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CHAPTER I

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

A SERIOUS difficulty is introduced into the task of writing an introduction to the psychological study of religion by the fluid state of the science of psychology and particularly of its terminology. Since the object of the present book is not primarily to teach its readers psychology, it would merely be a waste of time to discuss the merits of alternative psychological theories when we come to matters about which there is dispute. In order to avoid this waste, it will be necessary at such points to limit myself to a description of the theory which seems to me to be the one which has most chance of proving to be of permanent value, with an indication of the terminology which I intend to use. Where I am differing widely from the more conservative psychologists, I propose to mention the existence of alternatives without arguing about them. This procedure will make the psychological part of this book appear to be very dogmatic, but it is necessary if I am to avoid confusing and wearying those of my readers whose knowledge of pure psychology is slight. This appearance of dogmatism would, I hope, have been avoided if I had attempted to write a book on pure psychology; but, for my present purpose, it is only necessary that I should make my own position and use of language clear so that I may not be misunderstood.

The first subject that it is necessary to discuss is the meaning we intend to attach to the word *religion*. It is

not, perhaps, necessary to reach an academically satisfactory definition of religion, but we must come to a sufficient agreement about the use of the word to set some limits, however vague, to the subjects we propose to discuss under the psychology of religion. We must avoid the temptation, common amongst writers on religion, of defining it too narrowly, and thus unduly limiting the scope of our discussion. Such writers remind us of Mr Thwackum who when he mentioned religion meant the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England.

If, for example, with Hegel we define religion as "the knowledge possessed by the finite mind of its nature as absolute mind," we are making the meaning of *religion* far narrower than it is in common speech, for it would appear from this definition that a man can only be religious if he is a metaphysician. Similarly, we must not define religion in such a way as to imply that a man cannot be religious unless he is good. Many persons, as for example Cellini, have been extremely religious and extremely wicked. This fact rules out such a definition as that of F. W. H. Myers—that religion is "the sane and normal response of the human spirit to all that we know of cosmic law[1]."

In Professor Leuba's *A Psychological Study of Religion*[2] there is a valuable and interesting appendix in which he has collected no less than forty-eight different definitions of religion from various writers. Of these forty-eight definitions, I wish to draw attention to three only which will

[1] *Human Personality* (London, 1903), II. p. 284.
[2] New York, 1912.

be sufficient to serve as illustrations of the three different classes into which most of the others may be divided.

The first is given by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*: "By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of Nature and of human life[1]." The second comes from *A Study of Religion* by James Martineau. To him, religion is "the belief in an everliving God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and holding moral relations with mankind[2]." The third is Dr McTaggart's definition in *Some Dogmas of Religion*: "Religion is clearly a state of mind....It seems to me that it may best be described as an emotion resting on a conviction of harmony between ourselves and the universe at large[3]."

A scrutiny of these three definitions shows that they are applying the word *religion* to three completely different things. The first describes a mode of behaviour, the second an intellectual belief or opinion, the third a system of feelings. It is possible to regard religion as any one of these three things or as any combination of them. It seems, however, more consistent with the ordinary meaning of the word *religion* to treat all three as essential elements in it. We should, for example, refuse the name *religion* to an opinion that there was in fact a God, if that opinion had no influence at all on the holder's behaviour.

Our definition of religion will, therefore, include in association a mode of behaviour, a system of intellectual beliefs and a system of feelings. In order to find a complete and satisfactory definition, we must further enquire what is the particular mark of the conduct,

[1] 2nd ed. (London, 1911), I. p. 63. [2] p. 1. [3] p. 3.

beliefs and feelings in question which characterises them as religious. To this question many different answers have been given. Höffding calls a belief in 'the conservation of value' the distinctive character of religion; Royce thinks that it is loyalty. The man in the street would probably reply that it is the belief in God, and (remembering the existence of polytheistic religions) he might add 'or in gods.' I see no sufficient reason for not adopting this as the distinctive character of religion. In order to avoid the use of the undefined word *god*, it may conveniently be replaced by the term *superhuman being* (*superhuman* implying nothing more than that the being in question is felt to be greater than man, and may be looked up to by him). Our definition will then run in some such form as this: *Religion is a felt practical relationship with what is believed in as a superhuman being or beings.*

This definition will be found to be sufficient for the purpose for which we require it—to indicate the sense in which the word *religion* will be used in the course of this book. Possibly for a different purpose, a different definition would have been found more convenient. It will be noticed that no mention has been made of the marks which theologians often introduce into their definitions of God—self-existence, infinity, and eternity. These things have no meaning except on a level of intellectual development which most religious persons, even though they be monotheists, have not reached. In the scientific study of religion it would be absurd to include them as essential marks of religious beliefs unless we intended to confine our study to the religion of philosophers.

There are two terms in common use in the psychology

of religion which must be explained. These are the *religious consciousness*, and *religious experience*. The religious consciousness is that part of religion which is present to the mind and is open to examination by introspection. It is the mental side of religious activity. *Religious experience* is a vaguer term used to describe the feeling element in the religious consciousness—the feelings which lead to religious belief or are the effects of religious behaviour. Examples of what is meant by *religious experience* are: the sense of the presence of God described by the mystics, which also is not very uncommon amongst other people; the feeling of peace after prayer or sacrament; and the less intense, hardly perceptible, emotional undercurrent which accompanies ordinary religious life.

The main business of the psychology of religion is to study the religious consciousness. But it is impossible to study that alone; we must investigate religious behaviour as well. Modern psychology has become fruitful by giving up the attempt to confine itself to mind alone, and including human behaviour in its field. All *experimental psychology* is a study of behaviour, and the American school of *behaviourists* confine themselves entirely to this study, and refuse to concern themselves with the mind at all. In order to make the study of the psychology of religion fruitful, we must include religious behaviour as part of the problem to be investigated.

The method of the psychology of religion is the method of science—the study of the facts which come within its province in an objective and impartial manner. As far as possible, we must try to approach it with none of the prejudices for or against particular religious customs or beliefs which result from our opinions about

their truth or value. We must examine the strange writings of the erotic mystics and the wilder American revivals with the same scientific respect as we show to the services of mattins and evensong in the established church. We must not be ready to damn them at once with that invaluable word *pathological.* It is possible that a study of what are called pathological forms of the religious consciousness may be of great value in the elucidation of the workings of the normal religious mind. The questions of truth and value raised by them belong properly to the philosophy of religion.

At the same time, it is true that we cannot, in the end, be content to rest in mere description. For most of us the practical interest of the psychology of religion—its bearing on the question of the truth and value of religion—is far greater than our interest in its purely theoretical side. Unless we are to ignore this practical interest altogether, we cannot help encroaching to this extent on the field of the philosophy of religion. I intend to neglect these questions at present, and to return to them later.

The psychology of religion is an attempt to express the workings of the mind when it is religious in terms of the mental processes we have discovered in secular psychology. It makes the reasonable assumption (which would be discredited by our total failure to construct a scientific psychology of religion) that a man's mind works in the same way in his religion as it does in his other activities. The psychologist is no more necessarily concerned with the question of whether religious experience is caused by anything outside the subject than is the physicist with the question of the reality of matter. It is true that most psychologists do in fact interest

themselves in trying to show either that all the phenomena of religious experience can be explained without any religious assumptions, or that they do point to an agent outside the individual experiencing them. This, however, is only an interesting and important application of the psychologist's results; the conclusion he comes to will not influence him fundamentally in his descriptive work. Whatever the origin of the mental states of religion, we assume that once they are in a man's mind they will obey ordinary mental laws; in other words, that they will prove amenable to treatment by the methods of ordinary psychology.

In this, I am dissociating myself entirely from that school whose conception of the task of the psychology of religion is that it is to create a new and mystifying psychology for religion alone. It explains every new fact by the creation of some fresh mental faculty, which it christens with some such name as *transcendental consciousness.* When its inventive genius for new faculties fails, it brings in the mystery of the *subconscious* or the more ethically pretentious *supraconscious.* The objection to it is, of course, the objection to all faculty psychology —that it explains nothing but creates entities which are no more than the facts themselves which they were required to explain. So long as it claims to be merely description, there is no objection to this, provided that its terminology is simple and useful. If it claims to be scientific explanation, it is mere charlatanism.

It may be objected that the method of approach we are adopting is a very undesirable one to apply to religion. Scientific method itself tends to destroy that atmosphere of reverence which should surround religion, and thus brings it down to the level of other activities.

This is an objection with which we must sympathise; but it is not, I think, sufficiently well grounded. Unless religion is in reality a fancy woven by man out of his own mind, no scientific analysis will prove it so. On the other hand, if (as is freely assumed by modern writers on religion) psychology can produce real support for religion, it is clear that the value of our study of the psychology of religion will be proportionate to the completeness with which we detach our minds from our own beliefs and judgments. An investigation which was only concerned with the facts which seemed to support religion, which hesitated to go any further when it appeared to be discovering natural explanations for what had previously been supposed to be supernatural processes, would obviously be of no value at all as evidence. The strength of any evidence that a scientific study of the religious consciousness can bring for the reality of the objects of religion will depend entirely on how far we have made that study in a scientific spirit, without either over-emphasising the facts which support religion or neglecting those which appear to discredit it.

To those who think that such a study is better not undertaken at all lest religious faith should be disturbed, it is necessary to point out that all these questions are already being raised. We cannot get back into a condition in which they have not been raised at all. If any individual feels that he does not wish to disturb his own religious faith by questioning its foundations, he has a perfect right not to do so. But he should not be reading a book on the psychology of religion; if, by a mistake, he is, the right course for him to adopt is to close it at this point and to read no further.

At the same time, it is probable that the extent to

which the psychological study of religion has power to dissolve religious faith is exaggerated. When the psychologist describes what he believes to be the mental laws by which such an event as a conversion takes place, he in no way excludes the explanation of it which would be given by the Salvation Army—that it takes place by the Grace of God. The physiologist's explanation that a movement in my finger took place by muscular contractions brought about by a neural current started by a change (possibly chemical) in the cerebral cortex, in no way excludes the equally true explanation that I moved my finger because I wanted to. The psychologist and the Salvationist are explaining the same event on different levels. Both may be equally right. The psychologist may, of course, have a private opinion that the explanation of the Salvationist is wrong, but on this question he has no more right to dogmatise than anyone else. He may be wrong, and the Salvationist may know that he is wrong. To one who is sure that he has the vision of God, the scientific psychologist of religion can be no more than a blind man talking about colours.

The method of a psychological study of religion which claims to be scientific must be, in the widest sense of the word, *empirical*. In other words, such a study must proceed by the method of drawing conclusions from observed facts and not by arm-chair reflection divorced from experience. It is true that it will not be able to make much use of *experiment*, that is, of the observation of the changes which are produced in phenomena by intentionally produced changes in the conditions under which they develop. Experiment, however, is not the sole source of empirical knowledge. There is also *observation*, which is the method we use when we are not free ourselves to modify the conditions under which

phenomena are observed but must be content with studying them in such varying situations as are provided for us. Although we cannot experiment in the psychology of religion as we can when we are studying the psychology of sensation, we are not exempted from the duty of being able to justify our conclusions by an appeal to experience.

There seem to be three main sources from which data may be drawn for a psychological study of religion. These are: first, what can be discovered by questioning living persons; secondly, what can be discovered by examining ourselves; and thirdly, the information which can be drawn from the autobiographies and other writings of religious persons. Of these, the third is the evidence on which the present work mostly relies, while the first and second are used only subordinately.

The most highly systematised method of obtaining evidence from living persons is by means of the *questionnaire*. This is a series of questions issued to a large number of persons. It is peculiarly well adapted to obtain statistical information about what people believe. It has obvious limitations which are illustrated by the use made of it by Starbuck to obtain information about conversion[1]. It is difficult not to feel that Starbuck's conclusions about the part played by emotion, intellect, etc., in conversions, from the number of people who have mentioned these in their reply, are of extremely doubtful value. Leuba used the questionnaire to determine the percentage of scientific workers of different kinds who believed in God and in immortality. This is the kind of problem for the elucidation of which the questionnaire seems to be well-adapted. It is a pity that Professor Leuba was not content with this, but tried to draw from

[1] New York, 1903.

his results conclusions about the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, problems upon which a questionnaire, even if issued to leading scientific workers, is altogether incapable of throwing any light.

While I am not in the present book making explicit use of self-analysis as data for my enquiry, it can never be altogether absent. The schema of one's classification must always be provided in part from one's own religious development. Both in this and the previous kind of data, it is important to remember that one must not be content with mere introspection. The study of behaviour gives results which must supplement the data of introspection, and the psychoanalytic method of investigating the mind also makes a contribution to our knowledge. An obvious criticism of the questionnaire is that its replies are mere introspections whose value we could only judge if we could have also the testimony of the friends and relatives of the subjects.

One of the advantages of the analysis of written material as an empirical basis, is that in this we are not confined to the introspections of our subjects. Contemporary biographies throw light on the behaviour of the religious person when this is important for the understanding of his introspections. We can also observe the influence of his personal history and of his environment on his religious development. Such information is generally not given at all in a questionnaire. At the same time, when he talks widely and freely on a variety of subjects, he often enables us to guess at the unconscious springs of his thought in a way which is not intended by himself. This also is an advantage foregone by the users of the questionnaire method.

I intend to use as material for this book the more developed religions rather than the primitive ones,

because our own mental processes and those of the people with whom we live or whose books we read, are open to our observation in a way that is impossible for the mental processes of primitive man. For the same reason I propose to draw my illustrations principally from the religion with which we are most familiar—Christianity.

The first problem which it is necessary to discuss is perhaps most simply to be expressed as follows: what are the conscious roots of the belief in God as it is found in the mind of a believer in one of the higher religions? We find that this question has been answered in many different ways. St Anselm thought that he could prove the existence of God by an *a priori* process of reasoning quite apart from experience of any kind. Some persons say that they feel a certainty of His existence which they cannot doubt although they confess that they are not able to prove it. Others rest their belief on the authority of the Church or of the Bible. Others are convinced of the reality of the demands of morality, and can find no sufficient sanction for them except in the conception of a supreme lawgiver. Others are entranced by the beauty of Nature, and find in this the signature of a loving creator.

We need not dispute about which of these is the true method of approach, but recognise in each of them one element which goes to the building up of that complex mental product we call *religion*. If we try to classify those elements which help to produce belief in God we find that they fall under three main headings.

These are:

(1) The influence of tradition, childhood teaching, etc.

(2) Various experiences of the individual which are harmonised by the beliefs which he has been taught.

(3) Processes of reasoning by which he subsequently justifies them.

If we wish to name these three roots of religious belief, we may call them the *traditional, the experiential*, and the *rational* element respectively.

The experiences which have been included in the experiential root are so varied that we may conveniently further classify them as follows:

(*a*) The experience of beauty, harmony, and beneficence in the external world; in conflict with ugliness, disorder, and malevolence.

(*b*) The moral conflict, *i.e.* the conflict in the individual's own mind between the impulses he recognises as evil and those he believes to be good.

(*c*) The inner emotional experiences connected with the idea of God.

These I propose to call the *natural*, the *moral*, and the *affective* element.

This gives five main roots of religious belief which will be discussed in more detail during the course of the next five chapters. They can be summarised in the following form:

(1) The influence of tradition, etc. (the *traditional* element).

(2) Experiences harmonised by religious belief.

(*a*) Beauty, harmony, and beneficence in the outside world (the *natural* element).

(*b*) The moral conflict (the *moral* element).

(*c*) Emotional experience (the *affective* element).

(3) Processes of reasoning (the *rational* element).

The above classification will help us to treat the problem we are discussing in an orderly manner. We must, however, be on our guard against the pitfalls which are open to us if we attach too much importance

to our own classifications. There is no shallower method in psychology than that of those who arrange types in a neatly numbered series and then proceed to fit the infinite varieties of human life into their rigidly conceived framework. We should be making an evil use of the analysis just performed if we thought it justified us in allocating all the human beings of our acquaintance to the traditional, the rational, or to one of the three sub-varieties of the experiential type. We shall indeed find that in some forms of religion the contribution of one of these roots is exaggerated at the expense of others; and I shall speak of such forms of religion (and of such forms only) as *types*—as the *traditional type* when it is the traditional element which is exaggerated, and so on. These, however, are exceptional growths, often in response to the requirements of a theory. If, for example, a man makes up his mind in his study that the sole valid function of religion is that of dealing with the moral conflict, we need not be surprised to find that he develops a religion of the *moral type*, in which the moral element attains unusual prominence. When dealing later with each of these elements in turn, we shall notice the type of religion which results from their exaggeration. The more usual development of religion, however, will be from a variety of roots and an exclusive emphasis on one may be taken as a sign of an abnormal development.

At the same time, we must remember that we have so far established no criterion of *normality* in religion. When we speak of a religious type having been formed by the *exaggeration* of one element in the mental groundwork of religion, we can only mean that it is exaggerated as compared with the religion we most commonly find. We have no right to mean that it is exaggerated as compared with religion as it ought to be. It is possible,

for example, that the purest and most highly developed religion would be what we have called *religion of the moral type*. I do not believe that this is the case, for reasons which I shall discuss in a later chapter. So many people, however, do believe it that it would be dishonest for me to use language which prejudged the question in my own favour, by describing religion of the ordinary kind as normal and speaking of this as an *exaggeration* with an implied condemnation of it.

Just as such *types* of religion result from a strong emphasis in practice on one of these roots and comparative neglect of the others, so dogmatic schools in the philosophy or psychology of religion result from a similar over-emphasis in theory. An example of this may be found in a work on the psychology of religion, in which the author makes it clear in his preface that he considered that the only element belonging properly to religion was the moral element[1]. Philosophers of religion have often occupied themselves exclusively with the arguments for the existence of God, and supposed that this was the whole foundation of religion. Their influence on the religious life of their times has been small, because what they were arguing about played only a small part in determining whether people believed or disbelieved in God. When a philosopher supposed that he had successfully refuted all the arguments for the existence of God which had so far been brought forward, there was no general abandonment of religious faith. At most, he had destroyed only one of the elements which determine religious belief; the others remained as firm as before.

[1] *The Psychology of Religion*, by Coe (Chicago, 1916).

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL ELEMENT IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF

At the end of the last chapter, we had distinguished five main conscious roots of the belief in God. We are now going to discuss at greater length the first of these: the influence of such factors as childhood teaching, of tradition. This is an element which we always tend to regard as playing a much smaller part in the formation of our own beliefs than modern psychologists insist that in fact it does. Theorists' discussions of religious experience too often make the tacit assumption that the problem of the psychology of religion is to discover what kind of religion a man would develop from his own inner experience if he had been entirely cut off from his fellow men from infancy by being abandoned on a desert island. The problem in real life is not so simple. We are in fact surrounded by other people and are receiving from them influences far greater than we are generally willing to acknowledge to ourselves.

These do not come only from childhood teaching and from direct teaching in later life. Even what we regard as our own inner experiences, products of our self-determined mental life, are moulded very much by our social environment. Members of a society all tend to thrill with the same emotions under the same circumstances. Few religious phenomena are more uniform than the adolescent conversions of members of a religious body in which adolescent conversion is *the*

correct thing. We find that all the members of such a community go through a long series of emotional experiences which they describe in almost exactly the same terms. Yet when we turn to another community which has not this tradition of adolescent conversions, these experiences are not found. They are, in the main, merely products of the conventions of the community in which they were produced, and not (as we might easily have supposed) evidences of a deep-seated uniformity in human nature.

Such a fact as this should warn us once again of the artificiality of the classification with which we started. The influence of our fellow men is not confined to the traditional element in religious belief, it also influences the element we have called *the affective element.* However useful we may find it to be for convenience in description, the classification would lead us astray if we attempted to interpret it too rigidly.

The method by which our beliefs are influenced by other people is not, on the whole, reasoned demonstration. The child does not have the existence of God proved to it in its religious lessons. It is still true in later life that the simple affirmation of religious doctrines by a person for whom we have respect, or the mere fact of the holding of such doctrines by the persons amongst whom we live, may have an authority over us compared with which the influence of the most convincing chain of reasoning is negligible. The method by which beliefs are transmitted to us otherwise than by reasoned demonstration is by *suggestion*, so for the understanding of this root of religious belief, it is necessary that we should study the psychology of suggestion.

We may start with a description of suggestion in an

extreme form. This was the earliest kind to be studied by psychologists. If a hypnotiser shows a hypnotised subject a plain pack of cards, and tells him that there is a photograph of his brother on one of them; he may succeed in making the subject see the photograph there, and continue to see that card as a photograph of his brother until the suggestion is removed. If the hypnotiser tells him that he is an animal of some kind, he may begin to behave as if he were that animal. If he is told that in five minutes he will jump on his hat or perform some other ridiculous action, he often does so at the stated time; even though in the interval, he may have come out of the hypnotic state and be engaged in doing something else, quite unconscious of the command he has received. These commands are called *suggestions*. In each case it will be noticed that an idea suggested by the hypnotiser has been realised by the subject as a perception, a belief, or an action.

In ordinary life we do not meet with such striking phenomena as these. We cannot, for example, successfully suggest to a normal person that he shall have a visual hallucination. At the same time, we do constantly find phenomena which differ from these only in degree. We find that ideas presented to us by other persons in the right way, frequently ripen in our minds until they result in an action or change of belief. A statement made in a confident manner by another person is often accepted by us without any rational ground for believing in its truth or in the credibility of the person making it. It is usual, at the present time, to extend the meaning of the word *suggestion* to include such cases. We may then define suggestion as *a process of communication resulting in the acceptance and realisation of a communi-*

cated idea in the absence of adequate grounds for its acceptance. This is not quite the same as Dr McDougall's definition given in his *Social Psychology*, since he makes suggestion result in the acceptance with conviction of a communicated proposition. This does not include the important cases of suggestion in which what is communicated is not a proposition but a feeling state, or a course of action.

We will consider a typical case of suggestion in everyday life. We want to buy something in a shop. The salesman asks a price which we know is much in excess of the article's true value. We question his price. He insists in a firm, confident manner that not only is he not overcharging us, but that he is asking less than the true value of the article and that he will lose heavily on the sale. He continues to repeat this, and in time it has happened to most of us that we have been *talked over*—the barrier put up by our intellects has been broken, the suggestion has taken effect, and we have bought the article. Later, when we have been out of reach of the salesman's suggestions, we have realised (what we knew at first) that we have paid far more than our purchase was worth, and that we have been victims of a suggestion. It is clear that we have not argued that the salesman is probably telling the truth. On the contrary, we know that it is in his interest to be lying. His remark that he will lose on the sale is patently untrue. We have accepted his statement by no rational process, but by the process of suggestion—the acceptance and realisation by our minds of a suggested course of action simply because it has been proposed to us a sufficient number of times in a sufficiently confident manner. Continued repetition and confidence in the manner of repeating are,

in fact, the conditions of presenting a suggestion which most favour its success. There was a profound psychological truth in the logically inadmissible claim of the Bellman in *The Hunting of the Snark* that what he said three times was true.

We find that there are wide differences in the readiness with which suggestions are accepted by different persons and by the same person under different circumstances. These are called differences in *suggestibility*. Suggestibility varies with age and sex; children are more suggestible than grown persons, and women are more suggestible than men. Hysteria is accompanied by a marked increase in suggestibility; while persons suffering from certain forms of insanity and from amentia (or idiocy) are very unsuggestible.

The state of half-waking which immediately precedes or follows sleep is one in which suggestibility is very high. A similar condition can be induced artificially, and is called *light hypnosis* or the *hypnoidal state*. *Deep hypnosis* is a state resembling sleep. Both of these are conditions of high suggestibility. Hypnosis can be induced by fixing the eyes on a bright point, such as the flame of a candle or the bright reflections in a crystal standing on a dark ground, by listening to a continuous or rhythmically varying sound, such as the ticking of a clock or the sound of waves breaking on the sea-shore, or by rhythmical passes performed by someone else before the subject's face and body. It can also be produced simply by suggestion in a sufficiently suggestible subject. The operator has only to order such a subject to sleep, and he immediately falls into the hypnotic sleep.

The characteristics of a slight degree of hypnosis may

be tested without difficulty by anyone. Fix your eyes on a bright spot of light, preferably on a dark background. As you keep your eyes fixed, you find that the surrounding objects become misty and dark. Your mind seems to become empty, and you grow more and more drowsy. Your eyelids wish to close and you may allow them to do so. You are now in the condition of light hypnosis. The experiment will succeed best if you are alone and free from external distractions.

The psychological characteristics of the hypnotic state will be dealt with in greater detail in a later chapter, when we discuss different forms of what is called mental prayer. The only character which is of importance to us at present is that it is a state of increased suggestibility. It is for this reason that hypnosis finds its use in psychiatry. It was at one time usual, when a doctor wished to treat a patient by suggestion, to put him into the hypnotic trance; more usually at the present time he is put only into the state of light hypnosis. In either case, the object is to increase the patient's suggestibility so that the curative suggestions of the doctor may more readily take effect.

Suggestibility is heightened by practice. A person who has been put frequently into the hypnotic state becomes increasingly suggestible. Dr Rivers has pointed out, for example, that the object of military drill is to heighten the suggestibility of the private soldiers so that they may respond immediately and unquestioningly to the commands of their officers[1].

The success of a suggestion also depends on how far it conflicts with the mental organisation of the person receiving it—with his principles, prejudices, etc. It will

[1] Appendix to *Instinct and the Unconscious*, Cambridge, 1921.

be received with difficulty if he has a well organised system of belief or of principles of conduct with which it conflicts. It will be received most readily if there is previously existing in his mind a disposition to accept it. It is not true (although it is often stated) that, even under hypnosis, a man can never be made to do anything he believes to be morally wrong. His acceptance of a suggestion depends also on other factors, very largely on how far he believes he will be absolutely passive in the hands of the operator. Experiment has shown that it is sometimes possible successfully to suggest lines of conduct completely at variance with the moral principles of the subject, although more usually they are accepted with difficulty or not at all.

The suggestibility of the same subject also varies with the operator. Anything that increases the prestige of the operator increases the suggestibility of the subject to him. Love, and to a less extent fear, of the operator will increase the suggestibility of the subject. An attitude of dependence and heightened suggestibility in an extreme form, showing some of the characteristics of normal love, has recently been distinguished by the psychoanalysts under the name of *positive transference.* Transference may result from hypnotic treatment, and its occurrence is one objection to that treatment in mental therapy. It is also found in treatment by psychoanalysis, but the psychoanalysts claim that they have improved on the practice of hypnotism because they use the transference in the cure of their patients and are able to get rid of it afterwards. It appears that in transference we meet with a regression to the childish attitude of dependence on the parent, but with some other person substituted for the parent, and with the

relationship complicated by a tendency to the emotional attitude proper to a grown person.

Contrasuggestion is the name given to the process opposite to suggestion. In this, the tendency is to reject a proposition advanced by another person. There are people to whom it is sufficient to remark that it is a fine day, to provoke the response that it is a most unpleasant day, even though they may have had no thoughts about the weather at all until the remark was made. Persons to whom the attitude of contrasuggestion has become habitual are what we call *cranks*. It has been suggested by Dr Prideaux[1] that this is a case of what is called *overcompensation* for a tendency to accept suggestions too readily.

We have not, however, exhausted the subject of suggestion when we have described it as a consciously produced action of the mind of a single person on that of another. There is a tendency amongst modern psychologists—*e.g.* Dr Rivers in *Instinct and the Unconscious* and Mr Trotter in *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*—to emphasise the importance of what they call *herd-suggestion, i.e.* the suggestions which a member of a society is constantly receiving from the rest of the same society. It determines the close similarity in thought and belief of different members of a group. It supplies the sanction behind the conventional code of morality. To it are due the waves of feeling which pass over a whole country, such as the anger which is felt when a country is attacked or insulted. The greater part of the very large mass of opinions which a man has not thought out for himself, he owes to the influence of herd-

[1] "Suggestion and Suggestibility," by E. Prideaux. *The British Journal of Psychology*, 1919–20.

suggestion. Even in the opinions which he believes he has thought out, he is not free from its effects. His methods of thought, the things he has assumed as axiomatic, are all more or less determined for him by the society in which he finds himself. Thus herd-suggestion is a powerful force influencing the formation of belief to an extent greater than most people are willing to admit.

There is a third variety of suggestion called *autosuggestion*, in which the idea suggested is originated by the subject himself. I propose to reserve the discussion of this for a future chapter.

The bearing of what has been said about suggestion and hypnosis on the teaching of religion is very great. Suggestion clearly plays a very large part in religious teaching. I am convinced too that the unintended production of the hypnoidal state is present in religious services to a much greater extent than is ordinarily recognised by writers on the psychology of religion. Let us consider the various methods of increasing suggestibility and see how far they are found in religion. The prestige of the preacher is increased by the wearing of distinctive clothes. The suggestibility of the hearer is increased by finding himself one of a crowd. This effect is heightened in such a service as that of the Salvation Army by the ejaculations with which the congregation show their sympathy with what is being said by the preacher. The following things may be present which are liable to induce the hypnoidal state: a monotonous voice in the reading of the service, the rhythmical sound of the music, and the points of light produced by lighted candles. I do not wish to be so far misunderstood as to be supposed to mean that these things are deliberately introduced into services in order to induce the hypnoidal

state. But that is their tendency in fact, and it is possible that it is to this tendency that they owe their value as adjuncts to the religious service.

I was recently present at a Salvation Army service which provides a very fine example of the unwitting use of suggestion, and of the use of the hypnoidal condition in order to increase suggestibility. It took place in a theatre. At the end of the service, people were invited to come up to the mercy seat on the stage in order to seek consecration. On the stage, one of the leaders was repeating in confident and slightly monotonous tones: "Jesus calls you. Come. Come. Come now. Come. Come now...." The congregation were asked to bow their heads and to sing with their eyes closed. The closed eyes, the monotonous singing, and the repetition of the word "Come" on the stage, all tended to produce in the audience a state approaching the hypnoidal. The same verse was sung over and over again by the congregation, and it too contained the same suggestion as was being urged from the stage—it contained some such words as *I give myself to Jesus.* The effect of this suggestion was a powerful one, and it succeeded in breaking down the resistance of several of the congregation to the act of making a public declaration by stepping on to the stage.

A good deal of nonsense is talked by people who seem to think that it is a reproach peculiar to the teaching of religion that it is very largely a non-rational process—suggestion under conditions of heightened suggestibility. That is true of most teaching. Even in rational demonstration, it seems probable that the conviction with which a proposition is received owes a great deal to suggestion over and above the influence of the perceived rigidity of its proof. Perhaps the conditions of teaching

furthest removed from those of the pulpit are to be found in the university class-room, where one wishes to train the students to think for themselves, and the lecturer endeavours not to present conclusions but to state alternatives and to give due weight to facts on both sides. But even here, it will be found that so far as he is communicating his opinions to his class, he is using suggestion. He is not generally engaged in proving his opinions, but in affirming them in a confident tone. If he thinks that the class will have difficulty in accepting what he says, he does not multiply proofs; he affirms it again in a more confident tone. It is true that his class is not in a state of mind even approaching the hypnoidal. On the contrary he hopes that their minds are alert and active. But then we must notice that his aim is very different from that of the religious teacher. The lecturer wants his class to accept only so much of what he is saying that they will become interested in his subject, if possible along the lines he is indicating. The religious teacher wishes his congregation to follow him further than that. He rightly feels that the attitude of open-mindedness, and critical agnosticism, which is the right one to adopt towards a scientific theory, has little value when applied to the problem of the being of God, with all its implications for devotional and moral practice. So far, however, as the scientific lecturer does wish his audience to accept what he says, he uses on the whole the same method as the religious teacher—suggestion.

The use of suggestion is a normal process in teaching, but it has its dangers. In the first place, it is clear that the more a teacher depends on suggestion and the less he utilises the reasoning power of his followers, the graver is his moral responsibility for seeing that what he

teaches is true. Secondly, there is a danger of attaching too high a valuation to an unreasoning acceptance of what is taught. This encourages an attitude of suggestibility and dependence, with consequent weakening of the subject's character. Such a passively accepted religion, which has no grounding in the experience of the worshippers and has not won the allegiance of their reasoning powers, tends to be superficial. We might fairly describe such a religion as of the *traditional type.* There are, thirdly, dangers connected with *transference* to the minister. Those of my readers who have understood what I said about transference earlier in this chapter will have no difficulty in calling to mind a multitude of cases of transference to religious teachers within their own experience. The curate, for example, who is embarrassed by the number of unnecessary presents he receives from members of his congregation is a victim of transference. The wise minister of religion, of course, knows what to do with it. Like the psychoanalyst, he uses it for the strengthening of the subject's autonomy of character, and thus makes it destroy itself. But unhappily, the weakness, vanity, or folly of the minister can too easily make such a transference end in disaster.

The danger of an overvaluation of the attitude of passive acceptance of authority, and the consequent production of religion of the traditional type, is a very real one. A church which, in practice, says to the vast majority of its worshippers: "Do not think, do not bother about your feelings, simply believe and obey; in that is the highest merit," is justly suspected by those who feel their autonomy of character to be a precious thing.

A dreadful example of the exaltation of this attitude in religion comes from a little book called *Stories of Grace*. Obviously, the author of the book tells it as a very edifying story. It is as follows:

At the conclusion of a sermon by the revivalist, Mr Brownlow North, a young man asked to see him. Addressing Mr North, he said, "I have heard your sermon, sir, and I have heard you preach often now, and I neither care for you nor your preaching, unless you can tell me, Why did God permit sin in the world?" "Then I'll tell you," the preacher at once replied. "God permitted sin because He chose to do so."..."Because He chose it," he repeated as the objector stood speechless, and added, "If you continue to question and cavil at God's dealings and, vainly puffed up by your own carnal mind, strive to be wise above what is written, I will tell you something more that God will choose to do. He will some day choose to put you into hell! It is vain, sir, for a man to strive with his Maker; you cannot resist Him; and neither your opinion of His dealings nor your blasphemous expressions of them will in the least lessen the pain of your everlasting damnation."

As a consequence of this conversation and by reading a chapter of the Bible recommended by North, the young man became converted, and a week later expressed himself thus:

I am happy, oh! so happy, sir; and though the devil comes sometimes to tempt me with my old thoughts and to ask me what reason I have to think God has forgiven me, I have always managed to get him away by telling him that I do not want to judge things any longer by my own reason, but by God's word[1].

Corresponding to this danger in practice, of too high a valuation of the traditional element in religious belief;

[1] *Stories of Grace*, by the Rev. C. S. Isaacson, pp. 104, 105 and 106.

there is a danger of one-sidedness in psychological theory resulting from a too exclusive attention to the part played by this element in the formation of belief to the neglect of others. In the discussion of religious belief in such psychological theory, exclusive importance is attached to its ancestry, and the significance both of its value for experience and its justification by reason tends to be forgotten. This danger may be illustrated by the school in Comparative Religions which feels that it has given a sufficient account of pantheism when it has said that it is primitive man's fetishism made systematic, and is satisfied that it has disposed for ever of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement by saying that it is simply the survival of very primitive ideas about human sacrifice. This is clearly an inadequate account of any belief, and assumes that there is in its formation only one element—the traditional element. The survival of a belief is determined by its value for the experience of the people amongst whom it has survived, and by the appeal it makes to their intellectualising powers. The idea of vicarious sacrifice embodied in the Atonement has survived amongst civilised people because it has had a value for their experience, and because it has not been found by them to be intellectually impossible. These also are the factors which have determined its survival, and not merely the fact that it has happened to be handed down.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURAL ELEMENT IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF

In our classification of the conscious roots of religious belief, we distinguished three kinds of experience which the religious man found to be harmonised by his belief in God. The first of these we described shortly as the experience of the external world. In more detail, this was the experience of beneficence, harmony, and beauty in conflict with their opposites—malevolence, disorder, and ugliness. We must not, of course, make the mistake of supposing that the man who finds in such experience a confirmation of his religious belief formulates this mental process to himself in the clear-cut manner in which we are doing it now. When we try to express the step from experience of the external world to a belief in God in intellectual terms, we are in danger of forgetting that, in the beginning, it may not be an intellectual process at all. Everyone will remember the illustration with which Paley's *Natural Theology* starts. He supposes that a man has picked up a watch in a desert place, and, noticing its differences from such a natural object as a stone—the subordination of all the parts to a common end, etc.—concludes that it was made by a man. Yet Paley does not really wish us to suppose that the man goes through the chain of reasoning described before he says to himself that the watch is a product of human workmanship. If we were to challenge the man's statement it is probable that he would justify it by going through

that chain of reasoning, but in actual fact his inference from the character of the watch to its human workmanship probably contained no steps of logical thinking at all. In the same way, a vague feeling of a particular kind about the world may be the raw material for belief in a Creator. Later, when the belief which has grown out of the feeling has been questioned, it begins to take an intellectual form. An experience is something lived through and felt; it is purely individual and incommunicable. Religion, being social, cannot rest content with an incommunicable basis; so its experiences must be translated into words. They must be made to pass from the region of indirect phantasy-thinking in which they have their origin, to the region of directed communicable thinking in words. This translation into words is the *intellectualisation* of the experience which gives birth to a religious doctrine. The doctrine never fully expresses the experience, for an emotion cannot be communicated to another by the vehicle of a form of words as satisfactorily as can an intellectual idea. For this reason, persons with the strongest religious feelings often feel most acutely the inadequacy of attempts to put them into intellectual form. These are inclined to trust their feelings while they distrust any attempt to formulate them in dogma.

We may usefully begin our study of this experience by looking for descriptions of the feeling itself before it has become translated into a positive belief. We can find these plentifully in the prose and poetry of all those persons vaguely called nature mystics. I will first quote a well-known extract from the chapter on Solitude in Thoreau's *Walden:*

In the midst of a gentle rain...I was suddenly sensible of such sweet and beneficent society in Nature, in the

very pattering of the drops, and in every sight and sound around my house, an infinite and unaccountable friendliness all at once like an atmosphere sustaining me, as made the fancied advantages of human neighbourhood insignificant, and I have never thought of them since. Every little pine-needle expanded and swelled with sympathy and befriended me. I was so distinctly made aware of something kindred to me even in scenes which we are accustomed to call wild and dreary...that I thought no place could ever be strange to me again.

A similar feeling is expressed by Goethe in the second letter of Werther:

Wenn das liebe Tal um mich dampft und die hohe Sonne an der Oberflache der undurchdringlichen Finsternis meines Waldes ruht und nur einzelne Strahlen sich in das innere Heiligtum stehlen, ich dann im hohen Grase am fallenden Bache liege und näher an der Erde tausend mannigfaltige Graschen mir merkwürdig werden; wenn ich das Wimmeln der kleinen Welt zwischen Halmen, die unzähligen unergründlichen Gestalten der Würmchen, der Muckchen naher an meinem Herzen fühle, und fühle die Gegenwart des Allmächtigen, der uns nach seinem Bilde schuf, das Wehen des All-Liebenden, der uns in ewiger Wonne schwebend trägt und erhält; mein Freund! wenn's dann um meine Augen dämmert und die Welt um mich her und der Himmel ganz in meiner Seele ruht wie die Gestalt einer Geliebten[1]...

[1] Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*. "When the dear valley is filled with mist about me, and the high sun rests above the impenetrable gloom of my wood, only single rays stealing into the inner sanctuary, when I lie in the tall grass beside the tumbling brook and nearer the ground a thousand varied blades of grass attract my attention; when the hurry and skurry of the little world among the stalks, the innumerable incomprehensible shapes of the tiny worms and gnats are near to my heart, and I feel the presence of the Almighty who created us after His own image, the breath of the All-loving who upholds and sustains us in eternal bliss, my friend, when my eyes become dim and the world about me and the heavens are imprinted on my soul like the image of a loved one..."

This feeling of awe and reverence towards Nature is also condensed by Goethe into a short phrase when he makes the Earth-Spirit describe his activities to Faust as the weaving of *der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.*

Relevant examples from Wordsworth—from *The Prelude* and *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*—are too well known to need repetition here. An excellent example of a poetic account of this experience (which is not interpreted theistically) is also found in Swinburne's *A Nympholept:*

The whole wood feels thee, the whole air fears thee: but fear
So deep, so dim, so sacred, is wellnigh sweet.
For the light that hangs and broods on the woodlands here,
Intense, invasive, intolerant, imperious, and meet
To lighten the works of thine hands and the ways of thy feet,
Is hot with the fire of the breath of thy life, and dear
As hope that shrivels and shrinks not for frost or heat.

But the poet questions the optimistic intellectualisation of the experience which is made by the religious believer. The beauty of Nature is on the surface of his experience, but not the goodness demanded by a belief in God.

Thee, therefore, thee would I come to, cleave to, cling,
If haply thy heart be kind and thy gifts be good,
Unknown sweet spirit, whose vesture is soft in spring,
In summer splendid....

The experience which these passages are trying to describe is an emotional relationship to natural objects which is of the same kind as that which we feel towards a person. The natural world is felt to be, not a chance arrangement of non-sentient objects, but as something

with which the observer may have intimate personal relations—something towards which he may feel love or awe. One is tempted to say that this experience leads to pantheism, but this is probably too simple to be entirely true. It would seem to be more accurate to say that this experience leads to the positive element in pantheism—the doctrine of immanence. Pantheism however contains also a negative element in the denial of the transcendence of its god. If combined with a doctrine of the transcendence of God (supplied by reflection on other types of religious experience) this experience may lead to theism of a kind familiar in Christianity.

We do in fact find numerous theistic descriptions of it. In the account of his conversion, Brother Lawrence says:

That in the winter, seeing a tree stripped of its leaves, and considering that within a little time, the leaves would be renewed, and after that the flowers and fruit appear, he received a high view of the Providence and Power of God, which has never since been effaced from his soul[1].

A description of a similar state by a narrator of a very different kind is found in the following account of a conversion in Starbuck's book:

It was like entering another world—a new state of existence. Natural objects were glorified. My spiritual vision was so clarified that I saw beauty in every material object in the universe. The woods were vocal with heavenly music[2].

It is instructive also to notice the patterns of religious temperament in which this type of experience is absent.

[1] *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence, First Conversation.

[2] Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 120.

We may suppose that to a mentality hostile to the idea of divine immanence in Nature the experience would not occur, or if it did, it would be immediately suppressed as something illusory or evil. This hostility may, no doubt, merely be the result of theological or philosophical prejudices against such a doctrine as that of divine immanence; but the wide range of religious thought in which any doctrine expressing this experience is totally absent suggests a deeper reason than this. A hint of what this reason may be can be found in the poem quoted above. The idea that God expresses Himself in the beauty of Nature implies an optimistic attitude towards the external world. To the unreflective man, healthy in mind and body, and not much burdened by ultimate moral problems, this attitude is a natural one. For him there is no conflict when he sees Nature as the face of God. The matter is however different with the sensitive soul of the Buddha, tortured by the sight of the misery and cruelty of the world, or of St Paul, acutely conscious of sin in himself and in mankind. To such mentalities, Nature is not good. For them, the experience we are describing would come into conflict with the stronger experience of the reality of pain or evil[1].

