joyfully to accept this. We find that inspiration by return to what was given us once for all in Jesus and then go forward, under the guidance of his spirit, to encounter God as he meets us in the situations of our life to-day. We are dependent on him for our insights, but they are our own and not borrowed from him ; we are called to creativity and originality, but not to be as he was, the revealer of a new realm of values. There is therefore a rhythm in the Christian life, as now we meet with Jesus in discipleship and now we go forth boldly into the world to do God's will as we have come to see it.

It was in just such a relation to its Master as this that the Early Church lived. At their highest moments, the men and women of those days were conscious of a great liberation, they had inner resources which were simply inexhaustible, and they lived by vision, not by rule. In those communities in the Mediterranean cities there was much extravagant conduct but little that was pedestrian and commonplace ; their excesses were those of enthusiasm rather than of rigidity and dogmatism. They entered into life with zest, courage, and self-abandonment, knowing that in all things they had the comradeship of an unseen guide. Of that monitor they spoke sometimes as the risen Lord and sometimes as the Holy Spirit. Whether they could have distinguished sharply between what they received from one of these and what came by the other, is very doubtful : probably we to-day would do best to identify the Spirit and the Lord. For us, the Spirit of Christ is comrade and guide.

I have spoken already of what is meant by this term. There was that in Jesus which was of his time, and that which was eternal, the act and purpose of God in his human life. We can think of this last as liberated from the conditions under which it was expressed in him and so set free to enter afresh into each generation since his day. It is of this re-entry of Jesus by his spirit into our own time that Schweitzer

has spoken so movingly in the closing paragraph of his *Quest of the Historical Jesus* and to which his own life bears eloquent witness.

This of course raises at once the problem of the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith." Two mistakes are to be avoided. The first is—as traditionalism tends to do—to identify the two, so that the individual who lived in Galilee and died in Jerusalem becomes no other than God himself and all his words and deeds are invested with an absolute value. All we who come after have to do is to accept a truth and to obey a law given to mankind once for all. The other mistake is to separate the two, so that Christ becomes a mere name for our own opinions, a lay-figure to be clothed in the ideas of our time. That is the heresy against which 1 John is directed, the heresy of those who worship a vague and "spiritual" Christ who has no connection with the historic events out of which Christianity arose and to which it is for ever bound. It is bound to them but not limited by them, for they give it power to grow and to renew itself continually. Schweitzer comes dangerously near to this erroneous position when he writes: "It is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it."¹ Does not his own life show that it is by the encounter with the Jesus of history that one can experience him as arisen within the heart? We cannot therefore surrender the position from which we set out, that in the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth there is something normative for Christian thinking on ethical questions. Only it is clear that what we receive from him is not a set of precepts to be obeyed, nor even of principles to be applied, but an impulse to that love which is the fulfilment of the law and a new self which issues in free, spontaneous, and creative activity.

¹ Op. cit. (1910), 399.

CHAPTER III

CREATIVITY AND ASSIMILATION

THE teaching of Jesus as set out in the last chapter is a combination of amazing originality and dependence upon tradition. It becomes unintelligible once we leave out of account the indebtedness of Jesus to the law and the prophets, and it is equally mistaken to represent what he said as merely a repetition in other words of what had been said before him. The great ethical conceptions which he has made current were formed, it is true, by melting down much which was already in circulation among his people, but he set on each of them the unmistakable impress of his own personality. The work which he achieved had therefore two aspects : on the one hand, it was creative in character, for he had something wholly new to give the world in virtue of the relation in which he stood to God and the mission which was assigned him ; on the other hand, he has assimilated and made his own what was already in the religious tradition of his people. It will be the purpose of this chapter to trace the presence and interaction of these two movements throughout the development of Christian ethics, special attention being paid to the peculiarly formative periods in it.

1. THE OLD TESTAMENT¹

To begin with, we must follow this pattern of creativity back into the Old Testament.

The unique element in the religion of Israel—its passionate faith in the one living and universal God who in righteous-

¹ For much in this section I am indebted to Hempel : *Das Ethos des Alten Testaments* (1938).

ness judges individuals and nations—comes to full expression first in the succession of writing prophets beginning with Amos. But it seems likely that this was already present in germ in the teaching of Moses, and that he in turn did not think of himself as an innovator but as one who called his people back to the God of their fathers. Perhaps in that he was but following the natural tendency of the reformer to establish continuity between the new and the old ; but that his own message was one far in advance of what his people were able to receive and that the settlement in Canaan brought with it declension from the purer faith of the nomad period without those who were responsible for this being at all aware of what they were doing—this seems much more probable than that Moses is no more than the projection upon the past of ideals which derive from the eighth century B.C. only. The Decalogue in its original form may well be the work of Moses, and it was he who introduced his people to the magnificent conception of Yahweh as a god with a purpose to achieve who needed a people to be the instrument of that purpose. Thus the union of religion and morality was part of Israel's religion from the Exodus.¹

The Pentateuch represents Moses as working with and for people who were neither receptive of his teaching nor ready for the mission to which he called them, and we can well believe that it was so. The entry into Canaan exposed them to all sorts of alien influences and the simple morality of personal relations which was adequate to the nomad period had to be adjusted to the necessities of settled agricultural communities. The Israelites took over a whole legal structure for the maintenance of private interests ; this was placed under the protection of Yahweh though it did not spring out of his religion. The Old Testament legislation reflects stage by stage the process by which the peculiar genius of the Yahweh-religion worked upon the legal and moral codes which are the common heritage of the peoples of

¹ So Volz : *Mose und seine Zeit* (1932).

the Ancient East. The central principle of allegiance to Yahweh as the God of Israel operates as guide, enabling a choice to be made from this material, so that that is taken which can be assimilated and that refused which cannot so be incorporated into the life of the community. It was so, at any rate, that the position was formulated by the writers of the Deuteronomic school, who were able to see as they looked back how much had in fact been taken up into the national tradition which was incompatible with its genius and should have been rejected at the outset. Elijah's contest with Jezebel, particularly in the affair of Naboth's vineyard, shows the power of the Yahweh-religion at its best to resist the intrusion of alien elements.

With the formation of the kingdom under Saul, its extension under David, and its consolidation under Solomon, a whole set of new problems emerged. Solomon's effort was directed towards what we should call the "modernisation" of his people; he wished to bring his little hill-people into line with the civilisations of Egypt and Tyre. There was as always a division of opinion within the nation over this policy, and that division is reflected for us in the narratives of the monarchy which have been combined by the redactor of our 1 Samuel. One school of thought saw in the monarchy an unworthy imitation of heathen methods and apostasy from Yahweh: the other was convinced that Yahweh was working through the king and the State. The problem which confronted the people of those days is with us still: it is the problem of the relation between the values of religion and those of political life. The solution reached in the end was that the religious values were made supreme in the present, while the ideal political institution was recognised in the past or anticipated from the future. Judaism, that is to say, formed itself as a religious community which no longer aspired after independence, but which saw in David the ideal ruler, the man after God's own heart, and prayed for the coming of a Messiah who should restore the glories of his

kingdom. But this lies outside the period with which we are at the moment concerned. What is important is that even the Messianic hope came about by the incorporation into, and the re-interpretation by, the religion of Yahweh of what originally was the general type of political organisation found in Canaan at the settlement.¹

If the period from Moses to the eighth century B.C. is one primarily of assimilation, with perhaps more loss than gain as the result, the canonical prophets introduce a fresh era of creativity. For a century or so powerful spiritual influences are at work, men who can only adequately be spoken of as bearers of revelation cast the faith of their people into new moulds. For Amos, God is universal and impartial in the exercise of his righteousness ; heathen nations stand equally with Israel under his judgment and receive equally with Israel his protection ; the oppressed classes in society find in him a champion and to do justice between a man and his neighbour is the service which he most approves ; the sexual licence which accompanied the fertility-cults of the countryside are deprived of their religious sanction and shown to be the social corruption that they really are. Hosea introduces into the language of religion and morality the rich term *hesed*, the love or mercy which God in his sheer goodness shows to man and which should be shown by a man to his fellows : he dares to take up into the religion of Yahweh the very sex-imagery which has done so much injury to it in the past, but uses it as an argument for lifelong and single-minded devotion to Israel's divine companion. Isaiah lifts the idea of holiness to a loftier plane, once he discerns that which separates man from God not in any failure of ritual performance but in the falsehood and insincerity which are at once the peculiar shame of each individual and the all-encompassing common guilt.

In the Deuteronomic code we see how an adjustment was

¹ I do not consider here the possibility that the hope in question may have much earlier roots in Semitic mythology.

effected between the prophetic vision and the tradition against which its criticism was directed. Creativity was followed by assimilation and a code of laws was formulated in which relics of Semitic heathenism lay cheek by jowl with precepts of humanity and the injunction to exclusive loyalty to Yahweh. Ezekiel and the Priestly Code carried this process a stage or so farther, till the appearance of Jesus introduced a new period of originality and creativity.

Before we come to this, however, something should be said of the Wisdom literature. Here the debt to outside sources is unmistakable. The occurrence in Proverbs of a passage which is an adaptation of Egyptian moral instruction¹ shows how difficult it is to draw a hard and fast line between what is peculiar to Israel in this sphere and what is common to her and the surrounding nations. The ethical teaching of Proverbs seems to be a deliberate imitation on the part of a literary circle of the wisdom current among the common people. The religious beliefs which lie in the background are theistic but not specifically Hebrew: they are akin in fact to the ideas of the eighteenth century. It looks as though a rational religion with a common-sense morality attached to it was current in the Ancient East by the time of Solomon and was domiciled in Israel as part of his civilising and pro-Egyptian measures. It was a religion for the educated and travelled classes, without the inspiration of the prophet but without the superstitions of the masses. As it meets us in the Old Testament, it is one more evidence for the power of Israel's religion to take over and to re-shape material brought to it from outside.

2. PAUL

To what extent can we detect the same pattern of creativity and assimilation in the New Testament? Here we shall confine ourselves to the Pauline ethic. There are three pos-

¹ xxii. 17—xxiii. 14.

sible sources of indebtedness which have to be considered in his case.

(a) The apostle to the Gentiles was of course steeped in the tradition of his people, and to the end his moral standards were largely those which he had received from his training as an orthodox Jew. That is particularly the case in the horror of sexual immorality which he reveals so often in his letters ; here was something which revolted the Jewish mind in the conduct of the outside world as much as idolatry did in its religion. His attitude to the State is that of the rabbis : " Pray for the welfare of the government, since but for the fear thereof men would swallow each other alive."¹ He emphasises industry precisely as the rabbis did : " We command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."² The example of Christ and the authority of Scripture are one for him, as when he proves his assertion that " Christ also pleased not himself " by a citation from the Psalms.³ Throughout his correspondence, he insists on a final judgment of God according to what has been done in this life ; his doctrine of justification by faith does not involve the cancellation of this conviction which he brought over from Judaism, but includes it even while it transcends it. For Paul as for Jesus the miracle of forgiveness is that it is the act of a God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil and who yet invites to his fellowship those who are haunted by the memory of the evil of which they have been guilty.

(b) To what extent did Paul draw on the current philosophical teaching of his time ? Did he take over into his ethic any elements of Stoicism ? The one instance in which a good case can be made out for such a dependence seems to me to be the passage in Romans ii. which makes use of the ideas of the law written on men's hearts and of conscience as a power of self-criticism. Even here it is quite possible that Paul is drawing rather upon the adaptation of these ideas in

¹ *Ethics of the Fathers*, iii. 2.

² 2 *Thess.* iii. 12.

³ *Rom.* xv. 3.

the Judaism of the Dispersion than upon Stoicism itself. Enslin, after quoting 1 Cor. vii. 29-33 and comparing it with a passage from Seneca, declines to infer a literary relation and is content to suppose "that here and in other places Paul shows himself considerably influenced by current ideas whether absorbed from his environment or directly gained through listening to street-corner preachers."¹

(c) It would probably be better therefore to speak of the apostle's debt to Hellenistic Judaism than of what he owed to Hellenism itself. Here the book of Wisdom in the Apocrypha may indicate the kind of connecting-link between the two worlds of thought with which Paul was familiar. It is probable that Romans i. with its denunciation of idolatry as the repudiation of a God to whom nature itself bears witness and its catalogue of sins which follow from this fundamental error, is largely based on passages in this book.² One peculiar feature of the writer's—his emphasis on immortality in the sense of fame as one of the rewards of virtue³—is to be met with in the same epistle. There is a Hellenistic ring about the sentence: "To them that by patience and well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption."⁴ Pseudo-Solomon is concerned to show that Greek culture is the work of God by his Wisdom,⁵ and one passage in Paul calls for receptivity for all that is good and honourable.⁶ In so far as there is dualism in Paul, it is that of the earlier writer; the language used may suggest metaphysical dualism, but only ethical is meant.⁷

The influence of Hellenistic Judaism can be observed elsewhere in the epistles, in the parts which deal with the domestic and social virtues. Recent research has shown that at this point Paul draws upon material which was already in use; both in the synagogue and among the itinerant philosophers of the time there had come into existence a more or less stereotyped presentation of the

¹ Enslin: *The Ethics of Paul* (1930), 189. ² xiii. 1-9; xv. 22-31. ³ iv. 1 f.
⁴ Rom. ii. 7. ⁵ vii. 15-22. ⁶ Phil. iv. 8. ⁷ Wisdom viii. 19 f; ix. 14-17.

obligations entailed upon a person by the various social relations into which he entered; Epictetus, for example, hopes for the type of listener who will come to him with the request : " I wish to be free from passion and disquiet, and to know in a religious and philosophic and devoted spirit how it is fitting for me to behave towards the gods, towards my parents, my brothers, my country, and towards foreigners."¹ Did people ask similar questions of the Christian teacher ? *Haustafeln* which fulfil this requirement meet us in Josephus and other Jewish writers : it is significant that the schoolmen of the sixteenth century used for moral instruction the extant fragments of a Hellenistic Jew who borrowed the name of Phocylides and who gives just such a catalogue of virtues. The *Didachê* is further evidence for the entry into Christian circles of this type of literature. What Paul did was thus to take over the standards of the synagogue on these matters and to suggest Christian motives for conduct which was incumbent on all right-minded persons. How this was done can be seen best by an examination of Col. iii. 19-iv. 1.²

So much for the element of assimilation in the Pauline ethic. What of its creativity ? Here it is only possible to touch on a few points of outstanding importance.

(a) All that Paul had in this way taken over from Judaism and Hellenic thought acquired a wholly new meaning from the context in which he set it. He introduced the population of the Mediterranean cities not merely into a small community of devout souls, but into a world such as had not been known since the days of the prophets—except, of course, for Jesus himself. It was a world of dramatic and revolutionary events, in which God was vividly near and pervasively active. The simplest act can be related for him to the descent of the Son of God into the world and his self-giving on the Cross. One of the most strongly Christological

¹ Book ii, chap. xvii. I quote from the Oxford translation.

² I have drawn here on Dibelius's excursus on this passage in Lietzmann's *Handkommentar*.

passages in all his writing is designed to promote better personal relations within the church at Philippi,¹ and the relation between Christ and the church is taken as the model to be imitated by husbands and wives at Ephesus.² Paul's whole thinking is controlled by the amazing events which have taken place in his own lifetime, by the drama of divine passion and compassion in Jesus Christ. The argument he urges against immorality is that "ye did not so learn Christ,"³ and for mutual forgiveness is that "God also in Christ forgave you."⁴ The Christian is in honour bound by what he knows and what he has received. Continuity with the past has been broken by a mighty act of God ; the life of the Christian is a life that follows, and therefore must be lived in the light of, the Incarnation and the Cross.

(b) But perhaps we can only fully estimate the change which for Paul has come over the whole of life when we see it in the light of the Resurrection. Here, of course, we come to a theme which runs through the New Testament from beginning to end ; for the early Christian, the world has become the place in which God raised up Jesus Christ from the dead. It was, that is to say, a world in which the incredible had become fact, the impossible had taken place, and the natural sequence of events had been broken through. The impassable barrier which separates our life from the eternal world had been pierced in this instance and so it had become transparent for all who had faith in Christ. Henceforth what was there to fear, since death itself was dead, death which had been feared so long and so much ? The Christian knows himself invincible in face of all adversity, the spirit-forces in the unseen have been robbed of their power, and in his own frail human life the might of God is at work. He is in the world as one destined for victory and as such he is called to live in joy and confidence.

The Christian life for Paul is life out of this tremendous fact, the fact that the great conquering act of God for which

¹ ii. 1-11.² v. 22-33.³ Eph. iv. 20.⁴ Eph. iv. 32.

men have so long hoped has actually come to pass. And that act is no mere incident in the past on which we look back as something closed, it is also a spiritual event to be repeated day by day in our hearts. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."¹ The death and resurrection of Christ are at once the guarantee that we too shall die to the old self and rise to the new, nay, that we have actually done so, and the summons to make this total transformation the rule of life moment by moment. The Pauline ethic calls the Christian to become what he is, to become, that is to say, in act what he is already in principle and in the divine intention. He must therefore do more than live with the thrilling consciousness that the divine drama of sacrifice and redemption has just been enacted on this earth, he must so live that the mystery and the power of it can be continually reproduced within himself.

(c) Yet another approach to this new world of motives into which the Pauline ethic introduces us is by his doctrine of justification by faith. Reduced to its simplest terms, that is the affirmation that our relation to God is personal and not legal, that our standing before him is determined not at all by our moral achievement but altogether by his goodness. The paradox of this position is that morality is secured by being transcended, the very nature of the good life is changed. It ceases to be an effort of obedience and becomes a sense of indebtedness, wonder, and passionate devotion. That is what Paul means when he insists that his message does not destroy the law but rather establishes it,² as when he says that "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh" is now made possible in quite another way, "the ordinance of the law" is "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."³ There is an inner connection between Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant and the

¹ Rom. vi. 4.

² Rom. iii. 31.

³ Rom. viii. 3 f.

Pauline conception of justification by faith ; the apostle preaches what the prophet had hoped for—spontaneity in place of effort, the inward law instead of the outward, and the constraints of discipline superseded by a personal loyalty. In contemporary theology where emphasis is laid once more on justification by faith, not enough is made of the release which it brings to the whole personality and the wholly new type of service which is made possible by it. Paul uses the metaphor of adoption to secure much the same result : “ Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear ; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father.”¹ The old slavish obedience is replaced by the joyful devotion of the son.

(d) The context from which this last passage was taken shows also that for Paul the Holy Spirit was of decisive importance for the Christian life. The Christian is in fact one who is “ led by the Spirit.”²

Here we need to go back to the Old Testament. It is an illustration of how un-Biblical Barth can be at times that in his lecture on the Holy Spirit he makes no use of the rich material supplied by the Old Testament but is content to force the subject into the framework of justification by faith as he understands it.³ But a passage like Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-14 shows us at once what is meant by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is God in action, God as boundless vitality and creative energy. He breaks into the world when men are despondent and the good cause seems to be lost ; his coming is unforeseen and incalculable in its operations. As the Spirit he shatters institutions and traditions, creating a wholly new order of possibilities ; we have no defence against the revolutions which may follow on his impact. He presses upon us in our weakness and disheartenment an inexhaustible reserve of power, he is urgent and insistent that we need not always remain as hampered, as timid, and as futile as we are,

¹ Rom. viii. 15.

² Rom. viii. 14.

³ *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life* (1938).

but can have a share in his work of re-creation. He mocks at the impossible and transforms situations before our eyes : we who are led by him are caught up into a vaster life and become new persons, with powers enlarged so that we can volunteer for that which before seemed quite beyond our ability.

It is this Spirit Paul sees in operation in the common life of the Christian, though not as any vague, impersonal force, but as the spirit of Christ. "Unless one can understand this constant mood of victorious, jubilant happiness and confidence, he simply will not understand primitive Christianity."¹ Whether we like it or not, the fact is that the Christians of New Testament times did not regard themselves as adding to the existing stock of religious and moral ideas ; they held that supernatural powers were at work among them and through them. They had put behind them the painful effort to keep the commandments and had an inner guide to God's will, an impulse of the Spirit which led them where he would have them go. Of course, there was grave danger in this position and there were those who took freedom to be licence and the Spirit's leading to be a sanction for their own unbridled desires ; but these very excesses show the power and the novelty of what was at work in their midst.

(e) I shall deal later with love, fellowship, and the Christian society as the Body of Christ : it only remains at this point to draw attention to the ethical significance of the formula "in Christ." Without assuming that it has in all passages a mystical content, I find it impossible to deny that it has this in some, notably in Galatians ii. 20. Paul stands in so close a relation to his Lord that he is no longer the centre of his own self, the Lord is. Yet this does not mean that he is less a person than before, but rather that he is more so. His whole life is lived within the sphere of Christ, breathes an atmosphere which is Christ, and is wholly determined by

¹ Weiss : *History of Primitive Christianity* (1937), vol. i, 41.

Christ. The words : “ If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature,”¹ invite us to sum up what we have been saying up to this point. To the objection—a fairly obvious one—that I have been dealing with Paul’s religious experience and conviction rather than with his ethical teaching—I answer that it is precisely in the religious setting which he gives to morality that his moral contribution lies. He transforms the everyday obligations, the trivial duties, and the accepted standards by associating them with the stupendous facts on which his faith rests. He gives life a new impetus and a new content because he fills it with the grace and power of his Lord ; men must be wholly other after they have seen that vision than they were before it. He may use the conventional language when describing the relation which should subsist between say, parent and child, but he introduces into that relation a new tenderness and delicacy by linking it up with the amazing love of Christ. He is morally creative in the highest degree because his final interest lies not in morality but in religion.

There is however one specifically new duty which is laid on the apostle by what he has received : it is that of acting as herald to all mankind of the good news which has meant so much to himself. Not merely to care for all men, but to bring them to the allegiance of Christ—it is to this he knows himself to be called. This is an obligation laid upon him, something which men of all races, all classes, and all conditions have a right to expect from him. There is a common human need and a divine mercy which is for all, and he is in the world that these two may meet. Sometimes it seems to him that constraint is laid upon him, he can do no other ; sometimes again he thinks of his missionary work as the poor return he makes for the boundless mercy he has received. He is the missionary type which meets us also in other religions, notably in Buddhism.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

3. "THE RHYTHM OF DEVELOPMENT"

The creativity of the great apostle was followed by a period in which Christianity came to terms with the best of its time in the effort to redeem the time from its worst. In the *Didachê* the standard for Christian conduct is provided by the sayings of the Lord as a new law and precepts taken over from the Synagogue. We look in vain for any sign that that marvellous transformation of life in the light of Christ which we found in the Pauline correspondence is at all appreciated in the circles for which this little manual was prepared. So in 1 Clement the patriarchs and prophets are cited as examples of virtue ; but we feel that the writer is really speaking from himself only when the Roman in him comes to expression : " Let us then serve in our army, brethren, with all earnestness, following his faultless commands. Let us consider those who serve our generals, with what good order, habitual readiness, and submissiveness they perform their commands. Not all are prefects, or tribunes, nor centurions, nor in charge of fifty men, or the like, but each carries out in his own rank the commands of the emperor and of the generals."¹ In an earlier passage, Clement had referred to the order of nature as a revelation of the divine will ; here we see how a Christian thinks who is not without pride in the institutions of Empire.

Enough has been said to show that there is a certain rhythm in the development of the Christian ethic, an alternation between creativity and assimilation. At certain periods one of these prevails rather than the other ; the originality of Christianity is evident whether in the formation of new standards or in the new meaning which is given to existing ones, or on the other hand the outside world makes a contribution which seems for the time being to thrust into the background the specifically Christian elements. That indeed is in accordance with a natural law. We as human

¹ 1 Clement xxxvii. 1-3 : I quote from the version in the Loeb series.

beings grow by taking into ourselves what is present in the environment, yet so that we remain fundamentally ourselves all the while. It is equally disastrous to shut out all extraneous influences and to capitulate to them ; we live by what we can assimilate, yet there must be a central and sovereign self to direct the process of assimilation. Of course, owing to the fallibility of that self, mistakes are often made and we take up into ourselves what is injurious rather than what is beneficial. The environment supplies poison as well as food.

In the same way, the Christian ethic has suffered greatly by what it has accepted at times from secular culture ; yet the inference cannot be that it must shut itself up to its own resources. That, as I have argued, has never been possible ; the New Testament is heavily indebted to Judaism and the Old Testament draws upon the *mores* of the surrounding peoples as well as upon the prophetic revelation. As long as we retain the norm supplied to us by the teaching and personality of Christ, we need not fear to venture out into the world of secular values and extra-Christian standards, to receive as well as to give. But, as has been said above, it will be seen that over a long period the assertion of what is original in Christianity and the acceptance of what comes to it from outside will alternate, the one correcting the other, and truth lying as much in the effort and tension as in any final result.

Nygren uses a somewhat different terminology from that which I have employed, but his meaning is much the same : " The history of Christianity proceeds in a definite rhythm, alternating between two tendencies, which we may call synthesis and reformation. By synthesis is meant the tendency to adapt Christianity to its environment, by combining material drawn from both Christianity and elsewhere, so as to fuse into one, as far as possible, Christianity and the world of spiritual culture which it enters. By reformation is meant the tendency to present Christianity in a pure form, by distinguishing it as sharply as possible from

everything else, so that its own peculiar character is made clear.”¹

In the rest of this chapter I propose to deal with some typical crises of assimilation, moments in history at which, for good or for evil, the Christian ethic took up into itself elements in the moral code of its environment.

(a) One of the most fateful moments in the history of Christianity was its acceptance of war. This was made well-nigh inevitable by the conversion of Constantine ; to take over a share in Empire and refuse to sanction the military system was not possible, particularly in view of the growing menace of the barbarians. But war under those circumstances could be accepted as a stern necessity of self-defence. It was quite otherwise when a rival religion, Islam, threatened Christendom, sword in hand : then war became a religious duty, the service of Christ. Military orders were formed on this basis and the proclamation of the First Crusade was an appeal to the sword from the effects of which Europe has not yet recovered. In fact, behind the Prussian combination of ruthlessness in war and devotion to duty lies the tradition of those Teutonic knights who converted and harried the Slavs on the eastern frontiers of what was to become the Reich.

(b) The institution of chivalry carries us a step farther. As Bloch puts it, what the Church sought to do was to make out of the existing ceremonies attendant upon entry on the profession of arms a sacrament, and her theologians did not scruple to use the term in this connection.² Chivalry drew upon Roman tradition—perhaps misunderstood rather than recovered, the social organisations of the peoples who entered upon the Imperial heritage, and the economic and military necessities of a time of general confusion of authorities and insecurity of life and property. The cult of the

¹ *Agape and Eros*, Part II, vol. i. (1938), 24 f.

² La Société Féodale : *Les Classes et Le Gouvernement des Hommes* (1940), 53.