This may perhaps account for its absence from the Gospels and from that ascetic school of Christianity of which the example best known to English readers is St Thomas à Kempis. We seem indeed to find in some Christian ascetics a deliberate repression of any emotional attitude towards Nature. They hide their faces

[1] Itself rationalised in the Vedantic doctrine of the external world as illusion, and in the Christian doctrines of Creation and the Devil.

from its beauty lest it should make them love purely natural things and so steal their hearts from God. "Men draw thither," says St Augustine, "to admire the heights of the mountains and the powerful waves of the sea—and to turn away from themselves."

This repulsion from natural beauty is expressed also by St Catherine of Genoa in her *Vita:*

> The sun, which at first seemed so clear to me, now seems obscure; what used to seem sweet to me, now seems bitter: because all beauties and all sweetnesses that have an admixture of the creature are corrupt and spoilt[1].

We have so far been discussing this feeling for the external world as a vague whole without asking whether it may not be possible to analyse it into simpler elements. There are three constituent parts in this experience which may readily be distinguished. These are the experiences of beneficence, of harmony, and of beauty. We will consider these three parts separately, taking beneficence first.

Some things in Nature appear to be favourable to man—gentle warmth, seasonable rains, domestic animals, and all the numerous accidents which preserve his life or increase his happiness. Others seem unfavourable to him—extreme heat and cold, tempests, wild beasts, and all disastrous and uncomfortable happenings. It is not unnatural for him to see in the former the works of a being who loves him, and in the latter the handiwork of a being who is opposed to him. This gives us the raw material for a very simple religion. It is, we may notice, purely anthropocentric. It is also dualistic. There is a

[1] Baron F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion* (London, 1909), quoting *Vita*, p. 23 *c*.

sharp division between the province of its god and the realm opposed to him. Moreover, it is a dualism on a low plane—the plane of simple and natural human desires.

We must not expect to find this element developed alone in any religion which has as its object more than the satisfaction of man's bodily desires. It has been suggested that early Persian religion is very nearly on this level. But it is found as an element in even the most developed religions. It is the element in religion which is connoted by the word *Providence.* It is not absent from the more developed religions until we reach a high level of mysticism. At that level we find St Catherine of Genoa exclaiming: "I will not name myself either for good or for evil, lest this my (selfish) part should esteem itself to be something[1]." Yet it is an element the abandonment of which would leave ordinary religion the poorer. It repels us when we meet it in an exaggerated form. God must be more even to the most primitive faith than an efficient universal provider. William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience,* gives the following extract from the narrative of an English prisoner of war on a French ship who attacked the crew, killed two, and made the rest prisoner:

I looked about for a marlin spike or anything else to strike them withal. But seeing nothing, I said, "Lord! what shall I do?" Then casting up my eye upon my left side, and seeing a marlin spike hanging, I jerked my right arm and took hold, and struck the point four times about a quarter of an inch deep into the skull of that man that had hold of my left arm. [One of the Frenchmen then hauled the marlin spike away from him.] But through God's wonderful providence it either fell out of

[1] Baron F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion* (London, 1909), p. 269.

his hand, or else he threw it down, and at this time the Almighty God gave me strength enough to take one man in one hand, and throw at the other's head: and looking about again to see anything to strike them withal, but seeing nothing, I said, "Lord! what shall I do now?" And then it pleased God to put me in mind of my knife in my pocket. And although two of the men had hold of my right arm, yet God Almighty strengthened me so that I put my right hand into my right pocket, drew out the knife and sheath,...put it between my legs and drew it out, and then cut the man's throat with it that had his back to my breast: and he immediately dropt down, and scarce ever stirred after[1].

The revulsion which we feel against the religious attitude of the narrator of this story is not because the element of religion which is the dominant one in his mind—the attitude towards God as Providence—is an unhealthy one. It is because that element has become exaggerated, and this exaggeration has resulted in an attitude towards religion which we recognise as primitive and infantile.

Even in his experience of the external world, the ordinary religious man sees more in God than a mere provider for human needs. There seems to be in the world a harmony and purpose quite apart from his human requirements. The kind of thing that is meant may be best illustrated from Paley's *Natural Theology*. As psychologists we may use Paley as a guide in these matters without enquiring into the rigidity of his proofs. When Paley says that he can prove conclusively the existence of God by a consideration of the adaptations of organisms, we are not as psychologists interested in whether or not his proof is sound. What we are interested

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience* (London, 1903), p. 471.

in is the fact that he has shown us one way by which the mind of man has passed from the external world to the idea of God. The intellectualisation of this step may be totally unsound. The step itself is a psychological fact, and I suppose it to be a fact before it is intellectualised. So, when Paley deduces from the mutual adaptations of the parts of organisms and from the adaptation of organisms to their environment that they were created by a personal designer, we may conclude that this feeling that the world appears like a manufactured article is one root of religious belief. In other words, we conclude that in the religious man's experience of the external world, harmony as well as beneficence plays a part in the building up of his religious belief.

Thirdly, there is the experience of beauty in the world. To many people this is not strong; to others the world seems to be wonderfully and unnecessarily beautiful. They do not feel, as did Paley, that the world is like a watch. It seems to them to be more like a picture. Not only are they sure that it was made by someone, but also that it was made by someone whose thoughts and feelings they are able in some way to share.

It would be possible indefinitely to multiply quotations descriptive of this feeling from a source I have already used—the writings of nature mysticism. We will be content, however, with a single passage of a different kind. It is the narrative of the beginning of a man's religious life told by Dr Dale in his *Christian Doctrine:*

I was living in a small town in one of the southern counties of England, and one Sunday afternoon I went out into the country for a stroll. It was summer, and after walking for a few miles I lay down on the side of a hill. I saw, stretching to the distant horizon, meadows

and orchards and cornfields; the cloudless skies were gloriously blue, and the sun was flooding earth and heaven with splendour. The wonderful beauty filled me with excitement and delight. And then suddenly, through all that I saw, there came the very glory of God. I knew that He was there. His presence, His power, and His goodness took possession of me and held me for hours.

This experience of beauty has been given intellectual form by philosophers in a demonstrative argument from the presence of beauty in the world to a cause adequate to account for it. This is generally known as the *Aesthetic Argument.* As in speaking of Paley's argument from design, I do not propose to discuss the validity of this argument, but merely to note it as a confirmation of the fact that this experience is one root of the belief in God.

Whether or not it can be justified by reason as valid, the passage from these experiences of beneficence, harmony and beauty to Theism, *i.e.* to a belief in God, is a natural one. If things in the world seem to be, on the whole, arranged so as to be favourable to the needs of man, what is more natural than that he should conclude that it is arranged by someone who is taking care of him. If things seem, on the whole, to be ordered on an intelligible plan, what is more natural than for him to conclude that there is an intelligent designer of the universe. If beauty appears in the world, what is more natural than for him to suppose that this beauty is the expression of a personal being. In each case, we may say that the belief in God is an *intellectualisation* of the experience. It is the simplest possible explanation of the experience in intellectual terms.

There is one characteristic of the Theism reached by

these experiences which we must notice. It is, in each case, dualistic. That is, its conception of God definitely excludes part of experience, a part which is regarded as hostile to His nature. This hostile part consists of the elements of malevolence, disorder, and ugliness. By the element of malevolence, I mean all in nature that is opposed to man's well-being—extreme temperatures, wild beasts, and unfortunate accidents. By disorder, all those things in the world which seem to show an absence of design. The whole drama of life, with one animal preying on another, the capriciousness and indifference to merit of the fate of individuals (as it is depicted, for example, in Hardy's novels) and lastly the vision which physical science offers to us of the whole universe ending in a lifeless, meaningless condition of uniform temperature, gives a total picture of waste and disorder at least as spontaneously impressive as the world of design depicted by Paley. There are also the elements in the world which seem, at first sight, to be products of an evil design: the disgusting limbless parasite which shows the same admirable adaptation to its environment as that of the nobler animals over which the enthusiasm of the eighteenth century religious apologists was poured, and the increased capacity for suffering and inflicting pain which has accompanied the growth of self-consciousness in man. Lastly, there is the element of ugliness to be found in all those aspects of the universe which seem to us to be sordid, unlovely and revolting.

Religious belief, therefore, so far as it is drawn from this element of experience will certainly be dualistic. God will have a real element in the world opposed to him. Of course, this dualism may be modified (as it is in all developed religions) by other experience or by

reflective thought. We are not at present concerned with this modification.

Any optimistic Theistic belief (and, in practice, nearly all religion is found to be optimistic) will have the conviction that these opposed elements in the universe will be overcome. In Zarathustrianism, for example, it was believed that

finally, the powers of good and evil will engage in a last conflict. Ahriman and the evil host will be cast into the stream of molten metal. Then will the whole world be purified, the whole universe filled with Ahura Mazda's being, and all that lives will pass into immortality and celestial perfection[1].

But this optimism is not provided by the experience we are discussing. It comes into religion through some other element of experience or perhaps through some process of reasoning. So long as we remain on the plane of experience of the external world, we have an unresolved dualism.

But these experiences which we may call *evil* (remembering that we are using the word *evil* without any moral meaning) may do more than provide an opposing element in religious belief. They appear to some minds so to predominate that they provide the material for an atheistic interpretation of the universe or (if theism has been reached through the other roots of religious belief) for a theism which is pessimistic towards this world....

This reaction towards the world is illustrated by the story of the early religious life of the Buddha. He had led a happy and peaceful life in a palace. Then during a drive he was brought face to face with disease, old age,

[1] *Comparative Religion*, by F. B. Jevon (Cambridge, 1913), p. 101.

and death. Henceforth, these seemed to him to be the predominant facts of the world, and he was led to an attitude deeply pessimistic and effectively atheistic. As more modern examples, two widely read English authors may be taken. Hardy, in his novels, depicts the capriciousness with which a fate indifferent to human happiness and human merit crushes and destroys a noble character, and he ironically represents this as the sport of the President of the Immortals. Sir Francis Younghusband, in a book called *Within*, describes how his faith in God was destroyed by a painful accident, and details the other facts of the universe which seem to him to make the hypothesis of a benevolent God an untenable intellectualisation.

The possibility of such a reaction shows an obvious weakness in this element of religious belief, but there is no sufficient reason for denying its importance in conjunction with other elements. The people in whom it has been strongest have indeed often been content to ignore part of their experience of the world in order to build up a religious faith from its more pleasant aspects. Particularly is this true of the religious apologists who have provided a demonstration of the existence of God by the complacent enumeration of the pleasant features of the world. But, at the same time, we must notice that this element in religion has been strong in many who have by no means closed their eyes to the unpleasant side of the world. The example which most readily occurs to the mind is St Francis, to whom the world appeared to be full of God although he deliberately put himself in touch with its most unpleasant aspects.

After discussing each of the roots of religious belief, we may usefully enquire into the type of religion in

which it receives undue prominence. The type of religious belief which results from such an exaggeration of the natural element may be found in the form of *Natural Religion* which was in vogue about the middle of the last century. Its weakness as a religious belief was shown by the ease with which it degenerated into a merely sentimental attitude towards the pleasant aspects of the world, without real feeling for God as transcendent, and deficient in moral value. A similar example in which one part only of this element is exaggerated is to be found in those whose religious convictions are built exclusively on the foundation of natural beauty. The weakness of such a support when it is made exclusively to bear the weight of our deepest convictions has been illustrated by Professor Caldecott (I do not know with what justice) by the following passage written by Ruskin towards the end of his life:

Morning breaks, as I write, along these Coniston Fells, and the level mists, motionless and gray beneath the gorse of the moorlands, veil the lower woods and the sleeping village, and the long lawns by the lake shore. Oh that someone had but told me in my youth, when all my heart seemed to be set in those colours and clouds, that appear for a little while and then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me, when the silence of lawn and wood in the dews of morning should be completed; and all my thoughts should be of those whom, by neither, I was to meet more.

CHAPTER IV

THE MORAL ELEMENT IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF

In the last chapter we were discussing experiences of the outside world which tended to result in the confirmation of religious belief. The experience to which I propose to draw your attention in the present chapter is of a conflict which exists in the mind itself—the moral conflict. This is the conflict which results from the fact that the individual finds his own immediate desires opposed by an outside requirement—the moral law.

Before going any further it may be as well to notice that we are not concerned in psychology with the questions which would be raised at this stage in a philosophical treatment of ethics. It does not matter to us what the moral law is—whether it is at bottom a codification of the requirements of society, or whether it is something quite independent of any sort of utility and existing as really and independently as the outside world. It is sufficient for us to be satisfied that the conflict is a genuine psychological fact, and that it is an important one. For the sake of convenience we will call the system of forces reacting against our own immediate desires in the moral conflict, *the moral law*. Nothing that we say about the moral conflict will in any way be altered if we regard the moral law as merely a summary of the requirements of society, if we regard it as something real and independent, or if we adopt some other possible theory about it.

The moral conflict is not dependent on religious faith

in such a way that without religious faith it would disappear. It is often stated that it is, but I have never heard any reason given for this opinion which seemed sufficiently strong to outweigh the empirical fact that in the minds of persons who have lost their religious faith, the moral conflict is found to exist after their loss as it did before.

The experience of the moral conflict does, however, tend to result in religious belief, and this in two ways. When a man feels the conflict strongly he tends to objectify the two sides of it, and he objectifies the forces on the side of moral goodness as God. Other people seem to pass from the moral conflict to a belief in God by the practical necessity they feel for a belief in God in order that they may be kept good at all. These are two quite distinct methods of reaching religious belief from the moral conflict, and it only leads to confusion of thought to fail to distinguish them.

The first method of passing from the moral conflict to religion is quite plainly the same mental process as we were considering in the last chapter. It is an intellectualisation (or rationalisation) of an experience. The belief that the good side of the moral conflict is the expression of the will of some being who is infinitely good, is a simple explanation of the felt importance of the moral conflict. Thus the belief in a good God is an *intellectualisation* of the experience of the moral conflict.

This is given the form of a demonstrative argument in the famous *moral argument* for the existence of God. This is essentially a deduction from the stated fact that the demands of morality are something as real and objective as the external world. This reality can only be accounted for by assuming the existence of God. As

before, we will not feel ourselves concerned with the question of the force of this argument; but note that the very wide appeal it has made is an indication that we have here, in the objectification of the moral conflict, one of the sources of the belief in God.

But there are other people who, when they are examined about their religion, show a totally different reaction to the moral conflict. They feel that unless they believed in God, they could not be good. Without that belief, they would be unable to find any motive strong enough for moral conduct. Their belief is not the intellectualisation of an experience, but a belief dictated by a practical need. This is a psychological process similar to what the psychoanalysts call a *wish-fulfilment*. If there is a strong practical necessity for a belief to be true, the mind tends to accept that belief. In practice, of course, it is not generally founded on a practical necessity alone. A belief originated in other ways has its acceptance by the mind facilitated by the fact that it fulfils a practical need.

This tendency too has been given intellectual expression. An argument from human need to reality is not indeed common in the philosophy of religion, because it is not generally felt by philosophers to have much compelling force; but it is found very commonly in the looser thinking of popular religious writing. It is not unusual to find in such writing the argument used against atheism that it would lead to immorality, without any further discussion of the problem of whether it is not possible that a doctrine may be true even though it does lead to immorality.

We may now pass to the discussion of the characteristic features of the contribution which this element

makes to religious belief. In the first place, like the naturalistic element, its contribution is necessarily dualistic. As before, this dualism may be modified by other experiences or by the demands of rational thinking. But it is a necessary character of moral experience that we find in the moral conflict two sides, the good and the evil. The distinctive contribution which it makes to the conception of God is that it tends to conceive God as the supreme lawgiver. In forms of religious belief in which this element is exaggerated, the conception of God will be found to be unduly legalistic.

When we come to examine those forms of religion in which this element has attained a position of high importance, we find ourselves face to face with a much more interesting problem than those which confronted us in our discussion of other roots of belief. In the other cases such exaggerations were seen to be of relative unimportance at the present time amongst educated persons. In the case of the moral element, this is not so. A very large number of people at the present time consider that the task of dealing with the moral conflict is the sole legitimate one for religion, and all that there is actually in the higher religions apart from the moral element is an accretion which it is the task of an enlightened criticism of religion to purge away. Very often this is stated definitely by modern writers on religion. Often too it is implicit in their whole treatment of the subject although it is not definitely stated. Thus William James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* makes an examination of traditional sainthood in which he tries to be sympathetic to it, but finds on the whole that it represents an ideal which is really unintelligible to the modern mind. It is not difficult in reading

James's work, to see what is wrong. He has found himself absolutely unable to enter into a conception of religion in which the ideal is not a moral one at all. Amongst American psychologists, Coe more definitely attaches a high importance to the moral element in religion; and it seems clear from his preface that this is because this element did, as a fact, predominate in his own religion.

Historically, there has always been a tendency for the separation out of the Christian religion of communities in which the moral root predominated. This tendency is found in puritanism and pietism in the Protestant tradition, and in Jansenism in the Catholic. There has been in it a very variable tendency amongst them to distrust religious feeling, and a constant one to distrust the naturalistic element. This distrust is probably responsible for the harshness of Puritanism (using this word generically to cover Jansenism etc.) towards the natural affections. Since in this type of religion, God becomes the supreme lawgiver rather than the lover of souls, it is not surprising that it has tended to produce a religion which is curiously hard and unlovely. It seems almost incredible to our milder religious sentiment at the present day, that under the influence of this tradition only a short time ago little children were frightened by threats of hell-fire for childish faults, and that it was not thought a dishonour to God that he was first presented to their minds as a supreme bogey-man.

There is certainly room for difference of opinion about what *ought* to be the nature of religion, and as psychologists we have no more right than anybody else to dogmatise about that question. But it is necessary to insist that it leads to a totally wrong method in the

treatment of our subject to assume that that is what religion *is*; to try to read into historical religion the moral element alone and to ignore all that it owes to other elements as secondary accretions. It is not true, for example, that historically Christianity has looked upon the love of God as a means of furthering morality. On the contrary, the tendency has been rather to look upon it as an end in itself, and to value morality mainly as a means of securing that end. The aim of religion, according to St Thomas Aquinas, is the attainment of the Beatific Vision; it is an experience, not a moral ideal. Moreover, a complaint may be made against the assumption without argument that morality *ought* to be the sole concern of religion. We may doubt this whether we are unbelievers or believers in the claim of religion to truth. Even from a purely this-world point of view, religious belief may have a higher value in the satisfaction of emotional needs which are otherwise unsatisfied; its contribution to happiness may be as important as its contribution to morality. Possibly the increase of mental trouble at the present time amongst educated persons may be due in part to the decay of religious faith. On the other hand, if there is objective truth in religious belief, there seems to be no ground at all for attaching this exclusive importance to morality. The affective relation to God must be at least as important as right conduct.

We cannot leave this subject without discussing a practical problem which the history of some phases of religious thought has made important. This is the problem of the value of concern about sin. That some measure of concern about sin is of high moral value will, of course, be disputed by no one. It is necessary,

however, to point out that an exaggerated horror of sin may not only be undesirable as tending to produce a generally unhealthy and morbid attitude of mind; it may also defeat its own ends by failing as an incentive to goodness.

This sounds paradoxical. It may be objected that if hatred of sin is the emotional driving force behind moral conduct, then the stronger the emotion, the stronger will be its effect. This, however, is not always true. There are occasions when a strong emotional reaction against a particular course of action makes it more difficult to avoid that course of action; and increased voluntary effort is not merely useless but tends even to intensify the difficulty. These cases come under what has been called by the new Nancy psychiatric school 'The Law of Reversed Effort.' I propose to discuss this law in a later chapter; at present we may be content with a simple illustration which will convince us of its existence. Suppose that you have been told to walk along a plank lying on the floor of the room in which you are at present sitting, without stepping off on either side. You would have very little emotion about the possibility of your failure, and you would accomplish the task quite easily. Now suppose that you have been told that you must walk along something equally rigid and of the same width at a height of several hundreds of feet above the ground. You will almost certainly fall off. What has happened is that your horror of falling off has made the spontaneous autosuggestion of the fall so strong that you have not been able to prevent your mind from realising it. You will also find, under these conditions, that the harder you try to prevent yourself from falling off, the more certainly you will do so. Your

only chance of performing the task successfully is to adopt a method which reduces to a minimum both your fear of a fall and your voluntary effort to keep on the plank; in other words, you must think neither about the height nor about the effort necessary to keep on the plank, but only about getting to the other end.

The attraction of certain kinds of sin is also of the nature of a spontaneous autosuggestion. The *Law of Reversed Effort* does not, of course, mean that mere relaxation of effort is a method of escaping from the power of sin. What is meant is that the strength of the autosuggestion is increased by increased horror of the sin, and that the kind of effort which consists of a direct assault on the sin itself is not an effective way of overcoming the autosuggestion. Other kinds of effort (as, for example, the effort towards virtue, or the effort to practise the *reflective autosuggestion* of the new Nancy school, which will be discussed in a later chapter) may be found to be successful.

The psychological mechanism which is here at work is no new discovery of the twentieth century, and the following is a very early example of its recognition as a factor which must be reckoned with in the moral life. In the records of the Egyptian Fathers, the story is told of how one Father consulted the blessed man Pachomius about his temptations, which were of such violence that he felt disposed to give up the life of the desert and to return to the world. Pachomius replied that this temptation had fallen upon the other by his strenuousness, and described how he himself had spent long years in struggling against similar temptations, until a conviction that the temptations were sent to him to deliver him from excessive self-confidence made him cease to have

anxious care about them. He then continued in peace from this struggle to the end of his days; this particular devil seeing that he had ceased to meditate about the matter never again approached him[1].

If we wish to study an example of a person in whom the *conviction of sin* became so strong as to cease to have moral usefulness and to become little more than a mental disease, we may find one in that sad account of years of morbid preoccupation with his sins which Bunyan gives in *Grace Abounding*. From his childhood, he says that he had few equals for cursing, swearing, lying and blaspheming. But even at these tender years he was frightened by fearful dreams and visions, and by apprehensions of Devils, and thoughts of the Day of Judgment and the torments of Hell-fire. Soon after his marriage he began to go to church, but was still not sensible of the danger and evil of sin. But after a sermon on the evil of Sabbath breaking, he heard a voice while he was playing tip-cat on a Sunday which said "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to Heaven, or have thy sins and go to Hell?" But the thought of the grievousness of his many sins made his heart sink in despair, for he was convinced that it was too late for him to hope for forgiveness. So he made up his mind to fill his belly with the delicates of sin, and went on in sin with great greediness of mind, still grudging that he could not be so satisfied with it as he would. But after about a month a rebuke for the violence of his cursing and swearing from an ungodly woman made him ashamed, and he gave up the habit. Later, under the influence of a poor man who made profession of religion, he reformed his words and life,

[1] *The Paradise of the Fathers*, translation by Wallis Budge, I. 130 and 131.

and his obvious reform made his neighbours take him for a very godly man, although he says that he knew neither Christ, nor Grace, nor Faith, nor Hope. Now he had great peace in his conscience and thought God must be pleased with him.

This condition lasted until he heard some poor women at Bedford talking about religion. These spoke of a new birth, and of the filthiness and insufficiency of their own righteousness. At this Bunyan's heart began to shake, for he knew nothing of the new birth, and had not taken any notice of the temptations in thought about which the women were concerned. He began to be doubtful whether or not he had *faith*, and his soul became assaulted by doubts about his future happiness, especially whether he was elected, or whether the Day of Grace was already past. He alternated between such depressions when he was ready to sink where he went with faintness in his mind, and similar periods of elation when he was obsessed with comforting words from Scripture. For years, however, the depressed condition predominated, although his conscience was so tender that he durst not take a pin or stick though but so big as a straw. Troubled, and tossed, and afflicted with the sight and sense and terror of his own wickedness; he was also afraid that this trouble might pass away from him and that he might lose his sense of guilt without remission of his sins. After a period of unusual peace, he became obsessed with the thought "Sell Christ, for this, sell him for that." He resisted for a long time, saying: "I will not, I will not; no, not for thousands of worlds"; until suddenly he felt the thought pass through his mind, "Let him go, if he will." Now he was convinced that he had committed the unforgivable sin, and a

godly man to whom he confessed the matter agreed that he probably had. For two years nothing could occupy his mind but damnation and the expectation of damnation. Later, occasional periods of peace came when comforting texts remained with him for a time. These became longer until a study of Scripture convinced him that his was not the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that salvation came by the righteousness of Christ. After this time, comfort and peace were his usual state, and the periods of depression were only occasional.

Professor Pratt[1] considers that Bunyan's struggle was altogether without moral significance. Even admiration for Bunyan's later heroic struggle against persecution cannot blind us to the fact that this judgment is correct. His moral reform came before and was independent of this mental conflict; nor does the latter seem to have been connected with any enrichment of his devotional life. The struggle was not against any real moral evil. Such evil as Bunyan was struggling against—the obsession by anti-religious thoughts—seems clearly to have been intensified by the struggle. We must remember also that it is only because Bunyan succeeded in emerging from this unhealthy condition of mental pain and of morbid preoccupation about his own damnation, and became a great religious personality, that we have any record of the obsessions at all. How many weak souls were driven by the threats of hell-fire and thunders against the filthiness of human righteousness, to despair and madness or vice, we do not know.

We may now turn to an example of the other extreme, and look at the life of a religious person in whom the moral element seems to have been entirely undeveloped.

[1] *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1920).

The life I will take is the well-known one of Benvenuto Cellini. Cellini was an intensely devout person; he lived in an atmosphere of exalted religious emotion. Yet his life was one of profligacy and murder, lived without any consciousness of inconsistency. His religion meant nothing to his morality. He could murder his enemy in cold blood just as he was leaving Mass filled with beautiful religious emotions. In prison, he was sustained with an uplifting sense of the divine favour, and records that for ever afterwards he had an aureole of glory on his head.

A practical problem which confronts religion is the necessity for striking a compromise between these two extremes. Clearly, if the sense of sin is absent, immorality must be expected; but, on the other hand, it is not a satisfactory solution of the problem so to intensify the sense of guilt that it becomes morbid. Religion wants to prevent its followers from becoming Cellinis, without making them into Bunyans. This problem is to some extent solved by the Catholic practice of auricular confession (which exists also in some form or other in very many Protestant bodies). Simply on the psychological level, the value of confession appears to lie in the fact that it maintains a predominantly healthy-minded attitude towards sin, as well as providing a disciplinary remedy against it. It may, of course, be disputed how far it is successful in this, but it certainly succeeds in some measure, and its effective replacement is a real problem in applied psychology for those forms of religion which have dispensed with it.

This view of the psychological value of confession is confirmed by Professor Raymond and M. P. Janet who say:

Regular Confession might have been instituted by some mental specialists of genius as the best means of treating the victims of obsession. Where is the man or woman

who does not pass through periods of depression and bitterness? Between the extremes of morbid obsession and that state of anxiousness which is fully justified by many of the circumstances of life there are a good many intermediary stages. Confession acts upon all these states of despondency like a healing balm to pacify troubles and quicken dying hopes. The abandonment of Confession may easily lead to a condition of anxious unrest[1].

I do not, of course, wish to pretend to settle the dispute between the defenders and the critics of the practical value of confession. It is my purpose only to point out the kind of problem in applied psychology which is involved. The mere opening of moral conflicts to another person is often sufficient to prevent them from becoming the source of morbid obsessions like those of Bunyan. We may notice here an interesting observation which illustrates this fact. Amongst melancholiac asylum patients the obsession that they have committed the unpardonable sin and are therefore for ever cut off from the hope of God's forgiveness is very common. Yet the authors of the *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine* state that they have only met with one patient suffering from this obsession who was a Catholic; all the others were Protestants. There is little doubt that these facts are important, but it is impossible to make a fair inference from them unless we take into account also those cases of persons to whom confession must have been habitual who nevertheless suffered from scruples which remind us of the obsessions of Bunyan. Such a case, for example, was St Alphonse Liguori. It is to be hoped that further impartial observations may throw additional light on this question.

[1] *Les Obsessions et les Neurasthenies*, p. 707. Paris; quoted in *Spiritual Director and Physician*, by V. Raymond, O.P. English translation, p. 35.

CHAPTER V

THE AFFECTIVE ELEMENT IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF

THE next kind of experience which we must discuss as a root of belief in God is that made up of the moods, emotions, and feeling states which we have called the *affective root* (or *feeling root*) of religious belief. The name *mystical* has also sometimes been applied to it. I have rejected that name because I prefer to follow the more usual custom of limiting the word *mystical* to experiences which are definitely abnormal in the sense that they do not occur to the ordinary religious person. Everyone has a certain number of emotional experiences in connection with his religion. To most religious people there are times at which these experiences are intense and are yet obviously not different in kind from the less intense experiences of their ordinary religious lives. At the same time, there are a few persons to whom subjective religious experiences occur with unusual strength and constancy, and who have experiences which are remarkably similar amongst themselves but different from those of ordinary people. These are the *mystics*, who must be treated in more detail in a later chapter.

For the purpose of description we may make a preliminary distinction between those experiences which seem to occur apart from religious belief and tend to result in it, and those which accompany religious practices and may confirm and enrich previously held beliefs.

Some of the emotional experiences connected with the

beauty of nature which were described in the last chapter might equally well have been considered here as examples of religious experience of the first kind (those which tend to result in religious belief), for example, Thoreau's feeling of a prevailing friendliness in the sights and sounds around his lonely dwelling. Many examples of this kind of experience are to be found in the chapter on "The Reality of the Unseen" in William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience.* I will quote one of them, an account written by a man aged twenty-seven.

I have on a number of occasions felt that I had enjoyed a period of intimate communion with the divine. These meetings came unasked and unexpected, and seemed to consist merely in the temporary obliteration of the conventionalities which usually surround and cover my life....Once it was when from the summit of a high mountain I looked over a gashed and corrugated landscape extending to a long convex of ocean that ascended to the horizon, and again from the same point when I could see nothing beneath me but a boundless expanse of white cloud, on the blown surface of which a few high peaks, including the one I was on, seemed plunging about as if they were dragging at their anchors. What I felt on these occasions was a temporary loss of my own identity, accompanied by an illumination which revealed to me a deeper significance than I had been wont to attach to life. It is in this that I find my justification for saying that I have enjoyed communication with God. Of course, the absence of such a being as this would be chaos. I cannot conceive of life without its presence.

We may notice the characters of the experience as they are here described: the sense of an intimate pervading presence, the sense of a deepened significance in life, and the sense of a loss of identity. These are marks

of such an experience which, we shall find, tend to recur.

The first two of these feelings need no particular elucidation. They have probably in some measure fallen within the experience of all of us. But we may feel inclined to ask what such writers mean when they speak of a feeling of the loss of their identity. It will be noticed that a future account will describe apparently the opposite experience—'an intense quickening of the sense of personality.' Now the sense of identity or self-consciousness is a result of the fact that our experiencing and enjoying are accompanied by the idea of the self which is experiencing and enjoying. It is usual in psychological text-books to say that the experience of animals is not so accompanied. If that is the case, they have no sense of their own identities, and the words *I* and *me* have no meaning for them. It is clear, moreover, that the extent to which in human beings an experience is consciously accompanied by the idea of the experiencing self is very variable. An absorbed spectator at a football match, an artist engrossed in the contemplation or the execution of a work of art, or a nature-lover lost in the beauty of a sunset, all tend to lose, at least in part, even the vaguest consciousness of themselves. The intense absorption in any experience of things outside is accompanied by a partial loss of the sense of identity which is apparent to introspection when the period of intense absorption is over. Possibly the sense of lost identity described in these forms of religious experience means simply that the experience makes an even greater appeal of the same kind to spontaneous attention than the football match to the lover of football and the work of art to the artist. If this explanation be the true one,

it is not surprising to find that in the experience of Prince Muishkin, which we shall describe later, where a deepening of the sense of personality is spoken of, this follows a state of absent-mindedness in which attention had become detached from the experience of the external world.

Experiences of the kind we are describing are not always, of course, intellectualised by a belief in God. The theistic interpretation may be rejected by the mind for other reasons; because of other experiences which clash with it, or on intellectual grounds. Swinburne, for example, seems to be describing such an experience in the poem already quoted. He has a sense of a pervading presence—"The whole wood feels thee, the whole air fears thee"; he feels a loss of his own identity—"naught is all, as am I but a dream of thee." Other experiences, however, lead him to reject the belief in God.

An odd case of similar experience is found in what is called the *anaesthetic revelation* about which a good deal has been written by Mr Blood. This is a conviction felt often under an anaesthetic that one has grasped the secret of the universe. J. A. Symonds says of such an experience:

Only think of it. To have felt for that long dateless ecstasy of vision the very God, in all purity and tenderness and truth and absolute love, and then to find that I had after all had no revelation, but that I had been tricked by the abnormal excitement of my brain.

Blood makes this revelation the moral sustenance of his life. He says:

I know—as having known—the meaning of Existence: the sane centre of the universe—at once the wonder and the assurance of the soul—for which the speech of reason has as yet no name but the Anaesthetic revelation[1].

[1] Quoted from *The Varieties of Religious Experience.*

But (and this is a point which is not mentioned by the writers on the anaesthetic revelation) the secret of the universe revealed in this way may be a terrible one. This seems to be particularly liable to be the case when the anaesthesia is light and the operation painful. A mental specialist has told me that he has often had an experience of a terrible secret of the universe in this way, and that once after he had undergone an operation under anaesthetic he found that the experience recurred to him later. To him the world appeared not as founded on a transcendent reality, but as something horribly, inexpressibly unreal.

A case has been brought to my notice in which an experience similar to the anaesthetic revelation seems to have been passed through in the delirium of a death-bed. The subject was a metaphysician and a priest. The period before his death is thus described:

I was with him shortly before his death. He was then alternately clear and wandering. In his wandering he tried again and again to make clear to me something that he had learned about the attributes of God, especially about the Eternity of God. "The Everlasting Now"—this he repeated several times and then tried to explain it but tried in vain to find the words he wanted. He looked distressed at this, and also looked at me with distress because I could not follow him. These wanderings lasted but a short time, and then a change would come over his eyes and he would ask me if he had said anything he ought not to have said, and for awhile was completely self-possessed, responding to what I said, or joining in the prayers, but never referring to the subjects which occupied him in his delirium. Then he would lapse again into incoherent words about the Eternity of God.

It is not possible to discuss all the moods of exaltation accompanying abnormal bodily or mental conditions

which have made occasional contributions to religion. There are, however, two which I wish to mention quite shortly. These are the states of mind which result from the taking of hashish, and the exalted emotions which apparently sometimes occur immediately before an epileptic attack.

Hashish has been used in the East as a means of securing such moods. Its effects have often been described by users of the drug. It is said to produce a succession of intense visions, often of great beauty. These are followed by a period in which the things of the outside world are perceived but with an enormously exaggerated sense of space and time. Every second seems to be hours long, and near objects seem to be great distances away. This extension of space gives an impression of vastness in ordinary objects; small rooms seem to have the dimensions of banqueting halls. This sense of being surrounded by huge spaces seems to add to the mental exaltation which accompanies the taking of this drug.

As an example of an exalted state of mind before an epileptic fit, I am taking the account given by Dostoieffsky in *The Idiot*. You will remember that Dostoieffsky was himself an epileptic, so it is to be supposed that he is describing the attack from personal experience. Such emotional accompaniments of epilepsy do not, however, appear to be common. Speaking of the epileptic Prince Muishkin, he says:

He remembered that during his epileptic fits, or rather immediately preceding them, he had always experienced a moment or two when his whole heart, and mind, and body seemed to wake up to vigour and light; when he became filled with joy and hope, and all his anxieties

seemed to be swept away for ever; these moments were but presentiments, as it were, of the one final second (it was never more than a second) in which the fit came upon him. That second, of course, was inexpressible. When his attack was over, and the prince reflected on his symptoms, he used to say to himself: "These moments, short as they are, when I feel such extreme consciousness of myself, and consequently more of life than at other times, are due only to the disease—to the sudden rupture of normal conditions. Therefore they are not really a higher kind of life, but a lower." This reasoning, however, seemed to end in a paradox, and lead to the further consideration: "What matter though it be only a disease, an abnormal tension of the brain, if when I recall and analyze the moment, it seems to have been one of harmony and beauty in the highest degree—an instant of deepest sensation, overflowing with unbounded joy and rapture, ecstatic devotion, and completest life?" ...These instants were characterized—to define it in a word—by an intense quickening of the sense of personality. Since in the last conscious moment preceding the attack, he could say to himself, with full understanding of his words: "I would give my whole life for this one instant," then doubtless to him it really was worth a lifetime. For the rest, he thought the dialectical part of his argument of little worth; he saw only too clearly that the result of these ecstatic moments was stupefaction, mental darkness, idiocy. No argument was possible on that point. His conclusion, his estimate of the "moment," doubtless contained some error, yet the reality of the sensation troubled him. What more unanswerable than a fact? And this fact had occurred. The prince had confessed unreservedly to himself that the feeling of intense beatitude in that crowded moment made the moment worth a lifetime.

[6] He adds that it was no doubt to such a moment that the epileptic Mahomet refers when he says that he

visited all the dwellings of Allah, in less time than was needed to empty a pitcher of water.

Such experiences as these, however, have been used but rarely in the service of religion. They must always awaken the doubt whether they are not mere tricks of the imagination which owe their origin and have their full explanation in a diseased state of the brain, or whether (as may quite consistently be maintained by those who accept their authority) a disordered condition of the mind is a possible condition for a real insight into the highest reality. A set of experiences which belong more properly to the religious life in its early stages are the emotional states which lead up to adolescent conversion. Adolescent conversion will be treated in greater detail in a later chapter, so these emotional states will be mentioned now quite shortly.

Starbuck made elaborate statistical investigations into these facts and describes the stages preceding conversion as: a sense of incompleteness and imperfection; brooding, depression, introspection, and a sense of sin; anxiety about the future life, and distress over doubts. These are followed after conversion by a happy relief, a sense of pardon, and of certainty. These mental states have been schematised to an extraordinary extent by him in his *Psychology of Religion*. There is no doubt that a great part of his account of the adolescent conversion is valuable, but he has failed to recognise how much of what he describes is merely the result of suggestion, and how much of the uniformity of his results is due to the fact that his material is almost entirely taken from a particular type of American Protestantism, which had these conventional expectations about conversion. His neglect of this matter makes him take his classifications

much more seriously than they deserve, and makes it necessary to read his book with a good deal of caution. My purpose in alluding here to adolescent conversion is principally in order to draw attention to those emotional experiences preceding religion which contain the element of incompleteness.

There are three kinds of religious experience which resemble one another in being of the nature of a relief from a painful mental state. These are: the sense of the forgiveness of sins, the sense of felt certainty in belief, and the sense of permanence and stability in the divine. These are related to three painful mental states. The sense of sin, with its accompaniment of what Professor McDougall calls *negative self-feeling*, is a mental state with a strongly painful feeling-tone. In the last chapter, we saw an example in which this painful state attained terrible intensity in the mind of Bunyan. When this state is removed by the conviction of forgiveness received in answer to prayer, in a conversion experience, or when absolution is received from a priest, its relief is the mental experience called the *forgiveness of sins.* Intellectual uncertainty is also a painful mental state. This will be seen later to be a fact of importance in the study of conversion. The pleasure accompanying the change from doubt to a conviction of certainty may be very strong. In a vivid account of his conversion experiences written on parchment and worn over his heart, Pascal has the following line: "Certitude, joie, certitude, sentiment, vue, joie," and a similar mention of the joy of certainty is frequently found in other writings of the same kind. Last, there is the sense of divine stability. The painful emotional state of which this is a relief is the sadness produced by the impermanence and transi-

toriness of all that we value on earth, of human life and of human affection. Relief to this is given by the thought of the permanence and reality found in the idea of God.

In each of these mental attitudes, a pleasurable affect is produced, because a mental need is supplied, the lack of which had previously been painful to the mind.

The affective state called the sense of *the presence of God* does not differ from the sense of a presence described earlier in this chapter as a constituent of the vague emotional experiences which come before religious belief, except in the fact that it is more specifically provided with an object. The following account from *The Varieties of Religious Experience* is a typical one.

I have the sense of a presence, strong and at the same time soothing, which hovers over me. Sometimes it seems to enwrap me with sustaining arms[1].

The characteristic experience of mystical prayer which is generally called *contemplation* is also a sense of God's presence. It differs from these non-mystical experiences of the same kind, however, in several respects. The most important of these are: the fact that what is felt is more than mere presence, it is something more like possession; it is much less under voluntary control; and it involves suspension of the power to perform certain kinds of mental activity. The characters of contemplation will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter devoted to mysticism.

I will give two examples of contemplation; one from a Catholic, the other from a Protestant mystic. St Teresa says:

In the prayer of union the soul is asleep, fast asleep, as regards the world and itself: in fact, during the short

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 72.

time that this state lasts it is deprived of all feeling whatever, being unable to think on any subject, even if it wished. No effort is needed here to suspend the thoughts, if the soul can love—it knows not how, nor whom it loves, nor what it desires. In fact, it has died entirely to this world, to live more truly than ever in God[1].

The second is from an account of his life given by Evan Roberts, the Welsh revivalist:

One Friday night last spring, when praying by my bedside before retiring, I was taken up into a great expanse without time or space—it was communion with God. Before this it was a far-off God that I had. I was frightened that night but never since....After that I was awakened every night a little after one....From that time I was taken up into Divine fellowship for about four hours[2].

The practices of religion have also their accompaniment of emotional experience without which they would become extraordinarily empty of meaning. The comment of a member of the Church of England attending a ceremony in the Greek Church, or of a Greek who has found his way into an Indian temple, will probably be the same: "This is mere meaningless ceremonial." The reason for this judgment is that in each case the observer is witnessing the practices of religion without himself feeling the emotional accompaniment which gives them significance to the worshippers. To the worshippers themselves they are never merely meaningless ceremonial, they are rich in affective significance. In prayer, a sense of the presence of, and of communication with God is felt, which is effective in removing distress and increasing happiness. While the litany of saints is

[1] *The Interior Castle*, by St Teresa (English translation by the Benedictines of Stanbrook, London, 1906), 5. 1. 3.

[2] *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, XIX. p. 80.

repeated, the worshipper feels himself surrounded by the multitudes he is invoking. In the presence of the consecrated sacrament, the believing Catholic has a sense of the presence of God stronger than any he experiences at other times.

Some parts of the religious cult seem to have as one of their ends the intensification of emotional experiences. The pomp of the ritual intensifies the emotions of awe which are felt by the worshippers. Posture in prayer has its effects on the emotions. The position of kneeling is not merely an outward symbol of submission; it actually tends to produce the emotional attitude of submission in the mind of a person to whom it is such a symbol. Sacred music plainly has as its principal object the control of the worshippers' emotions. One of the objects of meditation is to facilitate the emotional response to the objects meditated upon. What are called *acts* of faith, love, etc., are simple autosuggestions which are intended to strengthen the feelings of certainty in the religious belief and of affection towards the object of religious worship respectively.

The affective experiences of religion have attached to them the same danger as similar experiences of secular life—the danger that they may be pursued as ends in themselves, and lose their value as stimuli to action. This is what is called *sentimentalism*. We may remind ourselves of the example given by William James of the Russian lady who was weeping over the troubles of fictitious people on the stage while her coachman was freezing to death on the pavement outside, the emotion of sorrow having become to her enjoyable merely as a mental state and no longer impelling her to the action of relieving distress. In just the same way there is a tendency for a strongly affective religion to degenerate

into religious sentimentalism. Its exalted emotions cease to be spurs to heroic conduct for the love of God. On the contrary, the soul basks in its pleasurable emotions like a cat in the sun, as if the multiplication of emotions were the aim of its religion; with the result at best of moral weakness, and at worst of moral disaster. The mystics have been aware of the danger of sentimentalism. "Lord, lead me not by the way of sensible consolations," is their constant prayer.

In illustration of this criticism of affective religion, I will quote a typical protest against religion of the affective type from a person whose religion appears to be of a predominantly ethical character. It is from the speech of the counsel who defended Flaubert in the action brought against him in connection with *Madame Bovary*.

Je ne connais rien de plus utile et de plus nécessaire que le sentiment religieux grave, et permettez-moi d'ajouter, sévère.

Je veux que mes enfants comprennent un Dieu, non pas un Dieu dans les abstractions du panthéisme, non, mais un être suprême avec lequel ils sont en rapport, vers lequel ils s'élèvent pour le prier, et qui en même temps les grandit et les fortifie. Cette pensée-là,...c'est la force dans les mauvais jours,...le refuge, ou mieux encore, la force des faibles....Mais voici où commence l'altération. Pour accommoder la religion à toutes les natures, on fait intervenir toutes sortes de petites choses, chétives, misérables, mesquines....Elles [the young girls about whom he is speaking] se font alors de petites religions de pratique, de petites dévotions de tendresse, d'amour, et au lieu d'avoir dans leur âme le sentiment de Dieu, le sentiment du devoir, elles s'abandonnent à des rêvasseries, à de petites pratiques, à de petites dévotions. Et puis vient la poésie, et puis viennent, il faut bien le dire, mille pensées de charité, de tendresse, d'amour mystique, mille formes qui trompent les jeunes

filles, qui sensualisent la religion. Ces pauvres enfants naturellement crédules et faibles se prennent à tout cela, à la poésie, à la rêvasserie, au lieu de s'attacher à quelque chose de raisonnable et de sévère. D'où il arrive que vous avez beaucoup de femmes fort dévotes, qui ne sont pas religieuses du tout. Et quand le vent les pousse hors du chemin où elles devrait marcher, au lieu de trouver la force, elles ne trouvent que toute espèce de sensualités qui les égarent.

Of course, the speaker, a barrister, is very much overstating the case against affective religion. But what he is describing are real dangers. The tendency to follow emotion for its own sake and not as an incentive to religious action, threatens the morality of those who succumb to it.

The first danger, then, threatening a religion in which the affective element has attained an exaggerated importance is that of sentimentalism, with its resultant moral weakness. There is secondly a tendency to intellectual weakness. Exaggeratedly affective religion is, of course, often a result of despair of the intellect as a guide to truth. Goethe, speaking through Faust, finds at the same time the impossibility of a satisfactory affirmation of the being of God in intellectual terms, and of a denial of Him in terms of feeling:

Wer darf ihn nennen? Und wer bekennen: Ich glaub' ihn? Wer empfinden, Und sich unterwinden Zu sagen: ich glaub' ihn nicht? Der Allumfasser, Der Allerhalter,... Erfüll' davon dein Herz, so gross es ist, Und wenn du ganz in dem Gefühle selig bist, Nenn' es dann, wie du willst[1].

[1] *Faust*, Pt 1, *Marthens Garten*. "Who can name Him? Who thus proclaim Him: I believe Him? Who that hath feeling His bosom steeling, Can say I believe Him not? The All-embracing, The All-sustaining,...Great though it be, fill thou therefrom thine heart, And when in the feeling wholly blest thou art, Call it then what thou wilt!" (English translation by A. G. Latham, London, 1908.)

The intellectualist can, of course, easily make such a position seem to be weaker than it really is. Expressed in intellectual terms, and attacked by intellectual methods, it seems to be indefensible indeed. But the real point of the position of reliance on feeling is that it denies the claim of intellect to have the deciding voice in matters of belief, and claims for feeling an authority of its own at least as ultimate as that of reason. At the same time, it is open to the serious objection that in rejecting the rational element in religious belief, religion of the affective type must necessarily be weak because it is deficient in one element which plays some part at least in the constitution of the beliefs of the normally constituted mind.

To this type also belong those forms of religion which rest largely on intuition, on the subjective feeling of certainty—such as Quakerism. I will quote a typical affirmation of faith of this kind from a thesis called *De l'Expérience Chrétienne* by Emile Paradon, quoted by Professor Leuba. He is discussing the question of whether the experiences of prayer are all illusion, due to autosuggestion.

...it becomes evident to us...that the objections of our adversary cannot reach us. We stand on two different grounds, and so we doubt if he will ever understand us, *but he cannot shake in us the affirmations of experience; namely, that we feel within us a being that is not ourselves; we see born within us new ideas and perceptions, real revelations that do not come from ourselves.*

A religion thus based suffers in the same way from the disadvantages resulting from the rejection of the rational element.

This seems to be the most suitable place to mention

shortly the visions and locutions which are found in the religious life. These are largely but not entirely confined to those whom we have called *mystics* in the restricted sense, and amongst these to those who have reached the stage of ecstasy. They play a much less important part in mystical thought than seems generally to be supposed. The tendency has been, on the whole, for the mystics themselves to attach slight value to visions and to regard them as methods of illumination too open to the danger of deception to be considered desirable. What has made them take such a prominent place in the recorded lives of the Catholic mystics has been the naïve enthusiasm of their biographers for the marvellous.

Traditionally these experiences have been divided into three classes. The first are *exterior* visions and locutions, in which the object seen or heard appears to the percipient to belong to the outside world. The second may be called *imaginal*[1]. In these the percipient has a clear image of what he sees or hears, but does not suppose it to belong to the outside world. The third are *intellectual* visions and locutions. In these the object is stated to be neither seen nor heard, but there is an inner feeling of a presence or a communication. It is not generally easy to make out from a narrative whether a vision which is being described is an exterior or an imaginal one, unless (as rarely happens) the person to whom the experience has occurred is interested in drawing the distinction. The difference between them is probably perfectly clear in all cases to the percipient

[1] The usual name for this class has been *imaginary*. This, however, is a misleading word, since in English it suggests an irrelevant judgment on their reality. I propose, therefore, to substitute the word *imaginal*, which is used in psychology as an adjective to describe mental facts belonging to the same class as images.

himself. It seems likely that most of the visions described which are not intellectual are of the imaginal kind, and that exterior visions are rare. St Teresa, for example, records that she never had an exterior vision or locution.

A typical example of the distinction between the account given of an exterior and imaginal vision, is to be found in a recently published account of a modern mystic:

In speaking to us of visions of Christ seen, and words heard, by him on subsequent occasions when in a state of Ecstasy, he clearly and emphatically distinguished the vision at his conversion, when he saw Christ with his bodily eyes and heard him "with these ears," from the later visions when he saw and heard with "spiritual" sight and hearing[1].

The following is a description of an intellectual vision given by St Teresa. She is speaking of herself:

She was conscious of His [God] being at her right hand, although not in the way we know an ordinary person to be beside us, but in a more subtle manner which cannot be described. This Presence is, however, quite as evident and certain, and indeed far more so, than the ordinary presence of other people about which we may be deceived; not so in this, for it brings with it graces and spiritual effects which could not come from melancholia[2].

The order in which the different classes of vision have been valued has been the opposite of the order in which I have described them. Intellectual visions have been considered to be highly trustworthy, imaginal visions less so, while exterior visions have been regarded with considerable suspicion.

[1] *The Sadhu*, by Streeter and Appasamy (London, 1921), p. 8.
[2] *The Interior Castle*, by St Teresa, 6. VIII. 4.

Some visions were supposed to be delusions of the evil one even when they took a religious form, and it was because of this danger that exterior visions and imaginal ones were so distrusted. It was supposed that intellectual visions could not be counterfeited by the devil. In addition many of the ecstatics had horrible visions of the devil, and auditory hallucinations of the same kind, as well as suffering from physical assaults of the fiends. Diabolical action of such kind has received attention from French medical writers on this subject.

It is natural to compare these visions and locutions of religion with similar phenomena of ordinary life. It seems probable that we are sometimes dealing with appearances which occur equally outside religion, but which have been given a religious colouring by the dominant religious interests of the person experiencing them, as well as with phenomena belonging more specifically to the religious life itself. Hallucinations are not very common amongst sane persons, but they are very common accompaniments of some forms of mental disease. Statistical investigation however suggests that at least one in every five sane persons experiences a fairly vivid hallucination at some time in his life. There are peculiar hallucinations found amongst sane persons, which are caused by the reflected pain of visceral disease. These have been investigated and described by Dr Head[1]. I have not been able to discover any records of experiences in religion which obviously belong to this class, although some of the diabolical obsessions of the sense of smell may do so.

The distinction between exterior and imaginal visions

[1] "Mental Changes that accompany Visceral Disease," by Dr Henry Head. *Brain*, 1901.

is obviously precisely the same as the distinction drawn in psychology between *hallucinations* and *pseudo-hallucinations*. Pseudo-hallucinations are those which the subject does not mistake for external objects, as he does genuine hallucinations. It is often assumed without argument in books on religious psychology that the persons who have visions are those with strong visual imagery, who mistook their images for reality. It has always seemed to me to be at least as probable that they are people ordinarily devoid of such imagery, who are particularly impressed by it because it comes only under these conditions. St Teresa clearly was not a visualiser, for she complains of the impossibility of picturing things to herself in meditation. On the other hand, I have found good visualisers amongst persons who have experienced religious visions. We must wait for more evidence before it is possible to decide this question.

Another problem in connection with visions which needs experimental investigation by a sufficiently self-sacrificing experimental psychologist is the connection between fasting and hallucinatory appearances. It is generally asserted without any appeal to evidence that one of the objects of fasting is to produce religious visions. That may be the case, although its value as a means of self-discipline is probably very much more important.

Sadhu Sundar Singh in his twenty-third year tried to carry out a forty days' fast in imitation of Christ:

During the early stages of the fast there was a feeling of intense burning in his stomach on account of lack of food but this soon passed away. In the course of the fast he saw Christ; not, he says, as at his conversion, with his physical eyes, because they were now

dim and could not see anything, but in a spiritual vision, with pierced hands, bleeding feet and radiant face. Throughout the whole period he felt in himself a remarkable enrichment of that sense of peace and happiness which has been his in a measure ever since he became a Christian. Indeed so great was this sense that he had no temptation whatever to give up the fast. As his physical powers became enfeebled he saw, or thought he saw, a lion or other wild animal and heard it growl; the growl appeared to come from a distance, while the animal itself appeared to be near[1].

He also records a permanent effect on his spiritual life and on his character. These are what he regards as the important results of his fast.

[1] *The Sadhu*, by Streeter and Appasamy, p. 25.

CHAPTER VI

THE RATIONAL ELEMENT IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF

EVEN if we are right in supposing that primitive religious belief is not at first a product of reasoning processes but of vague feelings and illogical deductions, reflection in words appears early, even though its function at first may be only to justify beliefs already held on other grounds. We seem to have the earliest beginnings of reflective thought of this kind in the following account quoted by Ribot. An intelligent Basuto is the speaker:

Twelve years ago, I went to feed my flocks. The weather was hazy. I sat down upon a rock and asked myself sorrowful questions; yes, sorrowful, because I was unable to answer them. Who has touched the stars with his hands? On what pillars do they rest? I asked myself. The waters are never weary; they know no other law than to flow without ceasing—from morning till night, and from night till morning; but where do they stop? and who makes them flow thus? The clouds also come and go, and burst in water over the earth. Whence come they? Who sends them? The diviners certainly do not give us rain; for how could they do it? and why do I not see them with my own eyes, when they go up to heaven to fetch it?...I cannot see the wind; but what is it? Who brings it, makes it blow?...Then I buried my face in both my hands[1].

[1] *The Psychology of the Emotions*, by Ribot (English translation), p. 371 n., quoted from *The Basutos* by Casilos, p. 239.

In the discussion of the rational element in religious belief, I propose to start with a descriptive account of the reasoning processes which lead up to or confirm a belief in God (in other words, the arguments for the existence of God) without any attempt at a philosophical discussion of their validity. Such a discussion would be outside the scope of the psychology of religion. Even if it could be shown that any or all of these arguments were invalid, they would still remain of psychological interest, for they have provided the foundation of the religious belief of men.

There is first the purely *a priori* 'ontological' argument of St Anselm, Descartes, and Leibnitz. This has been stated in several different ways. Descartes' statement of it may be put quite shortly as follows. The idea of God is the idea of a perfect being. Existence is a perfection, non-existence an imperfection. Therefore, a perfect being has existence as one of his attributes. In other words, God exists.

The others are arguments from experience. What is called the 'cosmological' argument infers God from the necessity to account for the beginning of the chain of causal sequence. Every event in the world has its cause in some previous event which was itself similarly caused. Once such a series of events has started, it may go on for ever, but there is no reason in itself why it should ever have started. A first cause must be assumed which is God.

The teleological argument differs from the cosmological in the fact that it makes its inference from the particular characters of things which seem to point to a personal creator. Of these characters three are described. Living things show in their structures evidences of order beyond what can be conferred by the operation

of physical laws. Things seem to have a purpose to fulfil beyond that of their own existence, in their effects on other things. Thirdly, it is sometimes urged that a single order, a unity, is observed in the whole of things. In each of these cases, it is argued that such marks of design point to a designer.

Finally there is the moral argument which deduces the existence of God from the reality of the moral law. A variety of this is the aesthetic argument from the reality of the experience of beauty.

This does not quite exhaust the rational element since a good deal of thinking at the present time is in the direction of trying to found an argument on religious experience. The form that this occasionally takes is that the religious man has no more reason for denying the reality of the objects of his religious experience than he has of the objects of his experience of the external world, so that the existence of God is as certain for him as that of the external world. I intend to discuss these questions more fully in my last chapter since this is a part of the philosophy of religion almost unavoidably raised by a study of its psychology. It should, I think, be clear that the particular form of the argument from experience which I have just stated is a solution of the problem too easy to be of any value.

I have stated these arguments, not with any intention of discussing their truth, but only so that we may have an idea of what we are talking about when discussing the rational root of religion. The problem I wish to discuss is the purely psychological one of how far, in fact, belief is determined by processes of reasoning. Our estimate of the importance of the rational root of religious belief, and of the value of religion of the

rational type must very largely depend on our answers to these questions. The whole tendency of modern psychology is to tell us that our beliefs are determined for us far more by our feelings, our wishes, and so forth, and much less by our intellects than we are generally willing to admit. In other words they are very largely affectively determined. It is true that we may be able to give what we consider to be excellent intellectual reasons for our beliefs. These, however, may not be the real causes of our holding the beliefs. They may merely be reasons the mind subconsciously supplies to justify it in holding beliefs which are really held on different and quite irrational grounds. Such chains of reasoning are now generally called *rationalisations*.

A *rationalisation*, then, may be defined as a chain of argument used by the mind to justify itself in the holding of a belief which really owes its origin to something else—to suggestion or to some *affective* root.

The most obvious examples of rationalisation are to be found in insanity. A man suffering from the delusion of persecution can find in every event fresh evidence of the designs of other people to kill him. Such a belief cannot be shaken by argument, since his belief in the intention of other people to kill him provides an interpretation of facts apparently as internally consistent as that of the sane person. Yet it is quite apparent to everyone else that his belief is untrue. It is not really an inference from the events he brings forward in its support, but is a construction imposed on events by his mind.

Dr Hart thus describes the rationalisations of a lunatic who believes that his wife is trying to murder him:

If his wife is solicitous for his welfare her behaviour is regarded as a cloak to conceal her real design, if she

treats him badly, the evil intentions are clear, if she gives him food it is obvious that she proposes to poison him, if she does not it is equally obvious that she hopes to undermine his health by withholding the necessaries of life. If we argue with him and point out that his belief is inconsistent with the facts, he smiles contemptuously at our credulity, or is perhaps suspicious that we are the paid accomplices of his wife[1].

This process of rationalisation is not, however, confined to insane persons. Most of us will have no difficulty in recognising its action in the minds of other people, however unwilling we may be to admit its existence in our own. Often when conduct or opinions are clearly dictated by feeling, a series of reasons is given for them which is recognised to be of the nature of a rationalisation by everyone except the person himself. I will give an example of this from the same book.

One of my patients, a former Sunday School teacher, had become a convinced atheist. He insisted that he had reached this standpoint after a long and careful study of the literature of the subject, and, as a matter of fact, he really had acquired a remarkably wide knowledge of religious apologetics. He discoursed at length upon the evidence of Genesis, marshalling his arguments with considerable skill, and producing a coherent and well-reasoned case. Subsequent psychological analysis, however, revealed the real complex responsible for his atheism; the girl to whom he had been engaged had eloped with the most enthusiastic of his fellow Sunday School teachers....Resentment against his successful rival, had expressed itself by a repudiation of the beliefs which had formerly constituted the principal bond between them. The arguments, the study and the quotations were merely an elaborate rationalisation[2].

[1] *The Psychology of Insanity*, by Dr Bernard Hart (Cambridge, 1918), p. 86.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 71.

It is less easy to convince ourselves of the existence of rationalisation in our own minds. This is to be expected from the fact that we judge ourselves mainly from introspection while we judge the motives of other people mainly by inferences from their behaviour. The unreality of the apparent connection between beliefs and the rationalisations which are supposed to support them is not, of course, apparent to introspection, because the object of the rationalisation is to satisfy our own minds that our beliefs are really held on rational grounds. But there are ways by which an honest examination into our own minds will, I think, convince us that we are ourselves guilty of the habit of making rationalisations. Looking back on our past conduct and beliefs and the reasons we gave for them, it is possible to see how often those reasons were mere rationalisations. They seemed real enough to us at the time, but now they have lost their power of convincing us and we see how far our real motives were removed from them. Perhaps the most convincing case is after we have passed through a total change of opinion, such as takes place in a conversion whether in religion or in some other matter as the holding of a scientific theory. The usual experience of such a change is that evidence accumulated against our earlier conviction. But instead of gradually undermining our confidence in it, what happened was that every new piece of evidence was fitted into our old theory by some new piece of reasoning. Then quite suddenly the whole structure collapsed, and we saw that all the reasonings by which we tried to make our new facts fit into our old theory were merely hollow devices for retaining our belief unshaken and that they had no compelling force at all. Our new

theory is soon supported by a fresh system of reasons of its own.

The discovery of the existence of such a process as rationalisation leads us to suspect that processes of reasoning play a much less important part in the formation of our beliefs than we like to assign to them. In our own subject, we may suspect that what we have called the rational element has played a less predominant part in the formation of religious belief than the intellectual vanity of man leads him to suppose. The further step of saying that it plays no part at all, and that all our processes of reasoning are mere rationalisations used to justify beliefs really held on other grounds, is an obvious one. I think, however, that we shall be wise to examine it rather carefully before we take it.

This position is assumed in psychological controversy more often than it is stated. Le Bon is the only person in whose works I remember having seen it stated quite definitely. Once one has grasped the meaning of rationalisation, its use in controversy is fascinatingly easy. You need not examine your opponent's arguments at all. You need only state what you imagine to be the affective grounds of his opinions, and dismiss all his reasons as rationalisations. It is not surprising that the method is becoming popular. In the whole of thought, I know of no other way of refuting an opponent which is effective, certain, and does not require you to do any thinking at all. If you wish to refute religion, you need only sketch what I have already described as the affective root of religious belief, detailing the needs, etc. which it satisfies. You then say that these are the real reasons why people believe in religion and that all else is mere rationalisation. If you wish to refute atheism, your task is

perhaps even easier. You can find the affective root of your opponent's unbelief in the fact that he is not living in conformity with the rigidity of morals which is demanded by religion. All his reasons, you say, are nothing but rationalisations to cover this moral laxity, and once more you are satisfied that your case is complete. I am not suggesting mere unrealised possibilities now; arguments of this sort are being increasingly used. The wonderful ease of the method should make us pause before accepting the implicit assumptions on which it is based.

In fact, these writers generally assume that a sufficient account of their opponent's reasoning is given by stating their affective grounds, but they seem somehow to exempt their own. This, of course, is illogical. Affective grounds can always be found for any opinion, and if that were the end of the matter, we would have to give up writing books or delivering lectures which were anything more than a mere recitation of facts. The fact that the statement of the supposed affective grounds of his belief was an easy way of triumphing over an opponent is, of course, no new discovery of modern psychology. Those of you who are close observers of human life will have recognised that it has always been the principal dialectical method of the arguments which take place in the gutter. It has not been unknown in more intellectual circles.

There are two principal directions in which this kind of criticism may be found unsatisfactory. The first is the fact that there is really no reason at all for supposing that all reasoning processes are in fact without influence, and a legitimate influence, on the formation of belief. Secondly, there is a possibility which must be considered

with some caution that the determination of belief by processes not strictly rational may not be altogether a mark of falsity, as our intellectual habits of mind tend to lead us to suppose.

Let us examine with some care the process of mind which is involved in a change of opinion, such as the change of opinion about some scientific theory. We have already looked at this shortly and we saw that rationalisation played a part in it. Reasons can be produced for the original opinion. Some of these may be rationalisations, but there is certainly no reason for supposing that they all are. The mind has probably at first, in coming to its opinion, no affective bias one way or the other. Then, after the opinion has been formed, experience begins to accumulate against the theory. There is now a strong affective bias in favour of retaining it. In the first place, there is unwillingness to admit that one was wrong. Secondly, the evidence may not at first be strong enough to overthrow the theory completely, so that if its implications were accepted, it would result in placing the mind in the unpleasant situation of doubt. Therefore the mind normally resists the implications of this new experience and creates a rationalisation which makes it fit in with the old theory.

Even with the most honest and careful scientific workers the usual attitude towards a fact which seems to conflict with their theories is irritation, and either a refusal to accept it or else an elaborate rationalisation to account for it which seems ridiculous to other people. This may go on for some time until the original theory is supported by a mass of such rationalisations. But we are not justified in concluding that the new facts have had no effect on the mind of the investigator. The

rationalisations are only a temporary device to avoid the existence of a period of uncertainty. If the new experience really undermines his theory, a time will come when his carefully prepared rationalisations will collapse like a house of cards, and he will suddenly change his mind. He will then be able to see the unreality of some of his old supports. The point I wish you to notice about this case is that the investigator does not really hold his opinions independently of evidence against them. He appears to do so, and his case might by a superficial observer be quoted as an example of pure rationalisation to show that affective grounds determined the whole of his belief. His beliefs are in fact really plastic to the influence of experience. This is what I wish to suggest as the essential criterion of a rationally held belief. His reasons are, it is true, mixed with rationalisations, but so far as they express a real moulding influence of experience, they are genuine ones. Such plasticity of beliefs to experience is the mark of a rational mind.

We can contrast this with another case. We all know the man who goes on resisting experience. As fact after fact accumulates against his theories, he goes on elaborating rationalisation after rationalisation. He may spend his whole life without changing his mind. While his subject is advancing, he sits in his study writing books which are more and more involved, in which he fits all the new discoveries into the theories of his youth. He is never refuted. His reasons appear marvels of ingenuity and consistency, but no one else believes his theories and they soon cease to read his books. Their elaborate rationalisations are unnecessary to people who do not share his affective disposition in favour of his theories. He is an example of a man whose opinions are

not plastic to the influence of experience. We justly suspect the reasons he gives us, however consistent they may appear.

While admitting, then, that actually intellectual processes play a smaller part in the formation of belief than we are generally inclined to suppose, they do play some part. This part is principally in the criticism and control of beliefs which may owe their origin in part to other causes. The logical consistency of beliefs and their perceived coherency with the rest of our knowledge determine whether they shall pass the test of our intellects. To a normally constituted mind, a belief which does not satisfy these tests will not permanently be held, however much it may be given an appearance of logical consistency by being bolstered up by rationalisations. The plasticity of beliefs to the influence of experience is the sign by which their rationality may be judged. Any reasoning process which does not start from experience, such as the ontological argument for the existence of God, is quite naturally suspected of being a rationalisation, however logically rigid it may appear. And, as a matter of fact, it is interesting to notice how extraordinarily small its influence has been in the history of religious thought. The natural reaction to it is to suspect that there is a catch somewhere, even if the argument cannot be refuted. The Roman Church has given expression to this feeling by laying down that ontologism cannot safely be taught.

In addition, there are the tendencies which have already been mentioned to doubt whether the determination of beliefs by reason is the only criterion of their truth. The hackneyed piece of advice, "Give your decision boldly for it is probably right, but never give

your reasons for they will almost certainly be wrong," is often quoted as an example of the implicit recognition of the process of rationalisation. But it is often forgotten that it also implies that one's beliefs may in fact be true although one's intellectual defence of them is a mere rationalisation. In other words, that the truth has been reached by some other process than reasoning. The attitude mentioned in the last chapter, of resting belief on feeling, is a more extreme example of the denial of reason as the final decider in matters of belief. Such an epistemology as that of Bergson, in which intuition is regarded as a guide to truth of greater value than intelligence, also denies the supreme importance claimed for the rational root in the formation of belief and therefore in the discovery of truth.

We will now turn to a study of religion of the *rational type*. This is the type of religion in which either deliberately in response to a preconceived theory, or as a result of a habit of mind, the rational element receives a disproportionate amount of emphasis. It is found in all persons of an intellectual habit of mind such as philosophers. It is the natural habit of mind of anyone at first who is trying to think clearly about these things. Those who think clearly enough are generally driven out of it, either into scepticism or into a religion which rests much more on feeling, by their discovery of the weakness of the position of the rational type of religion. This weakness is a double one. There is first the intellectual unsatisfactoriness of the so-called proofs of the existence of God. Supposed to have compelling force as apodictically certain proofs, their conclusions can as a matter of fact be doubted, and have been doubted by philosophers who are as capable of forming an opinion on

them as those who have been convinced. Secondly, there is the psychological unsatisfactoriness of a position which rests on a part only of what forms belief in a normal man. Purely intellectual conviction of the existence of God means very little until it has become associated with feelings and with experience. The mere proof of the existence of a supreme being would lead us little further towards a religion than the proof of the existence of infinite numbers. A man with a religion purely of the rational type would be in a worse position than the devils who, St James tells us, "believe and tremble." He would believe and remain in a condition of the most profound indifference.

An excellent example of the passage from religion of the intellectual type to one in which the affective element played a more important part is provided by the autobiography of Al Ghazzali. He was a Mohammedan professor of theology at Baghdad. He began with a religion which was of the traditional and rational type. A profound study of Western philosophy, particularly of Descartes, convinced him of the instability of the rational foundation of the belief in God. He became completely sceptical, and remained in that state for many years. Then he was led back to religion, but not by the path of reason. He was, he tells us, redeemed by a light which God caused to penetrate into his heart, and he became a Sufi (a Mohammedan believer of the affective type).

Having now discussed in turn the five roots of the belief in God, the task of the psychology of religion is not over. Most of the remaining chapters until we come to discuss Conversion and Mysticism will be devoted to the attempt to get some insight into what underlies the

elements which have already been discussed. Our treatment of the affective element, for example, was conspicuously incomplete. We merely described emotional experiences which contributed to religious belief without ever asking whether psychology could give any further explanation of the experiences themselves. This is a question which it is impossible to attempt to answer without going much farther into the psychology of feeling states, of instincts, and of the subconscious mind. These, therefore, will form the subject of the following chapters.

CHAPTER VII

CONSCIOUS PROCESSES

My intention in the present chapter is to spend a short time in the discussion of the psychology of conscious states, and particularly of the psychology of feeling. In any discussion of the psychology of religion, we are constantly talking about emotions, feelings, sentiments, etc., and it is as well to make our thought as clear as possible about these things. Perhaps more than in any other part of psychology, we are faced by the difficulty that these words are used in ordinary speech with vaguely defined meanings. It is only possible to attain the clarity of thought essential to a scientific discussion by taking the terms of common speech and giving them a strictly definite meaning. So far as possible it is as well to keep this meaning somewhere within the limits of the meanings our words bear in popular speech, but this is not essential. It is clearly impossible to use words in the same meaning as they have in their ordinary use, partly because this ordinary use is so variable, partly because as we begin to refine our thought we find that it is necessary to find names for things which have no names at all in ordinary language because they are not things which the ordinary man has thought of separately.

It may be as well to point out here, that one of the difficulties we shall meet with in dealing with the historical material for the psychology of religion (particularly of mysticism) is that we find that, although mental states are often described with real introspective

insight, these descriptions are usually given in terms of a psychology which has been completely abandoned. This is the Scholastic faculty psychology. Quite briefly, the difference between the scholastics' psychology and our own is that they thought of a soul possessing the faculties of will, memory, imagination, etc., just as the body possesses arms, legs and a head. This conception of *faculties* violates a fundamental principle of scientific method—that entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily. The immediately experienced facts are conations, not a faculty of will, memories, not a faculty of memory, images, not a faculty of imagination. Since we can give a complete description of mind by talking about these immediately experienced facts only, we have no right to talk about faculties at all, and in modern psychology we do not. It is necessary therefore, when using data from such writers as the Catholic mystics, to translate what they say from the language of the scholastic psychology into the language of modern psychology.

It is usual to analyse a complete condition of mind at any moment into three elements: *cognition, feeling* and *conation. Cognition* is used to cover all ways of having knowledge of awareness of an object. By object is here meant anything that can become an object of thought, an abstract idea as well as a material object.

Feeling is used in widely different senses in ordinary speech. We speak of having a feeling of hunger. We are then using *feeling* for an organic sensation. There are four other senses in which it is used. The sense in which it is to be restricted as an element in all states of consciousness is much the same as our use of it when we speak of a *feeling of anger* or a *feeling of displeasure.* If

we want a name for a unit of feeling, we can call it an *affect.* The whole of the feeling element in our mind at any one time we call an *affective state.*

Conation is the active element in our conscious life. It includes the mental side of voluntary movements, and the production of voluntary changes in the chain of ideas. The whole system of our conations is what was called in the old faculty psychology and in ordinary speech *the will.*

These three elements are not distinct states of consciousness which may exist in the mind in isolation. They are constituents of states of mind in which all three exist together. Every complex state of mind consists of cognition, feeling and conation in conjunction.

Our affects may be divided into two classes, those we find pleasant and those we find painful. Pleasantness and painfulness are thus qualities of feelings. Strong fear has a painful affect, joy has a pleasant one. This quality of affects is called *feeling tone* or *hedonic tone. Pain* is a word used in so many different senses that it is not generally employed as a name for the feeling tone opposite in character to pleasure. It is more usual to coin a word and to call it *unpleasure.* The feeling tone of an affect is thus its quality of pleasure or unpleasure.

I wish next to discuss the meaning of the word *emotion. Emotion* is used in two distinct senses by psychologists. It does not matter which we adopt since it is really only a question of convenience, but it is as well to notice the difference, because in reading about emotion in psychological text-books, there is always danger of mistaking a difference in the use of words for a real difference of opinion about facts.

The best way of beginning our treatment of emotion,

is to start, not by a discussion of the meaning of the word but of a concrete fact—by trying to find out what we mean when we make such a statement as that someone is angry. This will be most clear if we do it in the form of a diagram. We may notice first of all that we mean both something about his state of mind, and something about his bodily behaviour. We will begin by drawing a line down the middle of the page, and putting the particulars of the contents of his mind on the left-hand side of the line, and the details of his bodily behaviour on the right.

Mind	Body
Cognition. Of the cause and the object of anger.	
Feeling. A distinctive affect, on the whole of unpleasant feeling tone.	*Involuntary bodily changes.* Flushing, increased rapidity of heart beat, difficulty of inspiration, etc.
Conation. Of striking, etc.	*Behaviour.* Striking or clenching the fist.

Diagram to illustrate the analysis of the emotion of anger.

The mind of a man when he is angry, as at all other times, contains all three elements, cognition, feeling and conation, although it is the feeling element which particularly attracts our attention in the state of anger. The cognition may be not very prominent. It includes an awareness of, let us say, the affront received and of the person with whom the subject is angry. The feeling element is a strong and distinctive affect (with a feeling tone on the whole unpleasant) which is peculiar to the state under consideration. The conation is the mental side of the impulse to strike or to clench the fist. On the bodily side, there are two kinds of event. There are first, a series of involuntary changes—flushing, increased

rapidity of heart beat, difficulty of inspiration, etc. In addition to these, there are voluntary movements—striking or clenching the fist. In the diagram, I have put these voluntary movements opposite to the conations which are the mental aspect of them. The involuntary movements I have put opposite to the feeling element in the mind, because in the James-Lange theory of the emotions the affect is supposed to be merely the organic sensations due to these bodily changes.

Now we have the alternative of including in the word 'emotion,' everything that is on the mind side of the central line, or of restricting it to the affect. We can call it the total mental state of the man when he is angry, or only the feeling element of that total state. Professor Ward and Mr Shand choose the first alternative. Dr Myers and Dr Prideaux choose the second. There is, of course, no question of which is right; it is merely a question of convenience. It is only necessary to decide which meaning we shall adopt and to use it consistently. I intend to adopt the first alternative, and to mean by emotion the whole state of mind, using the word *affect* when I wish to refer only to the feeling-element. Mr Shand also speaks of the *system of the emotion*, by which he means the whole state of mind plus its bodily accompaniments, plus the bodily and psychical disposition called *an instinct*.

Some emotions, such as awe and contempt, can be analysed into simpler emotions; others, such as fear and anger, cannot. The former are called complex emotions, the latter primary emotions. McDougall, for example, analyses awe as a combination of the primary emotions of wonder, fear and negative self-feeling (the emotion of submission); contempt as a combination of disgust and

positive self-feeling (elation or the emotion of self-assertion).

There is no exact agreement amongst psychologists as to what are the primary emotions. Shand gives fear, anger, joy, sorrow, disgust, repugnance, and surprise. McDougall mentions fear, anger, wonder, disgust, negative and positive self-feeling, and tender emotion (to be explained later). My own inclination is to follow Shand in retaining joy and sorrow as primary emotions; while following McDougall in omitting repugnance, and adding positive and negative self-feeling, and tender emotion.

We sometimes experience the affect proper to an emotion, without the accompanying cognition of an object, so without the possibility of giving vent to the distinctive behaviour. An example is when we do what is popularly called *getting out of bed on the wrong side.* We have the affect proper to anger, but there is no object of our anger. This is called a *mood.* It is a particularly unpleasant frame of mind because we cannot get the relief we obtain in an emotion of anger by giving vent to the behaviour proper to the emotion. For this reason, we change an angry mood into an emotion of anger as quickly as possible by finding a suitable object for our anger. A mood may be defined as a state of mind containing the affect proper to an emotion but without the associated cognitions.

We will now leave the consideration of the emotions and pass on to mental facts of a more complex type, of which we may take hatred as an example. It is clear that hatred is not an emotion. It is something of a different kind from, let us say, anger. When we say that we hate a person, we do not mean that we are, at the present moment, having any specific experience con-

nected with him, but that we have a mental disposition to experience certain emotions when the object of our hate is in certain situations. We tend to feel sorrow when he is happy, joy when he is unhappy, repugnance in his presence, and so on. The object of our hate may not be in our minds, and then we experience no emotion about him at all. But in ordinary language we say that we still hate, for the disposition towards the emotions is still there ready to be called out as soon as the hated object comes again into our thoughts.

The great service which Mr Shand has performed for psychology is to distinguish things of this class and to provide them with a name. The name he gives them is *sentiment*. This is not quite the meaning of the word *sentiment* in common speech, but there seems to be no word which is more suitable. A sentiment we may define as a system of emotional dispositions. The difference between it and an emotion is that an emotion is an actual experience, a sentiment is only a disposition towards experiences of a certain kind. The different emotions which the sentiment of hate may call up under appropriate conditions are called by Shand, *the emotions organised in the system of hate*.

M. Ribot's word *passion* in his *Essai sur les Passions* is used in a manner similar to Shand's *sentiment*, but he defines it quite differently as an intense and prolonged emotion. It is a less useful conception, and was never very widely adopted by English psychologists, who have however been almost unanimous in their welcome of Shand's conception of the sentiment.

As an example of a sentiment, I might have taken love instead of hate. The reason why I did not do so is because, although the word *love* in ordinary speech is

generally used to describe a sentiment, it is also used for an emotion—the pleasurable emotion felt in the presence of the object of our love. This ambiguity causes some confusion of thought and may best be removed from psychology by restricting the word *love* to the sentiment of love, and finding a new word for the emotion. The name now generally employed for the emotion felt in the presence of the object of love is *tender emotion.*

The fact that love as ordinarily understood is a sentiment, and may therefore organise in its system a variety of different emotions is one which seems to have been a recurring surprise to lovers. It is a discovery which has frequently been expressed by them in verse, although not always with the precision required by scientific psychology. Shand quotes Chaucer and Coleridge as examples of this and also the following lines from Swift:

> Love why do we one passion call
> When 'tis a compound of them all?
> Where hot and cold, where sharp and sweet,
> In all their equipages meet;
> Where pleasures mix'd with Pains appear,
> Sorrow with Joy, and Hope with Fear.

In other words, the poet insists that it is incorrect to speak of love as a single emotion since it is a sentiment which organises in its system all the emotions. The latter statement, as will be seen later, is not strictly accurate.

Love is a sentiment which organises in its system most of the emotions of hate, but they are called up by opposite situations of its object. In love we feel sorrow at the unhappiness and at the absence of the object of love, joy at his happiness, fear at anything threatening

the object of love, anger at any person injuring him. But the emotion of repugnance called out by the presence of an object of hate is not found in the system of love at all, and the tender emotion felt in the presence of the object of love is not found in the system of hate. Tender emotion is, in fact, peculiar to the various forms of the sentiment of love.

You will remember that, in the first chapter we met with a definition of religion as a particular kind of emotion. It should be clear that, in the sense in which we are using the word *emotion*, the definition is absurd. On its mental side, religion is clearly a sentiment, it is a system of emotional dispositions organising in its system a variety of different emotions. It is therefore correct to speak of *the religious sentiment*. James, it is true, denies that there is any specific religious sentiment, but he is using *sentiment* loosely in much the same sense as we use *emotion*. He is not speaking of sentiment in the sense in which it is employed by Shand. Using sentiment in that sense, we may speak of the religious sentiment when we mean the system of emotional dispositions organised around the objects of religion.

The emotions organised in the religious sentiment are, on the whole, the same as those of the sentiment of love. We may ask whether there is any specific religious emotion found organised only in the religious sentiment. Probably there is not one which is never found in any other sentiment, but the characteristic emotion of religion is the highly complex one called reverence. McDougall considers that there are few human beings able to excite reverence, and that those who do are generally regarded as the ministers and dispensers of divine power.

The character of most people is largely compounded of a variety of different sentiments. The emotional response in any particular situation may be produced by the action of the situation on any one of these. It happens sometimes that one of the sentiments establishes itself so much in the predominant position that the emotional responses of the individual are called out from that one sentiment alone. An example of this is when the sentiment of love attains such a predominance temporarily. The sorrow felt at the absence of the object of love, is sufficient to counteract the joy which should have been produced by the action of the environment on the other sentiments; or joy at the presence of the object of love prevents the appearance of sorrow when that would appear to be the natural response of the other sentiments to other elements in the situation.

Similarly religion is ordinarily one amongst many sentiments. The emotional response of the individual is sometimes called out by the action of the situation on that sentiment, sometimes by its action on others. When the religious sentiment attains such a predominance as has just been described for the sentiment of love, we have what is called *mysticism*. In the mystic, the religious sentiment has attained such predominance that the emotional responses of the mystic are called out by that sentiment alone, as those of the lover are by his sentiment of love.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNCONSCIOUS

THE attempt to deal with the psychology of the unconscious in the space of one short chapter is little less ambitious than the aim of the works one sometimes sees advertised which profess to reveal the whole plan of creation in a pamphlet of thirty pages sold for twopence. Practically the whole of the modern psychology which has been developed from the study of mental disorder is a psychology of the unconscious. The most that I can hope to do in the short space it is possible to devote to this subject is to give a sufficiently clear outline of the theory underlying this work to enable us to use the conception of unconscious mental activity in an intelligent manner, and to see how incomplete a psychology of religion must necessarily be which ignores this aspect of mental life altogether.

Consciousness is a fact which cannot be defined but which can easily be understood, since we all experience it. Some of our conditions and activities are accompanied by an awareness. We are, for example, aware of a feeling of fatigue or of a voluntary movement. It is this accompaniment of awareness that makes the state or activity a conscious one. It is, of course, possible to define psychology as the science of consciousness, and to refuse to admit into a psychological discussion any other facts than facts of consciousness. This, however, is not usual at the present time. A large number of facts have been investigated which are most simply accounted for by

admitting into psychology the idea of mental facts whose principal difference from the facts of consciousness is that they are not accompanied by any awareness of them.

As examples, we may take the numerous sensations which at any moment are not attended to. At the present time you are reading a book. The visual sensations of the words of that book are conscious ones. But at the same time, there are numerous sensations to which you are not attending, and which seem hardly to enter into consciousness at all. Such are: the feeling of the pressure of your clothes, the ticking of the clock behind you, and the motions you are making in breathing. They enter into your total state of consciousness to some extent; you would notice their sudden removal and you can become aware of them as soon as your attention is directed towards them. As a second example, we may take what happens in suggestion. The most spectacular case is that of post-hypnotic suggestion. This is a suggestion given in the hypnotic trance which is to be realised after the subject has come out of the trance. The subject is, for example, ordered to take off his hat at a certain time. If the experiment is successful, at the stated time he does so, although up to the moment of its performance he has had no idea that he has received the suggestion at all. It violates our usual habit of thinking about causation to suppose that in the interval the suggestion has completely disappeared from the man's mind and has reappeared from nowhere at the time for its realisation. An alternative is to suppose that it has remained in the mind but unconsciously. The region of the mind in which it has stayed has been called the *subconscious*, the *subliminal*, and the *unconscious*. It may be noticed that in this experiment there has also been a subconscious estimation of time.