Virgin Mary and devotion to the fair sex were other elements in it. It was in fact one of the great historical instances of that synthesis of which Nygren speaks, the fusion of Christian and non-Christian elements to produce an ideal of life which has left its mark upon us to this day. Is not "the English gentleman" a direct descendant of the medieval knight as romances describe him? Of the ethical value of chivalry it is not easy to speak, but the tendency to-day appears to be to estimate it much lower than was once the case. Thus F. J. C. Hearnshaw goes so far as to speak of its famed "gallantry" as "nothing more than conventionalized adultery and social bigamy." But his final summary is more favourable: "In spite of its defects, it exalted the standard of honour; it enlarged the conception of generosity; it attached manhood to the service of religion; it developed and instilled a fine code of good manners; and it inculcated a splendid ideal of social service."¹

(c) One of the outstanding achievements of Christian thought in the ethical sphere is the fusion of Aristotelian and Christian elements in Aquinas. In the words of Father D'Arcy, we "find the notion of an end, the distinctions of the voluntary and the involuntary, the doctrine of the mean, the classification of the virtues, and other well-known features of the Aristotelian ethics re-appearing in the teaching of St. Thomas, with, as I say, differences. It is almost amusing, in fact, to watch how the saint turns the rather unprepossessing intellectualism of the other into the vision of God, and makes a somewhat worldly-minded moralist the advocate of holiness."² Aquinas took the classical ethic and the cardinal virtues as his foundation and built on these the Christian structure with its theological virtues. The two, however, are not independent, for it is only by the influence upon it of the love infused in the sacraments that the foundation even stands secure, as this in its turn is the senior partner in

¹ *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (1930), art. Chivalry.

² D'Arcy: *Thomas Aquinas* (1933), 227.

the triad of faith, hope, love to which it belongs. Yet even in his high estimate of love something was lacking ; he followed the classical tradition for which it is ultimately egocentric at the expense of the Christian paradox that to save one's self is to lose it.

(*d*) In more modern times the relation between Christianity and nationalism has become a burning question. With the break-up of the medieval unity of Christendom and the rise of nation-states, the religion of an open society—to use Bergson's language—tended to be reduced to that of a closed society. The figure of Joan of Arc shows how this synthesis was effected at an early stage in France, and this naive identification of the national and the religious is represented in our own time by the thought of Charles Péguy among others. In our own country the Elizabethan church settlement fixed the religion of Englishmen in a form which suited the exigencies of the state rather than the requirements of conscience, and the Puritanism of the Commonwealth has contributed not a little to the state of mind for which our commercial and imperial expansion assume the character of a divinely-appointed mission. The Church conflict in Germany in recent years shows how acute the problem can become and to what an extent nationalism can itself become a religion which threatens to dispossess Christianity as of alien origin and injurious tendencies. On the other hand, Grundtvig's prophetic leadership of the Danish people in the nineteenth century and the share of the Folk High Schools in shaping the life of the nation show that an alliance of the Christian spirit and national feeling is possible in which both sides gain much.

(*e*) Finally, one of the most critical periods in the history of Christianity was its encounter with Rationalism in the eighteenth century. That movement completed the emancipation which had begun at the Renaissance, and what is most significant in it for our purpose is the declaration of independence on the part of ethics. Morality was no longer

bound up with the tenets of the Christian religion, but was either wholly autonomous or rooted in a natural religion of a theistic or even deistic character. The conflict between Catholic and Protestant, above all the wars of religion, left on thinking men the impression that the peace and progress of society could only be secured as religion was relegated to private life and education and morality took over the direction of public affairs. The moment had in fact come at which the Christian ethic could only assert itself as it broke loose from Christian dogma. In this, of course, we can detect the influence of the radical groups of the Reformation, but the actual criticism of contemporary institutions was the work of a middle-class which had gained economic status and was not bound by the traditions of the aristocracy and the clergy. The supreme achievement of Rationalism was religious toleration, and this alone would serve to justify it in the eyes of posterity.

In much of the humanitarian work of the early nineteenth century which is the direct product of the ideas made current in the previous century, Christian and rationalist co-operated consciously or unconsciously for the common good. Owen and Shaftesbury, Fox and Wilberforce—the association of these names suggests that there was a unity of spirit underlying the gravest divergencies on religious issues. The judgment of Schweitzer on the eighteenth century is to my mind sound, though it runs counter to much that is said to-day: Christianity has reason to be grateful to Rationalism, since it brought to clear consciousness ideals which had always been an integral part of its teaching which it had not as yet translated into bold action.¹

¹ *Aus meinem Leben und Denken* (1932), 205.

CHAPTER IV

TYPES OF CHRISTIAN ACTION

IN the last two chapters we watched the process by which the Christian ethic took shape historically ; we have now to observe the different forms in which it has as it were crystallized out. For while from one point of view the Christian ethic can be regarded as a distinct type over against others, it is also true that in its turn it breaks up into a number of sub-types. Nowhere does it exist in an unqualified form, but always in some one or other of a wide variety of limited and historically-conditioned forms. The Quaker, for example, represents a distinct and independent variation of the general Christian spirit, so that much which is obligatory to him is not recognised by the Lutheran or the Anglican as part of his duty.

The simplest classification would be the one which singles out three main sub-types within the Christian one : these are the Catholic, the Protestant, and the Sectarian. It would be possible, of course, to carry the analysis much further : the Jesuit has not the same attitude to many questions as the Franciscan, or the Lutheran as the Reformed. But I shall be content with these three, and in what follows I shall illustrate each by means of a typical individual and then go on to specify in greater detail what is peculiar to each. This account, it will be noted, is confined to Western Christianity : no doubt Orthodoxy is entitled to equal consideration, but I am not competent to deal with it in the same way.

1. THE THREE SUB-TYPES

In Ignatius Loyola we have an example of the ethic of *discipline*. Sprung as he was from the fighting aristocracy of

the Basque nation, he brought the virtues—and the defects—of the military calling to the service of Christ. His *Spiritual Exercises* are the drill-manual of the Christian militia he set himself to enlist. From it a man learned to train himself till he became capable of the raptures and the obedience of the saints. No detail of life was too minute to be brought under regulation for this high end. It is not always clear that his plans for the spiritual life are more than so much elaborate self-hypnosis, but behind all is the will so to order one's whole existence that one may stand wholly at the service of Christ and his Vicar. With so great a purpose, how could one leave anything to chance? The soul must be trained as well as eager, the raw recruit in the Christian enterprise must be drilled by a spiritual director before he can be fit to be despatched on active service.

In contrast to this, Luther represents the ethic of *freedom*. As a monk he too had toiled and disciplined himself, fasted and confessed, fasted and confessed again, that he might at last be worthy of the grace of God. But with the revolutionary experience in the Black Tower all that was changed and he lived henceforth in the liberty of the children of God, the freedom with which Christ had set him free. "This is a spiritual power, which rules in the midst of enemies, and is powerful in the midst of distresses. And this is nothing else than that strength is made perfect in my weakness, and that I can turn all things to the profit of my salvation; so that even the cross and death are compelled to serve me and to work together for my salvation. This is a lofty and eminent dignity, a true and almighty dominion, a spiritual empire, in which there is nothing so good, nothing so bad, as not to work together for my good, if only I believe. And yet there is nothing of which I have need—for faith alone suffices for my salvation—unless that, in it, faith may exercise the power and empire of its liberty. This is the inestimable power and liberty of Christians."¹

Luther's Primary Works, trans. by Wace and Buchheim (1883), 115.

Where Loyola organised, Luther lived spontaneously out of the mercy which had come to him and claimed him for God. The contrast between the two has been well brought out by Boehmer, writing of the Reformer : " Certainly he rarely asked : What will be the consequences ? As a rule he saw and fulfilled only the demands of the day. But if on any occasion he did not know what were the demands of the day, then he would ask himself, not : What will be the consequences ? but simply : What must I do to justify myself before God and my conscience ? Thus, to him, conscience must perform the functions which middle-class morality assigns to prudent forethought. Conscience was the compass by which he invariably steered and made his decisions, made them so irrevocably that all the crucial actions of his life seem to have been determined by this absolutely irrational factor. With rational people such as Loyola, the various stages of their life can usually be indicated exactly by the plans and intentions formed by them after long and thorough rumination and calculation ; in Luther's case they are indicated by the decisions of conscience made, for the most part, in the space of a moment, and always inexorably adhered to."¹

In John Woolman we have an example of the ethic of *scrupulousness*. He lives in a state of constant watchfulness, concerned to avoid becoming implicated in the evils all about him. He must be continually on his guard lest he give his consent in any way to the oppression and insincerity which are characteristic of society as he sees it. We may smile at times at the extremes to which this leads him, as when he refuses to wear dyed garments or appeals to a conjurer's audience not to give heed to vanities. But on other occasions we cannot but admire him as a moral pioneer, one who was sensitive to evils which others accepted as part of the natural order of society. It was his scruple about the part he was called on to play as a shopkeeper's clerk in the

¹ *Luther in the Light of Modern Research* (1930), 232 f.

sale of a slave which struck the first effective blow at an institution which had become an integral part of life in the colonies and enjoyed the sanction of religion. In England he noted the wrongs of the post-boy and the exploitation of the working-classes, and it is characteristic of him that he included in the record of his own spiritual life statistics of the cost of living for the hardship which thus was inflicted on the poor. "Sin was not to him an isolated fact, the responsibility of which began and ended with the individual transgressor ; he saw it as a part of a vast network and entanglement, and traced the lines of influence converging upon it in the underworld of causation. Hence the wrong and discord which pained him called out pity, rather than indignation. The first enquiry which they awakened was addressed to his own conscience. How far am I in thought, word, custom, responsible for this ? Have none of my fellow-creatures an equitable right to any part which is called mine ? Have the gifts and possessions received by me from others been conveyed in a way free from all unrighteousness ?"¹

It is clear that each of these three sub-types has its grave defects. Discipline can so easily become the manufacture of an assumed self in place of the real one ; liberty degenerates into carelessness and licence, and scrupulousness can become morbid and self-centred, so concerned with one's own perfection that a negative attitude to life is adopted for safety's sake. But each also has its contribution to make, so that the complete life will contain elements from all three.

2. CATHOLICISM

We have now to consider what is characteristic of each sub-type.

Catholicism has made a momentous contribution to Christian ethics by its distinction between two styles of life, one religious and the other secular. The specifically

¹ *The Journal of John Woolman*, with introduction by J. S. Whittier, 36.

religious life has obligations which do not bind those who must remain in the world ; especially is it pledged to celibacy. There is here no perversion of standards, as has often been urged by Protestants, but a tendency which is inherent in religion as such. It meets us also in Buddhism, where the commandments of the lay devotee are supplemented by additional ones in the case of the monk, who is committed to chastity in the sense of abstention even from marital intercourse. The classical tradition also has left its mark on Catholicism, for both Plato and Aristotle set the contemplative life of pure speculation on a higher plane than the active life of participation in civic affairs.

Kirk has classified the various attempts to justify this division under three heads. The valid theory works with the notion of progress : the vision of God which brings blessedness is the goal of human endeavour ; the life of contemplation is obviously nearer to this than the active life, but is not for all that in itself superior. There are various stages on the road and some are farther on than the rest ; that is all there is to it. According to the compromise theory, the so-called religious life is in fact the easier way ; in the monastery one can hope to be free from the distractions which in the outside world interfere with the effort to live the Christian life. Finally, the invalid theory regards the two lives as differing in kind. " They are mutually exclusive alternatives, and the Christian must choose between them. We may still offer the layman the hope of salvation ; but it is salvation of a definitely lower grade, for he does not, and by virtue of his secular occupation he cannot, live the life of contemplation."¹ This last is the official doctrine of the Roman Church, as clearly set out in the canons of the Council of Trent.²

But is it possible to follow Kirk and to regard the first of the three views he has outlined as valid ? Only surely on the assumption that ethical values can be arranged in a

¹ *The Vision of God* (1931), 255.

² *Sessio Vigesimaquarta*, Canon x.

single ascending scale, so that each serves as a means to the one above it. But as I see it, the hierarchy of values is so complex that it is literally indescribable ; the structure of life is such that we are presented with alternatives which are apparently of equal worth yet between which we must perforce choose. The good life is not a movement towards a fixed goal ; it is lived in a number of typical forms, and there is no guarantee that all these have yet been brought to light. Can we not think of action and contemplation therefore as different in kind but equal in worth ? For the individual, of course, one will be obligatory rather than the other ; it will represent the will of God for him, but he will pass no judgment on what others have seen to be the will of God for them. Perhaps the analogy to follow here is not, after all, the tempting one of Martha and Mary, but rather that of Peter and John in the last chapter of the Fourth Gospel. Each is called to serve the Master in his own way ; let each therefore obey his own vocation and be content that the other should follow his, different though it must be. The two ways of life remain, but one is not on higher ground than the other. As Jesus pointed out in a memorable passage, there are those who, like himself, enter fully into the social life of their environment, while there are others who, like the Baptist, withdraw from it to a life of renunciation. Yet by each of these God speaks to their generation and wisdom is justified of her children ; those, that is to say, who know the secret of the divine working recognise that each has his place and mission in God's scheme.

I do not propose to enter into the criticisms which have so often been brought against the Catholic ethic on this point. It has usually had less than justice done to it by its opponents. The weakest point no doubt is that it introduces an aristocratic principle into the Christian fellowship : the majority accept in advance the fact that they can never reach more than a pass standard in morality and piety, and leave it for the few to aim at honours.

Yet, when all has been said that can be said in criticism of this theory, it refuses to be disposed of so easily. We may dismiss such crudities as the distinction between commandments and counsels of perfection—though the *Didachê* shows how far back this goes—and we can see clearly that if the alternatives are to be stated as action and contemplation, there is really no reason why the latter should be valued more highly than the former. But do we not naturally judge, say, Schweitzer's decision to give his life as a medical missionary in the African jungle as on a higher level than the alternative which was open to him, to remain at home as writer and organist? Does not the most convinced Protestant regard the ministry of the Word as in some sense a higher calling than that of the merchant and the soldier?

We are forced, in fact, to recognise a distinction between the vocation which is directly religious and that which is only indirectly so. There is no need to suppose that one of these has more value in the sight of God than the other; all that is maintained is that it does tend to have more value in our eyes, however unsympathetic we may be with Catholicism. From our standpoint, there is a heroism about the service of Christ by the missionary which is not to be found in the service of Christ by the shopkeeper or the clerk, however convinced we may be that before God they are equal.

For the simple and powerful two-lives theory of Catholicism we must therefore substitute the thought that the Christian life takes shape in a whole multitude of callings, within which the two tendencies can be detected, which I have spoken of as directly and indirectly religious. If the question is raised which of these is higher and which lower, the answer can only be given, not in terms of the work as such, but only with reference to the spirit in which it is done. The answer, that is to say, is with God and not with us.

3. PROTESTANTISM

It is one of the historic achievements of Luther that by his teaching and his practice he broke with this medieval piety as described above. In his conception of the calling he restored to its earlier religious meaning an idea which had become secularised. He returned in fact to the Pauline treatment of social problems in 1 Cor. vii. 17 ff, where the status of the individual is regarded as fixed by God, so that on becoming a Christian one must not seek to change the place one occupies but simply to use it for a new purpose in his service. Thus the common life becomes for Luther the sphere in which God is to be worshipped and served ; he who discharges his duties as husband or father, craftsman or noble, is as much a sacrificing priest as any of those on whom the hands of a bishop have been laid.

Luther works with the conception of estate (*Stand*) rather than class. His principle is *Vult Deus esse discrimina ordinum*. By estate he means any group of people who have in common certain characteristics, so that they exercise a specific social function. It is of function rather than of institution that he thinks. In this respect his conception is more dynamic than Melanchthon's, for whereas the latter makes a certain ideal of society central for his ethic and treats it as the criterion by which institutions are to be judged, Luther speaks rather of God's will as appointing for individuals the tasks by which they can serve their neighbours in the spirit of love. There are for him three estates, those of marriage and the family, the spiritual authority, and the secular magistrate. But he does not so much identify these with three distinct social classes as see in them three rôles which God has assigned to those who are to do him service.¹

All Luther's thinking on social questions reflects one fundamental tendency, the wish to return to the simple, patriarchal, authoritarian society which was being disrupted

¹ Elert : *Morphologie des Luthertums* (1932), vol. ii, chaps. 3 ff.

before his eyes by economic forces. "As far as practical action goes, there were two groups whose interests were consistently advanced by Luther—the secular princes and that part of the middle class which had authority in the cities and the guilds but was not engaged in foreign monopoly trade or finance."¹

More important than Luther's teaching was his action. That principle of the sanctification of the common life which is for ever associated with his name was asserted boldly by his marriage, which was an open repudiation of the traditional connection between holiness and celibacy. Holiness, so Luther claimed, is not man's achievement but God's gift, and is therefore possible in any condition of life if it is possible at all. So, in Japan, Shinran entered upon the married life in order to demonstrate that salvation is not by works but by faith in the boundless mercy of Amida ; he is to be sought and found in the home and in daily life.²

It follows from this position that the Christian life does not differ from another in recognisable appearance but only in inward quality. There is no type of dress or style of life which makes it obvious that one person has taken upon himself what is called "the religious vocation": there are no specifically Christian duties which one adopts in addition to those of one's secular calling. What alone is specifically Christian is the possibility of using that secular calling in God's service. "A cobbler, a smith, a peasant, every man has the office and function of his calling, and yet all alike are consecrated priests and bishops, and every man in his office must be useful and beneficial to the rest, that so many kinds of work may all be united into one community : just as the members of the body all serve one another."³ Hence arises that conception of "hidden inwardness," on which Kierkegaard was to pour so much scorn, after he had at first accepted it.

¹ Pascal : *The Social Basis of the German Reformation* (1933), 228.

² Anesaki : *History of Japanese Religion* (1930), 182.

³ Luther's *Primary Works*, 23.

In a brilliant descriptive passage of his *Fear and Trembling*, he has portrayed for us the "knight of faith" as one who is in no respect distinguishable from his fellows, yet who lives inwardly in relation with God.¹ His own unhappy experience had long since convinced him of the hollowness of the Hegelian formula: "The outer is as the inner, and the inner as the outer." He could find no outward expression which was adequate to what had taken place within his soul, nor did his personality fit into any of the moulds which society furnishes ready-made. But he was led to challenge the Lutheran principle because of what he saw in the Danish Church of his day. It was too great an act of faith to suppose that the sleek, successful prelate with his place at court and a row of orders across his chest was really, behind it all, living as one crucified to the world. What was the difference then between hidden inwardness and flat insincerity? Did it not enable a man to escape any criticism, because the appeal was to a sphere beyond observation?

So he wrote in his diary: "Oh, that hidden inwardness, how frightful to bring the average run of men so near to being fools, who imagine they are something, or hypocrites."² And elsewhere: "Established Christendom, where all are Christians, but only in hidden inwardness, resembles the militant Church just as little as the stillness of death resembles vociferous passion."³ This evil was to be traced back to Luther himself, "a reformer who wanted to cast off the yoke," who eased men of their burdens instead of telling them plainly that the freedom of which he spoke "led to making life, the spiritual life, infinitely more exhausting than it had been before."⁴ Kierkegaard himself confessed that, had he lived in the Middle Ages, his place would have been in a monastery.

"Back to the monastery out of which broke Luther—that is the truth—that is what must be done. That does not

¹ Ibid. (1939), 48 ff.

² *Journals*, 1226.

³ *Training in Christianity* (1941), 209.

⁴ *Journals*, 1079.

mean, however, that the Pope is to win, nor is it the Papal police who are to lead us back there . . . The fault with the Middle Ages was not monasticism and asceticism, but that worldliness had really conquered because the monk paraded as the exceptional Christian."¹

What this means is that the ascetic element, rightly understood, is something with which Christianity cannot afford to dispense. But it must be rightly understood. It is a rigour and discipline of life which the individual imposes upon himself before God, not to acquire merit and not under constraint, but in the joy of his service.

But what was spoken of above as the sanctification of the common life could with equal truth be described as the secularisation of religion ; it is taken out of its own special sphere and is brought into the ordinary daily occupation. Here we should perhaps distinguish between Lutheranism and Calvinism.

Lutheranism stands for a conservative secularisation of religion by the acceptance of the social context of the individual as God's will for him. Nothing could be clearer than the language used by the Reformer in his reply to the peasants' demand for the abolition of serfdom : " This article is dead against the Gospel. It is a piece of robbery by which every man takes from his lord the body, which has become his lord's property. For a slave can be a Christian and have Christian liberty, in the same way that a prisoner or a sick man is a Christian, and yet not free . . . For a worldly kingdom cannot stand unless there is in it an inequality of persons, so that some are free, some imprisoned, some lords, some subjects, etc. ; and St. Paul says in Galatians v. that master and servant are one thing."² Again, in his pamphlet *That Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved*, he writes : " I might boast here that, since the time of the Apostles, the temporal sword and temporal government have never been so clearly described or so highly praised as by me."³

¹ Op. cit., 1318.

² *Works* (1931), vol. iv. 240.

³ Op. cit., vol. v. 35.

Throughout its history German Lutheranism has been marked by a degree of subservience to authority which is unintelligible to those who have been nurtured in another tradition. Boehmer, himself a Lutheran, brings out most clearly the weaknesses of the position: "Luther's spirit manifests itself in the patience and long-suffering with which the Lutheran people endure bad times and social and political abuses. The revolutionary humour which prevailed among the masses at the beginning of the sixteenth century has already completely vanished by the time of Luther's death. The Lutheran people show no tendency to revolt even under the worst government. As long as its faith is not attacked, it submits with patient obedience to every harshness, and in evil times comforts itself with its remarkably numerous songs of religion and consolation. This certainly involves a notable lack of initiative in all questions of public life. To compel the abolition of any public abuses by force is to the Lutheran an unpardonable crime. He looks on all such evils rather as a visitation sent by God to test his faith. If, however, he regards an improvement in conditions as possible, he always waits quietly for it to be brought about by the superior wisdom of the authorities."¹ Recent events supply an eloquent commentary on this text.

On the other hand, the Calvinist secularisation finds its expression in commercial activities, while in the political sphere it has taken over not a little from the radicalism of the Reformation sects. Max Weber ² and R. H. Tawney ³ no doubt overstated the case for an inner connection between Puritanism and capitalism, but it can scarcely be denied that such a connection does exist. The moral earnestness of Calvinism went to create the temper required in the merchant and the captain of industry, as we can see even in the America of the last generation. Missionary experience in

¹ *Luther in the Light of Modern Research*, 326 f.

² *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930)

³ *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926).

China has shown me how the Christian, just because his new faith forbids him to gamble, smoke opium, or take part in idolatrous ceremonies, while it encourages him to obtain at least sufficient education to read his Bible and hymn-book and brings him through the Church into touch with a wider circle of interests, is likely to prosper in business. It is no accident that the countries which were influenced by Calvinism are those in which the industrial revolution made most headway.

4. SECTARIANISM

The radical groups which preceded and accompanied the Reformation had perhaps a more far-reaching influence on social development than either Lutheranism or Calvinism. They have worked in this way both in virtue of the positive element in their relation to society and by the negative element. Of these two, the latter is logically prior ; criticism of, and even withdrawal from, the world, correspond to the first impulse of the sects. If society is so far removed from the Christian ideal that the true disciple must retreat from it to live by his own standards, he may in the end come to see that his duty lies in so transforming society that retreat will no longer be necessary. Of course, many of these groups remain to this day at the earlier stage, and are distinguished from their fellows by the fact that they aim at purity of life among themselves and withdraw as far as possible from contacts with the outside world. To some, the refusal to cast a vote at election-time is symbolic of that despair of society to which they are committed by their principles.

The negative attitude to society finds its best expression with the Mennonites, who while recognising in the secular authority an ordinance of God, refused to serve in the magistracy, to take oath in a law-court, or to bear arms. Their carefully-worded statement on this position is worth

quoting : " Government or the civil magistrate is a necessary ordinance of God, instituted for the government of human society and the preservation of natural life and civil good, for the defence of the good and the punishment of the evil. We acknowledge, the word of God obliging us, that it is our duty to reverence magistracy and to show to it honour and obedience in all things which are not contrary to the word of God . . . This civil government the Lord Jesus did not institute in his spiritual kingdom the Church of the New Testament, nor did he join it to the offices of his Church : nor did he call his disciples or followers to royal, ducal or other power ; . . . but everywhere they are called away from it . . . to the imitation of his harmless life and his footsteps bearing the cross . . . Hence we withdraw ourselves from such offices and administrations. And yet we do not wish that just and moderate power should in any manner be despised or condemned, but that it should be truly esteemed."¹

The Mennonite position, of course, is tenable only on the assumption which governs this whole argument, the assumption, I mean, that there is not one stereotyped pattern of conduct to which all are meant to conform, but that there is a wide range of possible patterns, and that duty varies from person to person as it does from situation to situation. But it clearly implies a challenge to what I have called the conservative secularisation of religion in Lutheranism. Brunner's exposition of what is meant by the " calling " brings out what is at stake here. " All that Luther cared about," he says, " was to secure the possession of a *good conscience in one's Calling*."² " Because God wills that I should act here and now, he takes over the responsibility for the quality of this Here and Now, for the sphere in which I am to act. He *gives* it to the one who is called as though it were a purely divine work. He relieves him of the responsibility for this

¹ McGlothlin : *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (1908), 45 f.

² *The Divine Imperative* (1937), 206.

place in the world which, as such—like all places, like every form of time and place in the historical world—is not holy but sinful. God “covers” this sinfulness. It is with His forgiveness that he “covers” the past. And because God “covers” it, it no longer exists, it has lost all significance. Now the place is “pure”—however bad it may be in itself. It is “pure” through the Call of God.”¹

Here we have one of those partial truths which are almost more dangerous than errors. Forgiveness in the case of the individual does not deprive the past of all significance ; it remains as something to be lived down, as a warning against carelessness in the future. How then can evil be eliminated so easily in the case of one’s social position? Ought the slaveowner and the executioner to have “a good conscience” in their respective callings? Are there not cases in which the will of God for a man in his situation may mean, not merely the use of that situation for the good of his fellows, but the abandonment of it as one in which he is likely to do them more harm than good? Conscience must sometimes express itself in an emphatic “No!” over against the powers which rule in society and the tasks which they assign to one. Has not the Confessional Church in Germany borne valiant witness to this in our own day?

I suppose that it would be universally admitted now that the calling of the slave-owner is incompatible with Christian discipleship. Originally, official opinion in all the churches was against this challenge thrown out by the sects, but the latter have prevailed. Their function is to act as pioneers, to attack abuses which are generally accepted, and to wait until opinion throughout the churches is prepared to follow the lead they have given.