At one time psychologists recognised subconsciousness only of the kind first mentioned—sensations, etc. which are only outside consciousness so far as attention is directed away from them and those which are too weak to enter consciousness. But a very much wider kind of subconsciousness is a postulate necessary in order to give a satisfactory account of such phenomena as post-hypnotic suggestion and of a very large number of observations in mental pathology. Objections to the conception of unconscious mental processes are urged by some of the older psychologists and by philosophers. I will not discuss these in detail. It seems to me to be possible to formulate a conception of unconscious mental processes which is unobjectionable. The empirical facts on which the conception is based cannot be doubted. Unconscious mental processes are postulated in order to provide links to make complete in thought an otherwise incomplete chain of mental causation. As empirical psychologists, we need claim no more reality for them than that.

We will now consider a few different conceptions of unconscious mentality. The words *subconscious* and *subliminal* and the ideas connected with them were first made popular by F. W. H. Myers. He compared the human mind with a spectrum, and regarded consciousness as comparable with the visible part of the spectrum, and such organic processes as are unconscious he compared with the infra-red part of the spectrum. From the part of our life comparable with the ultra-violet come the insight of the poet and the inspiration of the prophet, religion, mysticism and love. Myers says:

It is *that* prolongation of our spectrum upon which our gaze will need to be most strenuously fixed. It is *there* that we shall find our inquiry opening upon the cosmic prospect, and inciting us upon an endless way.

This region has often been called the *supraconscious*. It is unfortunate that this conception has been so popular. The supraconscious, *uprushings from the subliminal self*, and so on, are terms dear to writers on mysticism. Once the phraseology has been mastered, wonderful possibilities are open to the writer or preacher to whom flights of imagination are more congenial than clear thinking and the severity of the scientific method. There is no limit to what may be said about the spiritual life by such writers, for in the *supraconscious* contradiction is as impossible as verification. The objection to it all is that, as a fact, it is founded on no sort of scientific evidence at all. Anyone can say anything he likes about it because it is a region of which no one knows anything, not even its existence.

This vogue of the *supraconscious* in religious writing has been unfortunate because it has turned attention away from the more firmly grounded part of the work of F. W. H. Myers, and from the real value to religious psychology of the investigations in mental pathology. It is to these latter that I wish to draw your attention now. Unconscious regions of the mind can be investigated scientifically and it is possible to find out a great deal about their nature and the laws of their operations. No statement about *the mysteries of the subliminal* which is not based on the results of such investigations is worth any more than the speculations of pre-scientific astronomy about the influence of the stars on our fortunes.

It has been made a reproach against the whole of this kind of psychology that it is founded on the study of diseased minds. That is true, and it is probable that exaggerations have sometimes been the result of taking over into normal psychology conceptions which had

their place only in mental disease. Yet this objection is not a very serious one. Diseased minds show the same general characteristics as healthy ones, and it is their lack of balance which enables us to distinguish in them processes which are present in healthy ones. We need only observe the very obvious precaution of verifying their existence in healthy minds. In other words, it is no reproach to the psychology of mental pathology that it draws its conceptions from a study of persons in a state of mental ill-health since it can be proved by observation that these same conceptions give us satisfactory explanations of the workings of the minds of ordinary persons.

A very good idea of the early position of this school of psychologists may be obtained by reading Binet's *Alterations of Personality*, or any similar work of the French psychiatrists, written during the last thirty years. In such a book, an investigation into the operations of the subconscious mind and its laws of working will be found. It will be found that subconscious action is recognised in the working of suggestion, in the production of hallucinations, in somnambulisms, and in all the phenomena of hysteria. A study of these works, however, leaves us vaguely dissatisfied. They are descriptive of the subconscious mind, but they are not explanatory. One seems to be confronted with a vast number of facts, whose connection and causation are not explained. One feels that, perhaps, the key to the riddle lies in the answer to a question to which psychology at that time had found no reply. This question is: "Why is there any subconscious?" The attempt to answer it was made by Professor Sigmund Freud of Vienna.

Freud's contributions to psychology have met with

a very bitter opposition from a certain number of psychologists and doctors, and from many more people who are neither. They have been attacked on moral, on aesthetic, and on scientific grounds. The intensity of this opposition makes it rather difficult to estimate the importance and the value of his work. On the whole, I am inclined to judge that it is very easily the most important contribution to the science of psychology that has ever been made by one man. He has for the first time given us an explanation of the significance of the unconscious, upon the brink of which the French psychiatrists seemed often to be, although they never reached it. He has also given us a method by which the investigation of the unconscious can be carried out. The immense value of Freud's work can be illustrated, as I try to illustrate it in a later chapter, by comparing the insight it gives us into the psychic mechanisms at work in conversion with the amount of insight one could have when all that could be said about conversion from the psychological point of view was that it was due to the *subconscious germination* of something, without any explanation of why it germinated or why it was subconscious.

I do not wish it to be supposed that I am recommending a complete acceptance of the whole Freudian position. The very isolation into which the thought of Freud was forced by his long boycott by other workers in the same subject has produced the prejudice, the exaggerations, and the dogmatism in the work of Freudians which are always the result of intellectual isolation. But, at the same time, it will be as impossible for a psychologist of the future to ignore the work of Freud, as it would have been for a biologist in the nineteenth century to have ignored the work of Darwin.

The terminology introduced by Freud is very largely new, and is not always very convenient. He does not use the words subconscious or subliminal at all. He uses *preconscious* to describe that part of the mind consisting of mental elements and processes which are not present to consciousness at the time, but which could be made conscious by a direction of attention to them. Such are: the feeling of the pressure of the clothes while the mind is directed towards something else, or a name which happens not to be in your mind because you are not thinking about it, but which you would remember at once if you did think about it, as, for example, the name of the town in which you are at present living. For things which are actually present in the mind but which cannot be made conscious by a mere effort of the attention (although they can in certain other ways) he uses the word *unconscious*. As an example of an unconscious mental fact we may take the name which you ought to know but which obstinately escapes you when you try to recall it. Freud thus recognises three regions of mind —the *conscious*, the *preconscious* and the *unconscious*[1]. It is his treatment of the unconscious which is the original part of his theory.

In discussing Freud's theory of the unconscious, it is quite impossible in a short space to give any adequate idea of the evidence on which it is based. A condensed and readable account of this is to be found in the first

[1] The confusion of thought which some of Freud's followers cause themselves by a loose use of this terminology is almost unbelievable. There is a small popular handbook on the Freudian psychology in which the author, in the course of one short paragraph, uses the word "consciousness" in three different senses: (1) in the restricted sense, (2) to mean the *conscious* plus the *preconscious*, and (3) to mean the *conscious* plus the *preconscious* plus the *unconscious*.

fifteen chapters of his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*[1]. I will try to give a brief account in turn of the three most important items in his theory of the unconscious. These are: the method by which mental material becomes unconscious, the contents of the unconscious, and the methods by which the unconscious can be unearthed.

The method by which material becomes unconscious is what Freud calls *repression*. It will be easier to follow what I am going to say about this if I give an example of repression first and a more general account of it afterwards. It was a belief of the older psychologists that things disappeared from our memories because they were weak, and because they called up no strong feeling. That is true of some forgetting, but not of all. During the war it was not uncommon for a man to pass through some terrible experience which was accompanied by the strongest possible feelings, and for that experience to be absolutely obliterated from his memory soon afterwards. This was the cause of a good many cases of "shell-shock." No effort to remember could enable such a man to recover his lost memory. It had disappeared from his conscious mind as completely as if the incident had never happened. Yet it clearly had not gone from his mind as a whole. It influenced his conduct, his mental health, and his dreams. The disappearance was not the result of any voluntary effort to forget—it was *unwitting*. Any such effort would have been ineffectual. This is a simple case of *repression*. It is an unwitting process by which the mind relegates to the unconscious painful memories, painful conflicts, and the wishes whose presence in consciousness would be painful because of

[1] London, 1922.

the impossibility or undesirability of fulfilling them. The word *suppression* is used of the witting refusal to translate into action the impulses to undesirable courses of action (such as certain impulses of the primitive instincts). Suppression of such impulses is followed either by their repression or by their sublimation[1]. One of the practical problems of religion is to provide an effective means of sublimation so that the process of repression (which is liable to produce mental disorder) may be avoided.

The contents of the unconscious are such repressed memories and conflicts, and those animal and infantile elements in our psyche which are incompatible with the demands of civilisation. These superseded primitive elements consist in large part of the unchecked impulses of our instincts. In the unconscious, the egoistic impulse exists with the ruthless disregard for the needs of other people which is characteristic of the young child. The sex-impulse makes its demands with the disregard for the requirements of morality which belongs to a much more primitive stage of evolution. There is nothing disgusting about this. The important thing ethically is that these libidinous impulses of the instincts are suppressed. We have risen from primitive morality by our relegation to the unconscious of these impulses. The structure of the unconscious shows the stages of our evolution in much the same way as the vermiform appendix.

The unconscious shows itself by its influence on conduct and by its effect on dreams. We have already had examples of the effect of the unconscious on conduct in the discussion of rationalisation. You will remember that we met with examples of conduct which were really determined by unconscious motives, for which the mind

[1] Cf. pp. 112 and 124.

made rationalisations in order to avoid the recognition of the repressed motive. Another kind of conduct to which Freud draws attention is that class of mistakes which are found on analysis to have an unconscious motive, such as the losing of a present given to us by someone we dislike, or the accidental leaving of articles at the house of someone we wish to revisit. These cases sound fanciful, but I think it is possible to convince ourselves of the reality of the unconscious motive in a large number of our own mistakes if we examine them carefully. An adequate account of the Freudian theory of dreams would take a longer space than we can spare now. Essentially they are regarded by him as disguised representations in the sleeper's consciousness of conflicts in the unconscious.

The method of psychoanalysis is the one which is most used in the exploration of the unconscious. We wish, let us say, to discover the fact in the unconscious which finds expression in a given element in a dream. The subject is asked to relax his body and, starting from the element in question, to say whatever comes into his head without any exercise at all of his critical faculty. If this is carried out correctly, it is believed that he is led in the end to the unconscious thought of which he is in search. It is probable that this method depends in part on the subject being in a hypnoidal condition. A difficulty is found in reaching the required unconscious thought in psychoanalysis. The subject fails to find any association, or has reasoned objections to the process. This difficulty is called *resistance*. It is the result of the fact that the thought in question is repressed.

There is one other conception in psychoanalysis which we shall find of value. It was pointed out that the un-

conscious was the seat of libidinous instinctive desires. The energy of these repressed desires can be utilised by the mind for other purposes, and the enthusiasm for art, for religion, and for work of all kinds is supposed to be made possible by the utilisation for such higher purposes of the energy of these instinctive desires. This process of the utilisation for higher ends of energy derived from the repression of instincts is called *sublimation.*

Freud gives an illustration of the relation of the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious, which (although it makes no claim to be satisfactory in all respects) may help to make his meaning clear. He imagines consciousness as an observer in a small room. This room is the preconscious. It is curtained off from a larger room which is the unconscious. This room is full of people whom it is undesirable that the observer in the small room should see. The resistance which prevents them from coming into the smaller room is supplied by a man at the curtain who refuses to allow the undesirable people to pass him. He is what Freud calls *the censorship.* If someone passes the censorship, he enters the small room, but, of course, he will not be seen unless the observer happens to look at him. A thought entering the preconscious does not become conscious unless attention is directed towards it. In the same illustration, Freud's theory of the dream would be that in sleep the vigilance of the doorkeeper was to some extent relaxed so that he allowed the undesirable people to pass him if they did so in such disguise that they would not be recognised by the observer.

For the sake of simplicity and brevity, I have given Freud's own views without pointing out where they may be criticised. It is necessary, however, to mention that

even those who agree with his main conceptions would not accept everything I have described. Dr Rivers, for example, considers that the whole conception of the censorship is misleading, and he regards as a fantastic and unnecessary explanation the idea that the dream is a disguise to evade the censorship.

I need hardly point out how very far removed is the unconscious which scientific investigation reveals to us from the *subliminal* of F. W. H. Myers. It is, however, the only subconscious we have any right to use in the psychology of religion, if our aim is to make its study scientific.

I will not go in detail into the ways in which the conception of the unconscious has a bearing on the problems of religious psychology. It will be more convenient to consider these problems as they arise in the course of later chapters and to be content now with the attempt to make the conception of the unconscious clear. We have already met with points where it was necessary to postulate something more than conscious processes of mind. An example to which I have already referred in the course of the present chapter, is when an intellectual chain of reasoning appears as a disguise for an affective determination of an opinion or a course of conduct. In general, we may say that introspection does not necessarily give us a true account of the reasons for an action or an opinion, since introspection reveals only the elements which are conscious. This is an important fact for the psychology of religion, since it shows how hopeless must be the attempt to obtain our data from introspection alone. We must draw our conclusions from a study of religious behaviour as well as from what religious people tell us.

A second example of unconscious mental action which we have already met is suggestion. The essential part of suggestion, the process by which the suggestion received is transformed into an opinion or an action, is not conscious. For this reason, suggestion has been defined as *the subconscious realisation of an idea.* This is a simpler definition than the one previously given, and has the advantage of leaving open the question whether the idea was received from someone else, was originated deliberately by the person in whose mind it appears, or was originated by himself accidentally.

A third point in connection with the unconscious I wish to discuss here is *symbolism.* The manner of thinking, which we may call *directed thinking,* is a voluntary activity. It employs mostly words, and is a function acquired late in evolution. A more primitive kind of thinking in which words are replaced by concrete images is developed when the mind is in the condition of reverie, and is, according to the psychoanalysts, found in the unconscious. This is more nearly allied to the manner of thinking of primitive peoples, as is shown by the construction of their language, and is probably the way we thought in early childhood[1]. It is, of course, the way we think in dreams now. If an image has a fairly uniform meaning for different people it is called a *symbol.* Unconscious thinking tends to use symbols. That is one explanation of the very large part symbolism plays in religion (I shall point out later that it is not the whole explanation). We all know that if we wish to appeal to something more than the surface of the minds of an

[1] The term, *the infantile psyche,* is often used for that part of the mind of a grown-up person which thinks and reacts in this infantile way now.

audience we must speak in symbols. No reasoned justification of the British Empire or of Karl Marx's social theories will make the same appeal to an audience as a vague phrase about *the glorious Union Jack upon which the sun never sets* or about *the red flag which waves the way to freedom.* These are symbols, and however meaningless they may appear when intellectually analysed they have a strong affective appeal because their appeal reaches the unconscious processes of thought. This suggests a reason why it is not really practical wisdom to try to reduce the symbolism of a religion, however foolish parts of that symbolism may sometimes appear to our intelligence. A reduction of symbolism means a weakening of the hold religion has on the unconscious modes of thinking, and therefore its particular weakening of those whose power of directed thinking is not very highly developed.

A good example of this kind of thinking in religion is provided by the authors of a recently published work on an Indian mystic. They say: "he thinks in pictures. For him an analogy or illustration is not merely a means to establish an argument; it is often the argument itself[1]." Such an illustration is provided a few pages later.

At one time I was a good deal perplexed about the doctrine of the Trinity. I had thought of three separate Persons sitting as it were on three thrones; but it was all made plain to me in a Vision. I entered in an Ecstasy into the third heaven. I was told that it was the same to which St Paul was caught up. And there I saw Christ in a glorious spiritual body sitting on a throne....The first time I entered Heaven I looked round about and I asked, "But where is God?" And they told me, "God is not to be seen here any more than on earth, for God

[1] *The Sadhu*, by Streeter and Appasamy, p. 53.

is Infinite. But there is Christ, He is God, He is the image of the Invisible God, and it is only in Him that we can see God, in heaven as on earth." And streaming out from Christ I saw, as it were, waves shining and peace-giving, and going through and among the Saints and Angels, and everywhere bringing refreshment, just as in hot weather water refreshes trees. And this I understood to be the Holy Spirit[1].

The weakness of this kind of thinking lies in its freedom from the possibility of logical testing. It is only so far as doctrines can be translated into words that we can argue about their truth or falsity. I am by no means satisfied that his biographers are just to the Sadhu when they say that an analogy or illustration is for him itself an argument. So far as in religious thinking apt illustration replaces argument, such thinking lays itself open to the charge of infantility.

[1] *The Sadhu*, by Streeter and Appasamy, pp. 55 and 56.

CHAPTER IX

THE INSTINCTS

When we have grasped the distinction between an emotion (an actual experience) and a sentiment (a mental disposition determining that experience), we are naturally led to ask ourselves whether the sentiments are produced by experience in a mental organisation itself formless, or whether there are behind them mental and neural dispositions which determined their starting and influenced their growth. If we consider the developed character as a complex building of which the sentiments are the constituent parts (the walls, the roof, etc.), we may ask whether the original lines of the walls merely followed the caprice of the builder or whether he was working on previously existing foundations whose form we may deduce by a study of the existing structure of the building. It is now generally supposed that there are such dispositions in the mental organisation of man which determine very largely the influence of experience in the development of his mind. These are called *instincts*. Instincts are the innate mental dispositions which are common to all the members of any one species. They play a large part in determining the behaviour of the lower animals; and so far as man is influenced by instincts, these are an inheritance from his animal ancestry.

Before going on to discuss the bearing of the psychology of instinct on our subject, we may notice the extraordinary looseness with which the word is commonly used, even by persons who make some claim to exact

thinking. It is, for example, clearly at variance with the plain meaning of the word to use it for any activity which is developed only on a high level of culture, and even more incorrect to use it for anything developed during any individual's life-time. Yet it is not unusual to hear people speak of the Englishman's *instinctive* love of fair play, or to read of a chess player who makes the correct moves *by instinct*, while many people justify all their irrational prejudices in politics by an appeal to a vague *instinct*. In no subject has this vagueness and inaccuracy been more common than in the psychological study of religion.

In our definition of instinct, we spoke of it as *innate*. It is inherited, not acquired during the individual's own life-time. This serves to distinguish an instinct from a habit. Shaving, for example, however mechanically it may be performed, is a habit and not an instinct, since it is entirely acquired during the individual's life, and owes nothing to heredity. An instinct is a *mental disposition*. We speak of instinctive behaviour, instinctive emotions, etc., but the word *instinct* itself refers neither to the behaviour nor to the emotion but to the disposition to behave, to feel, etc., in this particular way in the particular circumstances.

There is little doubt that the emotions and behaviour of the lower animals are determined by that something innate in their physiological and mental make-up, to which we give the name of instinct. We have all noticed the intense emotion produced in a dog by the objects of his emotions. He quivers with excitement when his hunting instinct is aroused, and shows anger when his instinct of aggression leads him to fight with other dogs. Equally clear is the uniformity of the impulse to be-

haviour dictated by instinct. Ordinarily the dog will give chase as soon as he sees a rabbit. Even if he has been trained not to do so and this impulse to give chase is checked, the existence of the inhibited impulse is clear to an observer of the dog's behaviour. Are the thought and conduct of man also determined by innate dispositions, or are such dispositions as we find in him acquired during the course of his life? This is a question which must be faced seriously by the student of the psychology of religion, for if the behaviour and emotions of man are determined to any considerable extent by instinct, we can attain only a very superficial understanding of the behaviour and the emotions found in religion, unless we study something of the instincts which might influence them.

Before evolutionary biological theory had won general acceptance, the answer to this question was supposed to be a simple one. The piety of the middle of the last century used to say that God had endowed the animals with instinct and man with reason. It was generally assumed that the mental lives of animals and men were so different that no common factor could be found in them. More recent psychology, however, has shown a steady tendency to move away from this position, and the importance of the instincts in determining the behaviour and the thought of men has been increasingly recognised.

Let us review briefly the psychological facts on which this opinion is based. It is true that, compared with the young of other animals, the human baby comes into the world in a very helpless condition. This fact might be used to support the opinion that it had no innate dispositions to guide it, but acquired them (perhaps by the teaching of its mother) as its intelligence grew. This,

however, is a conclusion more extreme than the facts justify. The baby has the instinct of nutrition developed to a small extent (but as much as is required for its own preservation) in the sucking reflex. Other instincts are developed later. It may be noticed that for a disposition to be innate, it is not necessary that it should be operative immediately after birth. The sexual instinct, which is perhaps the most marked innate psychophysical disposition which man shares with the animals, is not fully developed until many years of his life have elapsed.

It is when we turn to the simple activities of man, which are most nearly related to those of the lower animals, when we watch him hunting, fighting, or making love, that we see most clearly the traces of a set of mental dispositions which do not seem to be at bottom different from those of the animals. Even in such high-level activities as his social organisations, we may see at work the same instincts as are found to bind together the herd of gregarious animals. Much more obviously, many an undergraduate who walks down King's Parade in a yellow waistcoat during the Easter Term is doing the same thing, at the same time of the year, and for the same reason, as the peacock displaying his tail.

In our consideration of the instincts which influence human life, we may conveniently follow a classification adopted by Dr Rivers in his *Instinct and the Unconscious*[1]. He divides them into three groups: those connected with the preservation of the individual, the race, and the herd, respectively.

The instincts which have for their object the preservation of the individual include both those which subserve principally the end of nutrition, and also those which

[1] pp. 51 and 52.

determine his conduct in danger (*e.g.* the instinct of flight and of aggression). We may group these under the name of the *instincts of self-preservation.* The individual deficient in these instincts would, in a wild state, be quickly eliminated by starving to death or by falling a prey to some other animal.

There are, however, other very strong instincts which have no survival value to the individual possessing them. The sex-instinct and the parental instinct are examples. Any particular animal deficient in these instincts would be in no way handicapped in the struggle for existence. Its chance of survival would indeed be increased, for it would be free from the dangers to which these two instincts frequently expose their possessors. Many a wild mother must have been torn to pieces because she attempted to save her young, when she might have survived if she had taken to flight; and many male individuals must have been sacrificed to the sex-instinct, when they have lost their lives in a combat for the female which common prudence (the warning voice of the instincts of self-preservation) would have counselled them to avoid. Yet, in spite of the dangers to which they expose the individual, these two instincts are of fundamental importance for the survival of the race. If any species of animal, whose young need the care of the mother for some time after birth, were to produce females deficient in the maternal instinct, that species would quickly die out, through the failure of the members of the new generation to survive. In the same way, a race of animals would die out through failure to produce offspring if its members were deficient in the sex-instinct.

Gregarious animals have also a set of instincts which have as their object the preservation of the herd. We

may imagine a herd of animals whose members possessed only those instincts directed towards the preservation of the individual, so that when the herd was in danger each was concerned only with his own safety and not with that of the herd. It is clear that such a herd would be very helpless compared with one in which each individual was ready to sacrifice himself for the safety of the herd as a whole. The classical description of the *gregarious instinct* is the account of the Damara oxen in Galton's *Inquiries into Human Faculty*. He describes how the ox, although it seems to have little affection for, or individual interest in, its fellows

> cannot endure even a momentary severance from his herd. If he be separated from it by stratagem or force, he exhibits every sign of mental agony; he strives with all his might to get back again, and when he succeeds, he plunges into its middle to bathe his whole body with the comfort of closest companionship.

Galton himself was interested in the Damara oxen because he thought he saw a parallelism between its behaviour and that of human beings. This parallelism is now explained by the assumption that they spring from the same instinctive roots. The gregarious instinct is the root from which springs the human being's uneasiness at separation or isolation from other men, and makes him sensitive to that influence of herd-suggestion on which the safety and the well-being of social groups very largely depend. From this root also comes a large part of his altruistic impulses.

If we acknowledge, then, that man has inherited from his animal ancestors these three sets of instincts, it follows that no account of his psychical life (even in its highest manifestations) can be complete without a con-

sideration of their influence upon him. But, while we recognise that much of his behaviour is not (at least in its beginning) intelligent in the sense that it is determined by previous experience; we must be on our guard against the opposite error of exaggerating the part played by instinct in the determination of human behaviour. Probably it would be such an exaggeration if we were to suppose that even in the examples given—of fighting, hunting and making love—we saw merely the action of unchanged instincts, and that these activities were in no sense forms of intelligent behaviour.

The truth seems to be that the history of the mental development of a human being is the history of the replacement of purely instinctive behaviour by behaviour of the same kind determined by habit, and modified by mental processes of the complex kind which we may describe as intelligent thinking. It can be shown that an unexercised instinct may atrophy. William James points out in his *Principles of Psychology* that a calf prevented from sucking in the first few days of its life does not afterwards begin to do so; chickens shut away from their mother for eight or ten days after hatching will after that time run away from her instead of obeying her call. The instinct of these animals seems to be normally the starting-point of a habit. If the habit is not formed at the proper time, the instinct disappears so the habit cannot be acquired later. It is natural to infer that the instinct dies away in any case, and that what is seen afterwards is only the habit formed on the foundation of the instinct. This illustrates the practical difficulty in making a satisfactory distinction between instinctive behaviour and habit. It is clear that instincts vary enormously in the extent to which they die away if they

are not followed by the behaviour proper to them. Some instincts if they are weakened by disuse, certainly do not disappear completely, for their impulses remain through the greater part of life even when they are never exercised.

What is most distinctive of human development is the extent to which the habits formed by man on the basis of his instincts are modified by the more complex ways of behaving which he owes to his higher mental organisation. His sex-instinct may lead him to marry a wife, and to devote the rest of his life to the maintenance and protection of her and her offspring. In this case, he is forming on his sex-instinct a habit which is its biological intention. But it may also drive him (particularly if his first or repeated attempts to form a habit of the above kind are frustrated) to write poetry, to shut himself up away from the world, to devote himself to scientific research, to paint pictures, or to engage in a variety of other activities which are as remote as can well be imagined from the kinds of habit which other animals found on the same instinct. In this case, we may say that he is redirecting the energy of this instinct to other (perhaps we may think to higher) ends. It is now usual, when the end is recognised to be of value, to call this process *sublimation*.

We now come to the question: "Is the religious sentiment based on an instinct, and if so, on what instinct?" I have asked "Is the religious sentiment?" not "Is religion?" based on an instinct, because there is a part of religion—the rational element—which clearly does not come into the question at all. There have been several different answers to this question. In the first place, some writers have spoken of the *religious instinct*,

implying that the religious sentiment is based on an instinct specifically religious. For example, Starbuck speaks of religion as *a deep-rooted instinct*, and compares it with hunger and the desire for exercise. Others have said that religion is based on an instinct indeed, but that this instinct is the sex-instinct. This has been maintained by a school of American writers on the psychology of religion who have styled themselves *erotogenesists*. This is a subject which I propose to discuss more fully in the next chapter. Mr Trotter in his *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, seems to consider that religion is founded on the herd-instinct. The theory of Professor G. Elliot Smith and Mr W. J. Perry, that the first impulse towards certain early religions was the effort to find *givers of life* which should preserve the individual's existence, would make such religions a growth from the instinct of self-preservation.

This is an aspect of the problems connected with religion which has only recently been brought to the front by the modern psychological study of instinct. A writer would lay himself open to a well-deserved charge of presumption if he claimed to give a final solution of the problems raised. All that he can hope to do is to suggest the lines along which these solutions may be sought, and to point out the falsity of a few of the alluringly simple solutions which have little to recommend them except their simplicity.

If we have admitted the multiplicity of the conscious roots of religious belief, we should be prepared to distrust these too simple solutions which assert that religion is entirely the product of one specified instinct, and to expect rather to find that it is a complex growth from a variety of instincts. This I believe to be the case. The

satisfaction which religion gives to, let us say, the herd-instinct is not, indeed, the same as that given by association with our fellow-men. It is a sublimation of the instinct. The energy of the instinct is used in a new kind of activity. But the instinctive basis of a religious activity often gives its own colouring to that activity. Examples of this will be discussed later.

The instincts of self-preservation seem clearly to be connected with what we have called the *Providence element* in religion—that element which looks to God as a provider for our immediate needs—and with a part of the demand for immortality. It is also connected with the self-interested tendencies which come into conflict with the requirements of the religious society. The sex-instinct is similarly connected with the demand for a worthy object of love and with the demand for a giver of love; the gregarious instinct with the high valuation of the social group as compared with the individual which results in the sentiment developed round the church and in the religious individual's respect for traditional authority.

CHAPTER X

THE SEX-INSTINCT AND RELIGION

[redacted]ject of the present chapter—the relation between [redacted]ion and the instinct of sex—is a question which has been forced to the front by recent tendencies in psychology. The hesitation which may be felt at any attempt to handle the scientific treatment of the psychology of religion must be felt with double force in attempting to deal with a problem so delicate and so difficult as this. My excuse for not evading the subject altogether must be the same as the reason given in the first chapter for refusing to abandon the attempt to consider religion from the point of view of scientific psychology—that we were raising no new problems but discussing problems already raised by a large number of people. It must surely be better for the welfare of religious thought that these questions should be discussed not only by those who are frankly enemies of religion, but that they should also be investigated by those who are sympathetic to it.

Our typical statement of the tenets of the erotogenesists may be taken from the contributions to the *American Journal of Religious Psychology*, by Mr Theodore Schroeder. His theory can be summed up in two statements. First, that all religion is a misinterpretation of sex feeling. Secondly, that religion is therefore completely discredited. Both of these statements seem to be open to question.

His own formulation of the first point is as follows:

all religion in its beginning is a mere misinterpretation of sex-ecstasy, and the religion of to-day is, only the, essentially unchanged, evolutionary product, of psycho-sexual perversion....Thus literally may we say "God is love"—sex-love, sometimes in disguise and indistinctly recognised as such, by the lover whose love-sick longings even now create a god to take the place of the undiscovered and much-craved human lover[1].

I do not propose here to deal with this position. I have already tried to show in print its shallowness and weakness, and the absurdities of a great part of Mr Schroeder's defence[2]. There is one point which perhaps demands notice at this stage. It will be found that at the outset the erotogenesists load their dice by defining religion so as to include only what we have called the affective element. A supporter of Mr Schroeder explains what he means by religion, as follows:

He [Mr Schroeder] finds that religion is a subjective experience, ecstatic in its nature, ascribed to the so-called "transcendental" and interpreted as certifying to the inerrancy of some doctrine or ceremonial which through human means serves personal ends, the latter also supposed to be wholly or in part of a superphysical order[3].

This limiting of religion to a subjective experience is a totally unwarranted simplification of the problem.

I do not deny (indeed I emphasise) the importance of the facts which Mr Schroeder brings forward. I even suggest that they are so important that no theory of the psychology of religion deserves any consideration unless

[1] *Journal of Religious Psychology*, vol. VI.
[2] Article, "Religion and the Sex Instinct," *Psyche*. Oct. 1921.
[3] "The Problems and Present Status of Religious Psychology," Van Teslaar, *Journal of Religious Psychology*. Nov. 1914.

it takes them into account. But the essential requirement of this theory is that it should be shown that religion contains nothing but elements of this kind, and this is exactly what Mr Schroeder makes no attempt at all to prove.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the relationship between the sex-instinct and religion, it will be well to try to rid our minds of a prejudice which tends to warp any judgment on such a question. This is the feeling that there is something inherently disgusting about the sex-instinct which makes the mere suggestion of a connection between religion and sex revolting. There is plainly neither moral good nor evil in the instincts themselves. Moral value lies in the due subordination amongst themselves of the conflicting systems of instincts and in their control by our higher mental functions. The sex-instinct is at the root of all the highest expressions of human character which can be called out by love at its best, as well as of the depravity which we commonly call *sexuality*. There is no reason why we should feel willing to admit that the herd-instinct and the parental instinct may play a part in the determination of religious behaviour, but feel horror at the suggestion that the sex-instinct also does.

It is important to get rid of this prejudice because it is to it alone that a certain class of attacks on religion owe their sting. A book was published recently by C. Cohen, called *Religion and Sex*, which was little more than an enumeration of all the connections the author could find between religion and the sex-instinct. It is intended as an attack on religion. The author is defending no thesis like that of the erotogenesists, but is quite satisfied that the mere enumeration of such connections is sufficient to discredit religion.

What are we to conclude from the failure of the theory of erotogenesis? That the religious sentiment is in no way connected with the instinct of sex? That would fail to account for the observed facts, which are discussed later. If the evidence shows that there is a connection, it must be our purpose to find out what that connection is, how far-reaching it is, and what is its significance for religion.

First, we may consider what sort of evidence may reasonably be looked for as an indication that the religious sentiment is rooted in a particular instinct. There are several different kinds of evidence which are relevant. In the first place, if an instinct is not uniformly in action during the whole of the lifetime of the individual but has a period of development and decay, we should expect to find that, so far as it is based on that instinct, the religious sentiment shows similar variations. Secondly, so far as it is based on an instinct, we should expect to find the religious sentiment expressing itself in language characteristic of the sentiment normally developed from that instinct. Thirdly, we should expect to find religious practice particularly concerned with the suppression of the normal behaviour characteristic of that instinct. Fourthly, we might expect to find a tendency for religion of a highly emotional but ill-controlled type to develop into an uncontrolled normal exercise of the instinct.

We find, in fact, that all of these tests yield positive results when applied to religion and the sex-instinct. Certain types of religious excitement and certain phases of religious development show a correspondence with the times of the crises of the sex-life. The expressions of religious emotion (particularly those of the mystics) are

very generally in the language of human love. Religion has, on the whole, tended to attach a great value to chastity. Finally, there is a tendency for religious excitement of a certain kind to pass into sexual license. At the same time, a closer examination of these facts does not lead us to suspect that religion is *merely* a development from the sex-instinct. On the contrary, the indications are clearly in the opposite direction. We shall see that this is the case when we examine each of these four classes of facts in turn.

First, we will consider the connection between the development of religion in the individual and of his sex-instinct. The most striking example of this connection is to be found in the tendency for religious conversions to take place (in those communities which attach a high value to conversion) some time during the period of adolescence. This was a subject which was particularly studied by Starbuck, and his results are published in his *Psychology of Religion.* He sums up his conclusions as follows:

Conversion is a distinctly adolescent phenomenon. It is a singular fact also that within this period conversions do not distribute themselves equally among the years; in the rough, we may say they begin to occur at seven or eight years and increase in number gradually, to ten or eleven, and then rapidly to sixteen; rapidly decline to twenty, and gradually fall away after that, and become rare after thirty....The event comes earlier in general among the females than among males, most frequently at thirteen and sixteen. Among males it occurs most often at seventeen and immediately before and after that year....Conversion and puberty tend to supplement each other in time rather than to coincide; but they may, nevertheless, be mutually conditioned.

Similar evidence is given by a large number of revival preachers, and in Dr Hall's *Adolescence*. The main differences in the new religion of the adolescent convert are its increased emotional content, and the fact that it is much more a product of his own experience and much less of what he has been taught. In the language of the first chapter, the *traditional element* in his religion has grown less and the *experiential element* greater. Starbuck has also shown that a similar change takes place at the same age even in those cases of religious development, which are not accompanied by the sharp change which we call conversion. This seems to point to the fact that the sex-instinct contributes something to the experiential element in religion. But the evidence is very much against its contributing everything. Emotional religion is not entirely absent in childhood. Sometimes, though rarely, the intense emotional experiences of mysticism have occurred before adolescence. And there is little evidence of a corresponding decay of emotional religion in old age when the sex-life is past.

We now turn to the second point, the tendency of religious emotion to express itself in the language of human love. This is common amongst the mystics. Thus St John of the Cross, in *The Dark Night of the Soul*, describes the mystic union in the following stanzas:

On my flowery bosom, Kept whole for Him alone, There He reposed and slept; and I cherished Him, and the waving of the cedars fanned Him.

As His hair floated in the breeze, That from the turret blew, He struck me on the neck, With His gentle hand, And all sensation left me.

I continued in oblivion lost, My head was resting on my love; Lost to all things and myself, And, amid the lilies forgotten, Threw all my cares away.

This is characteristically the language of human love. Such language is also found in popular devotions, but much more rarely than amongst the mystics. Some hymns show this tendency. Yet even amongst the mystics the use of language of this kind is not so universal as would be required by a theory which asserts the identity of human love and religion. When the mystic discovers the insufficiency of ordinary language to describe his experiences, he uses symbolism drawn from all parts of life. He speaks of a divine lover, of betrothals, and of a spiritual marriage; but he also uses the symbolism of listening to music and of tasting or smelling.

Thirdly, there is the high value placed by religion on chastity; in other words, on the total suppression of the sex-instinct. This again is most marked in mysticism. There has certainly been a tendency in historical Christianity to regard marriage rather as a concession to human weakness than as anything good in itself. It is easy to exaggerate this tendency, as Feuerbach does when he says: "Marriage in itself is, in the sense of perfected Christianity, a sin, or rather a weakness, which is permitted or forgiven" only on condition that it is monogamous. But amongst the mystics a very high valuation of chastity is clearly seen to exist. Absolute chastity, the complete denial of the consolations of human love, seems to the mystic to have been the necessary condition for his enjoyment of the divine. But, on the other hand, we must notice that in this respect the sex-instinct does not stand alone. The suppression of other instincts is regarded by the mystics as of equally high religious value. Meekness, fasting, and solitude, as well as chastity, are necessary methods of approach to the highest religious life. Meekness is a name for the suppression of

the self-assertive impulses which belong to the instincts of self-preservation; fasting is the suppression of the instinct of nutrition; and solitude is a method of suppressing the gregarious instinct. The freeing of the self from all desire, not merely from sexual desire, is required from the mystic.

Fourthly, we must glance at the tendency of religion of a certain kind to develop into sexual license. If the development of the religious sentiment takes place in part by the repression of the normal mode of development of the sex-instinct, cases in which this normal mode breaks out in a violent form need not surprise us. Fortunately such cases are rare. They are to be found in the sects which have combined religion with the practice of promiscuous sexual intercourse. These have been known in all ages from some of the bodies which sprang out of the early Christianity to modern ones which have risen in Russia and the United States. Many of these started with an exaggerated over-valuation of chastity, a fact which lends support to the explanation here suggested. A fuller account of them will be found in Mr Cohen's *Religion and Sex*.

To sum up the conclusions of this investigation. The evidence seems clearly to point to the sex-instinct as part of the instinctive foundation of religion. It lends no support to the view that this is the whole of religion. This instinct seems particularly to be operative in the production of the peculiarly emotional religion of the adolescent, and in mystical religion. Essentially this is an example of *sublimation*. It is not merely a suppression of an instinct followed by the utilisation of its energy for the ends of religion. It is rather that the sentiment of religion is built in part on the innate mental disposition

called the sex-instinct, just as is the sentiment of human love.

I dissent altogether from the view that this relationship is one which degrades religion. It is implicitly recognised by many of the mystics, to whom the love of God has seemed to be the end of those desires which they thought could find only imperfect satisfaction in human love. Thus, Coventry Patmore speaks of "that human love which is the precursor and explanation of and initiation into the divine[1]." Dr G. Stanley Hall means it as no reproach to religion when he says: "True piety is earthly love transcendentalised, and the saint is the lover purified, refined, and perfected[2]."

A last example of the recognition by a religious person of the relation between human and divine love may be taken from the pages of a Mohammedan poet. In his *Yusuf u Zuleykha*, Jami praises human love because it leads the soul to the divine love. He considers that the experience of human love must necessarily precede the knowledge of divine love; but he gives the warning (typical of all religion with a strong mystical trend) that the soul must not rest in human love, but must value it only because of the possibility of its sublimation to the religious end.

Though in this world a hundred tasks thou tryest,
'Tis love alone which from thyself will save thee.
Even from earthly love thy face avert not,
Since to the Real it may serve to raise thee.
Ere A, B, C are rightly apprehended,
How canst thou con the pages of thy Kur'an?

[1] *The Rod, The Root and the Flower*, by Coventry Patmore, Magna Moralia, XLIX.

[2] *The Psychology of Adolescence*, by Professor G. Stanley Hall, II. p. 294.

A sage (so heard I), unto whom a student
Came craving counsel on the path before him,
Said, "If thy steps be strangers to love's pathways,
Depart, learn love, and then return before me!
For, should'st thou fear to drink wine from Form's flagon,
Thou canst not drain the draught of the Ideal.
But yet beware! Be not by Form belated;
Strive rather with all speed the bridge to traverse.
If to the bourn thou fain would'st bear thy baggage
Upon the bridge let not thy footsteps linger[1]."

Nothing has so far been said about the contribution of the psychoanalysts to this question. The theory of erotogenesis was not a growth from psychoanalysis. The best known contribution from this school has been Dr C. G. Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*. This is a work which deals mostly with the legends of early religions and makes only occasional and not very satisfactory mention of the higher religions. Its essential thesis is that religion is largely an expression of the tendency to regression to the attitude of infantile dependence on the parent, which is characteristic of an unsatisfactory development of the individual's love-life. That this exists as an element in religion need not be doubted, but there seems to be no reason for supposing that it is the whole of religion. The infantile attitude comes out clearly in certain hymns, and in the writings of some of the mystics. As illustrations, we may take the attitude of dependence expressed in such hymns as the ones beginning "Safe in the arms of Jesus," and "I rest my soul on Jesus"; and in the following passage from Lady Julian:

Fair and sweet is our Heavenly Mother in the sight of our souls; precious and lovely are the Gracious Children

[1] Translated by Professor E. G. Browne in *A Year amongst the Persians*, p. 128.

in the sight of our Heavenly Mother,...And I understood none higher stature in this life than Childhood, in feebleness and failing of might and wit, unto the time that our Gracious Mother hath brought us up to our Father's Bliss[1].

It seems probable that the method of psychoanalysis will throw a great deal of light on the question both of the mental roots of the belief in God, and on the part played by religion in the stabilising of unbalanced personalities, and in the building up of character. What is needed is a series of psychoanalyses of religious persons directed towards the elucidation of this problem[2]. I find it difficult to believe that results of any value can ever be obtained by psychoanalytic writing of the kind represented by an article in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* for March, 1921, which claims to be a psychoanalytic study of the Christian Creed. The author takes phrases of the creed and states their psychoanalytic meaning in the usual Freudian language. There is no indication that these meanings are based on any actual observations in analysis. The idea of *God the Father* is stated to be a father substitute adopted by the adolescent with a dominant Œdipus complex, who finds the actual father inadequate. "The ultimate causes of the Father symbol are the repressed parental complexes that are satisfied by this belief." The predicate of *Almighty* results from the effort of the unconscious to recover the omnipotence of the babe in the womb. "The Virgin Mary," we are told, "is an especially attractive object of worship because she satisfies an unconscious longing of the infant

[1] *Revelations of Divine Love*, by the Lady Julian, chap. LXIII.

[2] An account of pioneer work in this investigation is to be found in *The Psychoanalytic Method*, by Dr Oskar Pfister. (Eng. trans., London, 1915.)

boy to supplant the father or to think him away." This path of easy dogmatism and unsupported speculation is, of course, the negation of scientific method, and it is surprising to find it as an offshoot of a system which claims to be the result of the application of a rigid determinism to psychology.

While it seems likely that scientific psychoanalytic investigation will throw light on many of the problems of the origin and growth of religious ideas, it seems improbable that its discoveries will be of such a fundamental character as many of its supporters are at present inclined to believe. The assumption underlying the conclusions of the psychoanalysts is that the fact which is reached last in a chain of *free associations*[1] from a given idea is the *real* cause of that idea. It has been pointed out by Dr Rivers[2] that this is not an assumption which we can admit without question. It is possible that the infantile sexuality insisted on by the Freudians is in some real sense an initial factor in religion as in all other human activities; but that this is not a fact of such importance that it dwarfs all the other factors in the building up of religion, and makes the question of the truth of its objects a trivial one. It is possible that the Freudians who insist that it is a factor of such importance are in the position of botanists who, having dug round the roots of an oak tree, have discovered the remains of the acorn from which it grew, and insist that in this and this alone lies all the significance of the oak;

[1] *Free association* is the method adopted in psychoanalysis when the patient is asked to give all the thoughts which come into his mind, starting from a given situation or incident, without attempting in any way to control the course of his chain of thoughts.

[2] In a course of lectures not yet published.

and that the other scientists who spend their lives in the investigation of the structure of the tree itself, the artists who rejoice in its beauty, and the carpenters who use its wood, are all alike living in a fool's paradise, because they have not realised that the oak is a decayed acorn and nothing more.

CHAPTER XI

THE HERD-INSTINCT AND RELIGION

In the ninth chapter we discussed the gregarious or herd-instinct, which determines the behaviour and feelings of individuals of a gregarious species of animals in their relations with other individuals of the same species. If we admit that man is a gregarious animal, we are led to look to the herd-instinct as the biological explanation of his behaviour in his social organisations in the widest sense—when he forms a society, or assembles in a crowd, or when he behaves as a well-regulated member of a previously existing society. We regard herd-suggestion as the mental concomitant of the herd-instinct. The general obedience of the individual to the will of his society in courses of action, his sympathetic response to the emotions of his society, and his deference to its opinions, are all results of the operation of herd-suggestion. They are necessary means of securing conformity in action of all individuals of the same group so that the ends of the herd-instinct may be attained.

A well-known and imaginative work of popular science[1] discusses the influence of the herd-instinct on human behaviour. Apparently the author considers that the herd-instinct is the principal root of religious belief, for he says:

This intimate dependence on the herd is traceable not merely in matters physical and intellectual, but also

[1] *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, by Mr W. Trotter. (London, 1916.)

betrays itself in the deepest recesses of personality as a sense of incompleteness which compels the individual to reach out towards some larger existence than his own, some encompassing being in whom his perplexities may find a solution and his longings peace. Physical loneliness and intellectual isolation are effectually solaced by the nearness and agreement of the herd. The deeper personal necessities cannot be met—at any rate, in such society as has been so far evolved—by so superficial a union....Religious feeling is therefore a character inherent in the very structure of the human mind, and is the expression of a need which must be recognised by the biologist as neither superficial nor transitory[1].

We need not suppose that the unsatisfied longings of the herd-instinct make up the whole of the biological foundation of religious feeling (or, indeed, the principal part of it) in order to appreciate the importance of the point of view of this paragraph. Perhaps the essential difference between the part played by the herd-instinct and by the sex-instinct in the production of religious emotion, lies in the fact that the former is not subject to such necessary repression under the conditions of modern life as is the latter. A psychoanalytic investigation of the mental roots of the religion of Robinson Crusoe might have shown that the unsatisfied longings of the herd-instinct resulting from his complete loneliness played a very considerable part in its formation. This, however, is mere speculation; such conditions are too rare for investigation. What is certain is that the suppression of the normal mode of satisfaction of the herd-instinct is a preliminary condition of the more intensive religious life. Solitude is sought in the monastic cell; the esteem of one's fellow-men is despised.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 113.

To go abroad but now and then, To shun publicity,—Ay, even not to wish to see the face of man, All this is to be praised in one who takes the vows....Go in and bar your door And call upon your loved one, "Jesus come to me." Stay in your cell with Him; Elsewhere you will not find such rest[1].

This renunciation of the pleasures of human society and of society's approval is seen in an extreme form in the lives of the Egyptian Fathers, who would behave grotesquely in public lest they should earn a reputation for being holy men and so end by recovering the esteem which they began by renouncing.

One of the results of the possession by man of the instincts of a gregarious animal is the fact that he tends to form more or less permanent groups, and that in such groups his behaviour and his emotional reactions are entirely different from those of his solitary life. This influence of his social environment on the mind of an individual man makes it possible for the purpose of study to consider the group as a unit. It is not necessary to postulate any collective consciousness for a social group, and any such assumption is unnecessary and unscientific. The term *the group mind* has been used by Dr McDougall[2] in a way which does not assume the existence of any hypothetical group consciousness, and in McDougall's sense it may be found to be a useful one for social psychology. There are two directions from which the problems of religion have been approached by writers who make fundamental to their thought, the unity of the social group. The first of these is that of the French sociologists, who collaborate in the production of *l'Année Sociologique*, the second is that of the writers on the

[1] *The Imitation of Christ*, by St Thomas à Kempis.
[2] *The Group Mind.* (London, 1920.) Introduction.

somewhat nebulous *crowd psychology*, which has been made popular by Le Bon.

We will consider first the point of view of sociology. This differs from the point of view of psychology in the fact that in sociology, groups of human beings and not individuals are the units whose laws we endeavour to trace out. We may (if we wish) speak of a *group mind*, a *general will*, and *collective ideas*, thus taking over into sociology the words of psychology with their meanings changed. We may disagree about the desirability of such a taking over of terms, but the question is not one of the first importance. What is important is that we should recognise clearly that their meaning has been changed, that if we choose to talk about a group mind we have no right to assume that there is in group activity anything of the same nature as the individual consciousness which accompanies the working of the *mind* of psychology.

The relationship between psychology and sociology appears to be the same as that between molecular physics and mechanics. In molecular physics, single molecules are considered as separate things and the laws of their interaction are the objects of study. In mechanics, masses of matter are considered without any reference to the molecules of which they are composed—malleability, for example, is treated as a property of matter in mass without any consideration of its ultimate dependence on the mutual attractions of the constituent molecules. In the same way, it is found in sociology that groups of men interact with sufficient uniformity for it to be possible to develop laws of their interaction without any reference to the fact that these are ultimately determined by the passions and struggles of individual

men. The danger which threatens the science of sociology is that it should forget this ultimate dependence of its data on the facts of individual psychology. It is ultimately on the laws of the interaction of individuals (on the operation of the herd-instinct in suggestion, etc., on the antagonistic action of the instinct of self-preservation, and so on) that the behaviour of groups of men is dependent. It may be found more convenient to express facts connected with societies in terms of the conceptions of sociology, but it must be remembered that there is no social fact which is not (theoretically at least) expressible in terms of individual psychology.

This method of treating religion has been adopted by Durkheim and his collaborators in *l'Année Sociologique*. The characteristics of their treatment and its limitations are alike determined by the fact that they look for religion amongst "les faits sociaux[1]." Their refusal to admit the legitimacy of any other method of approach than the sociological is absolute, as may be seen by the following extract from an article by M. Durkheim, entitled "De la Définition des Phénomènes Religieux":

...ce n'est pas dans la nature humaine en général qu'il faut aller chercher la cause déterminante des phénomènes religieux; c'est dans la nature des sociétés auxquelles ils se rapportent, et s'ils ont évolué au cours de l'histoire, c'est que l'organisation sociale elle-même s'est transformée. Du coup, les théories traditionnelles qui croirent découvrir la source de la religiosité dans des sentiments privés, comme la crainte révérentielle qu'inspiraient à chacun de nous soit le jeu des grandes forces cosmiques soit le spectacle de certains phénomènes naturels comme la mort, doivent nous devenir plus que suspectes. On peut dès maintenant préjuger avec quelque assurance que les

[1] *L'Année Sociologique*, II. p. 2.

recherches doivent être conduites dans un tout autre esprit. Le problème se pose en termes sociologiques. Les forces devant lesquelles s'incline le croyant ne sont pas des simples énergies physiques, telles qu'elles sont données au sens et à l'imagination; ce sont des forces sociales. Elles sont le produit direct de sentiments collectifs qui ont été amenés à prendre un revêtement matériel[1].

The introduction of a single word would make this passage unobjectionable. If M. Durkheim were content to say that theories which try to account for religion *merely* by appealing to individual feelings such as reverential fear must be more than suspect, most people would be willing to agree with him. But he goes further than this and would have us believe that the forces which produce religion are *merely* social, an opinion which ignores the complexities of the question as completely as the one he is engaged in refuting.

The practical drawbacks of the limitations of this method of treatment may be illustrated by a review of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, by M. Mauss.

Déjà M. J. nous concède que la plus grande partie de l'humanité n'a pas eu de ces véritables expériences religieuses, et que la majorité des fidèles de toutes les religions vivent sur le fonds traditionnel....La vie religieuse du commun des mortels n'est que de "seconde main[2]."

This amounts to the statement that the only element which plays a part in the building up of the normal religious belief is what we have described as *the traditional element*. This is a pure assumption which has no better support in fact than its necessity in order to render possible the treatment of religion as only "un fait social."

[1] *L'Année Sociologique*, II. p. 24.
[2] *Ibid.* VII. p. 205.

All the evidence which has already been brought forward to show the dependence of normal (and not only mystical) religion on experience of various kinds, and the proved weakness of religion in which the traditional element alone is developed, refute this reduction of religion solely to this one element. A circumstance which leads us to distrust any generalisation which starts by the assertion that religion is merely the product of one of the constituent elements we supposed it to have been made up of, is the fact that other schools of investigators tell us with equal conviction that religion is merely the result of one of the other elements. For example, we may compare the assertion of the French sociologists that religion is merely the product of social forces and their complete denial of the theories which trace it to individual subjective experiences, with the theory of the ergotogenesists who say that it is altogether the product of the misinterpretation of an individual subjective experience.

The French sociologists consider that the ideas of religion belong to the class of *collective ideas*, products of pre-logical group thinking. This pre-logical or mystical thinking is supposed by them to have been the normal mental process of primitive man, and to have continued to develop side by side with the logical thinking which acknowledges the supremacy of the law of contradiction. While logical processes of thinking have, on the whole, ousted the rival method, M. Levy Bruhl states that it continues to lurk in the congenial gloom of the sanctuary and the law court. A *collective representation* is what is imagined by many members of a group, each under the influence of the rest; it represents things to be, not as they are, but as for certain social purposes one would wish them to be.

It has already been pointed out that some of the processes of religious thinking show an alogical and infantile character. This infantile character is shown by the dependence on symbolism and the difficulty of translating religious ideas into the exact language of directed thinking. This was considered to show the unconscious roots of some religious ideas in the infantile psyche. The French sociologists attribute this same character of infantility to the fact that religious ideas are the product of collective thought. It does not seem to be necessary to decide between these alternative theories as if they were mutually exclusive explanations. Both collective thinking and the products of the activity of the unconscious mind show this character, which marks their relationship with primitive ways of thinking. Since we have every reason to suppose that both collective thinking and individual unconscious thinking have played a part in building up religious belief, it would be idle to dispute about whether it owes its alogical element to one or other of these causes. We may notice in passing that it is this infantilism which they possess in common that is at the root of the relationship between myths and dreams, about which a considerable psychoanalytic literature has grown up.

While acknowledging the value of the researches of the writers in *L'Année Sociologique*, I see no reason for accepting their view that the sociological point of view possesses any kind of ultimate finality which makes the psychological method of approach impossible. On the contrary, this view seems to be based on a fallacious assumption—the assumption that the only psychological forces which are at work in the production of religious ideas are social forces. There seems, on the other hand,

to be abundant evidence to show that the explanation of religious ideas must lie partly in their value for the experience of individuals in each succeeding generation which has accepted them, and in part on their capacity for being translated into the exact language of logical thinking—in other words, on their experiential and rational grounding as well as on their traditional grounding[1].

The best known book dealing with *crowd psychology* is *The Crowd*, by M. Le Bon. This is a curiously unscientific work, which combines interesting and valuable observations with a fanciful background of psycho-physiological theory and a slipshod method which allows the author's political and other prejudices to colour all his observations. This work has, however, been so widely read and so slavishly reproduced by writers on the present and allied subjects that it is necessary to mention it here, since most people who have thought about the subject at all will have had their ways of thinking about it to some extent formed by Le Bon's writings.

By a crowd, for the purposes of his study, M. Le Bon means a group of persons united together by some common purpose or interest, such as a political meeting or a lynching party. The characteristics which he distinguishes in them are their cruelty and lack of responsibility, their ready response to an emotional and their slight response to an intellectual appeal, and their high suggestibility. The high suggestibility of a crowd is shown by its rapid and vigorous response to oratory which would leave its members cold if it were addressed to

[1] For a more adequate discussion of the views here mentioned, the reader is referred to *Group Theories of Religion and the Individual*, by Professor C. C. J. Webb.

them as individuals. This results from the fact that each of the individual members is being acted upon by herd-suggestion (produced by all the other members who are also being influenced by the orator) and not merely by the suggestions of the orator himself. For this reason, it is common in some forms of religious service for the conductor to make the congregation all perform some conspicuous action which testifies to their agreement with what is going on. The Salvationists ejaculate *hallelujah* during their addresses or *clap out* the verses of a hymn; the members of a Catholic congregation cross themselves or perform other ritual acts at definite times. Even if an audience can be made to laugh during an address, this is a method of putting into operation the force of herd-suggestion. M. Le Bon says, somewhat cynically, that a crowd should always be appealed to through their emotions and never through their reason, and that two things only are necessary in mob oratory —affirmation and repetition. Affirmation in a confident manner and repetition is, of course, the formula for successful suggestion.

With no touch of M. Le Bon's cynicism, a writer on the preaching needed in revivals[1] gives almost identical advice:

Revival preaching to be effective must be positive. The doubter never has revivals....A revival is a revolution in many important respects, and revolutions are never brought about by timid, fearful or deprecatory addresses. They are awakened by men who are cocksure of their ground, and who speak with authority....Revival preaching must be directed towards the heart and not the head....Get hold of the heart and the head yields easily.

[1] *How to promote and conduct a successful Revival*, by R. A. Torrey, p. 32.

It would be difficult to find a better example of affirmation and repetition than the following extract from an address given by Spurgeon to open-air preachers, printed in the same book as the above. The suggestion which is being repeated is that they should go on with their preaching. Notice particularly the method which is adopted. There is no development of the thought and no argument about it. It is simply repeated unchanged or by allusion:

Go on with your preaching. Cobbler, stick to your last; preacher, stick to your preaching. In the great day, when the muster roll shall be read, of all those who are converted through fine music, and church decoration, and religious exhibitions and entertainments, they will amount to the tenth part of nothing; but it will always please God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Keep to your preaching; and if you do anything beside, do not let it throw your preaching into the background. In the first place preach and in the second place preach and in the third place preach.

Believe in preaching the love of Christ, believe in preaching the atoning sacrifice, believe in preaching the new birth, believe in preaching the whole counsel of God. The old hammer of the Gospel will still break the rock in pieces; the ancient fire of Pentecost will still burn among the multitude. Try nothing new, but go on with preaching, and if we all preach with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the results of preaching will astound us. Why, there is no end, after all, to the power of the tongue! Look at the power of a bad tongue, what great mischief it can do; and shall not God put more power into a good tongue, if we will but use it aright? Look at the power of fire, a single spark might give a city to the flames; even so, the Spirit of God being with us, we need not calculate how much, or what we can do: there is no calculating the potentialities of a flame, and there

is no end to the possibilities of divine truth spoken with the enthusiasm which is born of the Spirit of God....Go on! go on! go on! In God's name, go on! for if the preaching of the Gospel does not save men, nothing will[1].

Either directly or by some sort of allusion, the same suggestion has been repeated no less than thirty-one times in the course of thirteen sentences. When we read the passage, this repetition seems a barren oratorical trick, and the reading of it leaves us cold. But we must not forget the influence which such oratory had on its hearers when its suggestive effect was reinforced by the fervid confidence of delivery produced by Spurgeon's faith in the message he was delivering, and by the prestige which his reputation attached to him.

We may notice here that successful speaking of this kind depends in part on the power of the speaker to receive suggestions from his audience. A high degree of suggestibility is one of the conditions of successful oratory. The speaker is continually feeling the temper of his audience and the success with which his suggestions are being received. He varies his method of presentation as he perceives the varying responses of his audience. If he said something at the beginning repugnant to them, he would arouse a general attitude of contra-suggestion and his address would fail. But after he has habituated his audience to receiving suggestions from him, he may be able to say later the unwelcome thing and find that it is accepted without any difficulty. This attitude of being in affective touch with their audiences will be found to be adopted more or less consciously by most (perhaps all) successful speakers. Descriptions of their methods will be found to contain some such fact as the

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 221 and 222.

following, which is taken from an account of Evan Roberts, the Welsh revivalist:

He makes the audience reveal itself, and then tells the people what they know already[1].

It is this fact which makes a carefully prepared speech of so little value as compared with a less eloquent discourse in which the speaker is ceaselessly varying his language in response to the changing emotions which he feels that he is producing in his audience.

We will now turn to the consideration of the more violent and crude methods of suggestion employed in some kinds of revival. Nowhere in the world have these been developed in such an extraordinary way as in America. An extreme example may be found in the method of preaching adopted by the successful evangelist and ex-prize-fighter, Billy Sunday. This is taken from a local paper of Illinois:

5843 converts, 683 in a day. Total gift to Mr Sunday, $10,431. Greatest revival in history. Will attract the attention of the religious world. Sermon on "Booze," the greatest effort of the revival! These are all headlines to the report....The preacher...began with his coat, vest, tie and collar off. In a few moments his shirt and undershirt were gaping open to the waist, and the muscles of his neck and chest were seen working like those in the arm of a blacksmith, while perspiration poured from every pore. His clothing was soaked, as if a hose had been turned on him. He strained, and twisted, and reached up and down. Once he was on the floor for just a second, in the attitude of crawling, to show that all slime crawled out of the saloon; then he was on his feet as quickly as a cat could jump. At the end of forty-five minutes he mounted a chair, reached high, as he shouted,

[1] *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. XIX. p. 80.

then again was on the floor, and dropped prostrate to illustrate a story of a drunken man, bounded to his feet again as if steel springs filled that lithe, slender, lightning-like body. He generally breaks a common kitchen chair in this sermon, and this came after a terrible effort, with eyes flashing, face scowling, the picture of hate. He whirled the chair over his head, smashed the chair to the platform floor, whirled the shattered wreck in the air again, and threw it to the ground in front of the pulpit. In two minutes men from the front row were tearing the wreck to pieces and dividing it up....Later, men carried away in cheering could be seen in the audience waving those chair fragments in the air[1].

The appeal to fear by vivid descriptions of hell-fire was very common in such revivals. Billy Sunday himself is reported to have been generous in his references to brimstone. The following is an extract from a sermon by Jonathan Edwards, who preached in America in the early part of the eighteenth century:

We can conceive but little of the matter; but to help your conception, imagine yourselves to be cast into a fiery oven, or a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire and all the while full of quick sense. What horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace. How long would that quarter of an hour seem to you? And after you had endured it for one minute, how overpowering would it be to you to think that you had to endure it for the other fourteen. But what would be the effect upon your soul if you must lie there enduring that torment for twenty-four hours. And how much greater would be the effect, if you knew you must

[1] Quoted by Mr Cohen in his *Religion and Sex*, p. 172.

endure it for a whole year. And how vastly greater still, if you knew you must endure it for a thousand years. Oh! then how would your heart sink if you knew that you must bear it for ever and ever—that there would be no end, that for millions and millions of ages, your torments would be no nearer to an end and that you never, never would be delivered. But your torments in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents[1].

The terror which gripped his audiences made them cry aloud for mercy so that the preacher sometimes could not be heard, and they grasped their benches to prevent themselves from slipping into the pit. Oratory of this kind is not common at the present time, but the following extract from a sermon preached by an evangelist in New York so recently as 1907, is not very different in spirit from those of Jonathan Edwards:

I preach hell because God puts His special blessing on it, convicting sinners and sanctifying believers, arousing the Church to greater effort for the salvation of the perishing....*Hell has been running for six thousand years.* It is filling up every day. Where is it? About eighteen miles from here. *Which way is it? Straight down*—not over eighteen miles, down in the bowels of the earth[2].

The intense emotional excitement of the revival tends to be accompanied by abnormal effects which closely resemble the convulsive attacks of hysteria. These are extremely contagious and whole multitudes have been known to fall down, to jerk their bodies in extraordinary contortions, to bark, to laugh, and to dance. Sceptics even were not free from the contagion, if they were

[1] *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals.* Davenport (New York, 1906), pp. 112, 113.

[2] *The Religious Consciousness.* Professor J. B. Pratt (New York, 1920), p. 178.

present at the meetings. As an example of these phenomena, we may take the following account of a great revival in Kentucky in 1801. This was at a camp-meeting of nearly twenty thousand persons which went on for several days:

The whole body of persons who actually fell helpless to the earth during the progress of the meeting was computed...to be three thousand persons, about one in every six...."At no time was the floor less than half covered. Some lay quiet, unable to move or speak. Some talked, but could not move. Some beat the floor with their heels. Some, shrieking in agony, bounded about like a live fish out of water. Many lay down and rolled over and over for hours at a time. Others rushed wildly over the stumps and benches, and then plunged, shouting, 'Lost! Lost!' into the forest."...Next to the "falling" exercise the most notable and characteristic Kentucky phenomenon was the "jerks." The unhappy victim shook in every joint. Sometimes the head was thrown from side to side with great rapidity. Again the feet were affected, and the subject would hop like a frog. Often the body would be thrown violently to the ground, where it would continue to bound from one place to another. Peter Cartwright declares that he has seen more than five hundred persons jerking at once in the congregation....Another phenomenon not so common was the "barking" exercise. The votaries of this dignified rite gathered in groups on all fours, like dogs, growling and snapping their teeth at the foot of a tree as the minister preached,—a practice which they designated as "treeing the devil"!...Many of these camp-meeting folk lay insensible, sometimes for hours, but when they recovered from the swoon it was to relate, in what were called "strains of heaven," experiences of interviews with departed friends and visions of glory[1].

[1] *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, Davenport, pp. 77–80.

Another abnormal manifestation of revival meetings is *glossolalia* or the *speaking with tongues*. This name is generally applied to a stream of meaningless syllables, sometimes mixed with a few real words, poured out under the influence of intense emotion. The interpretation by bystanders is due to the gestures and emotional expression by which the sounds are accompanied.

There were also very grave charges at the Kentucky camp meetings of serious immorality. Like the other phenomena which have been described, this charge could be paralleled in other revivals. There is less reason to doubt it since the charge was made, not by the ungodly, but by ministers taking part in the revival.

Similar phenomena can be found recorded in the history of English revivals, though in less number and with less intensity. Wesley did not employ the fear of hell with such freedom as Jonathan Edwards, but there are records of sermons by him with a considerable element of hell-fire. Two of his disciples succeeded, near Cambridge, in producing such morbid effects of terror by their preaching, that the account of it in Wesley's diary seems more like the history of a terrible outbreak of insanity than a condition deliberately produced in honour of God. Evan Roberts, the Welsh revivalist, did not use fear as a motive in his missions, but he had jerks and dancing amongst his congregation. I notice that Spurgeon regarded all such things as the work of the devil.

Before leaving the subject of revivals, we may mention one question which a student of the subject can hardly fail to ask himself. We find in the revival a remarkably uniform succession of events which becomes so conventional in its form that one might describe it as a religious rite. In its conventional form it appears

at first to be entirely confined to Protestant Christianity. We are led to enquire whether it is really a spontaneous growth in Protestant Christianity, or whether it is a phenomenon to be met elsewhere in the history of religions. The answer to this question is supplied by Davenport in the work from which quotations have already been given. He shows that the revivals of the Kentucky camp-meetings are very much like the methods of two Red Indian religious movements[1]. These are the Shaker religion of the Indians of Puget Sound and the ghost-dance religion. In these, as in the Kentucky camp-meetings, cataleptic and convulsive phenomena were produced by mass suggestion in which the medicine-men played the part of the camp-meeting preachers. Communion with the spirit-world was enjoyed during trances and even those unsympathetic to the movement were unable to prevent themselves from being overwhelmed by its influence. As in the camp-meetings, these morbid phenomena were accompanied by real moral advance and the Indians who were affected by them made vigorous onslaughts on their racial vices of drinking and gambling.

Although, as I have pointed out in an earlier chapter, suggestion is a perfectly legitimate weapon for religion, and although even emotional violence may be used to produce desirable changes in peoples' hearts, it should be clear that the methods we have been describing have great dangers. The jerks and other morbid symptoms, even when they are only temporary, are undesirable. But they may also, although perhaps rarely, end in permanent insanity. The weakening of moral control tends,

[1] These are described in the fourteenth annual report of the Bureau of Ethnology.

as has been mentioned, to result in immorality. In addition to this there is a danger of revivals losing their beneficial effect on conduct, and becoming a kind of emotional debauch which is indulged in repeatedly. On the other side of the account we must put a large number of changes of life, which have been real changes for the better, and have resulted from emotional revivals.

CHAPTER XII

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

In making a distinction between worship and prayer, I propose to confine the word *worship* to the collective activity corresponding to the private and individual activity of *prayer*. In worship, in its simplest form, we have a group of persons trying as a group to get into relationship with God. Here we find at work all those very powerful influences which we have seen to be dependent on the gregarious instincts. For this reason, worship may be felt to be valuable even when group sentiment is not very strong, for the individual finds that he can better feel himself in relationship with God when he seeks Him in company with others. The contagion of feeling resulting from herd-suggestion gives him a depth of emotional experience which the ordinary man does not attain in his own private devotions. In the solemnity of church services he experiences a sense of the divine presence compared with which the affective content of his private prayer is poor.

In *The Religious Consciousness*, Pratt distinguishes two types of worship which he calls the objective and the subjective. In objective worship, the leading idea is to have in some way an effect on God or to communicate with Him; while in subjective worship, the aim is to have some sort of effect on the minds of the worshippers. He takes as examples in Christianity the ideals of Catholicism and Protestantism, and says that the leading purpose of the Mass is the worship of God, while

that of the Protestant service is its subjective effect on the minds and hearts of the worshippers. He finds the same distinction between the objective popular worship in Indian temples, and the more sophisticated Arya Samaj; while one may also find in India the most extreme forms of subjective worship (at least in theory) in Jainism and Buddhism.

I intend to accept this distinction between subjective and objective worship for the purpose of discussing what Pratt calls *the problem of worship*. At the same time, it is necessary to point out that his application of the distinction in practice appears to be a completely unwarranted simplification of the facts. We may agree that the principal object of the Mass is the worship of God, but there seems to be no sufficient reason for supposing that it is different in most of the services of Protestants. Where we find Protestant services, whose main purpose seems to be the subjective effect on the minds and hearts of the worshippers, this is essentially a changed ideal for a service which had as its original intention the worship of God as definitely as has the Mass. The sharp distinction made by Professor Pratt between the objective worship of Catholicism and the subjective worship of Protestantism, seems to be an example of the tendency (deep-rooted in the human mind) to make a clear and striking exposition by drawing in black and white what can only be represented truthfully by the use of various shades of grey.

The practical problem of religious worship arises from the fact that the subjective effect of objective methods of worship, although not aimed at directly, is found to be great; but, at the same time, these methods are ineffective if not accompanied by the belief in their

objective value. Pratt says that so excellent in producing subjective effects are the objective methods of the Catholic Church that a benevolent atheist might conceivably do his best to forward the interests of Catholicism. If he were a wise as well as a benevolent atheist, however, he would probably keep his views of the truly subjective nature of the worship entirely to himself. Otherwise, the desired result might become almost unattainable. This Pratt diagnoses as the weakness of objective worship, that it is impossible to those whose minds are of too rationalistic a cast to be able to accept the beliefs behind it. He sums up the difficulty by saying that if objective worship be impossible for the intelligent, and if subjective without objective worship is self-delusion, there is an end of all worship for the modern man. The second statement he thinks is certainly true, but the first he considers is probably false. With the reasons for considering that objective worship is still possible for the intelligent modern man, I will not here deal, since this is the kind of problem I am reserving for the last chapter.

Prayer, like worship, is certainly always in its first intention objective. In ordinary speech we would refuse to use the word prayer of any vocal activity undertaken primarily for its good effects on the mind of the person using it. Essentially it is directed towards a superhuman being in the belief that it is heard by the being to whom it is addressed. But this activity has subjective effects as well, and as psychologists we are primarily interested in these. Such subjective effects as are produced by prayer are plainly related to the effects of autosuggestion in secular life. In fact, if a vocal activity resembling prayer were undertaken purely for the sake of its effects

on the mind of the person using it, this activity would be pure autosuggestion. Prayer differs from such simple autosuggestion in the fact that its mental effects are only incidental and are not what is primarily intended. It is necessary, however, in order to approach the consideration of the mental effects of prayer, to discuss autosuggestion at some length.

This task is made easier for us by the extraordinary command of popular interest which has been achieved by the new Nancy school of autosuggestion, described by Professor Baudouin in his *Suggestion et Autosuggestion.* It is not true, of course, that autosuggestion is a discovery of Dr Coué, as writers in the lay press appear to believe. Schools of autosuggestion have existed both in this country and in America, of which the New Thought movement is a prominent example. The new Nancy movement will, however, be a convenient one to take as the subject of an exposition of autosuggestion, partly because it is so well known, partly because it systematises and makes explicit important details of practice which are neglected by other systems.

Autosuggestion, in all its forms, is the same process as heterosuggestion (or suggestion by another person) but put into action by the person himself and not by another person. As in ordinary suggestion, the thought of a belief or a course of action becomes *realised* by the subject, *i.e.* translated into an actually held belief, or an actual course of action. Baudouin distinguishes between *spontaneous autosuggestions*, in which the matter of the suggestions has caught the attention of the subject and been realised by him spontaneously, *i.e.* without his own deliberate co-operation, and *reflective autosuggestions* in which the same process is made to take place intentionally.

Spontaneous autosuggestion is a process which appears to be taking place fairly commonly, whenever an idea which has happened to catch our attention realises itself. An opinion, for example, which we have often heard repeated tends to become a firmly held belief. When we see a fire freshly lighted, we may begin to feel warmer, although it is not yet really giving out an appreciable amount of heat. An illness that we are always talking and thinking about tends to develop. There are two fairly obvious conditions which an idea must fulfil before it can become a spontaneous autosuggestion. The first is that it shall have caught the attention, the second that it shall be enveloped in some more or less powerful affect. The new Nancy school also emphasise a third condition for any autosuggestion, that it shall be held in attention by conscious effort. This is considered by Baudouin to be the important contribution of Nancy to the psychology of autosuggestion and is called by him the *Law of Reversed Effort.* This is stated by him as follows:

When an idea imposes itself on the mind to such an extent as to give rise to a suggestion, all the conscious efforts which the subject makes in order to counteract this suggestion are not merely without the desired effect, but they actually run counter to the subject's conscious wishes and tend to intensify the suggestion[1].

These conditions may be illustrated by an example given in an earlier chapter—the impossibility of walking along a high plank with a sheer drop on both sides without falling off, although the plank may be of such a width that it would be perfectly easy to walk along it

[1] *Suggestion and Autosuggestion*, by Professor Baudouin (Eng. trans.), p. 116.

if it were lying on the floor. Spontaneous attention is unavoidably caught by the idea of falling off, and there is a very powerful emotional accompaniment (of fear or horror) to this idea. These are the first two conditions which have been mentioned as those under which ideas tend to become realised by spontaneous autosuggestion. If the person concerned could manage either not to think about falling off at all, or to think about it without any strong emotion, his danger of falling off would be less. The law of reversed effort may be illustrated by the observation of the fact that his voluntary efforts to retain his balance are not only useless but tend to defeat that end.

Reflective autosuggestion has as its objects the combating of noxious spontaneous autosuggestions, and the deliberate attainment of the good mental effects accidentally produced by desirable spontaneous autosuggestions. The difficulty in the practice of reflective autosuggestion is to find an efficient substitute for spontaneous attention. A voluntary effort to think of and to realise the object of the desired suggestion is found not to be successful, and this failure is accounted for by the law of reversed effort. It is for this reason that most people fail when they try to follow the directions of one of the systems of autosuggestion. They are told to concentrate on an idea. For them concentration means an intense voluntary effort to think of it; and intense voluntary effort is the condition under which autosuggestion is most certain to fail. Those who have experienced the effects of intense voluntary effort to go to sleep know the condition of hopeless wakefulness which such an effort induces. The practical problem to make successful reflective autosuggestion possible is to discover some

condition in which voluntary effort is as small as possible, but in which the mind can be kept occupied with the particular thought which is to be the object of the suggestion.

I propose to discuss the states of mind which Professor Baudouin distinguishes at this stage of his work, in order to point out their relationship to mental states found in Christian prayer and in the mental self-culture of Yoga. The condition between sleeping and waking, which has already been noticed as one of high suggestibility, is a state in which spontaneous autosuggestions are stated to be particularly liable to realise themselves. All writers on autosuggestion seem to be aiming at the willed production of a similar state in which there is a certain emptiness of mind and suspension of the mental functions. Sometimes, however, they write as if this were a state to be attained by an act of will, and their followers find themselves misled into making strenuous efforts where a relaxation of effort is the principal necessity.

One of the characteristics of this half-waking condition is what Baudouin calls the *outcropping of the subconscious*. The mind ceases to be occupied with the voluntary activity of thinking in words, and instead becomes occupied with a succession of vague images which are surface effects of the repressed contents of the unconscious. A similar condition is found in reverie, that is, in the state in which we have relaxed the voluntary activity of the mind. It is found that those to whom this state of outcropping is most normal are those to whom autosuggestion is easiest—as artists, women and children. The first step which Dr Baudouin suggests in the practice of autosuggestion is an education of the outcropping by practice in the production of these states. This is done by keeping the body motionless and the

muscles relaxed while we are resting on a comfortable armchair under conditions as free as possible from such external distractions as noise. The eyes are closed and the effort of thinking is relaxed, while the mind is allowed to occupy itself with the vague images which float past it. Baudouin speaks of the state of outcropping produced by such a relaxation as *le recueillement*[1].

Le recueillement, however, is merely a preliminary stage. The equivalent of attention for which we are searching is a combination of this condition of outcropping with the effortless permeation of the mind by a single idea. Baudouin calls this state *la contention*. It is sometimes found to be the condition of the mind on waking up after sleep; directed thinking is at a minimum, and at the same time the mind is exclusively occupied with one single idea. This is the condition in which the idea occupying the mind will realise itself as an autosuggestion. In order to be successful in the attainment of the state of *contention*, it is necessary to cultivate both the power of attention and of relaxation. It is suggested that the former should be cultivated by such exercises as learning by heart, and the latter by the practice of *le recueillement*.

The state of *contention* is found to be described both in the literature of Christian prayer, under the name of the *Prayer of Simplicity*, and in Yoga practice, under the name of *Dharana*. The prayer of simplicity will be described more fully later. Normally, it was produced involuntarily as an effect of prolonged discursive meditation, but voluntary efforts to attain the prayer of

[1] I have retained the original French for Dr Baudouin's names for these conditions, since their English equivalents suggest meanings remote from those intended.

simplicity by the suppression of the images found in the condition of *recueillement* were made by the Quietists. The Yogis attained *Dharana* by the preliminary practice of *Pratyahara*. This was the condition of outcropping produced in *le recueillement* from which its normal content of images was progressively banished, apparently (as in quietism) by voluntary effort.

Reflective autosuggestion may be practised by taking advantage of the condition between sleeping and waking by permeating the mind at this time without effort with the thought which it is desired to realise—the idea, for example, of the cure of some illness or weakness. The difficulty is to find some way of keeping the mind permeated with a thought without the effort of attending to it. The way this is done in the new Nancy practice is by summing up the desired thought in some formula which is repeated over and over again. It is particularly emphasised that the repetition is to be mechanical; no effort is to be made to think of the idea it is intended to convey. If one wishes to make an autosuggestion at some other time of the day, this may be done by an artificial production of the state of *la contention*. Outcropping is first produced by the practice of *le recueillement* as already described, and the mind is then permeated with the desired idea by the repetition of a formula as before.

Relaxation is not, however, the only method of producing the state of outcropping. If the attention is kept fixed for some time on one subject, it relaxes itself spontaneously through loss of interest and probably fatigue. When it relaxes itself in this way, a state of outcropping is produced similar to that in *le recueillement* or reverie. This is the condition which Baudouin calls *hypnosis*. It differs from reverie in the fact that it is

more favourable to the production of the state of *contention* with a single idea. The reason for this is that in reverie we tend to have dispersion of mind, while in hypnosis the immobility with which the state started remains a dominating tendency, hence this immobility is readily re-established when we wish to transform the state into one of *contention* for the purposes of autosuggestion.

He also proposes the name of *la concentration* for a state of hypnosis produced by the fixation of the attention not on an external object but on the idea which is to be the object of the suggestion. Notice that this is not the state of intense voluntary attention to which we generally give the name of "concentration." He defines this condition as follows: "a state of autohypnosis and of persistent *contention* with one idea, the autohypnosis having been induced by the lulling influence of the idea on the mind." The simplest way of producing *la concentration* is to sum up the idea in a short phrase and to repeat it over and over again, either aloud or sketching its pronunciation with lips and tongue.

We may notice here an odd difference between the practice of the new Nancy school in the attainment of hypnosis and the practice of religious systems when their adherents are trying to attain a similar state of emptiness of mind. The new Nancy recommendation is that the body should be relaxed on a comfortable chair. In the mental exercises of Yoga, on the other hand, the meditant adopts a position of extreme discomfort. There are a large number of different attitudes he may adopt which are called the *asana* positions, all of which have in common the fact that they are positions of great muscular strain. In one of them, for example, the meditant sits bolt upright with the legs folded so that each

of the feet is resting on the thigh of the other leg. It is said that the Yogi can remain in such a position for many hours. It might be supposed that such continuous discomfort would make any mental exercise impossible, yet there can be little doubt that the *asana* positions have been continued because experience has shown that they help forward the end to be attained. Probably the explanation is to be found by an extension of Baudouin's explanation of the condition of hypnosis as a result of the fatiguing of the attention. The strained posture of the Yogi immobilises his attention on to the physical discomfort of his position and the subsequent fatigue of the attention produces the hypnoidal condition with its characteristic tendency to pass into *contention* when an object of thought is presented to it. If this is the true explanation of the *asana* positions, it suggests that the method of relaxation is possibly not the best for auto-suggestion, since it should tend to produce reverie and dispersion of the attention rather than the fixity of attention required. It may also be noticed that in Christian meditation it is found, as a matter of common experience, that the comparatively uncomfortable position of kneeling is better than relaxation on a comfortable chair. While the latter position makes it easy to detach the thoughts from immediate stimuli, it also encourages the vague and uncontrolled wandering of the mind found in reverie or day-dreaming. For this reason it is a position not favoured for meditation in which the control of the thoughts is the principal object.

It has already been mentioned that the method of presenting the object of a reflective autosuggestion to the mind is the mechanical repetition of a formula embodying the suggestion. An important practical question

is that of the wording of this formula. We will suppose that we are suffering from toothache and wish to remove the pain by autosuggestion. If we use the formula *I want to be free from this pain*, we shall find such a formulation too weak to be effective. If we go to the opposite extreme and say *I have no toothache*, our present experience of the toothache contradicts us. A suggestion in this form is successful only with those whose critical function is abnormally undeveloped. For more ordinary people, it is necessary to adopt some formula which is intermediate between these two extremes. The kind which is recommended is one which asserts that the undesired condition is growing better. For removing the pain of toothache, we may use the form: *This is passing away.* If we wish to use autosuggestion to help ourselves to sleep, we may repeat: *I am falling asleep.* A detail insisted on by the new Nancy school is that the formula should be gabbled. This is to prevent the spontaneous autosuggestion contradicting the formula from arising in the mind between each repetition of it. For example, if the repetition of the formula *I am falling asleep* is slow, it is difficult to prevent the mind from thinking between each repetition, *I am not really, I am still as wide-awake as ever.* If this happens, the spontaneous autosuggestion of remaining awake will tend to realise itself and thus defeat the reflective autosuggestion of falling asleep.

The following are the uses of reflective autosuggestion claimed by Dr Baudouin. It can undo the evil work of noxious spontaneous autosuggestions—the illnesses which result from morbid preoccupation with the state of our health, and so on. It can be used for the cure of all functional disorders such as tics and hysterical para-

lyses and swellings. It is also of value in certain organic complaints. It can always help the natural process of cure, and it can undo the part played even in real organic disorders by spontaneous autosuggestion. It may also be used as a means of removing bad habits, and of obtaining complete control over sleep. In the new Nancy school, it is not recommended that particular suggestions for the removal of specific troubles should be frequently repeated. After a trouble has been made the subject of a particular suggestion, it is claimed that it is sufficient to repeat about twenty times every night and morning the general formula: *Day by day, in all respects, I get better and better.*

Autosuggestion is connected with a particular aspect of prayer—its subjective effect on the person praying. With one exception (to be noted later) prayer is not an activity undertaken merely for the sake of its effects on the mind or character of the subject, but primarily for the purpose of coming into communion with or otherwise affecting the Being to whom prayer is addressed. Its subjective effects, although they may be important, are generally only incidental from the point of view of the person praying. It is these subjective effects, however, which come within the province of a psychological study; and, regarded as a producer of subjective effects, prayer is clearly of the nature of reflective autosuggestion undertaken with the intention of bringing about changes in that sum of mental dispositions which we call character. Even regarded merely as autosuggestion, it is probable that prayer must always be more effective than autosuggestion deliberately and self-consciously carried out. For precisely that element which was seen to be most essential and most difficult to attain in

reflective autosuggestion—the abandonment of voluntary effort—is provided naturally by the mental attitude of prayer. We may take as an example of this, the familiar experience which is heard again and again in the testimony of religious converts who say "I struggled against such and such a sin, but its power over me simply grew greater. Then I realised that I could not conquer in my own strength and I gave up struggling and left in the hands of the Lord, and the burden of my sin rolled away." Without prejudice to the religious explanation of the convert, may we not see in this a simple working of psychological mechanisms? First, there is the spontaneous autosuggestion that he will fall into his habitual sin, which, by the law of reversed effort, becomes strengthened by a voluntary struggle against it. Then in prayer he saturates his mind with the thought of the desired improvement, while his trust in an all-powerful God whose grace can save him from the sin, makes possible that abandonment of voluntary effort which was impossible in his preliminary period of struggle. So unconsciously he has produced in himself the conditions for effective reflective autosuggestion, and he finds himself freed without effort from a sin against which his efforts were unavailing. Thus, religious faith provides in perfection the conditions for the subjective working of prayer to become effective as autosuggestion; conditions, let it be noted, which cannot be reproduced by using the form of prayer without the faith.