There are however two objections which have to be dealt with. The first is that the sectarian attitude is perfectionist, based on the delusion that in a sinful world it is possible to isolate oneself and achieve a perfectly good action.

¹ Op. cit., 201.

That such a claim has been made I would not deny, but it is by no means essential to the position here defended. I would distinguish between a perfect action and an unconditional obligation. The former would be of that doubtful character which has just been described ; the second would be an action which the individual knows in conscience to be required of him at this particular juncture and which he may not submit to any calculation of possible consequences. What characterises such a decision is just its *Ich kann nicht anders* ; he who takes it feels that his action is in some profound sense not his own, he is but the agent of a vaster wisdom than the human, one therefore which he may not judge by the customary standards. For him therefore the summons is of absolute authority, even though—if he contracts for a moment out of his inspiration and views what he is doing from the standpoint of an observer—he has to admit that his action, like every other in this world, has its disadvantages as well as its advantages, and stands over against other courses of action which he must not aver to be wrong. Such an act was that with which John Woolman broke with slavery though he was well aware what complications emancipation would create in a society so largely based on negro labour.

The second objection is that one has no right to isolate a single problem in this way. The pacifist, in particular, rejects war, it is said, but accepts the covert use of force as economic pressure and social coercion. "The Christian who lives in and benefits from a society in which coercive economic and political relationships are taken for granted, all of which are contrary to the love absolutism of the gospels, cannot arbitrarily introduce the uncompromising ethic of the gospel into one particular issue."¹ Is it not sheer self-righteousness to be an objector at one point while complying everywhere else ?

But such an argument is without force. It could have

¹Niebuhr : *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (1936), 196 f.

been used with equal cogency against the opponents of slavery. One can imagine Niebuhr pointing out to them how illogical it was to agitate for the emancipation of the slave while poverty, the subjection of women, and the exploitation of the Red Indian were accepted features of American society. The point is, of course, that he would not in fact have so argued, for the reason that it was only by first isolating the one issue that people became aware of the others. Conscience throws, as it were, a spotlight on one evil at a time ; the law of social development in this connection seems to be that of concentration. The word "arbitrarily" in the quotation from Niebuhr is highly question-begging ; he assumes that those whom he criticises have selected their duties to suit their own taste and are not acting under compulsion of conscience. That we are given one task at a time and not all the same task is part of God's wise economy.

Finally, the positive aspect of the sectarian contribution falls to be considered. This might be described as a radical secularisation of religion. In the judgment of Mannheim, it was with the effort of the radical groups to bring the kingdom of God to earth and make Christian love regulative for the common life that politics in the modern sense of the term may be said to have begun.¹ The Hussites, the South German peasants and the millenarian sects of the Commonwealth period are so many instances of the transfer of ideas from the religious sphere to those of social and political relationships. In the Independents the will to the re-ordering of society took a more sober and permanent form, particularly as worked out in the American colonies, where the church-covenant became the basis of democracy in the civic community also.

To be sure, there were those to whom all this was anathema. They objected to it as the secularisation of the Gospel and did not see that such a secularisation, such an entry

¹ *Ideology and Utopia*, 190 ff.

of the Gospel into the structure of life in the world, is inescapable. What they were opposed to was not in fact secularisation as such but radical, as opposed to their own conservative, type of secularisation. We revert here to the theme of creativity and assimilation. It would seem as though in this process which is continuous throughout history there is a certain division of labour between the two forms which the Christian society assumes. To adopt the terminology with which Troeltsch has made us familiar, assimilation seems to be the function of the Church and creativity that of the sect. It is the mission of the sect to bring the Christian insights to bear upon the society of their time, to protest against the evils which all others are prepared to tolerate and perhaps to justify, and to suggest the lines along which advance can be made in the future.

There is however another point of view from which this question of the sub-types which go to make up the Christian ethic historically can be considered. We may seek to discriminate between two basic tendencies in virtue of which men are divided in a way which cuts clean across the classification with which we have here worked. To this we now turn.

CHAPTER V

TYPES OF CHRISTIAN ACTION (*continued*)

1. PRINCIPLE AND CIRCUMSTANCE

I shall introduce the subject with a quotation from Prof. Whitehead's *Adventures of Ideas*. "Our co-ordinated knowledge, which in the general sense of the term is Science, is formed by the meeting of two orders of experience. One order is constituted by the direct, immediate discriminations of particular observations. The other order is constituted by our general way of conceiving the Universe. They will be called, the Observational Order, and the Conceptual Order."¹

Does not ethical action equally take cognisance of two factors, one general in character and one particular? The person who has to decide whether or not to travel to London, settles the question in the end by an appeal to two sets of considerations. He will bear in mind, on the one hand, the particular demand that he should travel and, on the other hand, the total scheme of life which governs the use he makes of his time. If it is a grave moral question which he is debating, he will call to his aid his own ethical convictions, the religion of which he is the adherent, and so on, to counter-balance the immediate pressure to which he is subject. We may call the two factors in question principle and circumstance.

Whitehead goes on to say that knowledge comes about by the interplay of the Observational Order and the Conceptual Order, so that neither can be dispensed with. In the same way, the elimination of either of the two factors we have just singled out would rob conduct of its moral quality. The

¹ Pelican Edition, 151.

man who acts without principle is clearly immoral ; he merely reacts to his circumstances in the way that gives him least trouble. But what of the man who is insensitive to the variety of incident which enters into life, whose conduct is therefore rigid and predictable, as though he were but an animated syllogism ? If he is to be credited with morality at all, it is morality of a most mechanical and exasperating type. Ethical responsibility lies in a region remote from either extreme, in the delicate interplay of principle and circumstance. The one makes for stability and the other for adaptability, and both these qualities are necessary.

Now, to return to the analogy of knowledge for a moment, it is possible to imagine an infinite mind which is not compelled to operate as ours is with the observational and conceptual orders, but to which the whole universe is present in a single intuition, as something like a rich and glorious work of art. It is to some such change of standpoint as this that religion would introduce us, when we pass to it from ethics. For it neither principle nor circumstance is ultimate, but each in its own way is an expression of God's will. There is an element of self-conscious effort in the attempt to find the right adjustment between principle and circumstance which is lacking when we think simply of doing God's will, co-operating with him in a purpose which includes and yet transcends both these factors. The account of life as the actualisation of certain absolute values is not finally satisfactory ; it fails to take up into ethics what experience shows to be the best of all incentives—a right personal relationship. In morality, the indirect strategy is more likely to be successful than the direct, and commandments have less force in the long run than loyalties.

The categorical imperative, according to Kant, is sublimely indifferent to the actual situation of the persons to whom it addresses its commands : it is one and the same for all, whatever our age or natural ability. But God's will for a man is always addressed to him personally in the place which

he occupies : it is not something which exists as it were in the air and has to be brought down to real life. God's will for a man is a picture of what he can be called upon to do, at that particular juncture and with such powers as he possesses. To quote again from Whitehead : " His purpose is always embodied in the particular ideals relevant to the actual state of the world. Thus all attainment is immortal in that it fashions the actual ideals which are God in the world as it is now. Every act leaves the world with a deeper or a fainter impress of God."¹

It follows from this that the Christian ethic is less a summons to obedience than a call to co-operation in the work of redemption. God is for ever communicating to us his vision of how the world as it is may become the world as it ought to be and inviting us to join with him in effecting the change. We are not therefore charged to live out an abstract ideal under circumstances which have no relation to it whatsoever ; that way lie painful struggle and unsatisfactory compromise. Our vocation is rather to discern the divine direction in our situation, the act on our part which would, in Whitehead's suggestive words, " leave the world with a deeper impress of God," and to follow this prompting. Of course, such discernment does not come easily, and I do not see how it can come at all unless it has been preceded by the moral discipline which acquaints us with certain principles which should govern conduct and an awareness of what the circumstances we are under require of us. That means, as has been urged more than once already, that neither the moral nor the religious account of life is adequate when one is separated from the other. We live both by the vision of God and by the moral standards which give us guidance amid the complexity of our experience. The one defends us against rigidity and keeps open the possibility of initiative and creative enterprise, while the other saves us from identifying God with our own whims.

¹ *Religion in the Making* (1926), 159.

A significant comment on the position here set out is provided by a study of the development which can be traced in Karl Mannheim's thinking from *Ideology and Utopia* with its appreciation of circumstance to *Diagnosis of Our Time* with its recognition of principle. Whereas in the former work he was concerned to emphasise the part played by historical conditions and in particular by the rôle assigned to one in the class-structure, in the later discussion he shows how various adjustments to a given set of circumstances are possible and that the choice between these will be determined for each individual by his general view of life. Two persons may therefore agree in their estimate of the problem which they face, considered merely as a complex of facts, but may differ profoundly in their reactions to it, just because each has his own world-view which provides him with standards of conduct. He speaks therefore of the "Christian archetypes" or "paradigms," and declares that "the problem of Christian values in a new environment consists in an awareness of the two aspects—an awareness of the paradigmatic basic experiences, and an intellectual awareness of the relevant changes in the modern environment."¹ These correspond exactly to the two features which we have singled out in any moral situation.

2. THE TWO POLES OF ACTION

To what conclusion does this lead us? Surely to the recognition of two distinct possibilities of action, one from principle to circumstance and the other in the reverse direction. In the first case, we begin with some moral generalisation which we seek to apply in the concrete situation; in the second case, we begin from an appreciation of the immediate situation with which we have to grapple and try to formulate some general rule which will guide us in it. It is often the case that some difference of opinion proves

¹ *Diagnosis of Our Time*, (1943), 135.

irreconcilable just because the two parties to it approach the question at issue from opposite directions. I think it was Professor Gilbert Murray who said of a conference which he attended under the auspices of some peace organisation that one half of those present was asking : What is the best way to deal with Europe now ? while the other half was asking : How can I avoid sin ?

E. H. Carr has distinguished these two types in the sphere of political thinking and action as the Utopians and the Realists. He defines them respectively by "the inclination to ignore what was and what is in contemplation of what should be, and the inclination to deduce what should be from what was and what is." Or, as he quotes from Albert Sorel, "It is the eternal dispute between those who imagine the world to suit their policy, and those who arrange their policy to suit the realities of the world."¹ A great deal, of course, is taken for granted in both these formulations, especially in the second. In particular, I shall have occasion before the close of this chapter to raise the question of what is meant in this connection by "reality." It will suffice at the moment to think of the Utopian as the man for whom general principles have priority over particular circumstances, and of the Realist as one for whom the reverse relation holds.

Nowhere, of course, do we meet with either type in the abstract, and any attempt to illustrate the distinction which has just been drawn will show the outlines much more blurred than in a theoretical description. One reason, for example, why the character of Paul is not easy to assess is that he belongs in a sense to both types : his passionate advocacy of liberty from the law did not prevent his becoming under the law in order to win the Jews. In Lincoln we see how the moral passion to emancipate the slave could be harnessed to the political purpose of maintaining the unity of his country, and how what seemed to him the measures

¹ *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (1940), 16.

demanding by the situation were censured by ardent Abolitionists as dilatory and compromising. Nevertheless there are moments in history at which the two tendencies take clear shape for all to see.

One such is in the contrast between the Genevan and the Elizabethan Reformation and the struggle between Roundhead and Cavalier which might be regarded as a continuation of this. The will to reform the Church by the pure Word of God was opposed by a judicious appreciation of what was suited to the English temperament and in accordance with the English tradition. But the Civil War reproduced the contrast in the hour of victory; for the sober energy of Cromwell had to be exercised to check the revolutionary activity of the millenarian sects which wanted to go on to "the rule of the saints."

Every political movement has within it two elements, those who are sensitive to the fluctuations in public opinion and would adapt policy to it, and those who would sacrifice the prospect of power rather than imperil the integrity of their programme. Men of equal honesty are engaged on each side, and it would be disastrous were either followed to the exclusion of the other. In the work of the League of Nations, there were those who propagated the ideals which were the basis of the League and those who were engaged in the slow month-by-month labour of making its machinery work to some good purpose.

It is clear therefore that each type has its specific merits and its peculiar demerits. For a summary of these we can scarcely do better than turn again to E. H. Carr. He writes: "The utopian, fixing his eyes on the future, thinks in terms of creative spontaneity: the realist, rooted in the past, in terms of causality. All healthy human action, and therefore all healthy thought, must establish a balance between utopia and reality, between free will and determinism. The complete realist, unconditionally accepting the causal sequence of events, deprives himself of the possibility

of changing reality. The complete utopian, by rejecting the causal sequence, deprives himself of the possibility of understanding either the reality which he is seeking to change or the processes by which it can be changed. The characteristic vice of the utopian is *naïveté*; of the realist, sterility.”¹

I should not quarrel with this, though I should express a doubt as to whether that balance which is referred to can ever be fully achieved by the individual. No doubt, this is one of the cases in which a knowledge of the forces which have hitherto governed social development will enable us to bring them under control to a certain extent. Mutual understanding between the two types and closer co-operation should be made possible by an appreciation of the fact that neither of itself is equal to the complexity of life, and that each needs the contribution of the other to complete his own work. But I cannot think that the two approaches will ever be assimilated to each other. The wealth of human personality will always remain, and with it those basic differentiations to which attention is here drawn. Even when the utopian has learned to temper his enthusiasms with a more vigorous sense of the realities and the realist has developed an openness to possibilities at present hidden from him, there will always be those for whom principle bulks larger than circumstance in the reckoning which precedes action, and those for whom circumstance takes precedence over principle.

3. PROPHET AND KING

In fact, it would seem as though in any genuine religious conviction there is an impulse towards what those who do not share that conviction would stigmatise as utopianism. It is the function of prophetic religion to let loose in the world ideas which are scouted at the time as quixotic and even perilous, but which come in the end to shape society as a nice compromise could never have done.

¹ Op. cit., 17.

The classical instance in history of the conflict between the prophetic and the political estimates of one and the same situation is, of course, the clash between Isaiah and Ahaz at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition against Judah. Faced with the invasion of his country and the nomination of a puppet-king to take his place, Ahaz looks for some political power which will more than counterbalance that of the combination which has taken the field against him. He proposes accordingly to appeal to Assyria. Probably no other king in his position would have thought otherwise than that here was the obvious means of deliverance.

To Isaiah, however, such a policy is tantamount to apostasy. His call is to faith, faith that the divine power which willed the Hebrew tribes to be a nation and chose them for its purpose will not abandon them now, faith that God's action is a reality even in this world of alliances and armaments. Why need Ahaz look for allies when he has so mighty a defence? Why fear these two tail-ends of burning torches, smoking for the moment, but destined soon to be extinguished? The warning: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established,"¹ has as its corollary that faith will be rewarded with security. So unbounded is the confidence of the prophet that he offers to authenticate his message by any miracle for which the king may care to ask. Perhaps it is fortunate for him that the king had no wish to be persuaded and declined to put him to the test.

Behind this conflict lies a problem which had exercised men's minds in Israel from the earliest days. Hempel describes it as the question whether the nation was to maintain itself by the direct or by the indirect way.² As he points out, each of these was in its origin religious in character. In the story of Gideon, he must on the one hand reduce his force to show that victory is with God and not with man, yet on the other hand, the slogan with which his men plunge into the battle unites their leader's name with God's.

¹ Isaiah vii. 9.

² *Das Ethos des Alten Testaments*, 93 ff.

In the narrative of the founding of the monarchy, one source does not need Saul, since the conquest of the Philistines had been effected already by direct divine action, while the other knows of no divine action save that which takes place through the valour and initiative of Saul. So that we must be careful not to stamp Ahaz's policy as purely secular ; it had behind it one of the two prevalent interpretations of the national religion and the national duty.

We need not be surprised that the king rejected as utopian the advice tendered him by the prophet. And events served to justify his decision : the appeal to Nineveh brought the Assyrian army into action and the invaders were driven from the soil of Judah. The historian is tempted to say that Isaiah's credit was saved because Ahaz was too sensible to put it to the test. But what of the final outcome ? Ahaz's action brought with it its own nemesis ; the Assyrian came as liberator and stayed as conqueror. Furthermore, the time was to come when Judah was to find that the one defence left to her was in the realm of the spirit, and that this did not fail her. At the moment at which she forfeited her place among the nations, she took up her destiny as one of the spiritual leaders of mankind. Was Isaiah then so mistaken after all ? Has his utopianism not proved in the end wiser than Ahaz's realism ?

The answer is not quite so simple. Isaiah was right in what he asked of his people, mistaken in what he promised them. He was right in so far as he bade them put their trust in unseen and spiritual forces, mistaken in so far as he promised them security by so doing. Had his people rallied to his call, we can scarcely doubt that there would have been flame enough in those two tails of smoking firebrands to burn down the walls of Jerusalem. Judah would have paid with political insignificance for such fidelity to her religious mission, but she would have triumphed inwardly through that failure—at least, that was the most that Isaiah had a right to offer to his countrymen. No doubt, it was incon-

ceivable to him that Judah's spiritual mission should be carried on independently of her tenure of Jerusalem, but this was to fall back upon the standpoint of the national religion he was sent to supersede.

There is in the whole story one problematic feature to which Hempel has called attention. It is that Isaiah's policy would, by any political standards, have played into the hands of the aggressors. That is even more the case in the other conflict of prophet and king which the Old Testament records, that of Jeremiah and Zedekiah. Jeremiah urged surrender on his people, even to the extent of advising individual soldiers to desert to the enemy, and we cannot be surprised that he was reckoned a defeatist by his countrymen and thanked for his services by the conqueror. From the standpoint of those who fought for Judah's independence, he was a fifth columnist of the worst type. "It is the glory and the tragedy of the religious spirit in its most vigorous forms that it can never come to expression in this world of ours without stepping outside its own domain and intervening in other areas of life, though it has no intention of taking them over."¹ In that sentence we are introduced to the whole problem of the relation between religious and political values, a problem as complex as it is important.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UTOPIAS

That a utopian element enters into the very nature of prophetic thinking is shown by a consideration of the expectations which the prophets sought to raise in the minds of their countrymen, whether these centred round a personal Messiah or not. Thus Isaiah xi. 1-9 looks for the return of the Golden Age under a king who is God's vice-gerent on earth; man is reconciled to the animals and the ancient enmities cease even among the beasts. The writer passes from the achievement of social justice to the miraculous

¹ *Op. cit.*, 180.

transformation of nature without any consciousness, apparently, that he is entering a new dimension. Second Isaiah looks for the return of his people to their own land as something much more than a political event ; it will be accompanied by a theophany, the transformation of the desert into garden and cultivated land, and the conversion of mankind. The kingdom of God comes for the seer in Daniel as an event within history when the humane world-rule of the Jewish community takes over, by a mighty act of God, from the bestial despotisms of the past.

It is significant that Niebuhr, with his prejudice against all that savours of utopianism, takes Amos as the standard by which prophecy is to be tested. Such Messianic expectations as we have just outlined become then a less valid insight against which the truly prophetic spirit struggled. In so far as Messianism attained to truth, it did so in the later apocalyptic writings which despaired of a kingdom of God in this world, and particularly in the pessimism of 2 Esdras. The specific contribution of prophecy is negative rather than positive, it is the " recognition that all history is involved in a perennial defiance of the law of God."¹

This surely is to bring to the Bible a standard of judgment derived from something outside it without allowing it to speak for itself. It seems to me that a more natural conclusion would be that here again we have that juxtaposition of the direct and indirect ways of which we have spoken already: there were those in Israel who looked for a work of God which should be done through men and in this world, as there were those whose hope was in one which would be wholly his.

As Isaiah xi. 1-9 shows clearly enough, the prophetic hope is expressed in terms of a myth. Here we must distinguish between two types of myth. There is, to begin with, the myth which embodies a profound reflection on the meaning of life. Eternal truths find expression in a story which

¹ Niebuhr : *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. ii (1943), 29.

seems to be an account of what took place long ago : the limitations of human thought and language are such that, if we are to avoid abstractions, the only means left open to us is to speak of what is always true as though it were true "once upon a time," at the beginning of things. Thus "the Fall is symbolism, necessary to the intellect, but unconceivable by the imagination. It involves no scientific description of absolute beginnings. Eden is on no map, and Adam's fall fits into no historical calendar. Moses is not nearer to the Fall than we are, because he lived three thousand years before our time. The Fall refers not to some datable aboriginal calamity in the historic past of humanity, but to a dimension of human experience which is always present—namely, that we who have been created for fellowship with God repudiate it continually ; and that the whole of mankind does this along with us."¹

The second type of myth arises out of an impulse to action in the present. Sorel has shown the immense importance of some collective conception which kindles emotion and directs the will.² The Communist dogma of the classless society of the future is a case in point : it expresses a decision in the present—to work for the suppression of all class-distinctions—under the form of a statement about what will happen at a future date. It is a "truth of the will" rather than of the intellect ; once again, we have to recognise the limitations inherent in our thought and language. When at Christmas we sing

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the Age of Gold,
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Whale : *Christian Doctrine* (1941), 52.

² *Reflexions sur la Violence* (1912), 177 ff.

we are not forecasting the development of events, we are giving expression at once to a prayer and to a resolve. May God grant us this : and let us work that this may come to pass.

Karl Mannheim has reached the same conclusion by way of a distinction which he draws between ideology and utopia.¹ The former is a set of ideas which have no integral relation to reality : their function is to defend the interest of a group which is in power. The latter, on the other hand, arises from below, from a group which protests against abuses and seeks to assert its rights. As such, a utopia becomes an instrument of struggle ; it may simplify the situation unduly and represent the heart's desires as nearer to realisation than is actually the case, but it does act as a power reshaping the defective situation out of which it has arisen. I am not sure that Mannheim maintains this distinction as I have stated it consistently throughout his book, but such a comparison and contrast might help to clarify the issue somewhat.

Or we might appeal to the psychologist's use of the terms fantasy and ideal to express two different attitudes to reality. While fantasy is a mode of escape from responsibility, the free play of imagination constructing a world much more pleasant than that in which one has actually to live, ideals represent possible transformations of that world and so set goals to the will.

It is as a goal to the will that a utopian conception has to be assessed, not as a blue-print of the future. Its truth-value lies in its power to rouse emotion and direct it towards valiant endeavour. In the somewhat cynical concluding paragraph of his *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Niebuhr recognises the necessity of "illusions" if anything heroic is ever to be accomplished. Of the illusion "that the collective life of mankind can achieve perfect justice" he says that "it is a very valuable illusion for the moment ; for justice cannot

¹ *Ideology and Utopia*, 173 ff.

be approximated if the hope of its perfect realization does not generate a sublime madness in the soul.”¹ To hand over the direction of history in this way to necessary falsehoods seems to me just a modern form of the old belief in a devil whom it is advisable to enlist on one’s side. The ideas, I would say, which have power to shape events are not to be taken as descriptive, but—in Kant’s term—as regulative. They lie beyond the definition of truth as this is employed in natural science, because they only become true in so far as we believe in them and are prepared to work for them.²

5. THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS

The previous section was in the nature of a digression, designed at once to vindicate a place for utopian thinking in prophetic religion and to show that an utopia is not an illusion, but a necessary mode of apprehending a specific non-intellectual type of truth. We must now address ourselves to the problem of politics and religion from which we broke off.

Starting from Hempel’s judgment as quoted earlier, we may perhaps formulate the problem thus : Religion cannot renounce the right to intervene in the political sphere, but it is not able to do the work of political forces. Thus, Isaiah would have been unfaithful to his mission had he regarded the question of an alliance with Assyria as one on which he could remain neutral, but equally he was not able to secure that withdrawal of the invading armies from the soil of his country which Ahaz effected by his alliance with Assyria. In the same way, the pacifist to-day is justified in appealing, in the name of Christian love and self-sacrifice, for the renunciation of armaments, but he has no answer to the question how the food-supplies of this country are to be assured if it is actually involved in war with a naval power.

¹ Ibid. (1936), 277.

² For a similar position to the above see Johnson : *The Social Gospel Re-examined* (1942), 66 ff.

The acceptance of Christianity by the Roman Empire was in a sense a large-scale experiment on the application of Christianity to politics. That is to say, Constantine made this momentous change because he saw that civilisation could not be held together merely by organisation, it needed also a set of common convictions. Where could these be found in the moribund paganism of the day? But had not the Church shown its vitality and its survival-power during the persecution under Diocletian? So to the Church he turned. But Christianity did not in fact provide the social dynamic he looked for, nor did it prove a stabilising power. The destiny of the Empire went on its way as before. The contribution of Christianity seemed more and more to lie elsewhere, in the salvation of the individual soul. So at least Augustine argued when the Empire collapsed under the barbarian assaults and neither the new faith nor the old was able to prolong its life. Was there, asks Professor Cochrane, any hope of reconciliation "between the claims of a system which was directed to the achievement of temporal peace and one which aimed at the realisation of a peace not of this world?"¹ This, as he says, is "a question of profound interest and importance." It looks as though the statesmen made upon the religion a demand which it was not competent to meet, because its energies were employed elsewhere. The difficulty in the way of any synthesis of religion and political activity is that the former is concerned about ends which seem unreal to the latter, but which it must esteem more highly than those with which the statesman works.

We have here in fact perhaps the most acute case of that conflict of values of which I have already spoken. The translation of the Christian spirit into the language of political reality must be attempted continually but it can never be accomplished adequately. Some incompatibility will always remain between the medium employed and what is expressed by it. To revert to the picture with which we

¹ *Christianity and Classical Culture* (1940), 356.

began this whole discussion, the view of the city from the cathedral will never be quite the same as that from the castle. It is not possible to divide the city into two parts and assign one to each : a clear-cut separation between the religious and the political sphere is equally impossible to carry out. What men like Hitler have attempted to do is to remove the cathedral to a single room in the out-buildings of the castle ; that would solve our problem by falsifying life. As long as the two perspectives remain, so long will there be between them a measure of agreement and a measure of disagreement : sooner or later, a religious judgment will be passed which the political leader dismisses as utopian, or a political policy will be sponsored which the religious teacher must brand as unworthy, though he may not deny that in the short run it is likely to be successful. In other words the offence of the Cross is something to which Christianity must always be prepared to reconcile itself.

As Mannheim has pointed out, the decisive consideration, even in a question of the political order, is that of the nature of reality.¹ To what must individual and society alike make their final adjustment ? To a moral claim or to a set of vested interests ? Is the world one of conflicting claims and counter-claims between which a judicious compromise must be found, or is it the sphere of God's wisdom and power ? Is God the last, inescapable reality with which men have to deal or is he an idea on whose validity and social utility men are unfortunately divided ? The problem of life is, of course, that each account can be justified ; what is seen from the castle is *there* equally—and also, more insistently *there*—than what is seen from the cathedral. But the representatives of the two will at times speak what are most different languages, and what is wisdom to the one will be folly to the other.