When speaking of prayer, I intend to use the word in the extended sense usual to devotional writers on the subject, and not merely to mean praise and petition. In this extended sense, we call *prayer* any mental exercise whose aim is religious, or any mental state of religious

character. In Christianity, if we wish to take over a terminology for the science of prayer, we are almost inevitably led to adopt that of Roman Catholicism. The reason for this is not merely that prayer has been more developed amongst Roman Catholics because it is the sole occupation of some of the religious orders; but also that the custom of revealing their methods of prayer to their directors has led to an introspective habit of mind which had as its fruit a methodical classification of types of prayer which is without parallel in any other branch of Christianity. I shall, therefore, in this part of my work, follow the terminology of Fr. Poulain, in his *Graces of Interior Prayer* (a terminology which is largely modelled on that of St Teresa), although my angle of approach is a different one from his.

First, we may notice that in devotional books are to be found a simple form of prayer called *acts*, which are almost purely autosuggestions and are intended as such. At the opposite extreme is to be found ordinary *vocal prayer*, *i.e.* prayer in the popular sense of praise and petition, in which the whole of the intention is centred on the Being to whom prayer is addressed and not at all on the production of any desirable mental effects. Between these, there is the wide range of the various forms of *mental prayer* of which the most familiar is meditation. In these the purpose of mental self-improvement and of entering into communion with God are inextricably mingled. Some forms of meditation are very much like forms of non-religious mental exercise in which mental culture is the only object. But in all religious meditation, the religious element is present as well.

First, we may consider the *acts* which are simple autosuggestions whose object is to strengthen belief or love,

or self-sacrifice, or any other desired mental disposition. The following, which will serve as an example of what is meant, is an *act of faith* copied from a devotional book:

O my God, I believe with a most firm faith all those things which Thou hast revealed in the Holy Scriptures and which Thy Holy Church teaches. I believe in One True and Living God, my beginning and my end, and that in this One God there are Three distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe that the Second Person, God the Son, became Man, and died upon the Cross, to deliver us from all sin, death, and hell. When I cannot understand Thy Revelation, I bow down my understanding and my will to worship Thee. In this faith I now live; in the same, by Thy grace, I resolve to die. Lord, increase my faith.

In connection with vocal prayer, there is little to notice of psychological interest in addition to what has already been said about prayer in general. Perhaps, however, it will be well to notice that every effort of vocal prayer is, apart from its immediate Godward intention, a means of devotional education. There is a temptation, at the present time, on the strength of a superficial acquaintance with the literature of mysticism, for advisers in devotional practice to decry the practice of praying in words even by beginners, and to recommend that prayer should only be practised when it is felt to be real. From such dangers, Catholic mysticism has been saved by its effective touch with the needs of the ordinarily devout person. It should be noticed that for the education of the subconscious in reflective auto-suggestion a form of words is used, and so far as one desires a similar effect to follow from prayer, a similar method must be used. It is true that there are later forms of non-mystical prayer in which thinking in words

is not carried on, but it seems reasonable to suppose that such a later development is a result of subconscious dispositions already produced by verbal exercises. And, if the religious man desires to develop a devotional habit of mind, it is certain that he can only do this by carrying out the same form of prayer whatever his feelings may be. The closest psychological parallel to this is perhaps also reflective autosuggestion. An autosuggestion is not practised only when the subject feels real affect in connection with it.

The devotion of the Rosary is one which approaches to meditation proper. In the recitation of the Rosary, the state called *contention* by Baudouin, is induced by the repetition of the *Hail Mary*, while the attempt is made to keep the mind fixed on the thought of one of the fifteen *mysteries*. This is clearly an exercise allied to the *mantra yoga*, in which there is a similar repetition of one of the formulae called mantras, or of the word *Aum*. If in the Rosary, the formula repeated were expressive of the mystery itself, this would be an example of what Baudouin calls *concentration*.

As a typical example of meditation, we may take the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola. This is a series of discursive reflections supposed to be made by a person during the course of a retreat lasting a month. Each of these was supposed to take an hour, and five were performed each day.

Each meditation was preceded by a preparatory prayer asking that its performance may be directed to the glory of God. The retreatant then constructed in visual imagery the object of the meditation (*ver con la vista de la imaginación el lugar corpóreo donde se halla la cosa que quiero contemplar*). This was followed by a prayer for the

appropriate emotions—for joy, sorrow, or shame, according to the subject of the meditation.

The meditation was conventionally divided into three parts. As a typical example, I will describe the first of the exercises, which has as its subject three sins. The first part of this meditation is on the sin of the fallen angels. The instructions to the meditant are as follows:

The first point will be to carry the memory over the first sin, which was that of the Angels, and then the understanding over the same, reasoning; then the will, seeking to remember and understand it all, that I may the more blush and be confounded, bringing into comparison with the one sin of the Angels those many sins of mine; and seeing that they for one sin have gone to hell, how often I have deserved it for so many. I say, to bring into memory the sin of the Angels, how having been created in grace, and then refusing to help themselves by the aid of their liberty to pay reverence and obedience to their Creator and Lord, coming to pride, they were changed from grace to malice, and cast down from heaven to hell; and so consequently to discourse more in detail with the understanding, and thereupon more to stir the affections by the will.

In the second and third parts, he is instructed to carry the three faculties of memory, understanding, and will, in the same manner, over the sin of Adam and Eve, and over the sin of some particular person who has gone to hell for one mortal sin. The meditation ends with a colloquy in which the meditant imagines Christ or God the Father or the Blessed Virgin before him:

"The colloquy," says St Ignatius, "is made, properly speaking, just as one friend speaks to another, or a servant to his master, now asking for some favour, now reproaching oneself for some evil done, now telling out one's affairs and seeking counsel in them."

The course of meditations was to be made with the accompaniments of solitude, penitence and exterior penances (fasting and other austerities). His instructions as to posture are much less systematised than those of the Yogis, and appear to be entirely different in their aim. He tells the meditant that he should "enter upon the contemplation, now kneeling, now prostrate on the ground, now lying back with uplifted face, now sitting, now standing, aiming ever at seeking what I want."

A small point which the psychologist will find interesting is that St Ignatius makes the following recommendation:

after going to bed, when I am composing myself to sleep, for the space of one Hail Mary to think of the hour at which I ought to rise, and to what purpose, recapitulating the Exercise which I have to make.

Some Protestant critics of the Ignatian method make a great deal of what he says about the control of breathing during prayer. These criticisms are not always very fair nor do they show any intelligent grasp of the nature of the system. Although methods of breathing control, *Pranayama*, play a large part in the devotional practices of Yoga, they do not in the Ignatian exercises, nor (so far as I know) in any other Christian devotional system. The only mention St Ignatius makes of the breath is a trivial one. It is in what he calls *prayer by rhythmical beats*, the method of which is that:

with each breath or respiration one is to pray mentally, saying one word of the Our Father, or of any other prayer that is being recited, so that one word only is said between one breath and another; and, in the length of time between one breath and another, one is to look chiefly to the meaning of such word, or to the person to whom one recites it, or to one's own lowly estate, etc.

Probably this is a method of meditation which would be found to be easy during external distractions.

A particularly simple form of meditation which occupies the third and fourth week of the Exercises is what St Ignatius calls a *contemplation*. This is a meditation in which the subject is an incident from the life of Our Lord, and the preparatory *composition of place* is simply the visualisation of the scene of this incident. There is some confusion caused by the fact that, in mystical theology, the word *contemplation* is used in an entirely different sense to mean the characteristic mental state of mystical prayer. It seems better to avoid the confusion by restricting the word *contemplation* to the latter sense of it, and to describe the meditation from an incident in the gospels as an *Ignatian contemplation*.

We may next ask what is the purpose of meditation? In reading the Exercises of St Ignatius, we are struck by the fact that their immediate aim is essentially a practical one. It is to enable the retreatant to make a practical choice between a life in which the religious motive is the dominant one and a more ordinary life in which action is dictated by a variety of motives. In some cases, but not in all, this is expected to resolve itself into a choice between the monastic life and the life of the world. In all cases, the purpose of the meditations is to determine the retreatant in the choice of what would be called in the language of Protestant devotion *consecration*, or a surrender to the will of God.

This practical aim does not, however, exhaust the purpose of meditation. It is a method of education of the subconscious, as is the new Nancy autosuggestion. The meditations on sin are designed to strengthen the emotional resistance against sin. (It must be remembered

that his use of auricular confession protects the user of the Exercises from the dangers which we have seen to attend a too great emotional reaction against sin.) The Ignatian contemplation strengthens the feeling of love for and of belief in the Incarnate. The colloquies strengthen both the belief in the persons to whom they are addressed and the emotions connected with them. We may sum all this up by saying that the purpose of the education of the subconscious achieved by the meditations is the strengthening of the religious sentiment. This is not, of course, inconsistent with the view that their aim is also practical, for the strengthening of any sentiment means also the development of the behaviour which springs from that sentiment.

It is true that Protestantism has not very much developed the practice of meditation, and probably Protestantism is poorer for its loss. The loss is, however, less than might appear at first sight. The education of the subconscious, accomplished by meditation in the mind of the Catholic, is accomplished for the Protestant by sermons, by scriptural reading, and by vocal prayer. The very much larger place taken by sermons in Protestant devotion is probably accounted for by the fact that they are required to fulfil this need previously supplied by meditation.

The kind of mental prayer so far described has been clearly an activity of directed thinking. In the language of the faculty psychology, it is a *prayer of the understanding*. But if meditation be habitual, it is not found to remain in this form. Habitual meditation on religious subjects finally makes them so familiar to the mind that when the meditant directs his attention towards them, he passes immediately into a condition of *contention* with

the idea of the subject of meditation. In other words, directed thinking practically ceases while the mind remains permeated with the idea in question. Any attempt at discursive meditation becomes difficult at this stage, and the only voluntary activity necessary is that required to keep the mind from wandering from the subject in hand. This state of prayer is called the *prayer of simplicity* or *acquired contemplation.* I have already pointed out that this appears to be the same as the Yoga *dharanya.* The quietists taught that this state should be induced by the deliberate suppression of all mental activity in prayer. Thus, Molinos says: "consider nothing, desire nothing, will nothing, endeavour after nothing; and then in everything, thy soul will live reposed with quiet and enjoyment." This teaching, however, was strongly opposed by orthodox theologians, particularly by the Jesuits, who considered that although the prayer of simplicity might come as a result of meditation in the ordinary way, no attempt ought to be made to suspend mental activity in order to reach it.

If we wish to understand at all the different kinds of prayer, it seems desirable to distinguish the prayer of simplicity from the different forms of mystical prayer which will be discussed in the next chapter. There seems to be adequate psychological justification for the distinction, and it can only lead to confusion of thought to apply the name *Prayer of Quiet* to the non-mystical prayer of simplicity. The two features particularly to be noticed about this state of *contention*, called the prayer of simplicity, are the extent to which it is under voluntary control and the variety of subjects with which it may be occupied. In both of these respects it differs from mystical prayer. It is entered on voluntarily and

may be left by a simple redirection of the attention. It may be *contention* with any religious idea. The idea may be simply that of the presence of God, but not necessarily.

A form of prayer intermediate between ordinary meditation and the prayer of simplicity is called *affective prayer*. This is a discursive meditation in which the directed thinking is less while the emotional accompaniments are greater than in ordinary meditation. In the following extract from Fr. Nouet, both affective prayer and the prayer of simplicity are described:

When the man of prayer has made considerable progress in meditation, he passes insensibly to affective prayer, which, being between meditation and contemplation, as the dawn is between the night and the day, possesses something both of the one and of the other. In its beginnings it contains more of meditation, because *it still makes use of reasoning*, although *but little* in comparison with the time it devotes to the affections; because, having acquired much light by the prolonged use of considerations and reasonings, *it enters at once into its subject*, and sees *all its developments without much difficulty*, whence it is that the will is soon moved. Hence it arises that in proportion as it perfects itself, it discards reasonings, and being content with a simple glance, with a *sweet remembrance* of God and of Jesus Christ, His only Son, it produces many loving affections according to the various motions that it receives from the Holy Ghost. But when it has arrived at the highest point of affection, it simplifies its affections equally with its lights; so that the soul will remain sometimes for an hour, sometimes for a day, sometimes more, in the same sentiments of love, or contrition, or reverence, or some other movement the impression of which she has received[1].

[1] *Conduite de l'Homme d'Oraison*, quoted by Poulain in *The Graces of Interior Prayer*.

Before we pass on to mystical prayer, there are a few questions in connection with the relationship between autosuggestion and heterosuggestion and religious practice, which may conveniently be dealt with here. First, we may notice the connection between the therapeutic use of suggestion and religion. It is generally supposed that the miraculous cures of Holy Places are results of autosuggestion, and the attempt to revive gifts of healing in religious bodies at the present time is largely an attempt to replace this uncontrolled healing suggestion, by the same thing deliberately used with full consciousness of its scientific meaning. If it be granted that the cures of Lourdes are results of autosuggestion, working under the particularly favourable conditions of a simple religious trust, which makes the requisite abandonment of effort reasonable and easy, it by no means follows that the scientifically self-conscious use of the same means as methods of autosuggestion, would produce the same effect. If we ask a cripple to undertake a pilgrimage because it will set to work a curative autosuggestion, we are not reproducing the conditions under which he might be cured if we told him to go on a pilgrimage because the Blessed Virgin would work a miracle for him, and we cannot expect the same results. This may be one of the unavoidable losses which accompany intellectual enlightenment. On the other hand, it may be possible for the modern man, with full acceptance of the point of view of modern science, to find a reasonable ground for approaching religious healing with just the same simplicity of faith as the pilgrim at Lourdes. Then, and only then, will the miracles of Lourdes be possible for him.

We must, however, be on our guard against the danger

of taking for granted the assumption that the ideals of religion and of a healthy-minded system of autosuggestion, such as New Thought, are the same. If the ideal of religion were primarily to implant in its followers thoughts of health, happiness and beauty, so that they might be realised as beneficent autosuggestions, it is certain that existing religious systems do not succeed in that object very well. Thoughts of disease, failure and ugliness are dwelt on in religious devotion, although these are the thoughts which must be most sternly discouraged by a healthy-minded system of autosuggestion. Such a system could find nothing of value to it in the Christian hymns on the Passion, or in such a devotion as the Stations of the Cross. It does not seem necessary to suppose that, in retaining these elements, historical Christianity has merely made a vast blunder in mental therapeutics. Whether rightly or wrongly, it has not considered that mental therapy was its principal aim. It has supposed that in thoughts of pain and disease, it is drawing on a source of spiritual enrichment compared with which the health and happiness drawn from the shallow optimism of healthy-minded thinking is a trivial and a worthless thing.

These considerations lead us naturally on to enquire whether there are any difficulties or dangers in autosuggestion or in the methods of prayer which are most closely allied to it. The gravest medical objection against a cure by any kind of suggestion is that it is often merely a removal of a symptom while the underlying cause of the symptom remains untouched. We are not, however, particularly concerned with this, since we are not discussing autosuggestion as a method of curing diseases. There remain two criticisms which touch us more closely.

The first of these is the generally admitted fact that the practice of autosuggestion increases the suggestibility of the person practising it. This, as has been pointed out earlier, is an objection to the use of suggestion in any form. Baudouin, however, distinguishes in heterosuggestion between *acceptivity*, the ease with which a suggestion is received from another person, and *suggestibility*, the capacity of a person for realising an idea whatever has been its origin. He states that acceptivity is an undesirable factor, but that without an exaggerated acceptivity, a high degree of suggestibility is a source of strength and is to be desired. It is, of course, suggestibility in this restricted sense and not acceptivity that is brought into play in autosuggestion. Now it will hardly be denied that autosuggestion is free from the grave defect in the use of heterosuggestion, that the subject's independence of character is destroyed by the increased ease with which he receives suggestions from another person. But it is by no means certain that suggestibility, even in Baudouin's restricted sense, is not a dangerous element in character if it is over-developed. It has been argued that such over-development of suggestibility by a prolonged use of autosuggestion, may lead to mental dissociation, which is a condition characterising a certain class of mental disorders. Although this cannot be regarded as definitely proved, it is at least a possibility which must be considered seriously. In addition to this, it is clear that an over-developed suggestibility would expose us dangerously to the action of noxious spontaneous autosuggestions. The advocates of autosuggestion reply that that does not matter since these can then be adequately dealt with by reflective autosuggestion. But we may still doubt whether it is

wise to throw away our protective armour, because we are confident that our use of the sword is sufficiently expert to enable us to parry any blow that may be aimed at us.

This, however, is only a particular aspect of a charge made against autosuggestion, that it is essentially an infantile mode of behaviour. Its abandonment of voluntary effort, its cultivation of what Baudouin calls the *imagination* as opposed to the *will*, is stated to be an abandonment of a grown-up way of dealing with difficulties in favour of a childish one. This criticism is made sometimes by psychologists who regard the complete control of conduct by the rational forces of the conscious will as the proper condition of the mind of a grown person, and look upon irrational and instinctive mental elements as things which ought to have been superseded. To them any effort to direct these irrational forces otherwise than by consciously and deliberately overruling them is objectionable, so necessarily they condemn autosuggestion in any form, and they disapprove of any mental exercise which has not as its object the strengthening of the conscious will. This, however, is a view of the constitution of mind, which is not now generally accepted by psychologists. We look upon such irrational forces as necessary elements of mind which must be understood and controlled, but which cannot be got rid of. However, we call this part of the mind *the infantile psyche*, and recognise the undesirability of its being unduly developed. Autosuggestion and mental exercises akin to it are dangerous if they over-develop the infantile forces of mind. The charge of the orthodox mystical writers against the quietists was, whether justly or not, that they were over-developing this side of the mind.

Clearly, the abandonment of effort is a dangerous formula if it is taken as a complete guide to life. It may be important to know when to abandon voluntary effort, but it is surely even more important for effective action of any kind to know when voluntary effort is required. We saw that the Spiritual Exercises were, like auto-suggestion, an education of the subconscious; but they were also an education of the function of conscious conation, which is called *the will*. The encouragement of infantility is the danger which every kind of mental self-development must avoid.

CHAPTER XIII

CONVERSION

Dr G. S. Hall has pointed out the close connection between conversion and adolescence, and this connection has been fully illustrated in Starbuck's well-known work, *The Psychology of Religion*. These authors point out that the majority of conversions take place between the ages of twelve and twenty-five. They, therefore, connect the conversion change with the physiological and psychological changes taking place at that time. While the recognition and study of this fact have marked an important advance in the psychological study of conversion, it is to be regretted that most writers on the psychology of religion have been so captivated by the simplicity of the formula *Conversion is an adolescent phenomenon*, that they have often fallen into the error of supposing that this is all that is to be said about religious conversion from the psychologist's point of view. Their omission to consider conversions which do not fall under this formula is rendered serious by the fact that these exceptions have often been the most important religious conversions in history. A large number of great religious leaders have been converted late in life; St Paul, St Augustine and Tolstoy are well-known examples. It appears preferable, therefore, to treat adult and adolescent conversions as two separate problems, and to see how far the explanations found for one will fit the other and how far they require different treatment.

Using the word *conversion* in a wide and vague sense,

we may say that it is an outbreak into consciousness of something, such as a system of beliefs, which seems to have had no period of development in the mind. Modern psychology, on its pathological side, has been interested in other cases of apparent irruptions into consciousness of material which seems to have no continuity with what has previously been in the mind, and therefore appears to come into the mind from outside. These are commonly explained as due to the influence on consciousness of instincts or of sentiments with a strong emotional tone which have been repressed from the conscious mind, and have become unconscious. These unconscious mental dispositions are now commonly called *complexes*. The motive of the repression may be that the material concerned is painful, immoral, or otherwise displeasing to the normal consciousness. The repression may be so complete that the repressed matter becomes entirely unknown to the conscious mind. The force opposed to the repressed complex is called a *resistance*. Though it is lost to consciousness, such repressed material has not necessarily lost its power; it may influence feeling or conduct in some unexpected way. In this case, the individual concerned will be ignorant of the source of influence.

The struggle between a complex and the opposing resistance, if both are conscious, will be present to consciousness as a painful mental conflict. If the complex is entirely unconscious this will not be the case, but there will still be a real conflict, although it is not present to the conscious mind. The time may come when the development of the complex has so far advanced that the resistance is no longer powerful enough to keep it repressed. There is then an outbreak into consciousness

of a new mental construction which appears to introspection to have had no period of development in the mind. The system seems to have come to the mind from outside, so its outbreak has an apparently supernatural character. This appearance of the extramental origin of the system may be regarded as an illusion due to the fact that the process of its incubation was unconscious.

Similar cases of unconscious incubation of mental constructions are familiar in ordinary life to everyone who is sufficiently introspective to have noticed them. Many people, when worried by a problem or by the necessity of writing a difficult letter, have the habit of dismissing it from their minds and returning to it later. They then find that, though they have not thought of it at all during the interval, the problem is solved or the letter seems to write itself.

As an example of a consistent attempt to express the conversion change, as a result of the outbreak of a repressed complex, we may take a psychological discussion by Dr Jung[1] of the conversion of St Paul:

Although the moment of a conversion seems sometimes quite sudden and unexpected, yet we know from repeated experience that such a fundamental occurrence always has a long period of unconscious incubation. It is only when the preparation is complete, that is to say, when the individual is ready to be converted, that the new view breaks forth with great emotion. St Paul had already been a Christian for a long time, but unconsciously; hence his fanatical resistance to the Christians, because fanaticism exists chiefly in individuals who are compensating for secret doubts. The incident of his hearing the voice of Christ on his way to Damascus

[1] "The Psychological Foundation of Belief in Spirits." *Proc. S.P.R.* May, 1920.

marks the moment when the unconscious complex of Christianity became conscious. That the auditory phenomenon should represent Christ is explained by the already existing unconscious Christian complex. The complex, being unconscious, was projected by St Paul on to the external world as if it did not belong to him. Unable to conceive of himself as a Christian, and on account of his resistance to Christ, he became blind, and could only regain his sight through submission to a Christian, that is to say, through his complete submission to Christianity. Psychogenic blindness is, according to my experience, always due to an unwillingness to see, *i.e.* to understand and to accept, what is incompatible with the conscious attitude. This was obviously the case with St Paul. His unwillingness to see corresponds with his fanatical resistance to Christianity. This resistance was never wholly extinguished, a fact of which we have proof in the epistles. It broke forth at times in the fits he suffered from. It is certainly a great mistake to call his fits epileptic. There is no trace of epilepsy in them, on the contrary, St Paul himself in his epistles gives hints enough as to the real nature of the illness. They are clearly psychogenic fits, which really mean a return to the old Saul-complex, repressed through conversion, in the same way as there had previously been a repression of the complex of Christianity.

On this view, the account of St Paul's conversion is a particularly instructive one because it shows the unconscious complex breaking into consciousness as a result of its own development. The actual outbreak is not determined by an external influence, as in the case of a person converted by the hearing of a revival sermon. Moreover, the resistance itself is visible in its effects on his conduct (in his persecution of the Christians). Acceptance of this as a sufficient account of the psychological mechanism of his conversion does not, of course, prevent

us from holding, if we have reason to do so, that there was an objective ground of St Paul's visions. Psychologically, it would not be a necessary postulate, but it is arguable that it might be necessary on other grounds.

Before discussing adult conversion in detail, it is necessary to make a distinction between two classes of adult conversion, which clearly have their roots in entirely different mental processes. These are: ordinary conversion (from an irreligious to a religious life) and what is generally called *mystical conversion* (from an ordinary religious life to the life of a mystic). It is with ordinary adult conversion that we are concerned at present, and for the psychological mechanism of this, I am of the opinion that Dr Jung's explanation is substantially correct. We seem to be able to give an adequate account of this by assuming the presence of a growing sentiment, kept unconscious by a resistance, which finally overthrows that resistance and establishes itself in a dominant position in the conscious life.

We notice, however, that in ordinary conversion itself there is considerable variation in the nature of the resistance and the impulse which it is opposing. We may conveniently classify these differences by saying that the conflict may be mainly moral, mainly intellectual, or mainly social. By a social conflict I mean one in which the contending interests are loyalties to two mutually opposed communities. It is likely that all three of these elements enter into every conversion, but it is possible to make a rough distinction into classes in which one or other of them is dominant.

The first class, in which the conflict is moral, is the most familiar, since most of the reported conversions of revival preachers are of this type. The repressed complex

may be a desire to escape from excessive drinking or from sexual indulgence, or from any other kind of behaviour which is regarded as sinful. The interest behind the complex may be genuinely religious in character—a desire to be "right with God." This interest is often, however, supplemented or replaced by others—by a wish for the approval of other people or of one's self, by a fear of the consequences of continued indulgence, etc.[1] This is recognised by the revival preacher who, in addition to the purely religious appeal, eloquently describes the horrors of a drunkard's end or the pains of hell. Thus, Jonathan Edwards says:

There will be no end to the exquisite, horrible misery. The inhabitants of heaven and all the universe will look on and praise God's justice. No prayer will mitigate God's hate and contempt, for He can no longer pity. You would have gone to hell last night had he not held you like a loathsome spider over the flames by a thread[2].

We will take two examples of the *moral conversion.* Both are given in a book called *Stories of Grace*, by the Rev. C. S. Isaacson.

The first took place after a sermon preached in a small church in Basingstoke:

Amongst the crowd in the centre of the aisle there stood a man so noted for his ungodliness and profane language as to be known in Basingstoke by the name of "Swearing Tom." He was a leader in sin and profanity, and for

[1] It must be added that one of these interests may be of instinctive origin. Even when discussing sexual indulgence, it is necessary to insist on the falsity of a manner of talking about it which assumes that unlimited indulgence is *natural*, while restraint is always a *work of grace.* Excessive sexual indulgence is as truly a violation of an instinct as is absolute continence.

[2] "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." *Works*, 1807, VII. p. 486.

seventeen years he had never entered a church. It was only curiosity which brought him now. The text was taken from the prophecy of Ezekiel, "I will put a new spirit within you." Towards the close of the sermon the preacher quoted the words, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke xi. 13), remarking that, contrary to the conclusion which might have been expected, "the offer was not to children, but simply to those who asked. There was nothing, therefore, between the worst of men and this most blessed gift from heaven but to ask for it." He then added, "If the most wicked man in this church would go home and pray that God, for Christ's sake, would give him His Holy Spirit to change his heart, God would hear and answer that man's prayer."

These words went straight to the heart of "Swearing Tom." "I am the worst man here," he said to himself; "I will go home and pray." As he went he had to pass by the familiar public-house, but, unmoved by the calls of his companions, he refused to turn in. On reaching his home he threw himself on his knees, and tried to pray in the words which he had heard from the pulpit. The prayer was answered. From that time he became a changed man, and his name of "Swearing Tom" was soon altered to that of "Praying Tom," by which he was known till the day of his death[1].

The next account is that given of himself by Mr Brownlow North, who became, after his conversion, a revival preacher. He was of noble birth, and up to the age of forty-five he led a gay life in Aberdeen.

It pleased God, in the month of November, 1854, one night, when I was sitting playing at cards, to make me concerned about my soul. The instrument used was a

[1] *Stories of Grace*, by the Rev. C. S. Isaacson, pp. 129, 130.

sensation of sudden illness, which led me to think that I was going to die. I said to my son, "I am a dead man; take me upstairs." As soon as this was done, I threw myself down on the bed. My first thought was then, "Now, what will my forty-four years of following the devices of my own heart profit me? In a few minutes I shall be in hell, and what good will all these things do me for which I have sold my soul?" At that moment I felt constrained to pray, but it was merely the prayer of a coward, a cry for mercy.

I was not sorry for what I had done, but I was afraid of the punishment of my sin. And yet there was something trying to prevent me putting myself on my knees to call for mercy, and that was the presence of the maid-servant in the room lighting the fire. Though I did not believe at that time that I had ten minutes to live, and knew that there was no possible hope for me but in the mercy of God, and that if I did not seek that mercy I could not expect to have it, yet such was the nature of my heart, and of my spirit within me, that it was a balance with me, a thing to turn this way or that, I could not tell how, whether I should wait till that woman left the room, or whether I should fall on my knees and call for mercy in her presence.

By the grace of God I did put myself on my knees before that girl, and I believe it was the turning point with me.

This incident started a long and distressing mental conflict which ended one night when he was reading and came to the passage: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe."

With that passage light came into my soul. Striking the book with my hand and springing from my chair, I

cried, "If that Scripture is true, I am a saved man! That is what I want; that is what God offers me; that is what I will have." God helping me, it was that I took: *the righteousness of God without the law.* It was my *only* hope[1].

We may here notice, in passing, the precautions necessary in dealing with the material provided for the study of conversion by such narratives as those which have just been given.

There is, in the first place, an unavoidable tendency towards unconscious falsification on the part of the narrators. Experiences recorded later in life than the time of their occurrence will be conventionalised in accordance with the point of view of the narrator at the time they are recorded. Features not in harmony with the usual accounts of conversions in the convert's community will tend to be softened out. Childish experiences are often described in language which obviously belongs to a later age. Particularly must we suspect accounts which are obviously written for the sake of edification, since in these the process of conventionalisation is certain to have crept in, however little the narrator may suspect it.

At the same time, we must notice an incompleteness in the narratives themselves. The data given are not all that the psychological enquirer would need for an adequate investigation into the phenomena received. If we accept the conclusions of modern psychology, the love-interests of the person concerned are of vital importance in the determination of all the events of his mental life. Generally, in the story of a conversion, they are omitted or given in an incomplete form. It is rarely that we have

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 18–20, quoting from *Records and Recollections*, Brownlow North.

a case like that of St Augustine where the sexual history of the convert is given without reserve. An obvious case of incomplete data is found in the second of the narratives already given. Why was the subject so powerfully affected by the phrase "without the law"? The account gives no indication. It seems clear that it is connected with the getting rid of some moral conflict—with its evasion, or perhaps with the perception that it was unreal.

A third point of importance in this connection is the fact that, if the psychological point of view we are adopting be correct, then some of the most important determinants of conversion will not be apparent to introspection since they will be unconscious. For example, the psychologist will not find it easy to accept Swearing Tom's statement that he was drawn to church merely by curiosity. He will rather be inclined to suspect that this conduct was the result of the already working religious complex, but that it was rationalised in this way because, since the complex was repressed, this motive was unconscious. Similarly, the religious background of Brownlow North's conflict when he thought that he was dying is curiously traditional. The genuinely irreligious man does not talk or think like that. The traditional religious dispositions implanted by his childhood teaching have survived in his unconscious and probably play a considerable part in the direction of his conversion change.

Predominantly intellectual conversions present more difficulties than the type we have just considered. The intellectual conflict seems always to be mixed up with moral elements, and it is difficult to tell how far it is real and how far it is merely a rationalisation of a moral

conflict. That a moral conflict may appear disguised as an intellectual one is no new discovery of modern psychology. Clergymen are quite familiar with the fact that the doubts of members of their congregations are often intimately connected with moral shortcomings in their lives.

St Augustine may be taken as an example of a conversion of the intellectual type. Of his thirtieth year, he writes in his *Confessions*:

But me for the most part the habit of satisfying an insatiable appetite tormented, while it held me captive. ...So were we, until Thou, O most High, not forsaking our dust, commiserating us miserable, didst come to our help, by wondrous and secret ways.

Continual efforts were made to have me married. I wooed, I was promised, chiefly through my mother's pains, that so once married, the health-giving baptism might cleanse me, towards which she rejoiced that I was being daily fitted....Meanwhile my sins were being multiplied, and my concubine being torn from my side as a hindrance to my marriage, my heart which clave unto her was torn and wounded and bleeding....But unhappy I,...impatient of delay, inasmuch as not till after two years was I to obtain her I sought, not being so much a lover of marriage as a slave to lust, procured another, though no wife....To Thee be praise, glory to Thee, Fountain of Mercies. I was becoming more miserable, and Thou nearer.

In Book VII, he describes his intellectual difficulties. He thought of God as extended in space, though filling all things. He was unable to understand the cause of evil. He knew that free-will was supposed to be the cause of evil, but he did not find in this a solution of his difficulties.

For He should not be All-mighty, if He might not create something good without the aid of that matter which Himself had not created. These thoughts I revolved in

my miserable heart, overcharged with gnawing cares, lest I should die ere I had found the truth; yet was the faith of Thy Christ, our Lord and Saviour, professed in the Church Catholic, firmly fixed in my heart, in many points, indeed, as yet unformed and fluctuating from the rule of doctrine; yet did not my mind utterly leave it, but rather daily took in more and more of it.

By a study of Scripture, he came to have what he considered a right view of all these questions, and saw that iniquity was the perversion of the will. Though accepting Jesus Christ as the Mediator between God and Man, he says that he did not understand the true doctrine of the Incarnation, not understanding how that saying, "The Word was made flesh," distinguishes the Catholic faith from the heresy of Apollinarius, who taught that Christ had no human mind. These difficulties vanished away when he studied the writings of St Paul.

He now accepted the orthodox faith. "But," he says, "for my temporal life, all was wavering, and *my heart had to be purged from the old leaven. The Way*, the Saviour Himself, well pleased me, but as yet I shrunk from going through its straitness." When told of the conversion of Victorinus, Rhetoric Professor at Rome, Augustine was on fire to imitate him, but found in himself two wills, the one spiritual, the other carnal. These struggled within him, until God delivered him out of the bonds of desire, wherewith he was bound most straitly to carnal concupiscence, and out of the drudgery of worldly things. He was afterwards much impressed by the story of St Antony and of the conversion of two courtiers, told him by a Christian called Pontianus.

Then he seemed to see how foul he was, "how crooked and defiled, bespotted and ulcerous."

What ails us? What heardest thou? The unlearned start up and *take heaven by force*, and we with our learning, and without heart, lo, where we wallow in flesh and blood! Are we ashamed to follow, because others are gone before, and not ashamed not even to follow?

The tumult of his inward contention hurried him to the garden of his lodging, where he would be free from any fear of interruption. He gives a graphic account of the conflict which took place here between his religious and moral complex and the resistance opposing it.

Thus soul-sick was I, and tormented, accusing myself much more severely than was my wont, rolling and turning me in my chain, till that were wholly broken, whereby I now was but just, but still was, held....The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my ancient mistresses, still held me; they plucked my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, "Dost thou cast us off?"... But now it spake very faintly. For on that side whither I had set my face, and whither I trembled to go, there appeared unto me the chaste dignity of Continence, serene, yet not relaxedly, gay, honestly alluring me to come, and doubt not; and stretching forth to receive and embrace me, her holy hands full of multitudes of good examples....I sent up these sorrowful words: How long, how long, "to-morrow and to-morrow"? Why not now? Why not this hour make an end to my uncleanness?

While he was speaking and weeping in bitter contrition, he heard a child chanting, "Take up and read; take up and read." This he took as a command from God, and opening the book by chance, his eyes fell on the passage: *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh* in concupiscence.

No further would I read; nor needed I: for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away....For Thou convertedst me unto Thyself, so that I sought neither wife, nor any hope in this world.

Of his state after conversion, he says: "This Thy whole gift was, to nill what I willed, and to will what Thou willedst."

The intellectual power of St Augustine, the introspective ability shown in his description of the conflict after it has become conscious, and the frankness with which he describes his sexual conflict, combine to make this an invaluable conversion record. It also illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing between the moral and intellectual parts of the conflict. St Augustine's difficulties about the nature of sin are clearly an expression of the conflict between his own moral ideals and his course of life. It is interesting to notice that his intellectual problems were solved first, and that it was the moral conflict alone which was active during the mental struggle in the garden. At this time the choice had been made in the unconscious, and the moral and religious complex needed only the slightest additional stimulation to burst into consciousness. This additional stimulation was provided by the voice of the child and the verse of Scripture he read.

Yet we cannot dismiss the intellectual conflict as a mere rationalisation of the moral one. St Augustine's position as a teacher of philosophy makes it clear that his mind was of the intellectual type. It is important to recognise the part played by purely emotional dispositions in determining belief and conduct; at the same time, we must not forget that intellectual processes also

play a part in determining belief and conduct, and that this part will be larger in minds with an intellectual disposition and training.

It is difficult, however, to find any clear case of a purely intellectual conversion in real life. There is indeed in fiction the conversion of Robert Elsmere in Mrs Humphry Ward's novel. But the soundness of the psychology of this account may be doubted.

The third kind of adult conversion which we distinguished was that in which the main part of the conflict appears to be between opposing loyalties. These we called *social conversions*. They will naturally be found most commonly as conversions from systems which make such demands upon the loyalties of their members that a breach with the system involves a complete breach with its other members—a tearing apart of the bonds between the individual concerned and all the individuals with whom he has intimate personal relationships. Most religious bodies in the modern civilised world do not make their demand upon the loyalties of their members in such an extreme form, so amongst these bodies we cannot expect to find many conversions of this type. They are found, however, in religious bodies and amongst races whose community feeling is stronger.

St Paul has already been quoted as a conversion of this type. As another example we may take a living Christian convert from Hinduism—the Sadhu Sundar Singh. The following is an account of this event in his own words:

When I was out in any town I got people to throw stones at Christian preachers. I would tear up the Bible and burn it when I had a chance. In the presence of my father I cut up the Bible and other Christian books and

put kerosene oil upon them and burnt them. I thought this was a false religion and tried all I could to destroy it. I was faithful to my own religion, but I could not get any satisfaction or peace, though I performed all the ceremonies and rites of that religion. So I thought of leaving it all and committing suicide. Three days after I had burnt the Bible, I woke up about three o'clock in the morning, had my usual bath, and prayed, "O God, if there is a God, wilt thou show me the right way or I will kill myself." My intention was that, if I got no satisfaction, I would place my head upon the railway line when the 5 o'clock train passed by and kill myself. If I got no satisfaction in this life, I thought I would get it in the next. I was praying and praying but got no answer; and I prayed for half-an-hour longer hoping to get peace. At 4.30 a.m. I saw something of which I had no idea at all previously. In the room where I was praying I saw a great light. I thought the place was on fire. I looked round, but could find nothing. Then the thought came to me, "Jesus Christ is not dead but living and it must be He Himself." So I fell at His feet and got this wonderful Peace which I could not get anywhere else. This is the joy I was wishing to get. This was heaven itself. When I got up, the vision had all disappeared; but although the vision disappeared the Peace and Joy have remained with me ever since. I went off and told my Father that I had become a Christian[1].

Like the conversion of St Paul, this story seems to be satisfactorily explained on the assumption that Christianity had already been accepted in the unconscious, while the affection for his parents and all the other social forces of his surroundings were opposing a resistance to the entrance of this conviction into consciousness. The resistance expressed itself as a violent conscious hatred

[1] *The Sadhu.* Streeter and Appasamy, pp. 5–7.

of Christianity, and the conflict between his repressed conviction and the opposing resistance produced such a painful state of mind that he wished to end it by suicide.

This theory of conversion is essentially the same as William James's theory of *subconscious incubation*. The difference, however, is important. Modern mental pathology has taught us a great deal more than was known in the days of James about the mechanism by which complexes are kept unconscious. Repression has been studied in a great variety of cases, both where it has become pathogenic and where the subject has remained healthy. The theory of subconscious incubation is no longer a hypothesis introduced to explain the peculiarities of this one phenomenon of religious conversion. It is a process familiar in a number of different conditions, and of which the laws are very largely known. The theory has, therefore, gained both in definiteness and credibility since it was first put forward in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

There are certain difficulties which must be mentioned in the way of the acceptance of this account of the psychological mechanism of conversion. In the first place, it must be admitted that the evidence is necessarily insufficient to demonstrate that this is the mechanism of all adult conversions. In certain cases the unconscious conflict gives signs of its existence by the effect of the resistance on conduct; but more often it can only be an inference from the suddenness of the emergence of the new mental system at conversion. The kind of evidence required for complete demonstration is a record of the dreams of the individual concerned for a period before his conversion. These would reveal any repressed

complex which was occupying his unconscious mind during that time. They could, of course, only be analysed after the conversion, since otherwise the complex would be made conscious and it would be necessary for the man to integrate it with the rest of his mental life, so that its cataclysmic outbreak would be prevented. The difficulties of such an observation are obvious, and, so far as the present writer knows, it has never been carried out.

An objection to all psychological theories of conversion which comes frequently from religious persons demands sympathetic treatment, although we cannot admit its force. To them it appears that to attribute conversion to an action of the mind, which can be paralleled in secular life, is equivalent to denying the reality of the divine action in conversion. There seems to be no sufficient reason for this fear. If we find that God works in accordance with law in the physical world, we may expect to find that the same will be true in the mental world. The only effect, from the point of view of the believer, of the theory suggested, is that the interest in the conversion process is shifted from the actual moment of conversion to the period of growth of the underlying complex. In any case, it seems perilous to found an argument for the reality of divine action on our ignorance of the mechanism of conversion. That is bad philosophy, and it repeats in mental science an error of which theologians have already repented in biology.

CHAPTER XIV

MYSTICAL AND ADOLESCENT CONVERSIONS

We have already described mystical conversion as the change from an ordinarily religious life to the life of a religious mystic. By a mystic, we mean a person to whom the emotional religious experiences which occur at times to all religious persons have become stronger and more permanent. He has other experiences differing in many of their qualities from those of the ordinary religious person. The mystic is also much more liable to have experiences which would be considered pathological by the doctor—visions, voices, trances, etc. These marks are sufficient to indicate, for the purpose of the present chapter, the kind of mentality covered by the word *mystic*. They are not intended to provide a definition of mysticism.

Although the development of the ordinary religious life frequently takes place without any abrupt change which can be described as conversion, this does not appear ever to be true in the case of the mystic. In the lives of them all there is one clearly defined event which they call their conversion. In the terms of our psychological theory, this would seem to mean that in the passage from an irreligious life to a religious life repression does not always play a part, while in the passage to the mystical life it does. The religious lives which develop without any sudden conversion we may suppose to be those in which the religious sentiment is integrated with the rest of the mental life without having been first repressed.

In the lives of many religious mystics we find, as well as the mystical conversion, an earlier conversion which often takes the typical adolescent form. In others, we are told that the person was very religious from his childhood. Thus Pascal was first converted at the age of twenty-three, and his mystical conversion took place eight years later. Evan Roberts, the leader of the Welsh revival at the beginning of this century, was religious from his boyhood and devoted to prayer and the Bible. He was converted with soul anguish in 1904, and after that time he had paroxysms and saw visions. Al Ghazzali, who was a professor of Theology (Mohammedan) at Baghdad, describes how, starting from dogmatic religion, he passed through a period of scepticism until he was redeemed by a light which God caused to penetrate into his heart, and afterwards he gave up his professorship and became a *sufi*[1].

The accounts of mystical conversion are very strikingly more uniform than those which have so far been described. Typically, they are of a conventionally religious person, living the usual life of the devout world, much respected for his piety and good works. He, however, feels a restless yearning for something more than his life is giving him. He begins to cut himself free from the ties that bind him to the life to which he has been accustomed. Then, after a longer or shorter period of unhappiness due to a painful inner conflict, he passes through an experience which he is unable to describe, but which has given him a revelation in the light of which his subsequent life must be lived. After this time he separates himself completely from the world of men, and is absorbed in inner experiences of pain and of

[1] *The Confessions of Al Ghazzali*, trans. by Claude Field.

pleasure which are both equally unintelligible to others. Instead of being universally respected, he becomes an object of scandal. He may even abandon valuable religious work in the world for the sake of his new life[1]. After the mystical conversion, his religious life has become much more highly coloured emotionally, has become intolerant in its demands on all other interests, and it has become definitely associated with such abnormal mental phenomena as visions, locutions, etc.

A case of mystical conversion which follows closely on the lines just indicated is that of Rulman Merswin. He was a wealthy, pious, and respected merchant of Strassburg. He retired from business in order to devote himself to religious truth. One evening as he was strolling in his garden, meditating, a picture of the crucifix suddenly presented itself to his mind. He was abruptly filled with a violent hatred of the world and his own free-will. "Lifting his eyes to heaven, he solemnly swore that he would utterly surrender his own will, person, and goods to the service of God[2]."

The mystical conversion of Pascal is one which will repay a detailed attention. Less violent than the typical case already given, it follows it closely in its general outlines. In her account of the life of Pascal, Madame Périer says:

While he was not yet twenty-four years of age, the providence of God having caused an occasion which obliged him to read books of piety, God enlightened him in such a way by this reading, that he understood per-

[1] It must be remembered that this is only an account of the initial stage of the mystical life. It would be necessary to modify it if we were to take into account its later phases.

[2] *Mysticism*, by Evelyn Underhill, quoting *Rulman Merswin*, by A. Jundt.

fectly that the Christian religion obliges us to live only for God and to have no other object than Him; and this truth appeared to him so evident, so necessary, and so useful, that it ended all his researches: so that from that time he renounced all other branches of knowledge in order to apply himself entirely to the one thing which Jesus Christ calls needful[1].

He had never been vicious or even sceptical in matters of religion. From this time he came under the influence of the Jansenists, whose outlook was puritanical. He dissuaded his younger sister, Jacqueline, from her projected marriage on the ground that this would be robbing God of a part of what belonged to Him. At this time he became a chronic invalid, but he bore his sufferings with much resignation. The physicians ordered a complete cessation of intellectual work, and that every possible opportunity should be taken for relaxation and entertainment. At Auvergne he mixed freely with the world, but without any irregularity of life. He opposed his sister's entry into a convent. His life and interests were becoming more and more secular.

Somewhere about this time he composed his *Discourse on the Passions of Love*. The Jansenists, who regarded it as an imperfection that so great a man should have experienced human love, have left us little evidence concerning this event. The object of his love was probably Mlle de Roannez, sister of Pascal's friend, the Duc de Roannez. She appears to have been a beautiful and accomplished woman. The difference in their rank must have made his attachment hopeless. Under his influence she became a novice in Port Royal, but returned to the world after his death. There can be little doubt that the

[1] *Vie de Blaise Pascal*, by Mme Périer, his sister.

deeply emotional nature of his subsequent conversion was largely determined by his redirection to Heaven of this earthly love.

He says in the *Discourse*:

Man does not like to dwell by himself; he loves, however: he must seek, therefore, an object of love elsewhere. He can find it only in beauty....The most suitable sustainer of beauty is a woman. When she has intellect, she animates and elevates it wonderfully....Man alone is something imperfect; he must find another in order to be happy. He often seeks this in equality of condition, because freedom and opportunity for showing himself are then met more easily. Nevertheless we sometimes go above ourselves, and we feel the fire burn higher, although we dare not tell her who has caused it. When we love a lady of unequal condition, ambition may accompany the beginning of love; but in a short time it becomes the master. It is a tyrant who suffers no companion....The pleasure of loving without daring to tell has its pains, but it also has its sweetnesses. With what transport do we not form all our actions with the object of pleasing a person whom we esteem infinitely[1]?

But he felt dissatisfied with the things of the world. His sister, who was now a nun, often exhorted him to lead a more separated life,

and finally did so with so much power and sweetness that she persuaded him as he had first persuaded her, absolutely to leave the world; so that he resolved to leave altogether all the intercourse of the world, and to cut off all the superfluities of life, even at the peril of his health, because he believed that salvation was preferable to all things. He was then thirty years old[2].

[1] "Discours sur les passions de l'amour," in *Pensées, Fragments et Lettres de Blaise Pascal*, by M. Prosper Faugère.

[2] *Vie*, by Mme Périer.

The change, however, was not yet completed. His heart refused to obey his reason. He had learned to despise the world, but not to love God. He made passionate efforts to redirect his will. But this change came only by degrees, as he learned that reason and practice were inadequate by themselves. Two events probably contributed to his final conversion. A carriage accident took place, in which his life was endangered, and his weak state of health caused him to faint away. In November, 1654, he heard a sermon by M. Sinslin, in which the preacher insisted upon the necessity for entire surrender to God. Shortly after this, Pascal fell into a trance in which he had a very vivid impression of the presence of God, and seemed to be illuminated by a supernatural fire. He then took the decisive step of putting himself under the direction of M. de Saci of Port Royal.

After his death, the following writing was found on a paper worn over his heart, and in a very slightly different form on a parchment. It is clearly a record of his conversion experience:

L'an de grâce 1654. Lundi 23 novembre, jour de St Clément, pape et martyr, et autres au martyrologe. Veille de St Chrysogone, martyr et autres. Depuis environ dix heures et demie du soir jusques environ minuit et demi, Feu.

Dieu d'Abraham, Dieu d'Isaac, Dieu de Jacob. Non des philosophes et des savants. Certitude. Certitude. Sentiment. Joie. Paix. Dieu de Jésus-Christ. Deum meum et Deum vestrum. Ton Dieu sera mon Dieu— Oubli du monde et de tout hormis Dieu. Il ne se trouve que par les voies enseignées dans l'Évangile. Grandeur de l'âme humaine. Père juste, le monde ne t'a point connu, mais je t'ai connu. Joie, joie, joie, pleurs de joie.

Je m'en suis séparé. Dereliquerunt me fontes aquae vivae. Mon Dieu me quitterez-vous? Que je n'en sois pas séparé éternellement.

Cette est la vie éternelle qu'ils te connaissent seul vrai Dieu et celui que tu as envoyé J.-C. Jésus-Christ. Jésus-Christ. Je m'en suis séparé; je l'ai fui, renoncé, crucifié. Que je n'en sois jamais séparé. Il ne se conserve que par les voies enseignées dans l'Évangile. Renonciation totale et douce, etc.[1]

Before attempting a psychological explanation of mystical conversion, it will be well to try to give a psychological description of it. If we turn to the traditional accounts of mystical conversion we find that the preliminary conflict is described as the struggle of the individual to renounce his own will and to submit himself entirely to the will of God. The moment of his conversion is when, by Divine Grace, he is enabled to do this. His subsequent life is one lived entirely free from his own will. This freedom may be shown, and at the same time safeguarded for the Catholic by complete obedience to his director or to the superior of his community. This is the significance of Pascal's expression: "Soumission totale à Jésus-Christ et à mon directeur."

This account clearly needs a certain amount of translation into modern terms, its use of the word *will* is one which we have ceased to find useful. Let us study the conduct of the mystic engaged in his preliminary conflict with the idea of finding out what he is actually suppressing. It is not merely what he regards as *sin* even of the most venial kind. He denies himself everything

[1] *Pensées, Fragments et Lettres de Blaise Pascal*, by M. Prosper Faugère. The following additional words were found at the end of the parchment copy: "Soumission totale à Jésus-Christ et à mon directeur. Eternellement en joie pour un jour d'exercice sur la terre. Non obliviscar sermones tuos. Amen."

that ministers to his own desires—food, comfort, and companionship. With particular severity he denies himself a luxury valued highly by even the most devout of ordinary religious persons, the good opinion of his fellow men. He is trying to rid himself of all the desires which bind him to the outside world in order that he may be able more completely to direct the energy of his soul towards the one object of the religious sentiment. In order to express this with clearness, we need a term for that energy of the mind which is differentiated into particular desires, into hunger and love, and into the less immediately instinctive desires connected with such abstract sentiments as the love of knowledge or of fame. For this conception we shall use the word *libido*[1]. The mystic, then, is trying to divert his libido from the external world in order that he may direct it entirely to God. In order that he may accomplish this, he does violence to all his natural affections. He tries to destroy his love of comfort by scourging himself and fasting. He maltreats his self-regarding sentiment by allowing his body to become disfigured by neglect and dirt, and by deliberately acting in such a way as to provoke the contempt of other persons. He shuts himself away from his fellow-men, so that he may not obtain pleasure from his gregarious instinct.

Since human love makes more insistent demands on his libido than any other sentiment, it is the one he most sternly avoids. It seems probable, indeed, that the

[1] In all places where this word occurs, I shall be using it in the sense adopted by Jung, and not in the exclusively sexual sense of Freud. The *libido* of Jung is *libido* plus *interest* in the Freudian terminology. The word seems preferable to Jung's own alternative *psychic energy*, and *élan*, which has sometimes been used, has already been given a biological connotation by Bergson.

failure to find a satisfactory resting-place for his libido in a human love object is often the determining incident which turns his feet into the path which leads to mystical conversion. Pascal has left us a record of his own unsuccessful attempt to find happiness in human love in the work already quoted. St Catherine of Genoa and Mme Guyon were both extremely unhappy in their married lives before their mystical conversions.

The explanation of the mystical conversion which I would suggest, is that it is the redirection of the whole of the libido into the religious sentiment. We may express this in other words by saying that it is the religious sublimation of the entire instinctive nature.

We may notice here a curious feature which makes the records of mystical conversion singularly repellent even to readers who are themselves religious and, on the whole, sympathetic towards mysticism. This is the indiscriminate suppression of human activities which other people regard as good with those which are generally considered bad. The convert of the ordinary type abandons drink and tries to lead a decent life. With his conversion we can sympathise. But when we find the mystical convert not merely treating his body with unreasonable severity, but also abandoning all the decent and beautiful ties of human affection, and refusing to live a life of social and religious usefulness, we feel that this is something with which no reasonable person can have any sympathy. Yet the inner necessity which drives the mystic to these excesses is undoubtedly a reality for him. Suso and other mystics have felt the impulse to lead an ordinary, decent, and respectable Christian life as one of their most subtle and dangerous temptations. For them it was clearly a choice between

suppressing all activities which gave them pleasure and failing in the attainment of their goal.

We may notice in passing that this tendency is by no means confined to the religious mystic. Persons who have consecrated the whole of their libido to other activities show the same peculiarity. Scientific research workers often show the same indifference to the demands of natural affection. Suso's temptation to lead an ordinarily useful and respectable religious life might be exactly paralleled by the research worker's temptation to leave the investigations interesting to him for the sake of doing work which is not only socially valuable, but is also sufficiently remunerative to enable him to marry and live in comfort. His answer to the temptation is the same as Suso's. He feels that if he were to yield to it he would be selling his soul. Other people have no more sympathy with him than they have with the religious mystic.

An interesting example of the tendency to repress good and bad desires indiscriminately has been brought to the notice of the present writer by a doctor. It is a case of ordinary adult, not mystical conversion. A man who drank excessively, but lived on affectionate terms with his wife and family, became converted by a religious organisation. He gave up drink and became an active worker in this religious body; but he abandoned his wife and children, and made them an entirely insufficient allowance, so that they were reduced to poverty. Two years later he lapsed, took to drink again, but returned to his wife and family, supported them, and behaved in his usual affectionate way towards them. A few months later, he was again converted. He announced his intention of giving up his occupation and living on

the very small pay of an official of the religious organisation which had converted him. He refused to support his wife and family any longer and said they were living in sin. He sold his house over their heads and they were left destitute. Meanwhile, he behaved as a very efficient worker for his religious organisation. They thought highly of him, knowing, of course, nothing of his domestic affairs. He preached and organised their work for a district with conspicuous success.

We have here, in a simple form, an example of that repression of desires which are commonly regarded as good with those which are recognised as evil, which becomes so marked in mystical conversion. With the possibility of its moral justification, we are not, as psychologists, concerned. We have emphasised this feature because it is one which tends to be slurred over by works on mysticism. It must be considered if we are to understand mystical conversion. A more detailed discussion of its psychological meaning may conveniently be deferred until the remaining kind of religious conversion has been dealt with.

It would, no doubt, be possible to find cases of the forms of conversion discussed in the last chapter taking place at adolescence, but there seems no reason for supposing that they are commoner at the period of adolescence than at any other age. At the same time, there is a kind of conversion which has certain well-marked characters of its own, which appears to occur only somewhere in the neighbourhood of adolescence, and it is to this that I propose to give the name of *adolescent conversion*. This is the only kind of conversion which has been considered at all by most of the writers on the subject. Starbuck has shown, as the result of

an elaborate statistical enquiry, that a large majority of the total number of religious conversions take place between the ages of twelve and twenty-five. The law which he develops is that conversion tends to take place between the periods of maximum physical change in puberty.

A comparison with those of adults shows that adolescent conversions have certain peculiar features. These are:

(*a*) A tendency to follow conventional lines in the event itself and in descriptions of it.

(*b*) A uniform exaggeration of preconversion sin and an equal exaggeration of post-conversion virtue.

(*c*) A larger number of adolescent conversions seem to be the result of preaching.

(*d*) In a large number of cases the change is not a very permanent one.

Before discussing the significance of these differences, we will give a brief account of a fairly typical adolescent conversion. The one chosen is the conversion of William Booth, described in the *Life* by Harold Begbie. In taking a case in which the redirection was permanent and so extraordinarily fruitful, we are to some extent departing from type. This departure, however, is necessitated by the difficulty of finding the more common transient changes recorded with sufficient detail.

Looking back on his preconversion days, General Booth exclaimed: "I have often wondered that I did not go straight to hell." It seems clear that he is reproaching himself for no worse fault than that of being a high-spirited leader in the games of the boys of the village and being indifferent to higher things, for he also declares: "I have heard my mother say that I never caused her an hour's real anxiety in her life."

There was no religious atmosphere in his home, but he used to go as a child to the parish church, which, however, made no particular impression on him. His first religious impression was of the "separate and religious" life of a cousin; and he was haunted by a remark this cousin made to him: "Religion is something that comes to you from the outside of you." He also records that at one time he was much affected by the hymn, "Here we suffer grief and pain." Both of these impressions faded, and he says that he settled down to the utmost indifference. However, he felt an inward dissatisfaction with his condition. "My heart," he says, "was a blank."

His early life was overshadowed by the financial trouble of his family. Then suddenly they were plunged into poverty by his father's complete ruin. Instead of being made into a gentleman as his father had hoped, the boy was sent into a pawnbroker's shop—an event which caused him lasting shame. This happened at the age of thirteen. Little impression seems to have been made on him by the subsequent death of his father and his death-bed repentance. From this time, however, he began to be interested in religion and to attend chapel. He began to realise the superiority of the religious life over the purely worldly existence he had lived for fourteen years, and a hunger sprang up for it. "I wanted," he says, "to be right with God. I wanted to be right in myself. I wanted a life spent in putting other people right." He seems always to have had what he regarded as an instinctive belief in God even during his *worldly* childhood.

While this unhappiness and the sense of the reality of God were deepening in his soul, he devoted himself

with zeal to the interests of his employer. He meant to get on in the world. He also became interested in political reform, and his sympathy with the poor was shown by his adherence to the Chartists.

The condition of the suffering people around me—people with whom I had been so long familiar, and whose agony seemed to reach its climax about this time—undoubtedly affected me very deeply.

During the year of his conversion, he saw children crying for bread in the streets of Nottingham.

In his sixteenth year, he determined to make the *surrender of personality*, which precedes conversion. He was held back by the memory of a sin. In a boyish trading affair he had managed to make a profit out of his companions. They, supposing all to have been done in the way of generous fellowship, had given him a silver pencil-case as a token of their gratitude. It would not have been difficult to have returned the case, but he could not bring himself to confess the deception of which he had been guilty. He suddenly made a resolution to end the matter, rushed out to the person chiefly wronged, acknowledged what he had done, and returned the pencil-case. He felt that the guilty burden had rolled away from his heart, and that peace had come in its place. This was the moment of his conversion. He was happy, but he says that he had no experience of emotional religion.

I felt...that I could willingly and joyfully travel to the ends of the earth for Jesus Christ, and suffer anything imaginable to help the souls of other men. "Rather than yearning for the world's pleasures," he says, "books, gains, or recreations, I found my nature leading me to come away from it all. It had lost all charm for me. What were all the novels, even those of Sir Walter Scott

or Fenimore Cooper, compared with the story of my Saviour? What were the choicest orators compared with Paul? What was the hope of my money-earning, even with all my desire to help my poor mother and sisters, in comparison with the imperishable wealth of ingathered souls? I soon began to despise everything that the world had to offer me."

As a record of the actual life of the boy at this time—though not, indeed, of his later life—this is undoubtedly exaggerated. He still continued to be the cleverest and most dependable of his employer's staff.

This account of the conversion experiences of General Booth is an illustration of the tendency of the process to follow a conventional path. Most of the essential features of the story could be paralleled in any other narrative of an adolescent conversion. There is, in addition, the characteristic exaggeration of the state of sinfulness before the conversion and of the state of virtue after it. *I have often wondered that I did not go straight to hell* is an expression of self-condemnation which could not have been justified from the point of view of an outside observer. Nor was there probably more justification for describing his emotional attitude after his conversion as a despising of all that the world had to offer him. Both of these points can be seen more clearly, however, when we study, not a single conversion record, but a series of them, such as that found in Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*. With a monotony which becomes wearisome we find subject after subject describing the same experience in the same conventional language. This is, no doubt, partly due to a process of conventionalisation which takes place in thought after the event itself; but it probably also points to a uniformity in the actual experiences of the event.

We find, too, in Starbuck's book, that his subjects consistently tend to describe their condition before conversion in language which would be strong if it were used of a hardened criminal instead of a child; and their state after conversion in language which could only be applied accurately to the strictly separated life of a saint. For example, a male convert of sixteen says:

Before conversion my mind was in a state of great anxiety. The fleshly mind was all aflame, and my guilt was hideous to me. Because I belonged to church I felt myself a hypocrite.

A female convert says of her state after conversion:

I was a new creature in Christ Jesus. Everything seemed heavenly rather than earthly; everything was so lovely. I had a love for everybody. It was such a blessed experience! *Going home I walked on the curbstone rather than walk or talk with ungodly people.*

There seems to be no reason to dismiss these tendencies as mere verbal exaggerations for the purpose of edification, although this factor undoubtedly plays a part, particularly when conversion experiences have been recorded for publication. There appear to be also real emotional experiences which are expressed in such exaggerations. The tendency to exaggeration of post-conversion virtue is probably little more than the natural difference, in judging a highly emotional state, between the point of view of the subject himself and other persons. The subject judges himself introspectively, and is mainly influenced by the rich emotional content of his desire for a new life. Other persons judge him from the point of view of observers of his behaviour, and find very little better in his life and even a certain amount that seems to them worse. The exaggeration of preconversion vice

is probably the more important of the two. The above quotation from Starbuck suggests what I believe to be the true explanation—that it is an expression of a morbid horror of the growing sex-instinct (due, no doubt, in part to unwise teaching).

Certain of the features which have been described as typical of adolescent conversion seem to point to the fact that in them suggestion plays a large part, and that they are not, as were the cases previously considered, mainly products of the individual's own self-determined mental life. If this were the case, it would explain the tendency of adolescent conversion to follow a well-defined course as well as its dependence on preaching and its tendency to impermanence. But though the effects of suggestion may play a large part in adolescent conversion, it would appear to be unsound to dismiss the process as merely a result of suggestion. Although suggestion undoubtedly helps to determine the form and even the occurrence of mental events, there is no reason for supposing that it could ever originate such a process as conversion, unless there were already in the mind a conflict which predisposed it to conversion. Moreover, the uniformity of the descriptions of adolescent conversions may not be entirely due to the influence of suggestion, but may be the same as that postulated for a similar uniformity in mystical conversions—the fact that they are the result of a single and uniform conflict.

Many of the writers on this subject have been satisfied with the explanation that adolescent conversion is the normal psychic change at this age which has been given a religious colouring. This normal mental change is essentially a change from a system of sentiments in which the principal object is the self to a system in which

other people occupy the larger part of the individual's interest. Thus, the awakening of the sex life is accompanied by a large development of altruistic sentiment, in addition to that concerned with the search for a particular love object. Such writers as Starbuck seem to think that conversion is simply the awakening of these altruistic sentiments, and that the sense of sin which accompanies conversion is the revulsion from the previous egocentric life.

This is no doubt true, but it does not seem to be adequate. The new orientation towards the external world which accompanies adolescence and is characterised by the birth of the disinterested emotions and sentiments certainly finds its expression in the new religion of the adolescent, so this element plays a part in adolescent conversion. But the religious sentiment is not merely altruism, although an increase of altruistic feeling ordinarily accompanies its awakening. It is essentially the redirection of the energy of the soul towards God, and unless this redirection accompanies conversion, it is merely an ethical crisis and not a religious one.

Moreover, the characteristic features of the conversion change in adult conversions were traced back to a conflict due to a repression. It is therefore reasonable to look for a similar mechanism in adolescent conversion. There is one repression which normally accompanies adolescence, and that is the repression of the growing sex-instinct (or love instinct) itself. Under the conditions of ordinary civilised life it is not usual for this instinct to find its satisfaction at this time in a real love object. It therefore leads an underground existence in the realm of phantasy thinking, and it may be more completely repressed by the morbid horror of sex to

which reference has already been made. This repressed instinct may become pathogenic and find an outlet in perverted behaviour or in neurotic symptoms. It may, on the other hand, be sublimated—*i.e.* the energy of the repressed instinct may be directed into channels in which it becomes valuable, such as intellectual work, art, or religion. The conversion of adolescence appears to be simply the sudden solution of this conflict, at least temporarily, by the sublimation of the repressed love instinct into religious channels. The instinct gives the qualities of its own emotions to the religious feelings which spring from it, hence the emotional intensity which is characteristic of adolescent religion.

It is interesting to notice in this connection that, in the youthful religious conflicts of Blessed Henry Suso, he is drawn to his object under the form of an erotic phantasy.

He had from his youth up a loving heart. Now the Eternal Wisdom is represented in Holy Scripture under a lovely guise as a gracious loving mistress, who displays her charms with the intent to please everyone; discoursing the while tenderly, in female form, of the desire she has to win all hearts to herself, and saying how deceitful all other mistresses are and how truly loving and constant she is. This drew his young soul to her...and he began to feel a yearning in his loving soul, and thoughts would come to him like these: Truly thou shouldst make trial of thy fortune, whether perchance this high mistress, of whom thou hast heard tell such marvels, will become thy love; for in truth thy wild young heart cannot long remain without a love[1].

If we compare our conclusions on the psychological processes at work in adolescent conversion with those

[1] *The Life of Blessed Henry Suso, by Himself*, trans. by T. F. Knox, chap. IV.

we reached in discussing mystical conversion, we find that the principal difference between them is the more extended nature of the disturbance in the latter. Both are the result of sublimation of the libido into religious channels; but in mystical conversion it is not only that part of the libido specialised in the sex-instinct that is sublimated, but the whole of the libido employed in the activities and affections of this-world life. A possible explanation of this difference is that in later life different sentiments become associated together in such a way that energy cannot be withdrawn from one without at the same time being withdrawn from others. The case quoted of the converted drunkard may be regarded as an intermediate one between mystical and ordinary adult conversion. The disturbance of the convert's distribution of libido is less than it would be in a typical mystical conversion; but, on the other hand, he cannot suppress his desire for drink without at the same time suppressing his love for his wife and family.

CHAPTER XV

MYSTICISM

I DO not propose to devote a very great space to the consideration of mysticism. The subject has already been written on so largely that a heavy responsibility rests on anyone who would increase that vast volume. The phenomena of mysticism (like those of conversion) are striking, and it has been found easier to interest people in them than in the more obscure, but at least equally important, psychological problems connected with the religion of ordinary persons. For this reason, the psychological study of religion has become in a great measure simply the study of mysticism and of conversion. Of the literature of religious mysticism, the student of religion should be acquainted with the following works: *The Mystical Element of Religion*, by Baron F. von Hügel; *Études d'histoire et de psychologie du Mysticisme*, by Professor Henri Delacroix[1]; *The Graces of Interior Prayer* by Fr. Poulain, and the last chapters of *The Religious Consciousness*, by Professor J. Bissett Pratt, to mention only a few books of outstanding importance. I will be content to give a very brief outline of the phenomena of religious mysticism and of the schemes of classification which have been proposed for them.

Few words have been used with such a bewildering variety of meanings as *mysticism*. There are at least five meanings in common use, and some writers use several of these in the course of one chapter without any indica-

[1] Paris, 1908.

tion of their differences. To avoid this confusion, it is necessary to decide in what sense we shall use it and to be consistent in that use. It is not necessary to maintain that our use of it is in any sense the one *right* use. I propose to adopt the same usage as such Roman Catholic writers as Poulain, to whom a mystic is a person who experiences a particular kind of mental prayer. This is practically a convenient criterion for mysticism, since the experience of these modes of prayer is accompanied by other well marked changes. The most notable of these is the peculiar dominance of the religious sentiment which is ushered in by the mental change we have called *mystical conversion.* Moreover, at about this stage of spiritual development, visions and locutions tend to make their appearance.

Several varieties of mystical prayer have been distinguished, but it is convenient to have a name for the mental state which is characteristic of them all, and to this state we apply the name *contemplation.* Again, it is necessary to notice that the word has had a large number of other meanings which we will not discuss. Contemplation is described by the mystics themselves as "the ineffable perception of God," "the experimental knowledge of God's in-dwelling and presence within us," and as the "direct apprehension of God." Such language makes us think of a form of the prayer of simplicity in which the object of *contention* is the idea of the presence of God. If we examine the mystics' accounts of their states more carefully, however, we shall find that this is not an adequate account of them. The introspective account of the sense of the presence of God in contemplation shows it to be different from anything that is ever experienced in the prayer of simplicity. It is de-

scribed as a *possession*, or at least as a *perception*, to distinguish it from the non-mystical experience which appears to its subject to be more of the nature of *thinking about* the presence of God. *Ineffable perception*, *experimental knowledge*, and *direct apprehension* would not have been used to describe the experience of the prayer of simplicity. This does not mean that in contemplation the experience is more clear than in the prayer of simplicity. On the contrary, the passage from the prayer of simplicity to the early stages of mystical prayer is often described in terms which make it clear that it has appeared to the person experiencing it as a passage from clear thinking to a very confused perception. It is for this reason that the words *darkness* and *night* are often used of the experience of mystical prayer.

A second difference which has already been briefly mentioned is the comparative absence of voluntary control over even the earliest stages of mystical prayer. We saw that the prayer of simplicity could be entered into or left voluntarily without any difficulty at all. Contemplation may begin and end without any action of the person experiencing it, and quite unexpectedly. If a person experiencing contemplation wishes to emerge from the state because it is interfering with necessary activities, he is unable to do so by merely directing his attention to other things. He has to make vigorous bodily movements and to walk up and down. In the later stages he is unable even to do this, since the power of bodily movement may be completely suspended. Sadhu Sundar Singh describes the care he must exercise lest he should *slip into* ecstasy while he is working in cities, and wishes to be able to address public meetings.

A third difference is the suspension of certain kinds

of activity in contemplation. Even in the earliest stages, any effort of directed thinking becomes extremely difficult; such effort, for example, as the recitation of the words of a prayer. This difficulty is known to Roman writers as the *ligature.*

There have been many different classifications of mystical states. There is first the three-fold classification of the way of *purgation,* of *illumination,* and of *union.* This has the advantage of simplicity, but it seems to have been used with considerable differences of meaning. Scaramelli, in his *Direttorio Mistico,* which has been published in a much abridged English edition, gives a long and detailed list of different states, many of which do not appear to be really specifically different. The classification I intend to adopt is that found in St Teresa's *Interior Castle,* which is followed by Father Poulain in *The Graces of Interior Prayer.* The great merit of St Teresa's classification is that it proceeds from clearly distinguishable psychological points of difference. The stages she distinguishes are: the prayer of quiet, the prayer of union, ecstasy, and the spiritual marriage.

The *prayer of quiet* is the first stage of mystical prayer. All that I said when speaking of contemplation generally will be true of the prayer of quiet in particular. This stage of mystical prayer differs from the later ones in the extent to which other mental functions are interfered with by the contemplation. It is described as the fifth mansion of St Teresa's *Interior Castle.* This state of prayer usually occurs to a person who has reached the stage at which his meditations have become the prayer of simplicity. At first it comes for only a few seconds, but later may stay many hours, even continuing during physical activity. The contemplation is accompanied by

distractions—images and thoughts which do not belong to the contemplation; and the power of making bodily movements is not lost, although movement usually results in the loss of the state.

St Teresa describes the prayer of quiet as follows:

In the prayer of quiet, when the water flows from the spring itself and not through conduits, the mind ceases to act; it is forced to do so, although it does not understand what is happening, and so wanders hither and thither in bewilderment, finding no place for rest. Meanwhile the will, entirely united to God, is much disturbed by the tumult of the thoughts: no notice, however, should be taken of them, or they would cause a loss of a great part of the favour the soul is enjoying. Let the spirit ignore these distractions and abandon itself in the arms of divine love[1].

The next stage distinguished by St Teresa is the *prayer of union*. This is intermediate between the prayer of quiet and ecstasy. The emotional experience is more intense, distractions are absent, but neither the power of voluntary movement nor sense perception is lost. St Teresa thus describes it:

In the prayer of union the soul is asleep, fast asleep, as regards the world and itself: in fact, during the short time this state lasts it is deprived of all feeling whatever, being unable to think on any subject, even if it wished. No effort is needed here to suspend the thoughts: if the soul can love—it knows not how, nor whom it loves, nor what it desires. In fact, it has died to this world, to live more truly than ever in God[2].

She goes on to say that although disturbing thoughts may be found in the prayer of quiet, they are never found here, "for neither the imagination, the under-

[1] *The Interior Castle*, 4. III. 7. [2] *Ibid.* 5. I. 5.

standing, nor the memory has power to hinder the graces bestowed in it[1]."

The next stage, that of *ecstasy*, is one which has attracted much more attention than these earlier conditions of mystical prayer, since it has striking bodily effects which excited the wonder of the contemporaries of ecstatics and of the writers of their lives. Ecstasy is accompanied by complete loss of the capacity to receive sense impressions, and of the power of making voluntary movements (in other words, the body remains in a cataleptic condition). It is stated that the only exception to this is that an order given to the ecstatic by his spiritual superior is obeyed[2]. Ecstasy is a state which comes on occasionally while the subject is experiencing a less intense form of contemplation. It is in this condition that visions and locutions generally take place. The introspective accounts of ecstasy differ from those already given principally in the greater clearness of the object which is felt to be perceived, and in its more intense emotional accompaniment.

As an example of ecstasy, we may take a present-day description given by the Sadhu Sundar Singh[3]. "No words are spoken," he says, "but I see all pictured; in a moment problems are solved, easily and with pleasure, and with no burden to my brain." In his earlier days as a Christian, ecstasy was a comparatively rare occurrence. Later, although he did not know beforehand when

[1] *Op. cit.* 5. 1. 5.

[2] This fact has been compared with the receptivity of the hypnotised subject to the commands of his hypnotiser when he seems oblivious of all other sense impressions, but it would seem to be a rash conclusion that the hypnotic trance is physiologically the same condition as that of ecstasy.

[3] *The Sadhu*, by Streeter and Appasamy, pp. 133, 134 and 136.

he would enter into it, it became an almost every-day experience, unless he held it back. Ecstasy commonly ensues after about twenty minutes of prayer and meditation. In this state, which sometimes lasts for several hours, he loses all perception of the external world; and he has no sense of the lapse of time. Once, during an ecstasy, he was stung all over with hornets, but he had felt nothing. While in ecstasy, he thinks on such themes as the love of God, and at the same time, he says that he listens to spirits, especially the Holy Spirit, as they talk to him. An interesting fact in connection with the ecstasy of the Sadhu is that he had practised Yoga before his conversion to Christianity. He says:

the great contrast between the state of ecstasy and the Yogic states which I cultivated before becoming a Christian lies in the fact that in Ecstasy there is always the same feeling of calm satisfaction and being at home, whatever had been my state of mind before going into Ecstasy. Whereas in the Yogic state, if before the trance I was feeling sad, I used to weep in the trance, if cheerful I would smile.

St Teresa says:

...when He intends ravishing the soul He takes away the power of speech, and although occasionally the other faculties are retained rather longer, no word can be uttered. Sometimes the person is at once deprived of all the senses, the hands and body becoming as cold as if the soul had fled; occasionally no breathing can be detected. This condition lasts but a short while; I mean in the same degree, for when this profound suspension diminishes the body seems to come to itself and gain strength to return again to this *death* which gives more vigorous *life* to the soul. This supreme state of ecstasy never lasts long, but although it ceases, it leaves the will so inebriated, and the mind so transported out of

itself that for a day, or sometimes for several days, such a person is incapable of attending to anything but what excites the will to the love of God[1].

The *Spiritual Marriage* is not an intensification of the experience of ecstasy as each of the stages of prayer already mentioned has been in some sense an intensification of the experience of the previous one. On the contrary, the trances of the ecstatic state disappear completely or nearly completely in this stage, as do also the imaginal visions which are a common accompaniment of ecstasy. At the same time, the state of contemplation, instead of being intermittent as hitherto, becomes permanent. There is also a strong impulsion to active work, which is in marked contrast with the tendency to abandon activity which is characteristic of the early stages of the mystical life.

St Teresa says that she is

astonished at seeing that when the soul arrives at this state it does not go into ecstasies except perhaps on rare occasions—even then they are not like the former trances and the flight of the spirit and seldom take place in public as they did before[2].

The permanent intellectual vision she enjoyed during this state is thus described:

By some mysterious manifestation of the truth, the three Persons of the most Blessed Trinity reveal themselves, preceded by an illumination which shines on the spirit like a most dazzling cloud of light. The three Persons are distinct from one another; a sublime knowledge is infused into the soul, imbuing it with a certainty of the truth that the Three are of one substance, power, and knowledge and are one God. Thus that which we

[1] *The Interior Castle*, 6. IV. 17 and 18.
[2] *Ibid.* 7. III. 10.

hold as a doctrine of faith, the soul now, so to speak, understands by sight, though it beholds the Blessed Trinity neither by the eyes of the body nor of the soul, this being no imaginary vision[1].

Of the impulsion to activity, she says:

The most surprising thing to me is that the sorrow and distress which such souls felt because they could not die and enjoy our Lord's presence are now exchanged for as fervent a desire of serving Him, of causing Him to be praised, and of helping others to the utmost of their power[2].

This impulsion to activity is much more strongly emphasised by Mme Guyon in her description of her *apostolic state*, which is generally regarded as equivalent to the Spiritual Marriage of St Teresa.

There is also in this condition what appears to its subject as a division of the soul by which distracting conflicts may consciously occupy the mind without disturbing the peace of the contemplation. Of this, St Teresa says:

Thus in a manner her soul appeared divided: a short time after God had done her this favour, while undergoing great sufferings, she complained of her soul as Martha did of Mary, reproaching it with enjoying solitary peace while leaving her so full of troubles and occupations that she could not keep it company[3].

And in the next chapter:

It is not intended that the powers, senses and passions should continually enjoy this peace. The soul does so, indeed, but in the other mansions there are still times of struggle, suffering, and fatigue, though as a general

[1] *Op. cit.* 7. I. 9. [2] *Ibid.* 7. III. 5.

[3] *Ibid.* 7. I. 14. In this passage the authoress is referring to herself.

rule, peace is not lost by them...though tumults and wild beasts rage with great uproar in the other mansions, yet nothing of this enters the seventh mansion, nor drives the soul from it[1].

Mme Guyon also describes a condition of automatism in which actions cease to be under the control of the conscious will and seem to be directly under the control of God. In her *Torrents* she writes:

Il faut se laisser posséder, agir, mouvoir sans résistance, demeurer dans son état naturel et de consistance, attendant tous les moments, et les recevant de la Providence sans rien augmenter ni diminuer, se laissant conduire à tout sans vue, ni raison, ni sans y penser; mais comme par entraînement, sans penser à ce qui est de meilleur et de plus parfait, mais se laissant aller comme naturellement à tout cela, demeurant dans l'état égal et de consistance où Dieu l'a mise, sans se mettre en peine de rien faire; mais laissant à Dieu le soin de faire naître les occasions et de les exécuter[2].

St Teresa, like the other more orthodox mystics, makes much less of this condition of automatism, probably being saved from its exaggeration by the greater virility of her character. She hints, however, at an approach to the same state when she says: "...our Lord ...told her that henceforth she was to care for His affairs as though they were her own and He would care for hers[3]." She, like Mme Guyon, seems to have written many of her books in a condition of automatism.

It should be clear that it is extremely unjust to mysticism to suppose that it is merely, or even primarily,

[1] *Op. cit.* 7. II. 14. The Seventh Mansion, in this work, is the state of Spiritual Marriage.

[2] *Études d'histoire et de psychologie du Mysticisme.* H. Delacroix, p. 144.

[3] *The Interior Castle*, 7. II. 1.

a system of emotional experiences pursued as such by the mystic. A character of the mystical states of prayer, which is strongly insisted upon by such writers as St Teresa, is the growth in the virtues, in humility, in the Love of God, and in spiritual fruitfulness found in the soul experiencing them. It is, in part, this growth which is used by the director of the religious person as a criterion to distinguish between what he regards as genuinely religious experiences and their diabolical counterfeits. Mysticism, like any other highly emotional system of experiences (as, for example, human love), may, indeed, be followed in such a way that the emotional experiences become ends in themselves. This, however, is the way of spiritual death which we find the historical mystics strenuously trying to avoid. Those who take this path degenerate into merely silly religious sentimentalists. These are probably at least as numerous as the greater mystics, only their names do not survive, because other religious people find nothing of value in their writings. The avoidance of this path is partly provided for by the exterior penances of the religious mystics, partly by characters inherent to the mystic process itself.

These characters are what are called *trials* in mystical theology. These are the painful aspects of the mystical states of prayer. These are so uniform that it is possible to describe the process of advance in mystical prayer in terms of its painful aspect alone. This is what is done by St John of the Cross in his *Dark Night of the Soul.* It is a serious misunderstanding of his meaning to suppose that St John's *Night of the Senses* and *Night of the Spirit* are two additional mental states which must be interpolated somewhere between the states described by other mystics in order to give a complete account

of the stages of progress in mystical prayer. There is, of course, a certain amount of artificiality in attempting to correlate exactly the stages of one mystic with those of another. A very considerable correspondence, however, is to be found in the conditions described by different mystics, and an examination of those of St John of the Cross shows that in the *first night* he is describing the passage from ordinary mental prayer to the prayer of simplicity, and in the *second night* the stages of mystical prayer which precede ecstasy.

We will now consider what can be said about the mystic states from the point of view of psychology. It was pointed out in connection with mystical conversion that the convert was engaged in trying to detach his libido from the outside world. This attitude towards the outside world has been studied by Dr Jung in connection with certain of the psychoses and he has given to it the name *introversion*. He distinguishes two types of men: the *introvert* who has withdrawn libido from the external world and is interested mainly in thought, and the *extrovert* who is interested in things, in action in the outside world, and in feeling rather than thought. He also applies the words *introversion* and *extroversion* to the ways of disposing of the libido characteristic of the introvert and extrovert, respectively. These two attitudes towards life may be characteristic of different phases of the existence of a single person. Introversion is liable to be determined by failure to find satisfaction in the outside world. A feeling of inferiority due to some physical defect or a failure to find happiness in love may drive a person to seek for happiness in the creations of his own mind, and thus to become an introvert.

An extreme form of introversion is found in the very

common form of insanity known as *dementia praecox*. In this disease the patient has lost all interest in the outside world and appears to live entirely in a world of day-dreams. Degenerative brain and other physical changes take place, and the disease ends in profound dementia. It is now stated, however, by the followers of Dr Jung, that dementia praecox can be treated in its early stages by purely psychical means, and if the patient can be made to extrovert his libido, the degenerative changes do not take place. Hysteria is regarded as a similar regressive form of extroversion.

Is it a satisfactory account of the mystical conversion to say that the subject is introverting libido? *Introversion* has been used for a long time as a term in mystical theology, although it would be perilous to assume that it has meant the same thing as it does to Dr Jung. Pseudo-Dionysius, for example, describes a movement of the soul as "an introversion (ἡ εἰς ἑαυτὴν εἴσοδος) from things without[1]." Clearly the attitude towards the external world in the initial stages of the mystical conversion is that of introversion. It is possible, however, that the fact that libido is directed towards an object which is, at any rate believed in by the mystic as an external reality, introduces an essential difference into the process. Possibly we ought to coin a word, and speak of *deoversion*. This process, as found in the greater mystics, appears to be related rather to the health-giving introversion described by the analytical psychologists than to the regressive introversion of dementia praecox. It is followed by a phase of extroversion in the Spiritual Marriage, in which the mental growth during the earlier phase is made profitable for work in the outside world.

[1] *The Divine Names*, chap. IV. para. 9.