It will be the duty of the Church, therefore, to deliver her message without reducing it to the limits of the politically

¹ *Ideology and Utopia*, 87 f.

practicable, yet to do this always with an understanding of those whose calling is to work within the sphere of the politically practicable. They speak from inside one of those closed societies which constitute the communities of this world, she must speak from the frontier, at the point where that closed society breaks down and becomes part of the open society of the City of God. Here, as I see them, lie the justification and the limitations of pacifism. It is vain to look for peace from any political devices, yet equally vain to hope that it can be achieved without such devices. Peace will come by the collaboration of two sets of people, those who refuse, for any considerations of expedience, to modify the judgment of conscience that war is sin, and those who seek by organisations and sanctions to make the state of nations less intolerable than it is at present. When I speak of collaboration between these two, I use the term in its widest possible sense ; what will often happen, of course, is that the two parties will be engaged in conflict, each seeing the whole truth in its partial grasp of the situation and its partial apprehension of God's will.

Each however has its own task to perform, and in the long run it is more conducive to progress that each should go its own way than that they should endeavour to work out a compromise which deprives the one group of its energy and the other of its appreciation of the immediate situation. The inevitable utopianism of the religious spirit must not be allowed to degenerate into the foolish enterprise of building castles in the air, and there is a healthy realism in the attitude of the statesman which should serve as a check on the venturesome faith of the prophet. The latter must not lose touch with the actual world, as the former must bear in mind that the actual world is not the only real one. If the one underestimates the strains and resistances of the material and social orders under which we live, the other does not allow sufficiently for the might of the ideal. It is just as important that men should become other than they are as that they

should do what they can as they are ; if that is the concern of the prophetic type, this is the task of the political. The man of God's right hand must follow whither conscience leads him, while recognising in the man of his left hand one who, in a way unknown to himself, serves in the end the same cause.

CHAPTER VI

NATURAL LAW IN THE MODERN WORLD

1. NATURAL LAW

TWO points which I have endeavoured to make clear in the preceding chapters are that (*a*) Christian action takes place in a world in which other values subsist alongside the specifically Christian ones, and that (*b*) history shows that a continual effort has been made, sometimes with and sometimes without success, to bring together these two sets of claims. We have to introduce now the conception of Christian action as action on the frontier : it will arise, that is to say, at the point at which the extra-Christian and the Christian values meet. The task is to live by the Christian vision in family and calling, business and the state. These frontier-situations of life are at once the most fruitful and the most perilous. They expose us to the danger of compromise, when we surrender the higher claim to the lower or pretend—and this comes in fact to the same thing—that there is no difference in worth between them. But they make possible a creative synthesis, as we discern which of the values for ourselves and in the circumstances we have to meet is the higher, and enlist the lower in its service. Such a synthesis cannot be worked out theoretically in advance ; the most that can be done is to suggest the lines along which advance is possible, the rest must be left to the insight and decision of the individual who is called upon to act.

The opportunity may be taken here to emphasise something which cannot be made too clear. It is an essential part of my argument that truth exists in a multiplicity of forms, that there are rival values each of which has a legiti-

mate claim on the allegiance of some persons, and which none can afford wholly to disregard. But this must not be taken as a plea for neutrality and inaction. If there is no hierarchy of values which is the same for all, there is one which is incumbent on each person, and his mission in life is to discover this. There is for each of us a personal, God-willed task in the service of which he must choose and refuse, must also discern what is of greater and what of lesser moment. Action in the real world lays under contribution values of several orders and of differing grades and welds them into a unity. It is able to do this, as I have urged, only in so far as it is sustained, whether consciously or unconsciously, by faith in a divine wisdom for which what is disparate for us is seen as unified, and in a divine purpose with which we co-operate. Even then we shall achieve such a result in part only, for the unity of the self is rather an ideal and a task than a present possession. But the spectator's view of life as mapped out into a series of rival realms of obligation must be replaced by the actor's view of it as so many frontiers to be broken down.

These frontier-situations arise, of course, for whole communities, even for whole civilisations. I dealt with some of these in an earlier chapter as crises in the process of assimilation to which the Christian ethic is committed. As was said then, one of the most fateful was when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire and adjustment became necessary where previously there had been conflict. The Church awoke to find herself no longer a persecuted sect but appointed keeper of his conscience by the master of the civilised world. Bishops who bore on their limbs the marks of persecution now found themselves travelling at the imperial expense to debate in Council the precise formulation of the faith for which they had once been harried from their homes by the same authority. It is not surprising that the patronage of the Empire proved more dangerous than its enmity, and that the adroit and fortunate soldier whose

hands were stained with the blood of wife and son was elevated to the rank of an apostle by grateful court-preachers.

But this change of fortune raised for the Church a most serious problem. It was all very well to stigmatise the institutions of the Empire as Satanic when they were employed against the Gospel : the same judgment could not be passed now that they were part of the structure of a society which appealed to the Church for her blessing and offered itself in her service. It was here that the concept of natural law proved invaluable. Already in 1 Clement we have seen how it was possible to regard the patriarchs of the Old Testament, the teaching of the Lord, the order of nature, and the discipline of the Roman legions as all pointing in one direction. The idea of a universal order which is at once the law of nature and the duty of man seems to be universal ; it meets us in India as *Rita* and in China as *Tao* : Christianity took it over from the Hebrew prophets and the Stoic thinkers. This conception now made it possible to accept the institutions of society very much as they were without surrendering in so doing the Christian standards. A distinction was drawn between the absolute law of nature which had governed the primitive state of man and which remained even after the Fall as the ideal, and the relative law of nature, which made room for the harsh necessities of power by which society was in fact regulated. " To the later Fathers, at any rate, it seemed that sin had made the original primitive law of nature irrelevant to the actual circumstances of society as it then existed. Men's minds had been darkened, so that the generality (apart from Christian *illuminati*) could no longer know the law ; and moreover the general dislocation of society had made the original law inapplicable. New social laws must be framed with a sanction of force, in order to make the best of a bad situation. Men must learn to endure these harsh laws as a punishment for sin, a punishment which will fall on all alike, as all are implicated in the general confusion sin has caused. All

punishment that is just is, however, not mere punishment ; it looks towards remedying, through pain, the disease which has made it necessary. And so the new law, like the primitive law, is good, for it looks to a good end and is redemptive in purpose.”¹

The synthesis of Christian ethics and social necessities which was adapted to the period following on the conversion of Constantine needed to be recast when the European peoples under the spiritual suzerainty of the Church began to take on the character of Christendom. Social institutions were now no longer a heritage from the pagan past, they were the forms of life for a society which professed the Christian faith and acknowledged as the supreme good, to be served by spiritual and temporal powers alike, the salvation of the immortal soul. With Aquinas, therefore, the pattern of absolute and relative law was replaced by that of grace and nature. The Christian ideal, that is to say, was no longer in a vanished past, but rather in the higher and supernatural world beyond this one. The institutions of feudal society were taken up into the Christian scheme for human life, becoming ministers of that final good which consists in the vision of God. Aquinas therefore deals principally with positive law, natural law remaining in the background as at once the source of this and the criterion by which it is to be judged.

I shall not attempt to trace any further the development of this conception, since the approach to the modern situation—and it is with this that my concern is—is better made from these earlier stages than from any of the later ones. The concept of natural law stands for the possibility of just that action on the frontier of which I spoke at the beginning of this chapter. It represents an agreed moral basis for secular civilisation and the Christian ethic, and as such it can serve as a principle of common action. That indeed is what has led to its revival in our own day. Amid the breakdown of

¹ Dalby : *The Catholic Conception of the Law of Nature* (1943), 20.

standards, the disintegration of society, and the welter of individual opinions, we seek for some basis for co-operation among all who are concerned for the welfare of their fellows. The very denial of such universal moral principles on the part of the political religions of the day has opened our eyes to the necessity for re-discovering them if we are to save our civilisation. But is this possible ?

2. THE MODERN SITUATION

Let us first pass in review these features of our modern situation which complicate it and render it so different from that of the Middle Ages that we might well despair of finding that for which we seek.

(a) There is no longer a Christendom, a unity of different nations with a single moral authority in the Church of Christ. Rather is the Church herself divided. Where Catholic stands over against Protestant, Lutheran over against Reformed, the State is at a loss to know with whom to treat and is disposed to solve the problem by declaring its neutrality. Even in a country so habituated to compromise as our own, the problem of religious education defies completely satisfactory solution.

(b) When men to-day seek moral guidance, they can turn elsewhere than to the Church. While the Middle Ages had their undercurrent of doubt and scepticism, the modern period has its secular idealisms. Leadership to-day no longer lies with the Church exclusively ; it is shared by men and women who combine a passion for social righteousness with indifference, perhaps even with antagonism, to the Christian faith. There are some heretics and infidels among us whom we cannot possibly regard as enemies to be silenced ; in some important respects, they are friends and allies.

(c) Our problems to-day are on a world-scale ; it seems indeed as though the problems which arise within each State

are less urgent and more tractable than those which arise between States. If we aim at co-operation among nations, we can exclude none ; countries which are avowedly secularist or which profess some non-Christian religions will have to be accepted as equal partners with those which still bear the Christian name. What value, for example, would a world-order have which did not include Russia and China ? What common ground can we hope to discover here ?

(*d*) But perhaps the most serious consideration has yet to come. For the medieval mind, truth and Christianity were synonymous and the Church was the unquestioned source of moral authority. That is no longer the case. To-day all assertions that Christianity has the solution of our problems have to be qualified by the admission that for many among us it is itself a problem. Any authority which the Christian faith has in the modern world it must first win for itself ; it can make no claims as of right. This means that if the common moral basis which we desiderate is to be found, it will not be for Christianity to lay it down and for others to accept it. Such a common basis will have to be arrived at as the result of a debate into which Christianity enters on equal terms with the secular idealisms and the great world-faiths which also claim to offer guidance for the conduct of life. And in such a discussion she must be prepared to receive as well as to give, to learn as well as to teach ; as history shows, she may well lose, but there is no reason why she should not rather gain, by contact with the age and its needs.

What exactly is meant in this connection by debate and discussion ? I am of course thinking of much more than the interchange of ideas, necessary and valuable as that may well be. I think rather of the way in which issues can be clarified among those who find themselves committed by sheer force of circumstances to a common task : they come almost imperceptibly to adopt new and more realistic stan-

dards of valuation, finding that much now seems secondary which they had once thought was matter of principle. Such an interaction between representatives of various types of ethical thinking is indeed going on all the time ; what is required is that it should no longer be desultory, but should be directed towards the demarcation of areas of agreement and areas of difference. Christian and Humanist, Buddhist and Communist will be thrown together by the sheet necessities of the time and will need to find some *modus agendi* ; that will be more effective if it is formulated to a certain extent. Nations with widely differing institutions and ideologies are able to achieve this in war ; why not also in peace ? Is it too much to take as the goal of this process a community in which, however much men are divided on certain issues, including some of the utmost importance, they are in agreement on the basic moral principles of social life ?

Such an understanding would of course be at various levels, for Christian and Humanist, for example, would not necessarily have in common what united Christian and Buddhist. It would be dynamic, too, something to be won afresh from time to time and held continually subject to revision, as the various parties to the debate draw closer to each other. But let me again make it clear what I have in mind is no theoretical discussion but an actual encounter, a constant giving and receiving, in the course of active participation in the tasks imposed upon us by our time. We have learned that no community can be stable unless there is in it something of a common mind ; there must be a middle path between the tyranny of standardisation and the anarchy of individual opinion. Can we find this middle path for that world-community after which we seek ? ¹

¹ Since writing this my attention has been drawn to Maritain : *Christianisme et Démocratie* (1943), in which a similar point of view is expressed.

3. CHRISTIANITY AND THE WORLD-RELIGIONS

Let us consider first the question of the relation between Christianity and the great non-Christian religions. How far are understanding and agreement possible in this sphere? Clearly, they are only possible as they are worked out in the service of common tasks; yet some degree of understanding is necessary before common tasks can usefully be entered on.

The principle to which appeal has been made more than once already is relevant here also: I mean the recognition that in the spiritual realm truth is so rich that it requires for its self-expression a wide range of forms. This is not the cheap suggestion that "all religions are equally true," for, as was urged in the first chapter, the standpoint from which the variety of types is surveyed with scientific objectivity has to be supplemented by the standpoint from which a decision is made among them. But the relationship between the great historical religions is clearly one of unity in some respects and diversity in others. Each such religion can, to begin with, be regarded as a specific mode of spiritual experience; it is not so much that each offers its own solution of the problem of human life as that it formulates that problem after a manner peculiarly its own. But, further, each includes within itself what one may call a whole series of sub-patterns of spiritual life, to which correspond the various schools or sects of the religion in question. Between these sub-patterns agreement may exist in spite of the fundamental divergence which arises from the fact that they occur, e.g., in one case in Christianity and in another in Hinduism. The faith-motif and the works-motif can be traced, it would seem, through all the great religions, and the same is true of such issues as that of reason *versus* revelation.

These facts suggest that it should not be impossible to find a common basis for co-operation between those who draw upon the Christian religion and those whose background is

provided by one of the other great religions. If the civilisation of the future is to have spiritual foundations, we need to realise at the outset that these cannot, within any period that we can contemplate, be specifically Christian ones.

It will not be necessary to run through the whole gamut of non-Christian religions and suggest in each case how the areas of agreement and disagreement are to be delimited. That, to be sure, would be quite beyond the competence of any one person. I shall content myself with dealing with two religions of major importance.

(A) JUDAISM

The first is that one whose fortunes have for nineteen centuries been so closely bound up with our own. Each exists because it denies what is most sacred to the other, and each has behind it to-day a long and regrettable tradition in which the other has been stigmatised as its most dangerous enemy. One of the saddest features of this hostility is that for so long it concealed from the two parties how much they had in common. Yet Church and Synagogue alike have their roots in the Old Testament, and in face of the new heathenism of our time they champion what is at bottom the same faith.

It has long been the assumption among Christians that Judaism belongs only to the past, in the present it is no more than a survival-phenomenon and has no mission to fulfil. I should question that assumption and suggest rather that the rôle of the Synagogue remains and has not been wholly taken over by the Church. Israel is still to-day what she was of old, a bearer of revelation. Maritain has given expression to this thought : " While the Church is assigned the labour of supernatural and supratemporal redemption of the world, Israel, we believe, is assigned, on the plane and within the limits of secular history, a task of *earthly activation* of the mass of the world. Israel, which is not of

the world, is to be found at the very heart of the world's structure, stimulating it, exasperating it, moving it. Like an alien body, like an activating leaven injected into the mass, it gives the world no peace, it bars slumber, it teaches the world to be discontented and restless as long as the world has not God ; it stimulates the movement of history."¹

I do not feel that this statement is clear and definite enough. I would say that, whereas Christianity represents the impact of religion upon the life of a community, Judaism represents the integration of religion into that life. The first has a universal ideal which can never be fully absorbed into the life of any earthly society, so that it is committed to the conflict between spiritual and secular values ; the second is the penetration by religion of social life at all points, so that the latter serves as the means to the expression of the former. In the full sense, of course, this is not possible " in exile " : hence the religious significance of Zionism. "*Judaism is not only religion and it is not only ethics : it is the sum-total of all the needs of the nation, placed on a religious basis.*"² So Klausner. As a Jew, he feels that both his nation and humanity suffered loss when Jesus broke the earthen vessel and gave the heavenly treasure to the world without it. As a Christian, I should maintain as against this that a universal religion which is not tied to any particular race but is free to enter into the life of all races is intrinsically higher than one which is bound. But this gain carries with it a certain loss. This is another case of the conflict of values ; choice has to be made between extension over a wide area and intensity within a more restricted area. A religion which builds an invisible City of God which transcends all earthly divisions cannot achieve just what is possible to a religion which is identified with the life of a particular community ; the reverse of this is of course also the case.

Perhaps something of this lies behind the strange language

¹ *Anti-Semitism* (1939), 19 f.

² *Jesus of Nazareth* (1925), 390 : *italics in original.*

of Paul in Romans xi, when he regards the rejection of Israel as a necessary means to the conversion of the Gentiles. That is to say, it was not possible for religion to take a shape which would enable it to win the non-Jew without at the same time ceasing to be attractive to the Jew : the values of a universal religion and a religion which is national in form but universal in content—for that is how one would need to describe Judaism—cannot be combined. But both these values are within the purpose of God, and Church and Synagogue are partners in his service.

This partnership should prove easier to achieve to-day than ever in the past. We can understand Martensen's prejudices when he speaks of the Jew as one of "the forces at work for the dissolution of the Christian State and of Christian nationality,"¹ for such language may have had a meaning in his own day. It has little in ours. We no longer live in a Christian civilisation which must perforce regard the Jew as a potential threat, because he repudiates the spiritual basis of society. It is that very basis which is called in question to-day : it is not now the Nicene Creed which is at stake but the Ten Commandments, and with the preservation of these the Jew is concerned equally with ourselves. In the new heathenisms we face a common enemy and in the secularisation of modern life a common problem.

The traditional concept of natural law needs to be widened greatly at this point. The common ground for Christian and Jew is the revelation which both accept, the history from which both derive. From the kind of active debate which I have envisaged, both parties stand to gain much. The Jew may acquire a fresh understanding of the prophetic message and shake off some of the fetters of the Torah, while Christianity may learn from the strong communal sense of the Jew much which will serve to correct its individualism and ecclesiasticism. But on what is probably the basic

¹ Martensen : *Christian Ethics (Social)* (1882) vol. ii, 106.

issue of our time, the existence of moral standards by which nations are judged as well as individuals, the two stand together.

(B) BUDDHISM

The inner affinity between Christianity and Buddhism is of a different order. The simplest approach to it is by setting out the obligations incumbent on the Buddhist layman :

The charge to avoid the taking of life.

The charge to avoid taking what is not given.

The charge to avoid unchastity.

The charge to avoid falsehood.

The charge to avoid fermented liquor, distilled liquor, intoxicants giving rise to sloth.¹

There is a striking agreement between four of these and the second table of the Decalogue.

Again the precepts of non-resistance to evil and the overcoming of hatred by love are equally in place in their Christian and their Buddhist settings. "When men speak evil of you, thus must ye train yourselves : Our heart shall be unwavering, no evil word will we send forth, but compassionate of others' welfare will we abide, of kindly heart without resentment : and that man who thus speaks will we suffuse with thoughts accompanied by love, and so abide ; and making that our standpoint, we will suffuse the whole world with loving thoughts, far-reaching, wide-spreading, boundless, free from hate, free from ill-will, and so abide. Thus, brethren, must ye train yourselves."²

But there is also a conflict between the two religions, a conflict especially over the nature of personality and the self. For Buddhism individual selfhood is as such a source of evil, and the illusion of separate existence leads inevitably to the sin of selfishness. The dissolution of the self into its

¹ Woodward : *Some Sayings of the Buddha* (1940), 53.

² Op. cit., 97 f.

component cravings and the denial of these as the means of escape from the round of birth and death—this teaching may well go back to the original liberating experience of the historical Buddha. With his followers, compassion is rooted in the perception that the self is unreal, that I and my neighbour are but transitory manifestations of ultimate reality, so that we are not distinct beings and in the end self-love and the love of another are one.

“By constant use the idea of an ‘I’ attaches itself to foreign drops of seed and blood, although the thing exists not. Then why should I not conceive my fellow’s body as my own self? That my body is foreign to me is not hard to see. I will think of myself as a sinner, of others as oceans of virtue; I will cease to live as self, and will take as my self my fellow-creatures. We love our hands and other limbs, as members of the body; then why not love other living beings, as members of the universe? By constant use man comes to imagine that his body, which has no self-being, is a ‘self’; why then should he not conceive his ‘self’ to lie in his fellows also? Thus in doing service to others pride, admiration, and desire of reward find no place, for thereby we satisfy the wants of our own self. Then, as thou wouldst guard thyself against suffering and sorrow, so exercise the spirit of helpfulness and tenderness towards the world.”¹

There is something very beautiful and very moving in this ideal: this spirit of devotion to the good of others is one with Christian love, though its metaphysical foundation is quite different. Each religion seeks to transcend the self and its claims, but the one does it by denying any reality to the self, the other by giving a new direction to the will. While for the one personality is an error which must be left behind on the way to the true life, for the other it is the sum of those God-given powers which are ours to use in his service. It is strictly in accordance with this that modern Buddhist teachers tend to regard the Christian view of God as personal

¹ *The Path of Light* (trans. Barnett, 1909), 88 f.

as the supreme obstacle to an understanding between the two faiths. "The Ego, or Spiritual Self, known as God is in reality a superstition. The Mahayana doctrine is free from this restriction since it holds that this corporeal form of ours is born from causality and harmony and destroyed or carried on like any other illusion of the Unreal. It may be compared to the interchangeability of the five colours in the flame which flicker here and there in constant change."¹

Here we seem to have reached an impasse. We have in fact defined the area of agreement as roughly that of ethics and the area of difference as that of the religious metaphysic which lies behind this in each case. What is superstition to the Buddhist is something which I, a Christian, could not surrender. Time alone will show whether Buddhism will be able to meet the exigencies of modernisation, with its large-scale industry and its social planning without such a drastic reconsideration of its conception of selfhood as would bring it still nearer to the Christian point of view. Certainly, it is difficult for a Westerner to see how essential human rights are to be preserved by a denial of the ultimate reality of the self.

4. SCIENTIFIC HUMANISM

As another party to this debate upon which Christianity must enter in the modern situation I would single out Scientific Humanism. Under this head I would include Marxism also, for events since 1935 would suggest that "Soviet Humanism" rather than dialectical materialism is in fact the creed of Russia to-day. The application of science in war-time to social problems which were overlooked in peace, such as malnutrition, and the prestige which Russia has acquired by her heroic resistance to invasion—these are two of the factors which are likely to give Scientific Humanism a place of outstanding importance in the future. Already it seems destined to replace the older forms of

¹ Tai Hsu : *Lectures in Buddhism* (1928), 48.

rationalism, as already it has begun to claim for itself something of the status of a religion. C. H. Waddington, for example, proposes to satisfy the age-long demand for a faith by which to live, and calls upon us to “believe in” science.¹

Two elements have gone to the making of this new trend of thought. The first and positive element is the appreciation of the full import of the situation which confronts us. It is nothing less than a crisis in the history of our race, a crisis in self-consciousness. Now at last we are aware of those obscure forces which for centuries determined our destiny. Through history we are conscious of our past as a race and as nationalities ; through psychology we have extended our knowledge till it reaches down into the unconscious levels of life. We “blundered into Empire” in India and the Indian masses accepted our rule fatalistically ; but both sides know now how the change came about and the knowledge constitutes a frightful problem. Now to be aware of the forces which have been at work widens our responsibility ; we can bring them under control and decide to what uses they are to be put. Once we become conscious of the unconscious, it ceases to be unconscious. So in social life the obscure play of interests by which we were formerly governed is now brought clearly to our ken ; we have to decide whether we shall let them operate as before or shall impress on them a new direction. In either case we are henceforth ourselves responsible for what happens. There thus arises a sense of responsibility for the future of human evolution and the will to bring to this task the tried temper and approved methods of scientific work. What immense vistas of ordered progress open up before us once we accept this idea of the scientific planning of society !

The second element may be regarded as a special instance of the first. That awareness which is characteristic of our time has been extended also to religion. We know something now of the origins of religion and its historical develop-

¹ *The Scientific Attitude* (1941) 116 ff.

ment, as psychology has investigated the various phenomena of religious experience. Knowledge, here also, makes criticism possible and raises the question whether what has been thus begun is to be continued. This time the verdict is negative. The scientific temper and the results of science are declared to be hostile to religion in its traditional sense. The idea of God is man-made, it is argued, and must be abandoned as a childish effort to secure a supernatural protector. What remains under the name of religion is "cosmic emotion," a sense of wonder before the mystery of existence, a recognition of the obscure fringe which surrounds the clear-cut world of the scientist, religion without revelation and without God. Let man therefore address himself to his task—the scientific reorganisation of society—and he will find that he is able to accomplish it without recourse to any power beyond the human.

There is a challenge here which Christianity cannot to afford to disregard. It would be a tragedy indeed if the conflict between religion and science in the last century were to be repeated to-day in a new form, over the application of science to the problems of society. It is quite true that the claims made for Scientific Humanism often outrun what is possible: it is a fallacy to suppose that, because those problems of social life which are technical in character can only be solved by the application of scientific methods, there are no social problems which are not of this character. But religion is apt to make a similar mistake and to imagine that, because individual conversion is the one effective means of dealing with certain evils, therefore it is universally applicable. But as there are points at which a change of heart is needed, so there are others at which the crying need is for improved organisation. Even in the Primitive Church, with its abounding love and its apostolic direction, the problem of poor-relief arose and could only be met by a more efficient system of distribution!¹

¹ Acts vi.

Here we face one of those crises of assimilation of which I spoke in the previous chapter. The traditional understanding of Christian love equates it with private philanthropy, and one need not question the value of this in the past. But social development has confronted us with a new ideal, that of the organisation of society on scientific lines for the welfare of the individuals who compose it. This of course does not exclude philanthropy, but it works rather with standards of justice and efficiency. There is nothing in this which need in the least disconcert us : I see no reason why we should hesitate to take up into Christian ethics this whole conception of organised social planning.

At the same time, Christianity has a question to address to Scientific Humanism. In this country, its representatives are apt to take for granted that social planning will be directed towards the welfare of individual persons, rather than towards the aggrandisement of the State. That they do so is doubtless due in part to the fact that they live in so successful a nation, but is it not in part also due to the influence upon them of a Christian heritage? Waddington may say that it is on scientific grounds that he rejects the Nazi view that the individual is subordinate to the State, but it is much more likely that he does it because the Christian valuation of the person is still at work in his thinking.¹

Now we have the right to ask from the scientific humanist that he should clear his mind on this point. Does he regard moral standards as merely the by-products of social evolution or as fixing the goal towards which that evolution should now be directed? It will not do to employ the relativity of morals as a weapon against Christianity and then to insist that society must be organised for a justice which apparently possesses absolute value. On the other hand, whoever to-day recognises the objectivity and authority of ethical values, even though, like Hartmann, he denies the existence of God, is a friend and ally.

¹ *Op. cit.*, 74f.

Such a statement
to be welcomed :
experience testifies .
The good life, if no
transcendence.”¹ T.
Positivism, but in the
comparatively minor im-
perfect language in his broadcast
He says that “some things
selves—human decency and
beauty and of love ; inner peace
knowledge and noble expression
allying oneself “with the psychical
best call the spirit of righteousness, or
exactly is meant by the description of
logical forces” ? Huxley sees in them “
or supernatural, but hard facts of our daily
But are these merely occurrences within our own
pointers to a reality beyond ourselves ?

Marxism, of course, is clear on this issue : morals
are but by-products of the class-struggle. There is no
thing as justice, but only proletarian justice for ever at war
with bourgeois justice. The scientific humanist does not
mean that ; but what then does he mean exactly ? We
must therefore press the question : Is man “the measure of
all things, of things that are good that they are good, and
of things that are evil that they are evil ?” Or does his
dignity not lie rather in the recognition and service of
standards whose origin is from beyond himself ?

5. THE THREEFOLD CHRIST

This is perhaps the point at which to make explicit
something which has governed the whole discussion hither-

¹ *Science and Ethics* (1928), 35.

² *Humanism* : Three B.B.C. Talks (1944), 8.

ultimate identity

erse, Christ as he is
t and the centuries of
rist is the form under
both these. For he is
throughout our human
worship in spirit and in
ed, and all genuine cultural

best seen from a denial of it.
ie's neighbour, the 'universal
, which, it is said, is to be retained,
t from Christian love that it is its most
or even if such 'humane' ideals present
ertain similarities with Christian love, they
on a wholly different foundation, and have really
ion with it at all."¹ Frankly, I am unable to
how anyone could so express himself. Do the
labours of Nansen then represent but "the most
al perversion" of Christian love? Surely Christian
love itself would require of us a more generous judgment
than that.

Instead of seeking to explain away the good qualities of those who do not share in the Christian profession, I would rather acknowledge them as evidence that Christ is at work, even in those who do not call him Lord. If, as I would say all true worship is ultimately worship of him, and if what we do to the least among his brethren is somehow done to him, can we not rejoice that he is not confined to the circle of those who openly confess him? Just as for Paul the rock in the wilderness was Christ in disguise, so we can hold that all service of truth, beauty, and goodness is by the prompting of his spirit. As there is a manifest Christ in the Bible and the Church, so there is a hidden Christ in all generous human

¹ Nygren : *Eros and Agape*, 68.

aspirations and all faithful human labour, in the pre-Christian religions and in the world-faiths of to-day.

But there is a third symbol which is in place here : it is that of the *coming* Christ. The coming Christ is the full truth which is as yet revealed to us in broken fashion, under the two forms of the manifest and the hidden Christ. That truth is approached by us as yet only in approximation, its full possession lies in the future. “ We know in part and we prophesy in part ; but when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away.”¹

But when we speak of the coming Christ we do not mean so much that truth will be reached eventually by this process of approximation, as that we look for it in an act of God which will disclose to us more than we have as yet discerned. By a curious inconsistency those who cling most tenaciously to this symbol are just those who most wish to stereotype Christianity in forms derived from the past. But it is in fact quite incompatible with their position. For it forbids us to think of revelation as exhausted in the past and encourages us to look for new disclosures in the future. That all our human aspirations are to be gathered into one, and also that there is a new word from God which has yet to be spoken—this is the import of the Christ who is to come.

¹ 1 Cor xiii. 9f.

CHAPTER VII

MATTER AND SPIRIT

IF the contemporary situation calls for a reconsideration of what is meant by natural law, it requires equally a fresh approach to the problem of the relation between matter and spirit. This arises at various levels and can be formulated in several different ways. With most forms of the problem we shall not here be concerned. The metaphysician is interested in it as forcing on him the choice between the two great alternative patterns of thinking, materialism and idealism. The psychologist's concern is with the relation between body and soul : to what extent is the functioning of the mind dependent on its association with the brain ? In ethics, asceticism has always been a burning question : is the material aspect of life the ally or the enemy of the spiritual ? A new turn was given to the whole problem by its transfer with Marx into the economic sphere : is it the case, as he maintained, that economic factors are decisive in social development and the history of ideas and all else merely secondary ?

In what follows we shall confine ourselves to the significance of the problem for social ethics, with special reference to cultural activities. For ethics must not be restricted to the sphere of immediately moral action, but must be thought of as covering also the right attitude to cultural values.

1. HEBRAISM

We may begin with primitive thinking on this subject, a type of thought which is preserved for us in the pages of the Old Testament.

To the Hebrew mind, body and soul, the material and the spiritual aspects of life, are not opposed but virtually identified. In the Old Testament the terms "soul" and "flesh" can be used interchangeably as equivalents for our word "person": each of them is integral to the self and can represent it. The whole is present in the parts and the parts have therefore the value of the whole. Psychological and physiological language are used indifferently to describe the processes of mental life: the Hebrew thinks with his heart and feels with his stomach. Man is rooted in nature and does not regard his life as alien to his own. "The close relation between the country and the life of the people is only possible because earth itself is alive . . . Earth and stones are alive, imbued with a soul, and therefore able to receive mental subject-matter and bear the impress of it. The relation between the earth and its owner is not that the earth, like a dead mass, makes part of his psychic whole—an impossible thought. It is a covenant-relation, a psychic community, and the owner does not solely prevail in the relation. The earth has its nature, which makes itself felt, and demands respect. The important thing is to deal with it accordingly, and not to ill-treat it."¹

It is necessary to realise that in this the Old Testament, as was said above, merely reproduces the primitive pattern of thinking. "To the primitive mind the soul is not a mere part of man, but the whole man in his sacredness . . . It is not restricted to any single portion of the human body, but extends itself over all its parts according as these show themselves capable of some kind of powerfulness, just as blood is distributed throughout the whole body although certain organs are richer in blood than others . . . Everything in man can be 'soul,' if only it is powerful."²

The social background of this conception is easy to define. It belongs to a phase of development in which man is still

¹ Pedersen : *Israel* (1926), 479.

² Van der Leeuw : *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (1938), 276 ff.

in intimate touch with nature and in which the individual is not yet differentiated by his function from the common life of his group. The consciousness of belonging to one world with the group, the ancestors, and the environment accords with the reality of the case : it is not, as we moderns are apt to imagine, a fantastic attitude to reality, but a quite accurate one. Life is still a whole, an undifferentiated unity. Of course, to say that this pattern of thinking is explicable as the product of primitive society is not to say that it is to be dismissed as outmoded. It contains elements of truth which we have lost in the process of sophistication, but which we should do well to recover, to supplement what we have gained by means of the scientific consciousness. The poet and the artist are fortunately still with us as witnesses to a reality larger than can be exhausted by the scientific consciousness.

To return to the Old Testament. The conception of the relation between matter and spirit which has just been set out has certain consequences which are of great importance.

(a) Hebrew thinking is concrete and pictorial, not abstract like that of the Greeks. The ancient Hebrew did not in the first place conceive some abstract notion and then look for an element in the material or social worlds which might serve as a symbol of this. The purely spiritual does not suggest itself to him, but only some total conception in which the spiritual and the material are fused. One particularly clear instance of this is provided by the prophecy of world peace in Isaiah ii. The spiritual supremacy of Israel among the nations has as its natural accompaniment the elevation of the hill on which the Temple stands to a commanding position geographically.¹ The prophet does not think of men's minds being turned towards the truth unless their eyes are also turned in the direction of the place from which it comes. That and not any superstition is the origin of prayer towards Jerusalem or some other sacred place.

¹ On this see Burrows in *The Labyrinth*, ed. Hooke (1935), 53 ff.

(b) It is from this point of view alone that we are able to do justice to what we speak of as Jewish particularism. This is not to be equated with the nationalist sentiment of a modern Englishman or Frenchman. The peculiarity of Jewish particularism is that it is universalist ! It is by the faith that all mankind is one that this people has kept itself from mankind ! The purpose of God is for all men, but the Jewish mind is prevented by tradition from conceiving of that purpose in the abstract. It must in some way be earth-bound, it must be materialised in the history and destiny of a particular human group. This unity of the universal and the particular constitutes to this day the secret of Judaism into which no non-Jew can penetrate. " Human Unity is for the Jew an article of faith, like the divine Unity ; and when I try to find, in the consciousness of my race, what is my duty as a Jew, God answers me : Your duty as a Jew is your duty as a man."¹

(c) Another feature in the Jewish problem becomes more intelligible in the light of the general principles which we are here considering. I mean the attachment to Palestine which has found expression in Zionism. It is a great mistake, but one which is often made, to suppose that Zionism is a mere product of the unhappy experiences of the Jewish people in recent decades or even a surrender on their part to modern nationalism. Everyone who has read the Old Testament should have learned something of the intimate relation between people, religion, and land. Some words from Pedersen describing what was in the minds of the remote ancestors of the modern Jew suggest how much might be gained by this approach to Zionism. " That the land has been given to the fathers therefore means that it is indissolubly bound up with the soul of the Israelites and fused with it. The blessing of the Israelites and the blessing of the country are identical. When the successors maintain their right to the country, then it is a maintenance of their own

¹ Fleg : *Why I am a Jew* (1943), 46.

soul, of which the country forms a part.”¹ I have heard a Jew speak of the inexpressible joy with which one of his people approaches the Holy Land ; the very air over its coasts is somehow mysteriously different from that of any other spot on earth, he said.²

(d) It is in accordance with this that the Hebrew hope for the future takes the form either of an expectation of national glory or the belief in the resurrection of the dead. The Hebrew was more concerned with the welfare of the community to which he belonged than with the bliss of the individual after death. The Messiah actually has significance for the animal world as well as for the human ; that under his rule the leopard lies down with the kid is as characteristic as that he slays the wicked with the breath of his mouth.³ Incidentally, this last expression is an excellent illustration of how bodily functions can be charged with a significance which we assign to mental ones. The polemic of Amos is directed against the nation as a whole ; oppressors and oppressed alike perish in the coming doom : in the same way, Second Isaiah promises restoration and forgiveness to the nation as a unity. When the fate of the individual after death did at last become a burning question, there was at first no notion of the survival of the soul as such. The whole man lies dormant in the “ land of dust ” and the whole man is re-animated by the fiat of Almighty God. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body is a hybrid which has come into existence by crossing the Hebrew hope of the resurrection with the Greek belief in immortality. For the Old Testament it is the dead who rise, not their bodies : man is a totality and as such he is attacked by death and restored by God.

¹ Op. cit., 476.

² A Jewish friend tells me that in some communities it is still the custom at a wedding to place soil brought from Palestine on the eyes of bride and bridegroom.

³ Isaiah xi. 1-9.

2. PLATONISM

Over against this must be set the Platonic conception, which on the one hand draws upon the Orphic myth of human origins and on the other hand has entered deeply into Christian theology and European culture. "In a universe of dead materiality, of substantiality replete with destruction, the soul is the heavenly spark, the divine shoot."¹ The soul, that is to say, is the distinctive element of the personality, the body merely its temporary lodging-place. The pre-existence of the soul guarantees that its present phase is but a transitory one, and the soul is related to the body as the occupier of a house to the house itself. For the present, he must live in it, but he did not always do so, and he knows that in the future he will reside elsewhere. Soul has value and body disvalue; the latter is to the former as the prison-cell to the man imprisoned in it.

A study of Plato makes clear that the social background of this type of thinking is in two important respects quite different from that of the Old Testament. In the first place, differentiation of function is assumed throughout the *Republic*. The community as Plato knows it is not a closely-integrated whole with which the individual feels himself indissolubly bound up; it is an organisation of classes. Each of these has its specific contribution to make, while the common life is not something taken for granted as the starting-point; it has to be willed deliberately and to be maintained against internal as well as external threats by a constant effort to harmonise the various functions. In the same way, the soul is not for Plato a totality but a three-dimensional reality, and the class-struggles of the Greek city-state are reflected in his psychology.

In the second place, Plato's environment is that of the city rather than that of nature. How often does he draw his illustrations from art! His natural reference is to the crafts

¹ Van der Leeuw, *Op. cit.* 301.

and occupations of the city or to its political changes, not to the labour of the peasant and to natural phenomena, as is the case in the Old Testament. He lives in a society which has been cut off from nature and is largely man-made. His view of the relation between matter and spirit, body and soul, is therefore true as a description of the situation in which he was living.

But certain consequences follow from the Platonic, as from the Hebraic, view.

(a) Abstract thinking has a high value set upon it as the one road to truth. The world of the senses is spurned as merely the home of opinion and error, and the world of concepts is the one in which alone the philosopher is at home. In the well-known passage in the *Symposium* Plato makes it clear that the farther removed one is from the perceptual sphere the nearer one draws to reality and perfection.¹ The Absolute Beauty is a prize to be won only by long practice in abstract thinking. There is something unworthy about the physical world and the love of concepts is rooted in a deep-seated prejudice against the contingent and the particular.

(b) Morality takes on an ascetic character: it may be defined as the repudiation, in the interests of the soul, of the impulses which have their seat in the body. The highest life, that of the lover of wisdom, is devoted to the highest of all ends, and is in fact an anticipation of death. He yearns to be freed as speedily as possible from the restraints of the body and the deception of the senses. So he disowns the material side of life as much as possible and looks forward to the future life as promising him complete emancipation from it.

(c) The Platonic view therefore leads to the hope of survival after death for the soul, when it has won free from this mortal body. The latter is surrendered to corruption, not merely with equanimity, but with relief, and Marcus Aurelius regards the cultivation of the soul as furthered by constant reflection on the sordid elements of which the body is composed.

¹ Ibid., 210 ff.

(d) In so far as universalism is possible on this basis, it takes the form of an intellectual aristocracy, a republic of philosophers who are delivered from the illusions to which the mass of men still cling. Hence the exclusion from the highest class in the ideal community of all except those who are able to undertake a long training in abstract thought : the true wisdom on which the state depends is in fact only accessible to these. At the other end of the scale, the slave is regarded as a mere instrument of production, while the manual worker is of necessity shut out from the life which is most to be desired. Culture, in other words, is only possible to a leisured class and is maintained in purity to the extent to which it is divorced from economic considerations.

3. MODERN CULTURE

The Middle Ages were able to effect a synthesis of the two strains of thought with which we have been concerned, and to create a world-view of amazing unity and power within which the European peoples lived their life. A recent study of Shakespeare has shown in most illuminating fashion how this unitary world-view forms the background of his plays, though the fact that it was already beginning to break up in his day supplies not a little of the tragic element in them. One and the same law was exemplified in the microcosm and in the macrocosm, in man, society, and nature, and this derived in the last resort from God. Ulysses' speech in *Troilus and Cressida* is a classic statement of this whole position.¹

At the beginning of the modern period stands the Cartesian dualism, with its sharp separation between matter as extended and mind as thinking. The latter has access to a region of indisputable certainty, while the former is handed over to mechanism. This is what Maritain has called the "angelism" of Descartes, a philosophy which has

¹ Spencer : *Shakespeare on the Nature of Man* (1943).

access to absolute knowledge in a purely spiritual world. He "makes man, despite vain efforts to maintain the old notion of the substantial unity of the human compound, a complete spiritual substance . . . joined in an absolutely unintelligible manner to an extended substance which is also complete and exists and lives without the soul."¹ It is this standpoint rather than the Platonic which we must regard as determining our modern culture in some most important respects.

(a) The dominance of mathematics in our thinking can be derived directly from Cartesianism. Spinoza was only carrying out to an extreme the tendency of the school when he cast his metaphysics into the form of a geometrical demonstration and represented the various elements which enter into our experience as so many deductions from the nature of God. The influence of mathematics has been twofold, sometimes indirectly through its application to technical problems and sometimes again by its general metaphysical import. But in one way or another a habit of mind has been set up which regards the mathematical formulation as the primary type of truth and is sceptical of whatever cannot be reduced to this.

(b) To this Cartesian despiritualisation of the material world there corresponds a type of culture which leads at one end of the scale to artificiality and at the other to vulgarity. By the former I mean deliberate flight from all that would remind one of the material basis of life, by the latter the surrender to considerations of utility because the aesthetic values are not regarded as relevant. Literature may adopt a vocabulary of its own, carefully screened from the introduction of words which belong to ordinary, everyday life. Or a realm of convention is maintained which has no contact with the one in which the writer lives, as in the pastoral poetry of the eighteenth century. Culture is thought of as purely spiritual and as degraded by any interference from the sordid realms which lie below it. On

¹ *Three Reformers* (1928), 83.

the other hand "the assumption of the valuelessness of mere matter led to a lack of reverence in the treatment of natural or artistic beauty. Just when the urbanisation of the western world was entering upon its state of rapid development, and when the most delicate, anxious consideration of the aesthetic qualities of the new material environment was requisite, the doctrine of the irrelevance of such ideas was at its height. In the most advanced industrial countries, art was treated as a frivolity."¹

(c) In philosophy only two choices seemed open, the one a dogmatism which made the mind spin a whole system of knowledge out of its own innate ideas, and the other an empiricism which reduced its function to that of registering the impressions made upon it from outside. The mind must be either an absolute sovereign or a slave in fetters. In education the bookish or literary type was alone valued; the ability to write Latin hexameters was an accomplishment of which to be proud, just because it belonged to the realm of pure culture, in other words, was divorced from actual life.

(d) Religion and morality suffered in the same way, "The doctrine of minds, as independent substances, leads directly not merely to private worlds of experience, but also to private worlds of morals. The moral intuitions can be held to apply only to the strictly psychological world of private experience. Accordingly, self-respect, and the making the most of your own individual opportunities, together constituted the efficient morality of the leaders among the industrialists of that period. The western world is now suffering from the limited outlook of the three previous generations."² Religion at the same time came to easy terms with the prevalent dualism and allowed the spiritual life to be loosened from its material and economic setting. Do not the cult of individual salvation and the glorification of self-interest spring from a common root? The churches

¹ Whitehead : *Science and The Modern World* (1927), 243 f.

² Whitehead, *Op. cit.* 243.

tended to become breeding-grounds of sentimentalism, the love which is in word only and not in deed, the charity which has no intention of ever sharing its goods with the poor, and the brotherhood in Christ which allows social inequalities to exist in fact while they are repudiated in theory. The morality which issued from this betrayal has been called by Berdayev "symbolic" as opposed to "real" morality. "By symbolic morality I mean morality which seeks not really to transform life, but to perform conventionally significant actions. Spiritual life is understood symbolically and therefore does not mean the transfiguration of the physical and natural existence."¹

The social background of this was provided by capitalism with its characteristic separation between the functions of capital and labour. It brought into existence two classes, one enjoying wealth but freed from the necessity of manual labour and so free to appropriate cultural values, and the other immersed in the necessity of earning a living and so cut off from such opportunities as fell to the leisured class. While this leisured class belonged mainly to the land-owning and aristocratic section of the community, it preserved a tradition which made it capable of appreciating the values to which it had access. But when it was replaced by men who had newly arrived at wealth by trade or industry, culture was either preserved as a set of conventions which were worth respecting for the prestige which still attached to them or it was degraded to the utilitarian level. Patronage was one of the worst characteristics of such a state of things; the artist could only obtain the opportunity to satisfy his creative impulses as he purchased it by flattery of the wealthy. The idolisation of sport is another: our English society to this day is haunted by the notion that the man who stands highest in status is the man who does not need to work but can keep horses for the Derby or play cricket as an amateur. But here, as elsewhere, the transition from the evasion of

¹ *The Destiny of Man* (1937), 310.

economic reality to surrender thereto proved an easy one, so that what began as a gentlemanly pastime was in danger of ending as a vast commercial enterprise based on professionalism and mass-appeal.

4. MARXISM

Marxism can be understood equally well as the despiritualisation of Hebrew thinking and as the culmination of those tendencies which come to clear expression in Descartes. In opposition to the dualism which separated spirit and matter, it proclaims the sovereignty of matter and the dependence of spirit upon it. As has been shown, capitalism had already created the mentality for which all other considerations are subordinated to economic ones and the supremacy of cash-values becomes an article of faith. What was new and revolutionary in Marxism was not the adoption of the standpoint of economic interest, but the fact that it approached this from the side of the "have nots" instead of the "haves." The link between Marxism and the Old Testament is clear; man once more is thought of as bound up with his environment, though this is urban rather than natural, and with his community, though this now becomes his class. That there is a similar link with Cartesianism is shown by the eagerness with which the official Marxist philosophy claims Spinoza as one of its ancestors. It is argued that the "God-intoxicated man" used theological terminology to veil a position which was essentially that of materialism.

The sharp separation between spirit as pure thinking and matter as the sphere of mechanism is symbolised in the nineteenth century by the contrasting philosophies of Hegel and Marx, absolute idealism and dialectical materialism. For the one, the world is the evolution of spirit, for the other it is the battle-ground of economic forces. History and Science, says Hegel, "or History comprehended concep-

tually, form at once the recollection and the golgotha of Absolute Spirit, the reality, the truth, the certainty of its throne, without which it were lifeless, solitary, and alone.”¹ For Marx, on the other hand, “the mode of production of the material means of existence conditions the whole process of social, political, and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness.”²

In his *Historical Materialism* Nikolai Bukharin has applied this principle to the history of culture, seeking to establish a causal connection between each stage in social development and the cultural forms which obtain within it. Not only religion and philosophy, but even music and the arts are thus accounted for; “each is a function of the social economy, and therefore of the productive forces.”³

I do not propose to criticise this position but merely to note some of the consequences which follow from it.

(a) It creates a type of philosophy which is opposed to any form of idealism and stresses the unity of theory and practice. Ideas are weapons to be employed in the social struggle, and there is a military reason for insisting on the strictest orthodoxy. Lenin, we are told, was resolved not to allow the tiniest speck of rust to settle on the arms destined to be wielded by the proletariat in their struggle for emancipation, he was “almost pathologically sensitive” to any deviations from materialism because he felt that they imperilled the success of the revolutionary movement to which he was committed.⁴ While Descartes endeavoured to take up a standpoint free from any presuppositions, the Marxist glories in the fact that he is committed to a particular standpoint and a party programme. “A party standpoint

¹ *Phenomenology of Mind* (1910), 823.

² Marx: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in Burns: *A Handbook of Marxism* (1936), 372.

³ *Ibid.* (1925), 150 ff.

⁴ Luppöl: *Lenin und die Philosophie* (1929), 15 f.

and a party loyalty are in philosophy as necessary as they are unavoidable. The theory of knowledge which Lenin legitimately treats as one aspect of dialectical materialism and which thus attains the further significance of a scientific methodology of knowledge is for him as much a party-science as political economy.”¹

(b) The basic materialism of Marxism leads inevitably to the rejection of religion and the future life. Man’s horizon is bounded by the present and his social relations ; his ideals are indeed projected into the future, but the salvation for which he looks is that of his class and will be the lot of the favoured generations which are born into that classless society which has been made possible by the sacrifices of their predecessors. Ethics goes the same way. “A morality taken from outside human society does not exist for us ; it is a fraud. For us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class struggle.”²

(c) Education is primarily technological and aims at communicating the knowledge of science requisite for participation in large-scale industry. “The school becomes a centre of instruction, not only in reading and writing in one or more languages, but also in the principles of all the sciences, *taught always as the basis of the various arts of production.*”³ The organisation of scientific research in Soviet Russia is probably on a scale unparalleled in history. But it is significant that two such enthusiastic observers of this activity as the Webbs are led to comment on “the unevenness in the devotion to science” and to express their regret that the technological bias does not admit of adequate attention being paid to sociology and ethics, and in particular that the actual administrative system of the Soviet Union is nowhere taken as the subject of study.⁴

(d) Art and culture are socialised to an extent unknown

¹ Op. cit., 29.

² *Lenin on Religion* (56).

³ Webb S. and B. : *Soviet Communism* (2nd edit.), 898. Italics in original.

⁴ Op. cit., 988 ff.

before. Here, to be sure, Russia does but carry farther a development which had already begun under capitalism, with its cheap literature, its reproductions of artistic masterpieces, and such inventions as the gramophone and the radio. What was at one time the privilege of the leisured few has now been brought within the reach of the masses. In the case of Russia this led at first to the subordination of art to the class-war and the interests of the proletariat, so that Dostoevsky was banned as a reactionary and *Hamlet* was rewritten as propaganda. A harsh realism came into existence which had lost all understanding for the metaphysical depths of life, and was concerned only with the projects of the time. The Five Year Plan invaded the symphonies rendered by the Moscow orchestras as well as the text-books studied by Moscow schoolboys. But this crude application of party standards to art was bound to lead in the end to a reaction and a broad humanist culture has once again become possible in Russia, though the technological emphasis remains, as indeed it must : Lenin himself opposed the slogan of "proletarian culture" which was raised in some revolutionary circles. Before the seizure of power his attitude to bourgeois culture was negative, he denounced it as a falsification of life, a deception from which the people must be freed. But after the revolution his attitude became more positive and he was concerned to carry over into the new order what was of value in the old. There must be no indiscriminate rejection of the past, no fantastic talk of "proletarian science" or "proletarian mathematics"; Marxism was to be used to sift out from the previous culture what must be rejected and what should be retained. Above all, science and art must be taken out of their old aristocratic context and be made accessible to the masses.¹

The social background of all this is, of course, the rise to power of those elements in the life of the community which had hitherto been excluded from power. The situation of

¹ Luppel : Op. cit., 225 ff.

the proletariat makes it sensitive to the close relation which exists between the conditions under which a man works and the quality of his life. Those who are engaged in manual labour have little interest in a style of life which is based on a degree of economic security which they do not enjoy, and they bring a stern realism to bear upon all ideals and ideas. They have a strong sense that theory should authenticate itself in action and that religion and philosophy should have relevance for the actual circumstances under which men live.

5. A SACRAMENTAL SOCIETY

This “revolt of the masses” has constituted a salutary discipline for religion. We have to face the fact that no other influences are quite so powerful in determining a man’s life as the conditions under which he earns his daily bread. The most effective education, for good or for evil, is that which comes to us unsought from the social institutions under which we live. Man cannot escape the machine which he is hired to tend ; the processes of production in which he is engaged leave their mark upon his soul. Perhaps indeed they affect him most profoundly because they lead him to doubt the existence of the soul ; in an industrial community we live in our outward relations and lose touch easily with the inner world.

A demand is therefore upon us for the re-union of body and soul, for the “materialisation” of Christianity. “We have suffered in our churches, in our movements, and perhaps more than elsewhere, in our S.C.M., from a disembodied Christianity. I mean by that a Christianity which had no real grip upon reality, which remained a stranger to the interests of the man in the street, of the peasant in the fields, of the worker in the factory, of the student in library or laboratory. But God revealed himself by incarnation in the life of man, and one of the Bible’s most striking characteris-

tics is its realism. The message of the Bible is always addressed to the concrete man.”¹

Is there any guidance for us in the concept of incarnation to which reference is made in this quotation? For its philosophical formulation we must turn to the Fourth Gospel with its principle of the Word made flesh, the Logos entering history as an individual human being. Spirit and flesh are two disparate orders of reality, capable at once of opposition and alliance. Each has its own laws, yet the one can become the vehicle and instrument of the other. The Word comes in from beyond—I shall show shortly that there is a close relation between Word and Spirit—from the eternal world which is the background of the historical world, yet it uses the latter as its medium of self-expression. When this happens, the flesh at each point becomes significant of the Word. Hence the miracles are spoken of as “signs”; they are points at which the hidden splendour breaks forth and is visible to those who have eyes of faith to see it.

In the Eucharistic discourse of chapter vi the Evangelist appears to be conducting a campaign on two fronts. He is opposed at once to the purely spiritual view which would dispense with the material elements in the rite and to the crass materialism which regards these elements as themselves of value. Therefore he insists at first on the actual eating of the flesh of the Son of man and the drinking of his blood, repugnant as he knows such language is bound to be to the Jew. But once that point has been established, he goes on to protest that he must not be understood in any crude materialistic fashion. “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.”²

It must not be supposed that there is any such connection between spirit and flesh as can be reduced to a scheme; we do not know in advance in what way the sovereign freedom

¹ *The Student World* (3rd Quarter, 1943), 203.

² vi. 63.

of the one will employ the other for its purposes. "The spirit breatheth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."¹ The supreme instance of this superiority of spirit over flesh is to be seen in the Cross, where the utter humiliation of the one is the crowning glory of the other. It is as lifted up to die that Christ draws all men to himself, as betrayed into the hands of sinners that he has power to judge and expel the prince of this world. Neither is spirit the shadow of flesh nor flesh the shadow of spirit, but one sets ends and the other supplies means. The relation between the two may perhaps best be described as sacramental, and the agony of the Cross is for John sacramental of the victory of love.

Finally, the spirit is not committed even to this its highest form of expression in the Cross. The Word made flesh is for a time only and with death his work among men ceases. But the Spirit goes on and through him Christ is again a power, and an even greater power, in human lives. All down the ages, the material world can become sacramental to the spiritual in virtue of this never failing Presence in it. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto the Father."²

To what conclusions does this philosophy of incarnation lead us ? To the hope surely of a sacramental society in which the material necessities of daily life will become the embodiment of a spirit whose value is not to be measured by those necessities. The spiritual life is neither to be surrendered to economic activities nor maintained in isolation from them : it exists by its own right, but its mission is to penetrate and to transfigure the material world with its own inherent glory. What we seek is the translation into terms of "flesh" of a "spirit" which has independent worth and existence.

¹ iii. 8.

² xiv. 12.

At this point the Religious Socialism of Paul Tillich takes up the argument.¹ It accepts without hesitation as its starting-point the intimate connection between economic conditions and the spiritual life. This is the characteristic of our society with which religion must deal if it is to have any truth or relevance. It has no hope of the evangelisation of the masses by the conventional methods and with the conventional appeals, but seeks to identify itself with them in their effort after social justice, recognising in these an impulse which is of essentially religious origin, though unconsciously so. For it Socialism is not an end but a means, and the end is not the redistribution of economic resources so much as the emancipation and fulfilment of personal life. Or the goal may be defined as a sacramental society in which the activities by which men earn their living have become significant of the spiritual realities in which ultimately they live. In man also, yes, and even in the machine, the Word is made flesh to dwell among us.

¹ Art. *Sozialismus : II Religiöser Sozialismus in Die Religion in Geschichte and in Gegenwart* (2te. Auf.).

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAMILY

FROM the formulation of general principles we pass to the study of particular problems. Let us revert at the outset to our starting-point.

We have worked hitherto with the assumption that the picture of city, castle, and cathedral is adequately representative of the situation with which morality is concerned. The time has now come to question that assumption. Are there not moral factors and occasions which belong in the hidden realms of private life? To be sure, they will be included within the city, but they will escape observation unless we can enter the homes which go to make that city. Problems of personal relations exist alongside of, and intermingled with, problems of social adjustment. Of these the most important are those which arise within the family, in the relation between the sexes and between parent and child. The invisible and often fragile threads which attach person to person are as necessary to social cohesion as the organisations which control their interactions.

1. THE CRISIS IN THE FAMILY

While it is with the threat to the family in the Western countries that we are naturally most familiar, a survey of what is happening in the Orient will clarify for us the nature of the forces at work. The transition is being effected before our eyes from the arranged marriage to the marriage of affection, from the family as maintaining itself across the generations to the family as re-created afresh in each generation. For such changes the emancipation of the

individual is primarily responsible, as one can see from such a first-hand account of the strains within an Oriental family as is given in *The Autobiography of a Chinese Girl*. The individual claims the right to shape his life according to his own standards, instead of regarding himself as the trustee of clan traditions and clan interests ; one essential feature of this new self-expression is the right to choose one's own mate. This demand introduces a most disturbing element into the life of what has been for so long a static community with unchallenged standards. Nor is the individual any longer prepared to conceal such conflicts for the sake of social peace, and constant friction is the result.

In the West this emancipation of the individual has been carried still farther during the last half-century or so. Scientific methods of birth-control have made it possible to add to the demand to be allowed to choose one's own partner, the other demand to be allowed to enter into sex-relations outside of marriage. Social control had hitherto been exercised through the fear of pregnancy on the part of the woman ; with the removal of that fear a quite new set of relations became possible. For the first time it became practicable to regard the quest for sexual satisfactions as belonging to the same sphere of private life as one's meals or one's furniture. The only criterion in such cases is the need or taste of the parties concerned, and where they are in agreement others have no call to pass judgment on what they do.

It is curious that this unrestrained individualism is to be met at times in just those circles which are otherwise most collectivist in sympathy. The communist groups of Lenin's day included among them not a few young people who held what they described as " the glass of water theory " of sexual relations, but he himself was wise enough to perceive the fundamental inconsistency between private licence and the social organisation which he sought to bring into existence.¹

¹ Zetkin : *Reminiscences of Lenin* (1934), 49 ff.

Society cannot be stable if the individuals of which it is composed are undisciplined and anarchic in their emotional relations. There was much more wisdom in Plato's view that a planned state would require as its foundation a system of controlled mating. An ordered whole is not to be secured by leaving the parts to chance.

In this respect the Russian social experiment, just because it has been on so vast a scale and so uncompromising in its methods, has been of immense significance. The laxity which was characteristic of the revolutionary period has been replaced since 1935 by a puritanism for which marital fidelity and parental affection are among the highest of virtues and the man or woman of loose life is an enemy of the community. Maurice Hindus in his *Mother Russia* describes how this new pride in the family has contributed to the stability of the country during the ordeal of the war. Its rulers learned in time that the family is the sole available source of that emotional security which must serve as the foundation on which the massive structures of collectivist society could be built up. Without that security the individual disintegrates and becomes unable to take his place in the common enterprise. In this Russian experience, we can perhaps see the best guarantee that the forces which in our own country threaten the family will in due course receive a check. The whole trend of the time is towards a more closely-knit and a more compactly organised society, and this will of itself require of us that we become disciplined individuals, with our emotions centred upon abiding objects instead of being dissipated in mere chance attachments.

I do not propose to deal in these pages with the practical social issues which are raised by the present crisis in the family, but to endeavour instead to penetrate to the central principles which are involved. One of the gravest defects of modern life is that sex has become isolated from social responsibility and religious conviction. The inevitable

result of that is a sex-obsession which besets our popular literature and entertainment and which prevents this element in our life from being seen in due proportion, as a part within the whole. Marriage is often grounded in nothing better than a degree of mutual liking on the part of two persons with no real experience of each other's major interests and no common concern for self-fulfilment in duty. It needs to be seen against not only its social, but also its metaphysical, background.

2. MAN AND WOMAN

The beginning of all our thinking on this subject should be wonder, wonder before the central mystery of life, which is that "man" as such does not exist. He is to be found only under one or other of the two highly diversified forms of man and woman. The infinite wealth of human existence is invested in these two types, which are at once alike and antithetical, opposed and complementary. It is thus the nature of life to express itself in two forms, man and woman, but to remain basically one in both.

Jung would have us go farther and carry the differentiation into the personalities of man and woman themselves. Each sex, that is to say, contains some element of the other latent within itself; the fully masculine character requires some counter-weight of feminine qualities, and *vice-versa*. If this is so, we can understand better how the unity of man and woman can bring self-fulfilment to each of them. There is that in oneself which awaits the arrival of the other to attain its own full development.¹

Life therefore exists as something which neither man nor woman can fully possess in common, but which is meant to be shared by the two as they become one. In this we can but see the will of God, who has kept the ultimate secret of his creation for the hour when man and woman together can

¹ *Psychological Types* (1923), 594 f.

receive it. We are almost driven at this point to follow Plato's example and tell a story. God having made the first man and the first woman said to each of them in turn : " I have given you my creation to subdue and rule, but your own selves I cannot yet give to you. That is for neither of you alone, it is reserved for the hour when you find it together." The complete unity of man and woman on all planes of being, from the physical to the spiritual—and it is only complete where this is the case—is a metaphysical experience of the very highest order. It is indeed nothing less than the return of life to itself after its separation into two forms.

That being the case, it follows that this crowning experience is only to be approached with due reverence, as something inexpressibly sacred. It is in fact one of the supreme occasions of life, since in it the material world is transfigured and in the intimacy of personal relations becomes the vehicle of the spiritual. The natural sense of shame, the taboos of primitive peoples, and the solemn rites of the higher religions are all so many ways of giving to marital union the place to which it is entitled. To speak of removing the taboos which surround sex is to speak without due thought. We forget that a taboo is not mere superstition, it is also the form under which absolute value is apprehended at a certain stage in social development. What needs to be done, therefore, is to eliminate whatever in our current attitude to sex is due to false shame or mere superstitious scruple, while retaining and enriching whatever springs out of the consciousness that here we have to do with something of a sacred order. To remove from sex the mystery and awe by which it is surrounded is not to liberate it but to destroy something which is essential to its nature.

It is only from some such point of view as is here set out that, so far as I can see, the Christian view of marriage can be defended. At the same time, care must be taken not to identify Christian marriage with any of the forms which it has come to assume in Western society. It is not bound

up, for example, with the institution of private property or with the economic dependence of the wife on her husband : Russia has shown how the removal of these can be attended by a rebirth of family life. Again, in certain types of society the arranged marriage is still the most natural one, and much harm can be done by introducing the free choice of a partner before those who have to make the choice are equal to what it requires of them. The arranged marriage belongs to a society whose members are not yet highly individualised, in which therefore there may well be many women with whom any one man might hope to contract a satisfying and life-long union. At this stage, affection comes after marriage rather than before it. Such a state of things may well be unintelligible to a Western European, but there are parts of the world in which it would be wiser to regulate marriages of this type than to substitute our own methods for them.

3. ETHICAL STANDARDS IN MARRIAGE

But all these things are merely on the periphery. The central considerations are two in number. Are we still to regard marriage as the life-long devotion of one man to one woman ? Are sex-relations justified outside the marriage-bond ?

(a) It is a commonplace that the male of the human species is a polygamous animal, and that monogamy is only possible as some force is brought into play to curb his ranging instincts. To-day polygamy returns under the form of easy divorce : one person may have several partners in the course of a life-time and may pass from one to the next for reasons which are little more than trivial. I am not dealing here with divorce as a legal provision ; the indissolubility of marriage in the intention of those who enter upon it is what is now in question. Do they regard it as an arrangement to be continued just so long as it yields the pleasures for which they came to it, or as an irrevocable commitment ? Is or

is not marriage entered upon in a spirit of total self-giving on each side, so that the possibility of one day going back upon it is simply not to be contemplated?

There is in all of us a shrinking from the finally binding decision, a desire to keep open a way of withdrawal, should the new situation we have created prove unpleasant. Yet character is only made as we are willing for just such an irrevocable commitment, as empires are only won by those who are prepared to burn their boats behind them. The true man is the one who wills to be true under all conceivable circumstances, who can be relied on to be true when to be otherwise would obviously be much more profitable. Unless there is this stability in him, he is not in fact a true man at all. So the highest joys of life are only to be obtained in a relation which we will to be permanent, which we are resolved to maintain however many arguments there may be for abandoning it. The partners in marriage take each other "for better, for worse," and even the prospect of being parted by death is one which they are not prepared to consider.

It is quite true that by such an irrevocable commitment one exposes oneself to a frightful risk. But this is only in accordance with what obtains throughout life: to win the best we must hazard the worst. Marriage however is vitiated from the first if it is valued in accordance with the pleasure it is likely to yield. That again is in accordance with one of the fundamental laws of life, the law that happiness flees from those who seek it and offers itself to those who devote themselves to some objective reality.

We have here another of those instances in which what we believe to be true tends to become true, in virtue of our faith. The will to maintain a relation whether it proves satisfactory or not may well be the most effective means to ensure that it does in fact prove satisfactory. On the other hand, the knowledge that such a relation can easily be broken off should it yield less than was originally contemplated, might well prove the shortest road to disaster in it. That is

why the trial marriage could not prove a satisfactory solution of the problems which have arisen in modern society ; those who enter upon such an arrangement are cut off from the conditions which make for a permanent union.

(*b*) If the ideal of life-long fidelity is rejected in certain quarters as infringing the liberty of the individual, the ideal of chastity is ridiculed as long since outgrown. Contraceptive devices have brought with them a new morality which knows nothing of the old restraints.

The assumption is that sex is a purely biological function which can be isolated ; its exercise leaves no more impression on the personalities of those who engage in it than the satisfaction of hunger or thirst would do. It is, in fact, the "glass of water" theory which I have already referred to. All that has happened is that an appetite has its craving met : it is not an event in the development of the person as a whole, so that after it he—or she—can never again be what he was before.

But is it really possible to maintain this isolation of sex from the higher functions of personal life ? The phenomena of sublimation point in quite a different direction. The energies of the sex-instinct can be diverted into other channels such as artistic creation and can there become a profound expression of the personality. Kierkegaard dated his own capacity for self-expression from the moment when he broke with Regine Olsen. We have to do here with an element in life which is of unique significance and force. Genuine love is not just an additional interest ; it awakens in those affected by it powers which lay dormant till then. They become new persons under its spell. The sex-instinct then implicates the whole personality as no other does, and the fact that two persons agree to have intercourse outside the marital bond only means that they have consented together to reduce to a momentary enjoyment what should have been the revelation of God's secret in the making of them to be man and woman.

“All the varieties of the modern doctrine that man is a collection of separate impulses, each of which can attain its private satisfaction, are in fundamental contradiction not only with the traditional body of human wisdom but with the modern conception of the human character. Thus in one breath it is said in advanced circles that love is a series of casual episodes, and in the next it transpires that the speaker is in process of having himself elaborately psycho-analyzed in order to disengage his soul from the effects of apparently trivial episodes in his childhood. On the one hand it is asserted that sex pervades everything and on the other that sexual behaviour is inconsequential.”¹

4. HOME AND PARENTHOOD

Let me return now to what I described earlier as the final import of that union of husband and wife which is the consummation of the marital relation. It is the disclosure of the secret of man's creation or, in other words, the return of life to unity with itself after it has been divided into two forms. It only remains to bring out the implications of this in two respects.

In the first place, the union of husband and wife brings into existence genuine community, the sharing of life by persons while their own selfhood is not obliterated thereby, but rather enhanced. How this will be used depends of course on the two who enter into this singularly close relation : will they make of it a retreat from their wider social obligations or the source of a new strength to accept and fulfil these ? That depends in turn on the answer which is given to the all-important question whether marriage is thought of as mutual enjoyment or as shared responsibility. Here we touch on something vital : only communities such as the Catholics and the Jews which ban mixed marriages

¹ Lippmann : *A Preface to Morals* (1929), 306.

have an understanding of what is at stake, and the main trend of modern life appears still to be against them.

If the individual cannot find himself by direct seeking, but needs to lose himself in an objective task, so the partners to a marriage need to supplement the intimate personal union into which they have been brought by the widest possible range of common interests. The enjoyment of each other is an insufficient basis for life-long association. Hence the inadvisability of marriages in which husband and wife draw on highly diverse traditions or are not agreed on matters of fundamental importance, such as religious belief.

But the common interests which husband and wife bring to marriage are not the only ones ; there are those also which are created by the marriage. The home is that enterprise, compounded of material necessities and moral obligations, which two persons will to bring into existence and thereafter to maintain by constant co-operation. The frustration of this effort by economic or other conditions is invariably attended by unhappiness. In Kierkegaard's case his own inability to commit himself in marriage seems to have made him all the more sensitive to what is involved in it, as a mysterious unity of romantic passion, moral duty, and religious insight. The petty details of life enter into it, not as hindrances but as helps, and obligations are cheerfully accepted as the means by which love is both demonstrated and reinforced. "Only responsibility brings blessing, brings blessing and joy, even to the man of one talent like thyself. . . . But we have responsibility only where we have a home, and this responsibility brings with it security and happiness."¹ The true home is a school of character, a training-ground for service in the world in after years, but it can only be this as it is rooted in the right relation between the two who make it. If we have any doubts on this point, they should long since have been dispelled by what modern psychology has shown us of the influence upon the personality

¹ *Entweder-Oder*,, übersetzt von Pfeleiderer und Schrempf (1913), vol. ii. 73.

all through life of its earliest environment in the home and of the extent to which that is determined by the relation between the parents.

In the second place, the introduction of man and woman into the secret of their creation is also an initiation of them into creative activity in their turn. The true and final union of man and woman in marriage makes possible a partnership with God in the work of bringing persons into existence. I deliberately choose such language rather than speak of the begetting of children. To make the procreation of children the fundamental purpose of marriage is surely to lay the emphasis on the wrong place, on the biological factors rather than the spiritual. There is, as a result, a tendency among those who take this view to lay too much stress on the mere fact of bringing children into the world and too little on what is to be done with them once they are there. I would say rather that marriage is the means by which what at the animal level is a mere device of nature for continuing the species, re-appears at the human level as the will to hand on to others the fullness of life which we have ourselves received. What God calls men and women to do is not just to add to the population of the globe, but to bring into being those who are capable of entering one day into the glorious liberty of His children. The desire for children is something much more than the wish to continue one's own existence after death ; in human beings it should rise out of gratitude for what the marital relation has brought and the longing to perpetuate the wonder of life with this hallowed mystery at the heart of it.

Here, surely, is the legitimate ground for birth-control—apart of course from such considerations as those of the health of the partners themselves. Where the spiritual aim of procreation—the making of personalities—requires a restriction upon the mere reproduction of life, the former has the right to take precedence over the latter. The fact that in some cases this is merely the excuse alleged, while

the real reason for the limitation of the family is a much less creditable one, may be admitted : this, however, does not invalidate the position itself.

5. PARENT AND CHILD

In the above discussion I have naturally followed the Western order of preference, for which the relation between parent and child is subordinated to that between husband and wife. It is worth remembering, however, that this is not a universal judgment, that over a large part of the world such an estimate would be rejected. Lafcadio Hearn, for example, remarked of the Japan of his day that the saying : “ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife ” would seem to many the most immoral saying ever uttered.¹ I have been told by a Chinese girl, educated at Oxford, that even young men of her class found, in a clash of obligations, that loyalty to parents took precedence over the obligations to wife and child. It may well be that the Orient has something to teach us here, and that the future holds within it the possibility of mutual understanding and enrichment in this respect.

Here again we can set out from a consideration of the nature of life. Life propagates itself by a combination of novelty and continuity, by the constant emergence of fresh lives under the guardianship of older ones. As it is not complete in man alone or in woman alone, but requires the unity of the two, so it exists under the two forms of youth and age, and these are meant to be complementary as well as in some measure antithetical. It is the task of one to give stability and of the other to venture forward ; age is heir to the past and youth creative of the future. Nor can these two functions be severed without grave loss : it is indeed only as we draw upon the old that we are able to bring about the new.

¹ *Out of the East* (1895), 90.

The closing words of the Old Testament suggest that the most difficult, and at the same time the most necessary, task that can be assigned to anyone in this world is the reconciliation of these two standpoints. Who shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and of the children to the fathers? Yet if this is not done, the earth will be smitten with a curse.¹ The two principles of conservation and progress are at strife within the family as within society at large, but if they are once united in the former they may be brought to co-operate in the latter. Age makes possible the traditions by which the experiences of the past are handed on to serve as starting-point for the enterprises of the present. Youth, on the other hand, makes a fresh beginning continually possible: the fact that new lives are for ever entering the world, bringing with them new powers, is the best safeguard against stagnation. Society is in equal need of both, and if conflict comes naturally to them, mutual understanding is their duty. Their relation is like that which we have seen to hold between political and religious values. It is not to be expected that the standpoints of youth and age should ever coincide, each has its own perspective, so that the world which the one sees is not wholly the same as that which opens out before the eyes of the other. Nor is any reconciliation within our power: we are left to temper the inevitable conflict by a degree of mutual appreciation beyond anything we have yet achieved.

The relation between parent and child is distinguished from that between the parents themselves inasmuch as it is based neither on personal affection nor on social convention, but on brute fact. We choose our partners in some societies, but in none do we choose our parents. Life is not a campaign for which we volunteer; we are conscripted to it and must serve in the regiment to which we are assigned whether or not it is to our liking. It is impossible wholly to rationalise the parent-child relation: just as the mother knows

¹ Malachi iv. 6.

herself bound to her child regardless of his worthiness or unworthiness, so the child cannot be deterred in his attitude to the parent solely by the extent to which the latter has discharged his duty. We must accept the natural basis of life and use it as the substructure on which to build the spiritual form of association. Those who live under the same roof must learn to share a common life. Indeed, could we ever have attained to community of interest and outlook had we not from the first been bound together in the family without any seeking of our own? That is the way in which life works with us, and we can conceive of no other way. There is no escape from the element of destiny, of the given, in our existence: as we are born into a particular family, so we enter at birth into a particular national community with its language, its standards, and its traditions. We are not asked to improvise life from our own resources, but to submit ourselves to it as it is appointed for us, and the beginning of wisdom is the acceptance of our human situation as just what it is.

6. BROTHER AND SISTER

The view of marriage which has been set forth above is no doubt open to one very grave objection. If it is the fulfilment of two personalities by total union as the crowning moment of life, does not this reduce to a sorry second-best the lot of those who must perforce remain unmarried? In reply, it may fairly be said that such an inference is by no means inevitable. We are dealing here with two types of experience which are in the last analysis incommensurable, since it is in the nature of the case impossible for one person to appreciate both from within—and it is only from within that they can be adequately appreciated. Those who have found the one set of satisfactions are simply not in the position to compare these with what they might have found had their destiny in fact been otherwise. But there is evidence enough

to suggest that the unmarried man or woman may sometimes achieve a quality of life which might well have been unattainable in that particular form within the family.

But it must not be forgotten that the family includes within itself a provision for satisfying relations between the sexes outside the marriage bond. In the relation between brother and sister, as well as in other respects, the home is a microcosm of society. It is true that friction at this point can become peculiarly severe, so that the cynic might be inclined to agree with Freud that rivalry and jealousy are natural as between brother and sister and affection is only imposed upon them by parental coercion. But this is another instance of the law that the best can only be won under circumstances which are fraught with the possibility of the worst. The family can be of incomparable worth as a school of co-operation and loyalty, in which personalities of widely differing types learn to work together on common tasks, and in which the attachments of childhood mature into the permanent fidelities of adult life. It is above all those who have been prepared in this way within the home who can enter with ease and confidence into relations of friendship with men and women in the world outside it.

The association of man and woman on a footing of equality and in friendship is therefore established within the family itself, for this is only complete as it contains within itself brother and sister. But it would be a mistake to separate this possibility from what has gone before. We must not suppose that a healthy relation can obtain between the sexes outside marriage where that within marriage has become vitiated or questionable. It is doubtful whether the freedom of the twentieth century would have been possible had it not been preceded by the Victorian discipline of family life : the two are much more closely related than is usually imagined. Just as it is only in the home where the relations between the parents are sound that those between the children can be secure enough to serve the purposes of character-

formation and training for life, so the free intercourse between men and women in our modern Western society requires as its background that reverence for marriage which is part of the Christian tradition. The problems attendant on enforced celibacy are to be taken with all seriousness, but they would not in the end be relieved, they might rather be exaggerated, by a relaxation of the standards governing marriage. The social and personal satisfactions which can and should result from the frank encounter and close co-operation of men and women in common tasks are ultimately not to be separated from that mutual respect and that all-pervading sense of the inviolable mystery at the centre of life which are the best guardians of the marriage-bond.

CHAPTER IX

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

1. GROUPS

THE family introduces us to the fact that society is composed of groups rather than of individuals. That men ever thought otherwise was because they sought to break with the existing group-structure of society in the interests of individual liberty. They did not realise that it was necessary to create new and more satisfying forms of association in place of the old.

Society to-day is a group-structure of a highly complex order. One interesting evidence is provided by the changes in vocabulary which ensue when an Oriental country is opened to Western civilisation. In China and Japan, for example, there have been two noticeable changes. A host of new terms has had to be coined to express the new forms of association which emerged, and another set for the various isms and ideologies which came in from abroad. On the old group-system of family, clan, and village a new one was imposed which was largely artificial, whereas the older loyalties rested on a natural basis.

Any attempt at an analysis of groups in modern society must begin with this distinction. It is not possible to classify groups according to categories which are mutually exclusive, we must be content to note the existence of opposing tendencies. At the one extreme stands a group like the family, which is biological in origin, at the other, say, the Trade Protection Society, which is formed by individuals and firms for the joint promotion of certain specific interests. In between, room must be made for mixed types. How far, for example, is the nation a natural association and how far an

artificial one? Most of us would put the British people in the former category: but is not our present unity in part at least the product of conquest?

Again, we can distinguish between groups according to the extent to which they make use of compulsion or are based on the free consent of their members. The friendly society is purely voluntary in character, since those who enter it are free to contract out of it whenever they so wish. But the State claims the right to dispose of individuals without consulting their wishes and to use the utmost rigour of severity, even to capital punishment, against those who refuse to submit to its authority. As an instance of the mixed type we may take the professional association. Those who join this do so of their own free will, but the fact remains that not to do so would disqualify them from following the calling for which they have been trained.

A third method of classification would be to enquire in the case of each group whether it requires from the individual his total allegiance or is content with a partial one. The dictatorships belong to the former class and some churches would perhaps make the same claim: in their case, it rests on a confusion between what is due to God and what to the persons and institutions which represent him in this world. But a trade union or a literary society takes cognisance only of certain interests which its members have in common. We may agree on the demand for a higher rate of pay and be divided on every other conceivable issue.

Finally, it is a peculiar feature of the modern situation that each individual is a member of several groups and may thus become the battle-ground on which their conflicting interests wage war. Our friend John Smith, for example, is not only a citizen of this country and of his own city, he is also a member of a congregation which belongs to a denomination at once national in organisation and world-wide in its ramifications; he is on the membership-lists of a trade union, a co-operative society, a political party with its ward,

divisional, and national organisation, and some dozen or so voluntary societies for the promotion of permanent religious, moral, and educational purposes or for the attainment of certain *ad hoc* aims. As such he reproduces in his own life the frictions of the total society to which he belongs. At election time, for example, is he to be faithful to his party commitments or to consider his interests as a depositor in the local savings bank? Or is he to subordinate both claims to his ultimate convictions of a religious order? The groups of modern society interpenetrate so that each man in his time plays many parts, and one of the defects of the Marxist analysis of social conflict is that it still imagines that these groups are mutually exclusive and has not reckoned with the fact that, to a considerable extent, the class-struggle is carried on within men as well as between them.

But even so we have not exhausted the possibilities of a classification of social groupings. We have now to penetrate these associations and to recognise in each the presence of an element of right and, alongside of it, an element of might. Each group has its own point of view, its own standards, and its own interests. It is usually of the opinion that its interests and the common welfare are identical, but in the eyes of an outsider it appears at times to be prepared to sacrifice the latter without hesitation to the former. The B.M.A. is concerned both to provide a medical service for the benefit of the community and to maintain the rights of its members. A trade union guarantees a certain standard of proficiency on the part of those who belong to it, but it will sometimes employ the strike-weapon to make good its claims upon society as a whole. The medieval Church was prepared either to baptise whole populations into the fellowship of the Gospel or to put them under the ban for any infringement of its rights. Exactly where in all such cases right ceases and might begins it is not possible to say. It is in fact a question of interpretation and therefore of standpoint: the Pope may have had no doubt that when he launched his anathemas he

was motivated by a desire for the salvation of those who were struck by them, but the victims themselves probably held a very different opinion.

Does there exist under modern conditions a pure instance of either of these last two types? Can we identify anywhere a group which is wholly coercive in character or one which is based entirely on moral considerations? Probably not. I suspect that even the simplest ethical association has some rights which it would be prepared to assert, and even a Fascist state is not altogether without some justification of a higher order than mere coercion. Suffice it to say that most, probably all, human claims represent a tangle of might and right: where, for example, is the husband or father who would say that he has wholly resisted the temptation to use his position for some form of coercion, however mild? A final separation of the two aspects of group-life is therefore beyond our power.

2. THE STATE

A society so constituted clearly has within it well-nigh infinite possibilities of friction, and that over right as well as over might. Different sections of one and the same community may be in conflict, now because they represent incompatible interests and now again because they hold divergent views of what constitutes the common good. The difficulties of a modern State do not arise merely from the clash between capital and labour; the educational controversy shows what serious problems may be created by the existence, within one nation, of various Christian denominations. It looks as though the complete elimination of self-interest among the members of a society might not have the magic effect with which we are sometimes disposed to credit it; honest differences of opinion would remain and might lead at times to serious complications.

It follows from this that no society can remain a mere

collection of groups ; provision must be made in it for some co-ordinating function. That function is exercised in the last resort by the State, though it may prefer to delegate it in some cases to other bodies rather than always to act in its own name. At the lowest, the State is concerned to prevent the inevitable frictions from becoming so serious as to engender insecurity : as such, it is the police-State. At the highest, it provides a common purpose which can unify the various sectional activities and turn them all to the general good. That is the type of State which the critical conditions of our own day would seem to demand.

The State works in two main ways. It may use legislation, either to provide in advance against circumstances which would make for conflict between groups or to do so after conflict has actually broken out. It may resort to arbitration, when it recognises the relative autonomy of the groups concerned and uses its good offices to effect an adjustment of claims which will be acceptable to both parties to a dispute. Which method is employed in a given case is largely a matter of political expediency.

So far we have been concerned with the function of the State. If we are to consider its actual composition, a further complication is introduced. The power of the State must be held by a group, the group which at any given moment composes the government. It is impossible to conceive of a society in which there is not some such group exercising executive power. This feature is common to dictatorships and democracies ; what differentiates them is the important fact that in the former case the government is probably self-appointed and certainly not to be removed by any action short of revolution, while in the latter case it is subject to some degree of popular control. The strategic centre of power remains but the composition of the group occupying this can be changed.

Government, of course, has the same characteristics as any other group ; it has an aspect of might and an aspect of

right. Theoretically, its standpoint is one of disinterested concern for the common welfare, but in actual fact it will have some axe of its own to grind on the public whetstone. There is always a measure of self-deception on the part of the holders of power ; they easily persuade themselves that what is to their own advantage is also to the public benefit. They may make this identification in all sincerity, but to those who are injured by it the whole procedure must inevitably savour of the grossest sophistry.

The right-clement in the modern State is seen most clearly in its internal relations, the might-clement in its external relations. Not that repression is wholly absent from the home policy of any government, even the most democratic ; none has yet been found which is able to function without law-courts, police officials, and a prison system. But the large-scale extension of the social services in the last two or three generations has made it seem much less preposterous than it once did to work with Aristotle's description of the State as established with a view to the highest good. Nevertheless, recent events have shown us only too clearly the frightful possibilities of evil which are bound up with the exercise of armed and coercive power by the State.

3. THE PROBLEM OF POWER

If now the authority of the State at any given moment is in the hands of a group which has some interest of its own to serve, what is to protect the rest of the community from exploitation at their hands ? How, in other words, is the abuse of power to be guarded against ? No final answer to this question is possible, since the best safeguards which can be devised will be ineffectual without the will to use them. But three conditions can be enumerated which provide as effective guarantees as the conditions of the problem will permit.

(a) There must be a widespread sense of responsibility

among the rank and file of the citizens in the community. The main safeguard of democracy is not in the ballot-box, with its limited range of choice and the danger of manipulation by party-organisations, but in the existence of voluntary societies, some with *ad hoc* purposes and some with more permanent aims. Discussion must be brought out of Parliament and carried into the committee-room and even into the home. The transition from democracy to dictatorship is accelerated by that general disgust with politics and willingness to abandon issues to authority which is to be found even where Parliamentary institutions have not yet been abandoned. The merit of voluntary societies is that they counteract this passivity, they simplify and select the questions on which the citizen is called on to make up his mind, and enable him to feel that he has some share in the formation of public opinion. The party-system in politics is justified by these considerations, and those who would discredit it should address themselves more earnestly to the task of finding a substitute for it which is not a form of tyranny.

(b) The right balance must be struck between the centralisation of power and its distribution over various points within the community. On the one hand, where the only centre of power is in the State, this puts into the hands of the governing group powers so drastic and so far-reaching that they cannot be expected to withstand the temptation to abuse them. On the other hand, where other centres of power have developed alongside of the State, as in great industrial or financial corporations, there is grave danger that they may constitute a veiled form of tyranny, all the more dangerous because it respects the forms of democracy. A society to be stable needs enough centralisation of power to give it security and sufficient distribution to ensure liberty. No formula can be given for this delicate balance, it must be worked out continually by the genius of a people, and it is one of the major achievements of our own nation that we have been able to do this so successfully.

(c) There is also a moral factor which is of supreme importance. That has been touched on already in what has just been said of the genius of a people. There must be a common mind in which the holders of power and those who are subject to them alike share. This will set limits and prescribe standards for the use of power. Such a common mind includes in the first place a set of conventions governing political action, such as those which regulate the operation in this country of parliamentary institutions, and in the second place, a simple moral code, an ethic of fair-play, mutual consideration, and self-restraint. There is such a thing as a generally-diffused sense of what is and what is not permissible within a community. It is a mistake to suppose that the only checks upon the exercise of power are those which have been consciously formulated ; the operation of a whole set of assumptions and of standards which are simply taken for granted may be much more effective. It is these unconscious factors, indeed, which are normally operative to secure social cohesion, the others are brought into play at critical moments when this is threatened. The common mind is most potent where there is a tacit agreement upon certain courses of action combined with freedom to differ in other respects. It is equally deadly in a society to have nothing certain and to have everything stereotyped.

But this consideration forces upon our notice the crisis of the State to-day, which arises from the fact that in so many countries this common mind of which we have been speaking is no longer present. Men are no longer directed unconsciously by an allegiance which is part and parcel of their normal selves, they fall apart into groups determined by economic interest or it may even be by religious conviction. At the same time the conditions of modern society with its mass-populations and its large-scale industrialisation call out for an ever larger measure of cohesion and organisation. Society is losing its unity and wholeness just when it needs them most.

The inevitable reaction to this was an attempt on the part of the holders of power to use the prestige and the machinery of the State for the regeneration of society. Where society is breaking down, there are only two known possibilities of restoration. One is by spiritual renewal and the other by State-planning : a generation which is as indisposed to the former as our own is necessarily driven back upon the latter. But the State cannot solve the problem, it can only falsify and aggravate it : for that delicate balance of agreement and difference which confers health upon a society it substitutes a manufactured and enforced agreement. The means which it employs to this end is propaganda, and in this the holders of power wield to-day a weapon of terrifying potency.

Serge Chakotin, drawing on his experience of this weapon, has shown how easy it is for a small group which has a clearly-defined objective and a knowledge of the psychological mechanisms which determine action to occupy the mass-mind and use it for its own purposes. He raises the question of how this frightful assault on human integrity is to be met, and supplies an answer : " There is only one effective method—to meet them with violent propaganda, to counteract their tendency to psychical rape by equivalent action on the psychism of the masses, but without recourse to lying. It is possible to carry on violent propaganda without violating the moral principles which are the basis of human society."¹

Chakotin's intentions are no doubt excellent, and he has grasped an important truth : the cause of liberty must be defended in peace with as much enthusiasm as is shown on its behalf in war and with at least as much as is employed by its enemies against it. But are truth and violence as compatible as he imagines? Does not the former require a largeness of mind, an objectivity, and a degree of self-criticism with which violence is totally inconsistent? Nor

¹ *The Rape of the Masses* (1939), 284.

does he consider how unwise it would be to expose liberty to the peril inherent in all propaganda, the peril, I mean, that it becomes in the end self-defeating, breeding only a universal scepticism and cynicism. It may be that in countries shaken and demoralised by defeat, there is not the time needed to attempt rehabilitation by the slower processes of education ; but where this is not the case, education rather than propaganda is surely the appropriate means to employ.

One damaging effect of war-time propaganda is that even the normal educational activities directed by the State and local authorities may come to be suspect and resistance be offered to the proposal to train each generation in a common attitude to life, on the ground that this is to indoctrinate them. There is no doubt a peril in such a policy, but it is no longer possible for us to leave society to the anarchy of individual opinions. There must be a determined effort to secure that balance of agreement and difference which we have seen to be a primary requisite of social health. It is for education to achieve this. Education I would define as the communication of the collective wisdom of a society, for acceptance at first and testing afterwards, in the faith that the testing will justify the previous acceptance. The authority behind it is thus that of experience, whereas propaganda operates with coercion and makes an overt assault upon the mind.

The rôle of education in a democratic society can be illustrated from the relation between teacher and students at the level of higher education. The teacher has no wish to impose his own conclusions on the students, rather does he submit all that he gives to their criticism ; but he does insist that they should understand any position thoroughly before they form an opinion about it. His own ability to make an original contribution to the subject in which he specialises is due to the previous discipline of assimilating what has been done in it by others. The attitude of society to those whom it

is training for the responsibility of membership might be best expressed if we imagine one generation speaking thus to the next : “ Here is what we have found to be true, in part by learning it from our fathers, in part by supplementing this from our own experience : we wish now to give it to you, as the best we have. Work with this and bring it in course of time to the test of your own experience, so that you may know in what form to hand it on to those who come after you.”

In other words, it is as much the duty of a community to train its youth in what it considers to be the right attitude to life as to teach its language and literature. In fact, in doing the latter it will also be doing the former, though largely unconsciously : the dangers which threaten the common life are, however, so serious to-day that the process must be made conscious if it is to be adequate to the needs. But it is its duty at the same time to train youth in openness of mind, receptivity to the lessons of experience, and the ability to submit even one's most cherished opinions to an objective criticism.

4. GROUP MORALITY AND INDIVIDUAL MORALITY

But this brings us to the final and most serious problem of “ moral man and immoral society,” to use the phrase which has been made current by Reinhold Niebuhr.

One initial difficulty in criticising Niebuhr's thesis is that he uses language loosely just where precision is called for. Sometimes he argues merely that disinterested action is much more difficult for the collectivity than for its individual members ; sometimes he goes farther and implies that the inherent selfishness of the former is ineradicable. This ambiguity appears on the opening page of his book. “ Individual men may be moral in the sense that they are able to consider interests other than their own in determining problems of conduct, and are capable, on occasion, of

preferring the advantages of others to their own. They are endowed by nature with a measure of sympathy and consideration for their kind, the breadth of which may be extended by an astute social pedagogy. Their rational faculty prompts them to a sense of justice which educational discipline may refine and purge of egotistic elements until they are able to view a social situation, in which their own interests are involved, with a fair measure of objectivity. But all these achievements are more difficult, if not impossible, for human societies and social groups.”¹

But surely the difference between the more difficult and the impossible, where conduct is concerned, is one of kind rather than of degree, and it is all-important to know which we have before us. The difficult is a task to contend with which I must summon all my powers, while the impossible is a necessity of nature which it would folly on my part to challenge.

There is yet another ambiguity which has to be dealt with. In the passage just quoted, what is “more difficult, if not impossible” for societies is that they should approach “a situation, in which their own interests are involved, with a fair measure of objectivity.” Elsewhere it is a “morality of pure love” which is declared to be out of the question in such cases. Here again we need to know better where we stand. That complete disinterestedness is not to be looked for from social groups we may grant without hesitation; that they cannot attain a “fair measure of objectivity” is at least a point to be argued.

In a previous chapter I stressed the inevitable divergence between the religious and the political standpoints, so that some measure of dualism has already been conceded. But that dualism was not identified with the disparity between individual and social morality, for it was maintained that the prophetic judgment is applicable in the political sphere, though never likely to be acceptable to the political leader.

¹ *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, xi.

Again, such dualism as was admitted was relative only, and, what is more important, was regarded as a challenge to action rather than as a final division between the two spheres. I should therefore maintain that the formula "moral man and immoral society" is not inaccurate as a description of the present unfortunate condition of things, but that this is rather an evil to be challenged than a limit imposed upon all action. It is quite possible, I freely admit, that this is Niebuhr's own view; if so, one can only wish that he had expressed himself at times more circumspectly. What, for example, could be more despairing than the declaration that God himself is impotent to deal with the fundamental immorality of society? "It is possible for individuals to be saved from this sinful pretension, not by achieving an absolute perspective upon life, but by their recognition of their inability to do so. Individuals may be saved by repentance, which is the gateway to grace . . . But the collective life of mankind promises no such hope of salvation, for the very reason that it offers men the very symbols of pseudo-universality which tempt them to glorify and worship themselves as God."¹

There are certain considerations which may be set out in greater detail.

(a) Niebuhr has perhaps over-estimated the moral possibilities of individuals. He seems indeed to be guilty of the fallacy of establishing a contrast between what is possible at times to the best individuals and what is characteristic of societies where they are weakest, where their economic interests are at stake. But it would seem that personal jealousies are as fruitful for evil as any factor which divides nations against nations. Modern psychology has revealed to us the extent to which family life is vitiated by self-assertion and the will to dominate. How often a family falls asunder over the division of an estate! In his other writings Niebuhr shows that he is thoroughly aware of all this,

¹ *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, 99 f.

though he has not seen how it should have led him to modify his position. If we place side by side the Freudian picture of personal relations and the Marxian account of social conflict, are we sure that the latter looks so much blacker than the former ?

(b) It is becoming a commonplace that personal relations cannot apply as between organised groups and that therefore the same standards are not applicable in the two cases. How, it is asked, can one nation love or forgive another ? To which the simplest reply would seem to be : How can one nation then hate, and seek revenge upon, another ? But that this is so is clear. Whatever our theory of the matter may be, we have to admit that it is quite natural to speak, for example, of Ireland's suspicion of England and to ask to what extent this has been mollified by our scrupulous respect for her neutrality during the war against the Axis. Is not the animosity of China and Japan a fact ? We speak of one nation courting the friendship of another : granted that it is a figure of speech, does not the metaphor convey something which actually happens ?

A closer investigation of what is covered by such statements is called for. It is not meant that there exist entities such as Japan and China which are " of a higher order " than individual Japanese and Chinese. Relations between groups obtain in the last resort between the individuals who compose those groups only, not *qua* persons, but *qua* bearers of some particular interest. A simple illustration will bring out what this means. An Englishman and a German are engaged in conversation ; so long as they talk of Bach's music, Hume's philosophy, or the work of the Christian Church, the utmost friendliness prevails. But once let the subject of naval blockade be raised and acrimony is immediately introduced into the discussion. In other words, those two men meet as members of four groups. As musicians, as Christians, and as thinkers they have no interests which divide them, but as members of their respec-

tive nationalities they find it difficult to avoid an open breach. The hostility is connected with one aspect of their life, but that a most dangerous one.

Furthermore, the relation I have been describing does not exist merely between individuals who are now living ; it is part of the tradition which they inherit from the past and which they will hand on to those who follow them, unless in some way the continuity of the tradition is broken in their case. What memories of past injustice have gone to make the Irish suspicion of England and her intentions at the present day ! How difficult it is for a white man and a black man to meet as persons in America and not as representatives of two races with an evil tradition to separate them ! The individuals of one nation may be brought up in a settled habit of reacting in a certain way to the people of another nation ; the result may be an attitude of mind so fixed that even though friendships are formed with individuals from that other nation, the effect of these does not spill over into the area on which they clash in virtue of the interests which antagonise them.

Such a relationship can, I submit, fairly be described as quasi-personal : it is one to which the moral principles which are recognised as binding upon individuals can be held to be relevant, though we can see in advance that conformity to them may well be less likely.

(c) It is not the case that the size and complexity of modern social formations necessarily make it more difficult to apply moral considerations to them than to simpler and smaller units. It is no doubt true that "it is natural enough to love one's family more than other families and no amount of education will ever eliminate the inverse ratio between the potency of love and the breadth and extension in which it is applied."¹ But here again Niebuhr forgets that if close personal relations foster good-will, they can make also for the bitterest animosity. The blood-feud and

¹ *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*. 125.

the vendetta are institutions which only obtain in a society in which people are in close contact and the slightest injury is violently resented. The impersonal processes of legal justice mark a distinct moral advance. A century ago men and women of refinement could seriously argue that it was impossible to dispense with the brutal system by which mere boys were to be sent up chimneys, because any other method would damage the furniture ! The extension of the franchise has made it possible to bring a moral judgment to bear upon such abuses. One of the most remarkable features of modern life is the extent to which disinterested service is undertaken on behalf of those who have no immediate claim upon us. The response of the working-classes in particular to an appeal for the relief of suffering in some remote region with the geography of which they have but the most cursory acquaintance is known to everyone who has worked in such causes. The elaborate organisation of a modern community does not necessarily contract our sympathies, and the planning of social services by the State may well constitute a more reasoned application of the principle of neighbourly love than a much greater amount of private charity.

5. THE ROOTS OF THIS DIVERGENCE.

All the same, it is not to be denied that a serious gap remains between individual and social morality : it only remains to enquire the reason why this is so. The answer, I suggest, is that morality springs from two sources, and that the very nature of society makes their contribution less effectual in its case than where personal relations are concerned.

The first of these sources is social convention. We act as we do largely because we are members of a society which has certain standards and which backs these by the sanctions of its approval or disapproval. To a very considerable

extent man is moral because he is social : take him out of his social setting and moral obligations are likely to be relaxed unless he has been taught to substitute the authority of conscience for that of the community. East of Sucz there are no Ten Commandments.

In this respect, the nation is still in the position of the individual whose social education is as yet rudimentary in the extreme. Niebuhr points out that there is no loyalty higher than the nation which the mass of men are prepared to recognise ; he is pessimistically inclined to accept this as final. But it is rather a summons to action. Paradoxically enough, society is not moralised because it is not socialised. The nation will be capable of disinterested action just in so far as those who compose it come to think of themselves, *qua* citizens of that nation, as integrated into a larger community with overriding loyalties. The State needs to find itself in some whole to which it is related, as individuals in their turn are related to it.

Here of course we have one of the situations which can only be dealt with by action. International morality is possible only within an international organisation, but the latter can only be achieved in and through the former. Nations, in other words, are prevented from being disinterested because there is no authority which can set limits to them in the exercise of sovereignty ; but how can such an authority come into being except by the surrender, or at least the drastic limitation, of their sovereignty ? So, at the individual level, a man can only break the drink-habit as he strengthens his will, but how can he strengthen his will till he has broken with the habit ? This is the kind of situation with which life is constantly confronting us, and we know that the problem must be approached at the same time from both directions if success is to be achieved.

I said above that morality was in part the work of the individual conscience. The prophet or reformer sets a new standard which is perhaps rejected during his lifetime but

which carries conviction after his death, and which eventually becomes embodied in institutions and receives social sanctions. The individual, too, must be thought of as exercising a measure of initiative and originality in the moral life. How far can this type of conduct be expected of society? To what extent can the conscience of the individual hope to regulate the actions of a collectivity?

Here let me recall the account I gave earlier of what we are to understand by a social group. It is the organisation of persons on the basis of a common interest, and those persons are only implicated in its policies in so far as that interest is concerned. I play one part in the local literary society, another in my trade union, and still a third in the State. Into the last-named I enter as having a share in the status, the wealth, and the power of my nation. In other words, I enter it in just those aspects of my life which are most recalcitrant to moral influences. Already in private life I am most disposed to self-assertion where my dignity, purse, and prestige are concerned. The State is thus in a position least accessible to ethical forces, and that not because it is different from the individual, but because it is so like him. It organises life just at the point where he is weakest morally.

There are three factors in the life of the national community which bias it in the direction of power rather than that of conscience.

(a) The governing group is composed of persons who may be divided on all other points but who are united in some view of what makes for the national interest and how this is to be promoted. The mandate which they receive from the electorate, in the case of a democracy, is in its turn on that basis. The result is that action in this particular direction is facilitated for them, and for the nation, since they act as its executive and in its name.

(b) The self-regarding impulses of the individual receive a powerful moral sanction when they are enlisted in the service

of the State, because they are reinforced by altruistic considerations. A policy of aggrandisement on the part of the governing group easily becomes for the individual citizen an occasion for self-sacrifice. What began as a ruthless war of aggression may become for him the call to defend home and family ; a ruling class draws heavily on the sense of duty and the will to co-operation of its subjects in order to invest the resources thus gained in some enterprise of imperialism. The State is two-faced, and in war it reaches the culminating point in this dualism which is inherent in its nature : the individual commits acts which would be criminal in peace-time and knows that they will be approved as shining examples of loyalty and self-sacrifice.

(c) The part which conscience plays in the individual is quite changed when it is transferred to the community. In the former case, conscience is an integral part of the self and has the support normally of certain social institutions as well as of other like-minded persons. But its status in the community is distinctly inferior to this. Whereas the people of this country, in so far as they are bearers of its wealth and power, are organised in a compact State with executive agents capable of taking rapid decisions and equipped with the means of implementing these, as consciences they are organised in a number of widely differing and even conflicting groups. While the right-aspect of the nation is represented by various more or less rival groups which include between them only a minority of the citizens, and are limited to the weapons of persuasion, the might-aspect is represented by a single and generally recognised authority which can present the people with a *fait accompli* and secure support at once because the alternative to it would be the surrender of common interests to an external threat.

Behind all this, of course, lies something much more serious. This is what Hartmann has spoken of as the impotence of the higher values as against the lower.¹ They

¹ *Ethics*, vol. ii, 82 f., 451f.

are handicapped by the fact that they do not dispose of the coercion which is at the service of the latter. Twinges of conscience may be unpleasant, but one does not die of them, as one might of pangs of hunger. That is so already in the individual : what is peculiar to most organised groups, and to the nation-State above all, is that it is expressly organised for the maintenance of the lower and more aggressive values, while leaving the higher and less potent ones to the sphere of private opinion. It is thus biassed in the amoral or even the immoral direction.

What I am concerned to maintain, however, is that this is not a fatality in which we must acquiesce, but a problem with which to grapple. The moral forces in the life of a nation must be so strengthened that they may be able to bring under control those which operate primarily for self-interest. The moralisation of society is thus not essentially different from that of the individual. It comes about both by the creation of a community to which one is ready to sacrifice one's private claims, and by obedience to the still, small voice which it is so easy to disobey because it has no power over us except that of truth itself. Those who are aware how stubborn is the resistance which the individual can offer in the sphere of personal relations to the solicitations and warnings of conscience will be least inclined to underestimate the difficulties which attend the hope that he may be willing to listen to them as a member of organised society. But in neither case will they be prepared to surrender to despair.

CHAPTER X

FREEDOM AND COMMUNITY

1. THREE LEVELS OF FREEDOM

THE problem of power can be stated also as the problem of freedom. The late H. A. L. Fisher has told us that "the natural trend of the human mind is towards despotism," and the events of the last ten years have amply substantiated his statement. Even among ourselves, it is by no means certain that freedom stands where it once did ; our fathers obtained their freedom with a great sum, whereas we are free-born, and what one has obtained without effort is seldom valued. But what, then, is freedom ? The answer to this question turns out to be more complicated than might perhaps be at first imagined.

To begin with, at the political level, freedom is an affair of rights and privileges claimed whether by individuals or groups, and defended by them against any threat from without. Ancient society was divided into the free population and the slaves, the latter being but the instruments of the former, who alone enjoyed full civic rights and a full human status. Magna Carta, the so-called charter of English liberties, made, in point of fact, no provision for the villein ; it was concerned only with the privileges of freemen. Even where, as in our own country to-day, the whole population is free, each member of that population is bound to defend this freedom against the encroachments of the executive, as well as against foreign foes. Indeed, the political tradition of our island is one of the stubborn maintenance of individual liberties against the State.

But moral freedom begins where political freedom leaves off. It is not something with which one can be born, but

something which one must win, and the foes which threaten it are not without ; they are within. Freedom becomes now an achievement in the sphere of character : “ He is the free man whom the truth makes free.” To be no longer swayed by impulse, subservient to opinion, or deterred by circumstance, but to have achieved self-mastery—that is to be free. Thus freedom becomes a prize set before us ; we are none of us wholly free, but only partly so, and freedom is to be maintained and extended only by constant vigilance. In Goethe’s words : “ He alone deserves freedom, as he alone deserves life, who must daily conquer it afresh for himself.”

Christian freedom, again, lies in a sphere between these two. It is neither a right nor a prize, but a gift of God. The New Testament can speak the language of morality ; “ Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ”;¹ but it goes on to say : “ If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”² Self-conquest is not the result of effort and toil ; we need to be swept away by a divine influence, to surrender to the heavenly vision. That does not mean that one is exempted from effort, but that such effort takes on a different character. It ceases to be our strained labour towards something we have to reach, and becomes the glad living-out of a marvellous thing which God has given us. That is the glorious liberty of the children of God, and it is sacred, because it was won for us by the Cross.

It is obvious that trouble will arise if once these various meanings of freedom are confused. Perhaps the most disastrous confusion was that which arose when the political conception of freedom was allowed to invade the realms of morality and religion. That happened once we substituted for that “ liberty of conscience ” which meant to our fathers the obligation on each man to follow God’s truth, the present-day claim that each man has a right to construct a

¹ John viii. 32. ² viii. 36.

religion to his private fancy. That happened, again, when we exchanged the government of life by strong conviction of duty for the right of each man to do as he pleases, so long as he does not interfere with his neighbour's right to do likewise. The result of all this is that society tends to fall apart into a mere agglomeration of clamorous, aggressive individuals, no longer bound together by any common allegiance to God. While those who won our liberties for us were valiant before kings and princes because they had first learned to humble themselves before God, we who are no longer capable of that humility can find no substitute for their valour but our private self-assertion.

The time has come, therefore, to reverse this process : to being the moral and religious conceptions of freedom into the political sphere. That means that the defence of freedom is not our only task ; we must also make ourselves worthy of it and capable of exercising it. The " rights of man " are not just the arrogant demands of self-willed individuals ; they are the equipment we need for God's service. We must be free, because only as we are free can we attain that for which we were born—to know the will of God and do it.

Democracy, that is to say, is less a society of free men and women than one of men and women who are learning to be free.

2. FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY

It follows from the whole trend of the preceding discussion that the two principles of freedom and authority are not to be thought of as antithetical, but rather as complementary.

Perhaps the best way to approach this subject would be through a criticism of Erich Fromm's *The Fear of Freedom*. With certain features of that book I would not propose to quarrel. That freedom is for many not a prize for which to contend but a burden from which to seek relief—this is but an application to the political sphere of Kierkegaard's profound

thought of "dread before the good." I would admit, too, a pathological element in Luther : while Augustine came to God for deliverance from sin, Luther was rather driven to Him by fear of His wrath. But what I wish to point out is the extremely unsatisfactory nature of the solution he offers in a few pages to a problem to whose exposition he has devoted so many chapters.

The individual—so his thesis runs—was originally embedded in the community and not aware of himself as sharply differentiated from it : the ties which bound him to it were the natural ones of blood and custom, and it did not occur to him to seek release therefrom. The time came, however, when he emerged from the background of which he had hitherto formed a part, and became to himself and others a distinct entity with his own peculiar claims. This change brought with it a heightened sense of his own worth and a growing mastery of his environment ; at the same time, it left him lonely and insecure. He had lost one set of connections and had not yet found another. The danger to which he was now exposed was that of being unable to find a way out of this condition, of being himself mastered by it. This indeed is what happened. Overwhelmed by a state of things with which he could not cope, he found freedom a burden too heavy to be borne and sought hither and thither for some opportunity of throwing it off. Two ways to do this have been found : one is by surrender to some omniscient authority, whether God or a dictator, and one by conformity to the society in which one lives, sinking oneself in the mass.

These of course do but accentuate the problem and the peril. How then can they be adequately dealt with ? The answer is ambiguous. Freedom is defined as "*the spontaneous activity of the total integrated personality.*"¹ One need not hesitate to accept that, but one is bound to go on to ask what exactly is meant by "spontaneity" and "integration."

¹ Ibid. (1942) 222.

In some passages, Fromm speaks of freedom in a way which would suggest that he has in mind something rather like the self-assertive individuality of Renaissance man. "*There is only one meaning of life : the act of living itself.*"¹ It is self-realisation in the sense of the uncompromising expression of oneself in thought, word, and deed. Conscience in the sense which it bears in the Kantian ethic is at one point expressly included among the authorities which are to be repudiated.² "Positive freedom also implies the principle that there is no higher power than this unique individual self, that man is the centre and purpose of his life ; that the growth and realization of man's individuality is an end that can never be subordinated to purposes which are supposed to have greater authority."³ Authority and ideals go the same way, unwanted and unacknowledged except in so far as they signify "the aims of growth and expansion of the individual."⁴ All this is strangely like the application to the common man of the philosophy by which the modern dictator justifies his policy of self-assertion. The error in it lies in setting up spontaneity as an end. I cannot be spontaneous because I want to be, but only because I have something other than myself which emancipates me and liberates my powers.

There are other passages which show that Fromm is not without an understanding of this. Freedom, he says, is to be found by forming new ties which can take the place of the old ones. In place of membership in a natural community which sustains his life, the individual must attach himself to his fellows by love and work. A person to whom to commit oneself and a task to take up with one's whole heart—it is as we find these that we enter upon our true freedom. "Primary bonds once severed cannot be mended ; once paradise is lost, man cannot return to it. There is only one possible, productive solution for the relationship of individualised man with the world : his active solidarity with all men

¹ 227.² 143 f.³ 228.⁴ 222 f.

and his spontaneous activity, love and work, which unite him again with the world, not by primary ties but as a free and independent individual.”¹

We are moving here in a different realm. The individual no longer aims at a maximum of self-realisation, but relates himself in mingled confidence and humility to certain objective claims, whether from persons or from things. He finds his bearings in a world he did not make but must accept: instead of expressing himself he expresses ideal values whose sovereignty he gladly acknowledges. Fromm is only saying here what the wisdom of the race had already made known to us, what is part of religious and ethical heritage. Man needs a person to love and a work to do: where shall he find these better than in God and his kingdom? God is the ultimate guarantee against isolation as he is the ultimate rebuke to self-assertion.

Fromm is greatly mistaken when he supposes that freedom is to be found by the repudiation of authority. The task of life is not to be engaged in perpetual rebellion, but to find and serve our true master. The kind of freedom which is given to us in this world, as I have urged above, is the freedom to commit ourselves, to choose a loyalty which is thereafter to bind us for life. Experience shows that the most genuine and stable freedom open to us is that to which we are introduced by wise parental authority, as the wisest parental authority is in its turn that which finds its satisfaction in the attainment of freedom by the child. It is by the will of God, we cannot doubt, that there should be this relation between the generations, by which each grows up under discipline that it may enter upon liberty.

But what of freedom in society? To begin with, it is clear that society cannot exist without the exercise of control. Nor is the extent of this control likely to decrease in the near future; it is much more probable that it will be extended. How is freedom then to be maintained? No longer, surely,

as the assertion of individual rights merely. We are moving, it would seem, into a state of things which will require of us a drastic revision in our attitude to the State. Over a considerable area of life it looks as though the threat to individual happiness and welfare from the operation of unregulated forces, especially those of the economic order, is much more serious than any danger from the regulating activities of the State. If that is so, it follows that we should cease to think of the State as a menace to liberty and think of it instead as the machinery by which we can hope to preserve liberty amid the dangers by which it is to-day surrounded. Thus the movement towards an increase of authority at the centre can be defended on moral grounds as well as from considerations of efficiency.

Again, therefore, we ask the question : How is freedom to be maintained ? The reply is : As the recognition of an authority higher than that of the State. The essential principle of freedom is the subordination of all earthly claims to the claim of God. We can give the fullest recognition necessary to political and social authorities and still preserve freedom if we limit them finally by the will to bring what they require of us before the tribunal of conscience. " We ought to obey God rather than man."

Von Hügel has described Catholicism as a better school of Christian humility than Protestantism because it bids us submit our consciences to a spiritual director, to man and not only to God.¹ But that is to mistake the nature of humility. There is an inner shrine which God has reserved for himself and which we may not surrender to any man or institution, however sacred. The authority of the Church is that of a guide and not that of a dictator : we must at all times check her counsel by the truth of God as we have been able to discern it. What applies to the Church applies still more forcibly to the State. They serve her best who bring all her policies before the judgment-seat of God and

¹ *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* (1921), 264.

will acknowledge no loyalty as absolute save that which they give to God himself.

In the light of what has been said, we can see a new meaning in the belief in immortality. If the person is immortal while the State is but for a dozen or maybe a thousand years, then the latter possesses only a temporary authority and its claims may never override those which are incumbent on the former. If on the other hand my existence is but for the threescore years and ten of my earthly lot, on what grounds can I oppose the State when it proposes, as the more abiding entity, to subordinate me to its purposes and use me as a means to its ends ?

We can also perhaps interpret better than our fathers did the principle of "a Free Church in a Free State." That has nothing to do with establishment as such. It is a question rather of the character of the Church than of its status. The free Church is the organisation of conscience over against the State as the organisation of interest and power. By claiming this freedom for itself it helps to preserve the common life against the encroachments of tyranny. For in democracy it is essential that life should not be exhausted by what is done in the name and at the mandate of the State : there must be a sphere of private life which is sacred. It is essential also that the political authority and the moral authority in the community should not be identical : where that happens, hypocrisy takes the place of morality. We have seen how Communism in Russia is corrupted by the fact that a profession of political orthodoxy is necessary to anyone's career ; there are other countries in which the same conditions obtain. The criticism of power by conscience is only possible where there is a final dualism of authorities, and it is by their interaction, whether in co-operation or in conflict, that the health of the community is preserved.

3. INDIVIDUAL AND PERSON

The form under which freedom appears in the world is that of the individual. The individual ceases to be embedded in, and at all points sustained by, society and becomes an independent centre of life. When this stage is reached, two possibilities open before him. On the one hand he may live henceforth as self-centred and with no direction except that of his own impulses or his own prudence; on the other hand, having been torn out of the context of society he may find himself at home in a larger and more ideal setting from which he derives his standards. He passes in this case from the closed society to the open society. If he does not effect this transition, he remains an isolated individual. The difference between these two possible uses of freedom is that between individuality and personality.

The Renaissance was, of course, the epoch at which the individual emancipated himself from social restraints and became the architect of his own fortunes. He became, in fact, at least in Italy and among the aristocracy, an artist, and the material on which he worked was himself: the aim of life was the maximum of self-expression and self-satisfaction. The various types which the Italy of the Renaissance produced, Pope, humanist, and soldier of fortune were at one in their unbridled individuality. "I am myself alone" cries Richard III in Shakespeare and the same language can be heard on the lips of Cæsar Borgia and Cellini. The naïvety with which art, murder, and religion mingle in the autobiography of the last-named is significant of a new phenomenon, to which we may give the name of shamelessness. The individual is proud of himself and requires no justification for his acts beyond the fact that they are his own. Perhaps no better expression has been given to this will-to-self than the words which Gobineau puts into the mouth of Pope Alexander II when speaking to his daughter, "Know

henceforward that for the kind of persons whom fate summons to dominate others, the ordinary rules of life are reversed, and duty becomes quite different. Good and evil are lifted to another, to a higher region, to a different plane. The virtues that may be applauded in an ordinary woman would in you become vices, merely because they would only be sources of error and ruin. Now the great law of the world is not to do this or that, to avoid one thing and run after another ; it is to live, to enlarge and develop our most active and lofty qualities, in such a way that from any sphere we can always hew ourselves out a way to one that is wider, more airy, more elevated. Never forget that. Walk straight on. Simply do what you please, but only so far as likewise suits your interests. Leave to the small minds, to the rabble of underlings, all slackness and scruple.”¹

Something of the same kind has re-appeared in our own day. The difference is that what in the fifteenth century was the secret of an aristocracy has now been bruited abroad among the multitudes of our industrial cities. Man, it is said, has no law, but can be a law to himself. One of the significant indications of this is in the shamelessness with which autobiography is written. The time has come when a public man can no longer trust his colleagues, for he never knows when one or other of them will go into print with a volume of memoirs which gives to the world the deliberations of the Cabinet and the intimacies of his private life. There is a ready market for books in which the narrator does but parade his ego for universal admiration, and boasts of what in other and more modest days would have been kept from the world. We say that we wish to live without illusions when in reality we want to throw off all restraint. Sensation is what commands our interest : what we value in another is not the inner law by which his being is formed but the shapeless mass of idiosyncrasies which he calls himself. Men make a fetish of originality, not in the sense

¹ *The Renaissance* (1927), 67.

of a fresh vision of truth but in that of an effort to attract attention by being different from their fellows.

Hence we are exposed to the peril of a hero-worship directed to those who are not heroes at all but only villains. Men like Mussolini are of the same stamp as the *condottieri* of the Italy of the Renaissance, without faith and without scruples. They achieve individuality as Napoleon did, by exalting themselves in self-will above mankind and using others as means to their own ends. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is a tirade against mankind ; he proposes to grasp power over those whom he detests and abuses. It almost seems as though a nation so shattered in its self-esteem as Germany was loves best those who browbeat it most.

But he who is a person and not merely an individual finds beyond himself a reality which he rejoices to serve. He is not a self-assertive will, but a will enlisted in the service of absolute values. His greatness lies in the fact that he gives expression to something worthier than himself ; its basis is in humility. The rule of his life is taken from conscience and not from impulse ; he does not shape himself to his own pattern but finds self-fulfilment in devotion to what is other than himself. The law of his being is neither wholly within nor wholly without ; there is a depth in him which calls to a depth in things, he recognises himself to be God's creature and child, so that he can only be himself in relation to God. In his *Peer Gynt* Ibsen has shown in masterly fashion how the fundamental error of self-will invites frustration in a thousand forms and how in the end we must recognise that to be oneself is to slay oneself.

4. AUGUSTINE AND ROUSSEAU

There are many instances in great literature of this basic contrast between selfhood as personality and as individuality. In the classical drama Sophocles portrays the first and Euripides the second. The noblest character in the

Sophoclean tragedy is surely *Antigone*, who asserts the claims of the family and personal relations as against the demands of the State; she does not speak in her own name, but in that of the eternal unwritten laws which should govern all human life. In Euripides, on the other hand, the "characters no longer know the restraint which springs from an inborn sense of what is noble and truly valuable and from a natural abhorrence for what is base and ignoble. They feel free to satisfy any desires, no matter how objectionable, and when provoked they are unscrupulous in the choice of the weapons which they employ for their revenge."¹

So in the closing scenes of *Richard III*, Shakespeare brings before us the self-assertive conscienceless man and the humble servant of justice. The thoughts of Richard turn wholly upon himself:

I shall despair. There is no creature loves me ;
And if I die, no soul will pity me :
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself.

But Richmond prays as a man with a task to perform :
O Thou, whose captain I account myself,
Look on my forces with a gracious eye.²

Perhaps, however, the most striking of all such contrasts is that between Augustine and Rousseau : and appreciation of this helps to show how much our civilisation has lost which was essentially healthy and ministered to true greatness.

The contrast is all the more striking because the two employ the same literary genre—autobiography—as their medium. Each lays bare his inmost soul before the eyes of the reader, and it is just because he has dared to do this that he has come to exert a lasting influence upon later generations. It is the old, sad story in each case, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But how different

¹ Solmsen : *Plato's Theology* (1942), 16 f. ² Act v. Scene iii.

their motives are ! One writes in the temerity and insolence of self-love, the other in the humble gratitude of a man whom God's mercy has made new.

Shamelessness is the mark of Rousseau's *Confessions*. In the language of Jacques Maritain, he is "nature's saint," one for whom the natural impulses are to be followed without questioning, for whom the self is just what he happens to be at any moment. "His special privilege is his resignation to himself. He accepts himself and his worst contradictions as the believer accepts the Will of God. He acquiesces in being yes and no at the same time ; and that he *can* do, just so far as he acquiesces in falling from the state of reason and letting the disconnected pieces of his soul vegetate as they are."¹ Augustine, on the other hand, has been engaged in a long battle with his lusts before he gains victory over them : in his early manhood he had heard the appeal to virtue as it reached him through the pages of Cicero's *Hortensius* and he could never afterwards forget it wholly.

Both men make of their lives a spectacle for others to behold : but while for Rousseau it is a comedy and he waits in the wings for the applause to which he feels that he has a right, for Augustine his life is a tragedy, the contemplation of which should have a purifying effect, in virtue of the pity and terror it will rouse in those who see it. The one has his centre in himself and his purpose is self-glorification ; the other has his centre in God and in every word that he writes he reckons with an ultimate judgment.

Rousseau has written the script of life with his own hand and is proud of it. Augustine knows that his was written originally by God and now he returns from his own follies to act out the part assigned to him by a higher wisdom. The opening sentence of Rousseau's *Confessions* shows the kind of man with whom we have to deal. He may have faults, but at least he is sincere, he will make open and unabashed avowal of all that he has been. The assumption is that it

¹ Maritain : *Three Reformers*, 98.

does not matter what one does provided one is prepared to talk freely about it! That is the modern mimicry of sincerity. Nature, he boasts, broke the mould after she had fashioned him; he may not be superior to others, but at least he is different. Augustine, on the other hand, writes under a sense of duty and to repay a great debt. He does not seek to impress, because he does not speak primarily to his readers but rather to the God whose forgiveness he seeks. "Yet suffer me to speak unto Thy mercy, me, dust and ashes. Yet suffer me to speak, since I speak to Thy mercy, and not to scornful man."¹

We can scarcely describe the difference between these two men better than in the category which we owe to Kierkegaard. Augustine is, and Rousseau is not, an individual before God. Kierkegaard said that Providence had stationed him, as it were, at the pass of Thermopylæ to break up the crowd and constrain men to become individuals; at his death he could wish for no more appropriate inscription on his tombstone than the words, "That Individual." But he uses this term, he assures us, "not in the sense of the specially distinguished or the specially gifted individual," but "in the sense in which every man, absolutely every man, can be and should be—should take pride in being, but verily will also discover his blessedness in being . . . an individual." By the individual Kierkegaard means what I have called the personality: it is the status of dignity and responsibility to which a man comes who reckons with his ultimate destiny. "As a single individual he is alone, alone in the whole world, alone before God."²

5. SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

There is, however, one grave defect in Kierkegaard's thought, his lack of appreciation for the social context of the

¹ *Confessions* (trans. Pusey) i. 7.

² *The Point of View* (1939), 105 ff.

individual as he describes him. That is no doubt due to a weakness in himself; while he was able to reckon in solitude with God, he shrank from committing himself to his fellows in a binding relationship. He could unveil the pretences and perils of society but he was incapable of community.

I have used these two terms hitherto as synonymous, but the time has now come to draw a distinction between them. The individual with his group-attachments and his private interests corresponds to society, the person with his sense of responsibility and his acknowledgment of a transcendent order of reality corresponds to community. Community is the truth of society, and the worth of the latter is to be measured by the degree in which it approximates to the former. Men desire community intensely, so intensely, in fact, that when they lack it they can be induced to accept almost anything which bears its name. Hence the fervour with which men attach themselves to the totalitarian State, which in this respect is no more than the substitution of mass-organisation and enforced uniformity for the fellowship and unity which belong only to true community.

True community is entered into by persons as total selves, they give to it their whole being and do not merely touch it at one point in virtue of some particular interest or function. A man feels that what injures the community of which he is a member is at the same time a threat to his own selfhood; he does not, in fact, distinguish himself from it, but locates his true self in it and its welfare. When he enters a community, he binds himself to those who belong to it also, joyfully contracting permanent obligations to them and refusing to consider the possibility that he and they might one day be separated in will. What brings persons together so is a common purpose, for the basis of community is not mutual enjoyment but shared work.

It is clear that community in this, its fullest sense, is only possible within a small and closely-knit group, especially in

one which is bound together by a religious or quasi-religious loyalty. The Primitive Church as described in the opening chapters of Acts, the Jewish community in a medieval city, and the modern secret association with a revolutionary purpose—these are all able to achieve what seems impossible on the large scale of organised society in an industrial country. Intensity of common life is only possible where the area over which it is extended will permit of close personal contacts between the members. Even where this is not possible, small countries such as Switzerland or the Scandinavian peoples seem able to achieve a larger measure of community than is within our reach. What we have ordinarily to be content with is society.

Within society, organisation to an increasing extent takes the place of vital impulse and natural sentiment. Life itself becomes mechanised and takes on an aspect of technique ; personal relations, which were once decisive, now tend to be thrust into the background by official relations. Many a man lives more of his waking hours as a partial self discharging certain economic functions than in personal relations with his fellows. Each man in his time plays many parts, some of which are inwardly repugnant to him but which he must assume because they are required of him. The worker in a factory, the manager who has the power of dismissal, and the directors of the enterprise, all in their turn are subject to certain necessities and may at times be driven to do what as individuals they would not approve. Did not Marx himself warn us that his strictures on the capitalist were not meant as censures upon individual holders of wealth but as objective expressions of the tendencies inherent in certain social functions, whatever the characters may be of those who discharge these functions ?¹

Thus the life of almost everyone to-day is divided into two parts, one which is lived personally, in his home and among his friends, and one in which he fulfils a certain rôle

¹ *Capital* (1920), xix.

assigned to him within the system which gives him the means of earning his living. What a man is in one part of his life may have little in common what he is in the other, and that not because he is a hypocrite, but because he has no power to alter materially the conditions amid which he works.

Man, we may say, aspires to community, but it is his fate to live in society. Is it possible for him to pass from one to the other, to transform society into community?

6. FROM SOCIETY TO COMMUNITY

Of course, the most that can be hoped for is a movement in that direction, we cannot expect the transition ever to be complete. That is not merely because of the imperfections of human nature ; it is also because there are values which can be achieved in a large organised society which are not possible in a small and closely-knit group. Here as elsewhere extension and intensity are alternatives and can never be fully combined in one social form.

There are certain considerations which suggest that such a transformation as we envisage is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

(a) Social organisation and personal relations are not as mutually exclusive as we are perhaps apt to think. One sees this in a country like China, where a whole civilisation has been built up on personal relations, but where the daily life of multitudes is frustrated by the lack of a legal system which would give security and an industrial system which would end the age-long rule of poverty. The type of social organisation, the effects of which we deplore, seems to be in the main what China needs for the deliverance of her people. Hu Shih's judgment is surely sound in this matter. Oriental culture is not superior to the West but rather inferior, so long as it allows the mass of its people to drag out an existence at the sub-human level. The traditional Chinese

view that personal virtue on the part of the rulers would suffice to secure the welfare of the ruled is painfully inadequate to present-day conditions. Only a considerable degree of mechanisation, it would seem, can open to the population of China the prospect of a decent and tolerable life. This would carry with it the division of labour, the rule of law, and the substitution of functional for personal relations over a wide area. But changes of this character, when seen against the background of the present mass-poverty, are clearly for the enhancement of personal life and not at all for its destruction.

(b) One of the most irksome features in our contemporary society is that sharp separation between person and function, to which attention has already been drawn more than once. In earlier phases of development this was not felt as it is to-day, for the all-important reason that society was still sufficiently unified for a man to know that in discharging the function assigned to him, acting the part given to him in the social drama, he was serving the common good. The mind of the time was prepared to accept the point of view which comes to expression in Ulysses' speech in *Troilus and Cressida*, with its emphasis on "degree" as the source of social cohesion and unity. Each man took his place in the whole with the sense that he was necessary to it. So perhaps Luther did not, as we are apt to think, banish love from the sphere of official relations, but rather thought of the latter as the particular way in which God had called those who hold public office to exercise Christian love. This attitude is of course quite strange to us, because society no longer has such a common purpose as is presupposed here; it is a welter of private interests and group claims, and the individual knows that his social function is enlisted, not in the common good, but in these partial and doubtful enterprises. But there is no reason why, with the discovery of a common purpose, we too should not reduce the various adjustments of social life to the status of means to generally-

accepted ends and make function once more, at least in some measure, the expression of personality.

(c) But is such a common purpose possible to us? There is surely no need to despair here. For in war we have already found a most effective instrument for the transmutation of society into community. War binds together individuals and groups of the most diverse origin and the most divergent interests and enables them to accept cheerfully the most irksome routine duties for the sake of a common good to be achieved thereby. Each detail of action becomes significant when related to such an end, and each individual has the exhilarating sense of being a wanted contributor to the well-being of the whole. Community can thus be achieved within the closed society; in the open society, the City of God, it is of quite other origin and character. The greatest human souls have already achieved that community and they invite us to share it with them. "The great moral figures that have made their mark on history join hands across the centuries, above our human cities; they unite into a divine city which they bid us enter. We may not hear their voices distinctly, the call has none the less gone forth, and something answers from the depth of our soul."¹ May we not say that the secondary community into which men are driven by the lash of fear is the symbol of that primary community into which they are drawn by vision and self-abandonment?

There is, it would seem, a law of historical development by which the human task remains essentially the same from generation to generation, yet has always to be discharged afresh under new conditions. There is in human affairs a tendency towards ever greater complexity of organisation; the structure within which the individual lives his life becomes more and more elaborate, more and more difficult to master. At each level of organisation that is thus reached, the forms of social life are ambiguous in their significance;

¹ Bergson : *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1935), 53.

they constitute a threat to the spirit or stand at its service according to the ability on our part to understand and use them. Man is set in each generation to subdue the system under which life is organised to the values in which the meaning of life is found. Can we in our generation succeed in this?

7. CONCLUSION

For a society which has thus been reconstituted as community by a common allegiance to ends beyond the society and those who compose it, we may perhaps borrow from Tillich the name "theonomy."¹ A brief analysis of this concept will serve to bring the argument of these pages to its fitting conclusion.

There are periods when the various interests of life break contact with the centre and the whole and declare themselves independent, when such slogans are current as "Business is business" and "Art for art's sake," when politics disclaims connection with morality. This is autonomy, and it is characteristic of our own time. Some would have us revert to what was possible at an earlier point and would now bring these various interests under the control of some religious authority which would fix the limits within which they would be allowed to operate. This would be heteronomy, and it is inconceivable to-day: modern man might readily allow the State so to control his life, but he would not concede such power to the Church. There remains the third possibility, that of theonomy, in which each sphere of life would retain a relative independence, but would at the same time recognise that it is but part of the unity of life of which God is the guardian.

Such a goal can only be reached as we live through the strains and tensions to which, in the previous chapters, attention has been called. We shall need to learn how to

¹ *Kant-Studien*, xxvii, 446 ff.

live as brothers, each faithful to his own task, yet rejoicing that the God who reveals himself in variety and decision alike has given to others their own very different tasks. Conflicts will arise, to be sure, even where this temper has spread widely, for there is no neat pattern of duties in which each falls into its place, and there is no overlapping: but they should be waged within the limitations imposed by mutual recognition. We shall need to have faith, even though we shall never be able to see how it is, that all honest convictions have their roots ultimately in one and the same truth.

A necessary accompaniment of this will be that action on the frontier of which I have spoken more than once, the will to break down the barrier between this area of life and that, and to make what was once a fatal division into an opportunity for creative action. A complete assimilation of politics to morality may never be possible for us, but again and again we shall be able to act so that some new form of organisation may be the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual unity among men, some reconstitution of the cities of this world may be the sacramental means to a fuller entry into the City of God. We live to-day between the temporal constraints and the eternal truths, turning now to these and now to those. But there is a point at which the two meet and become one; it is the dwelling-place of God and, while it is always far beyond us, a step nearer to it is always within our power. The faith that life is one in God in spite of its divisions in us should at last enable us to overcome those divisions, and so to create at least the beginnings of a society in which the inner will be as the outer and the outer as the inner, in which all right human activity, by the very fact that it is obeying its own truest laws, will do the will of God.

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