Of preanalytic studies of mysticism from the point of view of mental pathology, there is a considerable literature. The resemblance between some of the phenomena of mysticism and the symptoms of hysteria could not fail to attract attention. Janet studied an ecstatic at the Salpêtrière and concluded that she was a *scrupuleuse* who tended towards hysteria.

It would be difficult to find a fairer account of the similarity between certain phenomena in the lives of the mystics and the symptoms of hysteria than that provided by Baron von Hügel in the second volume of *The Mystical Element in Religion*. He takes the symptoms of hysteria mentioned by Professor Janet in his *État Mental des Hystériques*, and shows how they can be paralleled in the life of St Catherine of Genoa, particularly during her last illness. There is first the very characteristic hysterical phenomenon of anaesthesia, in which cutaneous sensibility is lost over an area of the body. It is recorded that St Catherine "would press thorny rose-twigs in both her hands, and this without any pain[1]." There is also often found amongst hysterics an exaggerated affective reaction to contact or to certain colours. Of St Catherine it is recorded that:

in February or March 1510, "for a day and a night, her flesh could not be touched, because of the great pain that such touching caused her." At the end of August, "she was so sensitive, that it was impossible to touch her very clothes or the bedstead, or a single hair on her head, because in such case she would cry out as though she had been grievously wounded[2]."

Similarly, in her reaction to colours we find that she

[1] *Op. cit.* II. 10, quoting *Vita*, pp. 113 *b*, 142 *a*.
[2] *Ibid.*

cannot bear the continued presence in her room of her physician in his red robes[1].

He instances too, as phenomena found in St Catherine's long illness which may be paralleled in Janet's account of hysteria:

the inability to stand or walk, with the conservation at times, of the power to crawl; the acceptance, followed by the rejection, of food, because of certain spasms in the throat or stomach, and the curious, mentally explicable, exceptions to this incapacity[2]; the sense, even at other times, of strangulation; heart palpitations, fever heats, strange haemorrhages from the stomach or even from the lung; red patches on the skin and emotional jaundice all over it;

peculiar attacks of fixity from which she must be roused if she is not to suffer in consequence of them; a consciousness of possessing an extraordinary fineness of discrimination between sensibly identical objects; feelings of criminality and of being already dead; and an apparent loss of social feelings shown by her absence of emotion at the deaths of her brother and sister, combined with an extraordinary dependence on and claimfulness towards her confessor, suggesting the attachment of the hysterical patient to her physician[3].

There seems no sufficient ground for supposing that mysticism is merely hysteria misunderstood by a superstitious and wonder-loving age, but there can be little doubt that certain forms of mysticism and hysteria are on their psycho-physical side closely related. Possibly

[1] *Op. cit.* II. 12.

[2] An example of this is that in the long fasts which took place earlier in her life, any attempt made by St Catherine to take food was followed at once by vomiting; yet she was able to receive and to retain the host at Communion.

[3] *The Mystical Element in Religion*, II. pp. 24, 25.

the extent of their connection is that both are characterised by a dissociation of personality, and that the symptoms they have in common are the symptoms of this dissociation. At the same time, it must be noticed that St Catherine of Genoa is a mystic in whom the relationship is particularly marked, for she was suffering at the end of her life from a psychogenic disease, a condition which is by no means universal amongst mystics. If the introversion account of mysticism is on the right lines, it would be reasonable to expect mysticism on its psycho-physical side to be related to dementia praecox rather than with hysteria, the disorder attributed to regressive extroversion. We may notice, too, that St Catherine appears to have been extroverted during the whole of her mystical life, for it was spent in active work in a hospital at Genoa. It was seen that in the mysticism of St Teresa, a phase of God-centred introversion was followed by a phase of God-inspired extroversion (the Spiritual Marriage) but that the former phase was the longer in time. Possibly a distinction ought to be made between mysticism of this type and mysticism in which the extroversion phase is the dominant one, and St Catherine of Genoa should be placed in the latter class. This is only a suggestion which would require a more extended study of the subject for its substantiation.

It is customary, before leaving the subject of mysticism to discuss its value. Our valuation of it must depend entirely on our attitude towards religion as a whole. If we judge it from a this-world point of view, we must remember that for the mystic the alternative is probably mental ill-health; even if we do not like mystics, we certainly prefer them to lunatics. It is true that mysticism tends often to incapacitate its subject

for activity in this world, but even on this score it may be justified if we look to the life of guided activity which is its end, and not to the stage of turning away from the world which is only preparatory to that end. From the mystic's own point of view, however, these considerations are very largely irrelevant. If man's highest activity is to love God, mysticism may have a value of its own entirely independent of any usefulness it is found to have in this world.

CHAPTER XVI

A MODERN MYSTIC

Although one is sometimes tempted to complain that in certain branches of the study of the psychology of religion, speculation tends to replace careful observation, this is not generally true of our subject. The difficulties in the way of continuous observation of highly religious persons, such as would be required for scientific study, have made it necessary for writers generally to avail themselves of such historical material as autobiographies or the contemporary but incomplete evidence provided by the questionnaire. At the same time, more direct and more satisfactory methods of approach are sometimes found to be available. The most interesting example of such a direct study is to be found in an account entitled *Une Mystique Moderne*, by Flournoy[1]. Since this work appeared in a Swiss psychological publication, which is not generally accessible to English readers, I propose to give in the present chapter a short summary of M. Flournoy's observations and conclusions, both for their very great intrinsic interest, and for the light they throw on the problems which have already been discussed.

The subject of these observations (whom Flournoy calls Mlle Vé) was a Swiss lady aged just over fifty years, directress of a Protestant school for young girls. She developed ecstatic religious experiences while she was under the observation of Flournoy, and wrote accounts

[1] *Archives de Psychologie*, 1915.

of them which show great psychological insight. Later, she lost the ecstatic form of religious experience, at about the time of the outbreak of the European War. It would be of great interest to know the details of her spiritual history subsequent to 1915, but the regretted death of M. Flournoy last year seems to make that impossible.

In order to understand the mental history of Mlle Vé it is necessary to give a brief account of her life, mentioning circumstances in it which convention would require us to omit. Such omission, however, would involve a radical falsification of the account of the forces which combined to produce her character as it is to be found at the onset of her mystical life.

She was born in 1863. Her father was a schoolmaster, who was deeply religious and of high moral character. She had a great attachment for him, and this attachment had a profound influence on her later life. Her mother was neurotic and played a part comparatively unimportant in the development of the girl's emotional life. Amongst the influences of childhood must be mentioned her initiation by a nurse into habits of self-abuse for the purpose of helping her to fall asleep. This later necessitated years of struggle and humiliation in order to free herself from the habit, which has always since appeared to her as the sin *par excellence*. She also suffered from a feeling of inferiority because she was not pretty like her sisters, and she often heard people say that she was awkward and unattractive. This drove her into day-dreams, in which she tasted all the advantages of which she was deprived in reality. She hated dolls, and preferred the violent games of boys.

The pietism of her father led him to keep her in a state of complete ignorance of sexual matters. At the age of

seventeen and a half, she was the victim of an assault by a man. This terrible experience was made worse for her by the fact that she could tell no one about it, and that she developed the conviction that she had been guilty of an unpardonable fault. While the whole of the character she owed to her moral and religious training revolted against the assault, it also awakened in her lower nature a passion which was purely animal. These two ways of reacting to her experience started a mental conflict which remained with her. For some years, the animal part of her nature seems to have remained in the ascendant, while she says: "De mon subconscient resté plus religieux que je ne le croyais, montaient tout à coup des bouffées d'une piété intense, mystique, et passionnée[1]." In the forefront of her consciousness, however, she felt revolt against a God who had allowed her life to be devastated by the sin of another, and whose omnipotence had not intervened in her favour.

Later in her life, her religious and moral nature regained the upper hand. Although this appears to have been a continuous process, she made a definite step in the reconquest of herself in her thirtieth year, which she sometimes regards as her conversion. After this time her previous sentiment against God was transferred to the human author of her trouble, whom she refused ever to forgive. Although, at her conversion, the victory was won for the moral element of her character, her mental conflict was not over. The sensual and impure part of her nature was now normally repressed, but she was in a condition of partial dissociation of personality. Her animal nature (which Mlle Vé calls *B*) still took possession of her for a few days several times in the course

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 21.

of a year. During this time she was the victim of sensual imaginings and dreams. She felt as if she were once more adolescent, and despised the cold principles of religion and morality which were sacred to her when she was in her normal state (*A*). She was able while in the state *B* to prevent herself from committing any actions which would cause scandal, but her change in face and manner attracted the attention of those who knew her well, although they had no knowledge of its real meaning. These onsets of the state *B* were intensely repugnant to her in her normal condition. This was not a condition of genuine double personality, since there was no discontinuity of consciousness or of memory between her two states. It may best be described as a partial dissociation of personality.

She first came under the observation of Flournoy in the December of 1910, when she consulted him about the trouble of these intervals of dominance of her second personality. Except for these, she was in perfect health both physically and mentally. She had a tendency towards automatism and had been successful in her youth in automatic writing and other mediumistic phenomena, but she had given them up and was strongly averse to any practice which tended to weaken the control of the personal consciousness. Apart from these there was nothing about her which suggested neurosis. Intelligent and cultivated, she had an energetic will and much practical good sense. Flournoy insists that she had none of the symptoms of hysteria or other mental weaknesses which are supposed to be associated with mysticism, and had the ordinary healthy-minded person's contempt for *les maladies d'imagination.*

He allowed her to open herself freely to him, and gave

her advice with the intention of lessening her self-accusation. She became better but not cured. Later, he treated her by suggestion, both in a condition of light and deep hypnosis, and helped her to unveil her conflicts by a small amount of psychoanalysis. After her treatment by deep hypnosis, she found herself lapsing into an attitude of dependence on Flournoy (the *positive transference* of the psychoanalysts) and with characteristic independence she refused to continue this treatment. She still suffered from her second personality, although the attacks became less frequent, and she found that the unbosoming of herself to Flournoy and his sympathy and help gave her moral and Christian personality, confidence and strength.

There was also at this time in her life a present conflict whose solution may well have been connected with the beginning of her mystical life. She had formed a friendship with M. Y., an amateur artist and man of letters. This friendship had become dangerously emotional, and she found a peculiar charm in the freedom and intimacy of his letters to her. M. Y., however, was married, and the conscience of Mlle Vé reproached her severely for this attachment, especially since in her evil phases he was identified with the man of the incident in her eighteenth year. In July of 1912, she broke off this intimacy completely and irrevocably at the cost of great mental pain.

"Depuis que cette rupture est consommée," she writes two years later, "j'ai réalisé combien plus facile m'est devenu le combat contre les instincts inférieurs de ma nature....Privée de l'affection où j'avais mis le meilleur de mon âme, j'ai appris ce que c'est que la soif de l'amour éternel et seul fidèle à lui-même. Comme un

enfant blessé qui ne trouve la paix que dans les bras de sa mère, ce n'est que dans les bras de Dieu que j'ai pu être consolée de la blessure que m'avait fait un homme...[1]."

The libido which had been freed from its earthly object was ready to turn itself towards God with a completeness which had hitherto been impossible.

Earlier in her life there had been a time when she had a foretaste of the mystical experience, for in a diary of 1896 and 1897 she describes experiences which she later recognised to be of the same order as her more recent ones. On 13th December, 1896, she wrote:

Tu m'as fait, une fois de nouveau, sentir Ta présence d'une façon extraordinaire; je ne sais que dire et comment le dire.

On 18th February in the following year:

Comment dire ce que mon âme a traversé ce matin, comme je venais de m'éveiller! Dieu m'a prise un moment tout entière à Lui, je ne sais comment, mais j'ai senti sa présence.

In May of the same year:

J'ai si soif d'amour humain! C'est un péché que de ne pouvoir être satisfaite de ce qui m'est offert d'amour divin.

And a fortnight later:

Tu m'as fait la glorieuse grâce de me faire sentir ta présence...un instant seulement[2].

Possibly she is describing here what has traditionally been called the *prayer of quiet*. If so, the passage from this to her later experiences seems not to have been continuous, for the occurrence of this earlier experience

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 34. [2] *Ibid.* p. 24.

became almost effaced from her memory. It seems reasonable to surmise that it ceased while, in her intimacy with M. Y., she was finding satisfaction in the *amour humain* for which she had thirsted. On re-reading this passage in her diary, during the time of her ecstasies, she was shocked by the conventionality of its thought and expression, and said that it seemed to her as if she had at that time been worshipping "un petit bon Dieu de plâtre avec une robe rose ou bleue."

It was during the autumn of 1912 that Mlle Vé began to have the first experience which led up to her later ecstasies. It took the form of what the older mystics would have called an *intellectual vision* of an unseen friend whose presence brought her peace and courage. On the 12th of November, 1912, she writes:

Je ne vois ni n'entends rien, mais je sais qu'il est là, au calme et au repos délicieux qui m'envahissent. Je ne sais s'il a un corps; il n'est en aucune façon perçu par mes sens, sinon que je crois l'entendre parler, mais d'une voix tout intérieure.... Il vient ordinairement le soir, avant que je m'endorme; mais pas tous les soirs. Quelque chose de très fort et surtout de très calme, vient de lui à moi[1].

She talked freely to the presence and although he spoke little she felt that he understood her completely. Sometimes he reminded her of her father, but not altogether. He seemed younger, and she spoke to him about things on which she had been reticent with her father. At the same time, although she cherished the experience because of the happiness it brought her, she retained a critical attitude towards it. She seems to have looked upon it as a new dissociation of her personality, but as one which was superior to her conscious self. Once only

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 41 and 42.

she speculated as to the possibility that it was a personal revelation of Christ, but generally her intellectual attitude towards it was analytic and critical, although she was content emotionally to accept the peace and strength which it brought her.

Flournoy considers that the psychological elements from which this phantom was built up were four. First, the idealised memory of her father; secondly, the suggestions of serenity, courage, self-mastery, etc., which she had received from Flournoy himself; thirdly, those examples of humanity at its best which had most struck her in the course of her reading, such as Duperrut, Frommel, etc.; and lastly, all her Christian instruction and faith. The figure never became more than a feeling of a presence, and it was sometimes absent for long periods, always during the now less frequent phases of her evil personality. It was ordinarily located on the left. Its appearance was always accompanied by a feeling of well-being, and also occasionally by numbness of the extremities. It is interesting to notice that she was unable to call up the presence by voluntary effort; on the contrary, an attempt to make it more tangible tended to result in its disappearance.

This intermittent presence of her spiritual friend lasted for about six months, at the end of which the experience suddenly changed its nature so completely that she felt it to be something entirely new in its nature and genuinely divine. It was on the 2nd of March, 1913, that the feeling of presence passed into the experience of ecstasy. This followed a series of undisturbed and dreamless nights. On this night she lay down and, realising that she was not going to sleep, she made up her mind to try as hard as she could to call up her "meilleur autre." She concen-

trated her thought and will on this object, remaining with eyes closed, and trying with all her power to avoid distraction. She was on the point of giving up the effort as useless, when she felt a sudden loss of power and will to move her limbs, and a sensation of cold combined with a pleasant numbness. Then she felt the presence cross her room from the door to the bed. She thus describes the experience which followed:

J'avais hier l'impression que mon être spirituel était libre des liens qui l'enchaînent à la matière et qu'il émergeait dans une autre économie. Je n'ai pas eu la perception d'un dialogue même d'un monologue vraiment parlé, mais d'une sorte de *libération*, parce qu'*il* était venu et que je n'avais plus conscience de mon moi limité et enserré par la matière. Sans effort j'étais comme consciente *d'une autre réalité essentielle et immuable.* Le mot de St-Paul me vient à la pensée: "Je fus ravi en esprit, si c'est dans mon corps ou hors de mon corps je ne sais, Dieu le sait."

Je n'ai rien vu, rien entendu, je n'étais ni endormie, ni évanouie, et pourtant j'étais *ailleurs* et j'étais *autre*[1]. - - - Lorsque je repris conscience de mon moi habituel, je me sentis très faible, comme bouleversée par une très forte émotion, mais ayant beaucoup de peine à réaliser et à formuler ce qui s'était passé. Je ne le saisis que par l'impression laissée, une sorte de CERTITUDE ABSOLUE DE LA RÉALITÉ DU DIVIN.

Il me semble aujourd'hui que la vie est facile à supporter vaillamment, parce que j'ai réalisé comme jamais encore qu'elle n'est pas tout, qu'elle n'est qu'une partie de la réalité dernière[2].

She was unable to say how long the experience lasted, whether for a minute or for an hour. She insists (as do

[1] The three hyphens which follow represent a period of loss of consciousness in ecstasy.

[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 61 and 62.

many of the mystics) on the indescribability of her experience—"Les mots ne sont pas faits pour décrire ce que j'ai éprouvé, ou subi, ou expériencé[1]." She states that she was neither conscious of her body nor of her own identity; above all, the impression of time was lost, she seemed to be plunged in timelessness, in eternity. Combined with this she felt the essential reality of a presence which she was disposed to call that of the Life of God. While hearing and seeing nothing, she felt this presence about her and in her. "C'était à la fois une immensité et une intimité[1]." Although quickly giving the name of *God* to this enveloping presence, she did not feel as if she were going through any ordinary religious experience. It was both more overpowering and less precise than what she had previously regarded as her religious experiences.

This ecstatic experience recurred at irregular intervals until the end of the July of the following year, the total number of its recurrences being thirty-one. At Flournoy's request, she made complete notes of these experiences at the time of their occurrence. Before the end of the period over which the ecstasies were distributed, Flournoy sent her back her earliest records, and in her comments on these we can read most easily the record of her spiritual development during this time. First she notices that her experience has so modified the traditional element in her religious belief that her former faith seems to her to have been limited and formal.

Elle a inauguré en moi une nouvelle conception du divin, à laquelle je ne suis pas arrivée d'un bond, mais qui me semble maintenant avoir consisté à dégager l'idée de Dieu de toute entrave dogmatique, de toute formule

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 63.

immuable. Avant cela, j'avais de Dieu une idée toujours la même (*cut and dried*, comme disent les Anglais); et je sens bien, maintenant, combien limitée, étriquée, était cette conception[1].

She feels herself so completely unable to describe her experience that she does not attempt it. She can only characterise it as a new emotion accompanied by the triumphant and unreasoning conviction that it is contact with *that which is*. It appears to her as immediate contact with what she feels as a divine force.

But she also has a reaction against this experience. She is puzzled and even indignant to find herself the sole depositary of a mystery; to find how powerless her experience leaves her to communicate any of its refreshment to the discouraged and thirsting souls with whom she comes into daily contact. This feeling is the feature of her mysticism which most sharply separates her from the traditional attitude towards such experiences. She trembles when she finds this thought apparently leading her in the direction of the denial of God's revelation to her soul.

Mais comment serais-je éternellement satisfaite de ce qui n'est pas transmissible? Ce serait redescendre, loin de la route où Christ a marché; ce serait revenir à un Dieu qui favorise quelques élus—et de ces élus je ne veux pas être[2]!

She cannot really doubt that her experience is from above, for it has caused her to make an advance she would not otherwise have made, but she feels that it is necessary for her to go further, from the experience to God who gives and communicates Himself. She recognises the value of the joy and certainty which her experiences

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 47. [2] *Ibid.* p. 148.

have brought her, and of the substitution of immediate knowledge of the divine for a merely formal and traditional knowledge. "Mais maintenant," she writes in the May of 1914, "oh! que j'ai soif de réaliser *l'amour* divin, comme j'ai réalisé la *réalité* divine[1]!"

This perplexity did not disappear as time went on, and the ecstasies became less frequent. On one night in July her thoughts converged towards the idea of a sacrifice of herself; for a moment the conviction formed itself that she would only re-find God by dying to herself. This was an idea which she found repellent, and she rebelled against the idea of making this sacrifice for which God was waiting before He would again reveal Himself as before. She was doubtful whether she was not being misled by her intense desire for her former experience to arrive at an idea of meritorious sacrifice. She still suffered occasionally from evil dreams at the time of her periods, but these appear only to have been faint shadows of the old attacks of her evil personality. On 31st July, 1914, she experienced her last ecstasy; the events which followed that date (felt keenly by an inhabitant of a neutral country with friends and relatives in both camps) confirmed her in the tendency of her mystical experience to believe that God is not in this world. More than ever, she felt led to seek for God, not in mystical experience, but in an energetic effort of will.

What in the end her religious experiences meant for her, and what was their value for her life, can best be told in her own words:

J'ai l'impression ce soir que pour moi la page se tourne de nouveau. Le temps de la vie surtout personnelle est passé....J'ai l'impression d'achever maintenant un cycle

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 148.

de ma vie religieuse. Sous la poussée puissante de l'Expérience mon âme a fait un grand pas vers plus de spiritualité. Dieu a cessé pour moi d'être limité et circonscrit dans l'histoire de sa révélation. Comme le soleil, Il est élevé sur l'horizon de mon âme, jusqu'à remplir tout, par delà ce qui n'est qu'humain, le bien et le mal, le temps et l'espace....Il faut aller plus loin. Après avoir retrouvé sur la montagne, d'abord la lumière, puis le Dieu qui est la Lumière et la Vie et l'Amour, il faut maintenant redescendre dans la plaine où l'on souffre, et apprendre, comme je ne l'ai encore jamais fait peut-être, à donner ma vie....Je n'ai pas l'impression que la vie mystique soit dans une période ascendante en moi: l'appel à l'activité pratique, à la présence d'esprit et au bon sens, est trop urgent. Je suis plongée dans des discussions d'économie domestique (et d'économie tout court), dans des questions de salaire et de nourriture...[1].

One is tempted to ask what, in traditional mysticism, would correspond to Mlle Vé's change from her ecstatic phase to this phase of religiously directed activity. Even the language in which she describes it recalls forcibly the mystic phase known as the Spiritual Marriage. Flournoy scouts this idea and prefers to describe it as a reaction from an introverted to an extroverted state. This, however, is exactly what, in psychological terms, the Spiritual Marriage is. It is the change from an introverted condition dominated by the consciousness of the presence of God, to an extroverted condition similarly dominated. On the other hand, it might be argued from the point of view of traditional mysticism that Mlle Vé lost the highest gifts of mysticism through her failure to respond to the demand for a complete *dying to herself*. Finally, of course, an opponent of mysticism might argue that she emerged from the mystical condition through

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 159, 160.

the strength of her own moral nature which led her to see the moral worthlessness of a mere emotional experience, particularly when the outbreak of war led her to feel more urgently the call to action. This would indeed make it necessary to ignore her own repeated affirmations of the permanent value of her mystical experience to her later active life. This, however, is a question which we could not even hope to be able to decide without the additional data provided by a knowledge of her later mental and religious development.

A point of importance illustrated by Mlle Vé's mysticism is the connection between the mystical experiences and the sex-instinct. We may remind ourselves of the facts of Mlle Vé's sexual history. The evil phases which resulted from a partial dissociation of personality consequent on her early assault, were accompanied by outbreaks of autoeroticism and sexual dreams. These were liable to occur at her menses even during the time of her ecstasies. Her mother played a negligible part in her life, but her affection for her father produced what Dr Jung calls an Electra-Complex. The fixation on one of the parents is commonly found to be accompanied by a tendency to homosexuality, which is also to be found in Mlle Vé. She states that until her intimacy with M. Y., although she had friendships with men, passion and jealousy were only present in her relationships with women.

It was pointed out that this relationship to her father seems to have been one psychological ingredient in her earlier experience of the *Spiritual Friend*. The other element of importance in her emotional life was this strongly repressed sexuality which found its outlet in her state (*B*). That this was playing a part in her

mystical experience was a conclusion which Mlle Vé was very unwilling to admit. The severity of her repression of sexual things itself tended to increase this unwillingness. Sex and religion had always appeared to her to be poles apart. Yet she was puzzled and distressed to find that the immediate moral and spiritual effect of the experience itself was followed by an excitement which she recognised as sexual, sometimes violent and sometimes immediately repressed. She attributed it at first to a momentary relaxation of her moral self-discipline. But even when she first remarks on it (18th May, 1913) she also suggests that there may be a real affinity between human and divine love, and she notices the fact that they have, to a large extent, the same language. She also remarks (14th July, 1914) that two of her friends who were temperamentally unable to feel sex love seemed also incapable of experiencing *l'émotion du divin*. It is hardly necessary to add that the belief in the affinity between human and religious love to which she was led was not that of Mr Schroeder. She remained convinced of the difference in value between the different directions of the libido.

There seems to be no satisfactory evidence connecting the times of her experiences with the rhythm of her sex-life. Flournoy points out that the intervals between the first sixteen of her ecstasies were as follows: 5, 3, 11, 7, 8, 5, 8, 6, 7, 11, 5, 8, 9, 8, 7 days. The mean of these is 7. Flournoy concludes that the ecstasies had a period which was just a quarter of her menstrual period, but that this periodicity was masked by the great variations due to the mental condition of the moment. It seems perilous, however, to try to draw any conclusions from the mean of numbers which vary so widely amongst themselves.

One is also tempted to wonder whether the two years of ecstasy occurred during the period of climacteric excitement, and whether the cessation of ecstasy was not coincident with the end of that period. Flournoy does not mention this point, but it seems clear from the narrative that the climacteric had not occurred at the time that Flournoy's account of her ends (March, 1915).

We may sum up the characters of the mystical experience of Mlle Vé by mentioning the headings under which Flournoy discusses it. He notices its ontological certainty, its ineffability, its imperative character, its incommunicability, its non-personality, the resultant depreciation of traditional religion, and lastly its sexual coefficient. In all of these respects it does not differ from the traditional Christian mystical experience. It will hardly be denied that both the fifth and sixth elements are present as tendencies even in Catholic mysticism, but these tendencies are resisted as dangers of an exclusive reliance on subjective experience in religion. The religion of the Catholic mystic is never the religion supplied by his mystical experience alone. He has a greater respect for traditional ways of thought and expression than had Mlle Vé, a respect which saves him from the danger of spiritual isolation which Mlle Vé did not altogether manage to avoid.

A marked difference from traditional mysticism is to be found in the absence of any preliminary ascetic practices, but it is easy to exaggerate the completeness of this absence. Although undertaken simply for moral discipline and not for the sake of attaining to spiritual experiences, the practices of her life were often severe. Even at the age of twenty-four, she forced herself for three months to get up between four and five in the

mornings in order to overcome her habitual reluctance to rise. She remained an early riser, and her habits of life were frugal. Most important of all, she strongly repressed the sexual side of her nature. This repression was symbolised in those of her dreams which dealt with these matters by the slaying of a white horse. It culminated in the definite sacrifice of her love-life when she renounced her intimacy with M. Y. It was suggested in an earlier chapter, when discussing the mystical conversion, that this was the essential step in freeing the libido from its earthly attachments, compared with which the other ascetic practices were relatively unimportant.

In discussing the psychological determinants of Mlle Vé's mysticism, it is also necessary to remember that a habit of introversion was probably implanted in childhood by the feeling of inferiority which has already been mentioned. This is the kind of factor in mental development upon which stress is laid by the psychoanalytic school of Dr Adler, which also is recognised as an important determinant of introversion by Dr Jung. The tendency to seek for happiness in another system of reality, may already have been implanted in her by her childhood's failure to find it in this world.

The last point of importance to which I wish to draw attention is the value of Mlle Vé's mysticism for her mental health and for her life. It is essentially misleading to talk of mysticism (as so many psychologists do) as if it were a succession of emotional experiences which were valued merely as emotional experiences. Flournoy quotes Silberer's statement that true mysticism is characterised by an enlargement of personality, and he finds striking evidence of such enlargement in Mlle Vé. The manner of dealing with her libido by its sublimation

into religious channels is one which resulted in an enrichment, and not in an impoverishment of her character. Even if we rejected its claim to objective reality, we could not judge the value of her mysticism without taking into account the fact that it probably played an essential part in bringing stability and happiness into a life which seemed to have been blasted in its beginnings by the wickedness of another person.

CHAPTER XVII

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have so far been describing the phenomena of the religious consciousness, and discussing its psychological mechanism without concerning ourselves with the question of how far what has been said has any bearing on our intellectual attitude towards religion. It is clear that at many points we have been skirting questions of great practical importance, which probably raised themselves in the minds of my readers at such points. It is to such questions (belonging rather to the philosophy than to the psychology of religion) that I intend to devote this last chapter.

We must begin by making clear exactly how much we intend to discuss, and what kind of answers we may expect to our questions. The central problem is, What contribution does such a psychological treatment of religion make to our knowledge of its truth or falsity? We may ask whether we have shown that all the phenomena of religion are explicable in terms of known mental activities, and therefore proved its untruth. Or have we shown the inability of psychology to give a satisfactory account of some of the facts of the religious consciousness, and therefore left room for the action of God? It is in some such form as the foregoing questions that the problem is often posed, but the form of the two questions is open to objection since it involves assumptions which must themselves be examined. We may take

both of these questions one stage further back and ask whether success in the expression of the phenomena of religion in terms of known mental processes would indeed prove its falsity, and whether it is really in the gaps in our scientific knowledge that we must look for the finger of God. The answer to these last two questions is very generally assumed in the hasty solutions of the problems of religious psychology which are often given.

Professor Leuba, for example, assumes a positive answer to the first of them when he says:

If there were extra-human sources of knowledge and superhuman sources of human power, their existence should, it seems, have become increasingly evident. Yet the converse is apparently true; the supernatural world of the savage has become a natural world to civilized man; the miraculous of yesterday is the explicable of to-day. In religious lives accessible to psychological investigation, nothing requiring the admission of superhuman influences has been found. There is nothing, for example, in the life of the great Spanish mystic whose celebrity is being renewed by contemporary psychologists,—not a desire, not a feeling, not a thought, not a vision, not an illumination,—that can seriously make us look to transcendent causes[1].

He goes on, not to prove, but to assume that he has thus disposed of what he calls *transcendent causes*. There are, of course, other criticisms of this passage from Leuba. For example, it is impossible to pretend that our knowledge of psychological laws is so complete that we can honestly say that it provides us with an explanation of the desires, thoughts, feelings, etc., of anybody. The point, however, which I wish to emphasise at present is that it makes the unproved assumption that religion

[1] *A Psychological Study of Religion*, p. 272.

would be convicted of falsity if it could be expressed in terms of known psychological laws.

The positive answer to the second of these two questions (which is, of course, implied by a positive answer to the first) seems to be assumed by Professor J. Bissett Pratt when he is arguing against Leuba's view and says:

> if the psychologist can explain all the facts of the religious consciousness by scientific laws then there is no psychological proof of God's presence and influence in our lives[1].

He does not take Leuba's further step of supposing that our failure to find evidence of breaks in the causal sequence of mental events in the religious life is evidence that religion is false, but only that no evidence can be brought for its truth from the psychological study of religion. The possibility that the religious explanation of religious experience may be the true one, although psychological investigation is powerless to prove it, he illustrates in the following manner. He supposes that the human race are living in perpetual sunlight, but that most men are blind and a few only are able to see. One of those men who can see will, on opening his eyes, be receiving light sensations. One of the blind psychologists could apply the method of single difference to demonstrate that the opening of the eyes was the cause of the light sensations and fully explained them (in the psychological sense), no reference being needed to the sun or the ether waves or any other outer source. If the seer insisted that he saw the sun, the psychologist could challenge him to see light with his eyes shut, or to fail to see it with them open, or to point out a single element in his experience not accounted for by the psychological

[1] *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 455.

formula. Both, Pratt considers, would be right. Within its own limits the psychological explanation would be complete, and it would be vain to seek to prove the objective existence of the sun by breaking down the psychological correlation of light sensation and organic condition. And yet it would be true that the seer saw the sun.

We will now return to the discussion of the idea that it is sufficient in order to refute religion to state that all its phenomena can be accounted for by the operation of the ordinary laws of psychology. Of course, with the present limitation of our knowledge of the laws of mental operations, it is not true that they can; but perhaps this will be possible one day. The position that, in this case, religion would be proved to be illusory, is not ordinarily stated. The opponent of religion is content to demonstrate, so far as he can, that religion is explicable in terms of ordinary psychological processes, and to give a metaphorical shrug of his shoulders which induces his readers to take the further step for themselves.

The foregoing discussion should have made it clear that this position is reached by two steps. The first is the statement that the only possible psychological proof of the reality of divine action in religious experience is the discovery of gaps in its psychological causation, that no such gaps can be found, and that, therefore, the truth of religion cannot be proved by psychology. The second step is that if it cannot be proved by psychology then it is not true; a fallacy well rebutted by Pratt in his parable of the blind psychologist and the seer of the sun. But surely it is enough to state it explicitly to make it clear that this second step is a fallacy which can only escape detection when it conceals itself as an implicit assumption.

But even the first step, which Professor Pratt admits, cannot be allowed to pass unquestioned. Is it absolutely certain that the only evidence we could possibly have of the divine origin of religious states of mind is that they are not found to obey the same psychological laws as other mental facts? It does not seem to be self-evident that this is the case. I intend later to mention ways in which religious people have attempted to justify their faith by arguments drawn from religious experience which do not involve any assertion of a contradiction of known psychological laws. We may, of course, on examining them decide that all of these arguments are invalid. If we do, and if no others can be found, it will be necessary for religious persons to fall back on arguments drawn from mental facts which fall outside known psychological laws (if such can be found) if they intend to use psychology as a support for their faith. But we must protest against the introduction at this stage of an assumption (and a totally unnecessary assumption) which would condemn all such arguments unheard.

A similar criticism must be directed against another too easy method of refuting religion adopted by Feuerbach and by some of the psychoanalytical writers. This is a reduction of the doctrines of religion to fulfilments of human wishes with the implicit conclusion that they are therefore illusory. We ought, indeed, to be careful in the use of the argument so common in popular theology which uses the fact that particular doctrines of Christianity fulfil mental needs as evidence for their truth. Unless we assume the existence of a benevolent God, there seems no sufficient reason for saying that the actual nature of the universe must correspond with our desires, but certainly it may. If we had other grounds for be-

lieving in the existence of a benevolent God, there might even be a presumption in favour of the nature of reality being such as our demands required it to be. The reduction of religious dogma to wish-fulfilment—the belief in God to the demand for a perfect lover or for the parent, the belief in immortality to the demand for continued personal existence and for the survival of those we love, and so on—cannot in itself be a valid logical argument against religion, for it would only be effective as evidence against religious truth if the hypothesis of the reality of God were ruled out on other grounds.

There is a last tendency which must also be noticed to abandon, on logically insufficient grounds, the claim to truth of religion. It was stated in earlier chapters that heterosuggestion and autosuggestion played a part in the formation of religious belief. It is easy to make the inference that religion is merely the result of suggestion, and to dismiss it as a delusion partly fostered by other people and partly by ourselves. This inference becomes easier if we always think of autosuggestion as a method of self-deception, and of autohypnosis as a condition involving the lulling to sleep of the "higher faculties," so that self-deception may be successfully carried out. But we saw that this was a ridiculously misleading way of looking at these things. Autosuggestion is a process of the education of the subconscious, and autohypnosis and its related mental states (Baudouin's *contention*, *concentration*, etc.) are conditions under which this education is most effectively carried out. Autosuggestion may be employed to implant true ideas in the mind as well as false. The above considerations apply, of course, equally to the implanting of beliefs by heterosuggestion. The fact that religious

beliefs are fostered by the methods of suggestion is no evidence either of their falsity or of their truth. The only real relevance of this fact to the problem of the truth of religious belief is that it makes impossible any proof of the truth of a religious doctrine from its mere *existence* as a belief. It still remains possible to argue that the belief has characters which give evidence that it is true.

The question as to whether religious experience can give any evidence for the truth of religion is an important one at the present time. Many schools of religious thought are now trying to base the whole of their theology on subjective experience. Others, more cautiously, recognise this as one amongst many sources of religious knowledge. As an example of the latter attitude, I will quote a passage from Professor Sorley's Gifford lectures:

When reflexion intervenes upon this [religious] experience, the dangerous process of describing and naming begins. The power to which the individual trusts for reconciliation and security—in a word, for salvation—is conceived as beyond the reach of hostile or indifferent forces, as willing the good which the worshipper conceives, and as able to carry out what he wills. Starting in this way from the facts of religious experience, the religious man becomes involved in the same problems, concerning the relation of nature and values to one another and of both to the ultimate ground of reality, which meet the philosopher in his attempt to arrive at an interpretation of the universe[1].

This tendency has passed from the work of original thinkers into popular writings on theology, and in these it sometimes takes forms which are open to serious criticism. *The objective validity of religious experience* easily becomes a formula which serves no other purpose

[1] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 478.

than to hide looseness of thought. All religious experience cannot be valid (unless, of course, we choose to mean by religious experience only such subjective experience as is objectively valid, when the formula loses all possibility of proving of practical value). If the formula is to mean anything at all for us, we must, before employing it, seriously face two questions. The first is whether we can know that any religious experience is objectively valid, *i.e.* points to a reality beyond itself. If we decide that it can, we find ourselves faced with the problem of finding a criterion by which we can decide what part of the subjective experience connected with religion has this objective validity and what part has not.

I will begin by discussing a particularly simple answer to the second of these questions, since it is clear that if we could begin by discovering a criterion by which the objective validity of some religious experience was clearly established, we would also have answered our first question without having given ourselves much trouble. If we fail to find such a clearly marked criterion, it may still be possible that we can justify the formula *the objective validity of religious experience*, but it will be necessary to do so by first finding out whether any religious experience can be reasonably held to point to a reality behind it, and then working out a rough practical guide which may tell us no more than that on the whole it is probable that certain experiences have this reference to a reality behind them, while others probably have not.

Such intense experiences as mystical states of prayer, and, to a less extent, other religious experiences, seem often to come with a character of *givenness* which makes it impossible for the experient to doubt that they come from outside himself. The mystic experiences voices and

visions which he feels certain cannot come from his own mind, because they come as suddenly into his consciousness and as independently of the stream of his thought as do perceptions. In an earlier chapter I quoted from a thesis by a French Protestant, who says: "we feel within us a being that is not ourselves; we see born within us new ideas and perceptions, real revelations that do not come from ourselves[1]." Now, it is just this character of coming from outside our own minds, which we may call *givenness*, that is, the subjective mark of what we consider to belong to the outside world; it is the mark of objects of perception as distinct from those of imagination. It follows that the affirmation that all experiences accompanied by this mark are experiences of objective reality is a natural one. If psychology could give no other explanation of this character than that such experience is of the nature of perception, then the argument as to the reality of the objects of religion would, at least, be settled for those who have had such experiences. Other people, too, might reasonably be asked to accept the testimony of the large number of persons to whom the experience was real. Unfortunately, however, psychological science has another explanation of this character which prevents us from taking such an easy path out of our difficulties.

This character of givenness belongs not only to perceptions of external reality, but also to any experiences which result from the passage of mental processes from unconscious regions of the mind to consciousness. Dreams, and the vague images and intuitions which cross our minds in the waking state, equally with religious feelings, seem to be outside the stream of thought, and like re-

[1] *A Psychological Study of Religion.* Leuba, p. 222.

ligious feelings have been rationalised by attributing their origin to something outside the person experiencing them. In certain forms of mental disorder these images and thoughts possess the same convincingly apparent objective reality as the visions and locutions of the mystic. The conflicts which emerge from the subconscious of these insane persons are heard by them as voices which are as objectively real to them as the voices of actual people belonging to the real world. We can find, however, a full and sufficient explanation of such experiences in the theory that they are irruptions into consciousness of material from unconscious levels of the mind. The apparently outside origin of religious experiences may reasonably be explained in the same way. It is possible, therefore, to say with Delacroix, that where the mystic postulates God, the psychologist need only postulate the subconscious. In arguing against the psychologist in this matter, it is grossly unfair to talk (as do Fr. Poulain and many other Roman Catholic writers) of the subconscious as if it were a hypothesis invented by psychologists for the sole purpose of providing an alternative explanation of religious phenomena. The subconscious is becoming increasingly well known in general psychology, and in general psychology its action is found in phenomena closely parallel to those of the religious life.

We must be careful, however, to notice exactly how far these considerations have carried us. They have given us no reason for supposing that no valid argument can be drawn for the validity of religious experience from psychological data. They have only shown the weakness of this one simple and rather crude argument from the *givenness* of such experience—the argument that because I feel that these experiences have not come from my

own mind, they are due to divine action. Undoubtedly this argument has sometimes been used explicitly to prove the validity of religious experience, and probably it has much more force to the minds of unreflecting people who do not argue about their experience at all. But it is very easy to exaggerate the extent to which it has been used. As soon as religious persons begin to reflect on their subjective experiences they find that a large number of them cannot be due to divine action because they seem to be evil in their fruits, and these seem to have just the same character of perceptions as the others. Angels are seen, but the fruit of the visions is pride, and voices purporting to be divine exhort the saint to rebellion or to peculiarity of doctrine or practice. He, of course, still believes that they come from some source outside himself, and attributes them to the devil. The important thing to notice is that he finds himself unable to make the simple criterion of givenness a sufficient criterion of the divine source of his revelations.

Let us turn to St Teresa as a typical reflective mystic to see what she did, in fact, take as a criterion of the divine source of her experiences. It is much more complex than the one we have just been discussing. When giving her reasons for believing that a form of ecstasy, which she calls *the flight of the spirit*, is neither an illusion nor the work of the devil, she says:

neither the imagination nor the evil one could represent what leaves such peace, calm, and good fruits in the soul, and particularly the following three graces of a very high order. The first of these is a perception of the greatness of God, which becomes clearer to us as we witness more of it. Secondly, we gain self-knowledge and humility as we see how creatures so base as ourselves in comparison with the Creator of such wonders, have

dared to offend Him in the past or venture to gaze on Him now. The third grace is a contempt of all earthly things unless they are consecrated to the service of so great a God[1].

I do not propose, at present, to discuss the validity of St Teresa's criteria, but only to point out how far removed they are from the simple argument from the apparent extramental origin of religious experiences which we started by discussing. It should be clear that the large number of attacks on the validity of religious experience, which assume that this argument in its crudest form is the only position which need be dealt with, are gaining a victory very much too cheaply.

What has been said so far has been a necessary clearing of the ground before starting an attack on the main problem—whether psychological analysis provides us with any means of deciding whether there is an objective reality behind some part at least of what we call religious experience. This is clearly a problem belonging to the philosophy of religion. It is a part, and only a part, of the problem of our knowledge of the truth of religious conceptions. It will be well to define the problem more clearly so that we may see what part of the philosophy of religion it clearly is not. There are two main ways of approach to religious knowledge which we are leaving entirely on one side. These are the metaphysical way and the approach by revelation. It may be possible to prove the truth of religion by pure reason without any appeal to experience. On the other hand, it is possible that religious truth has been revealed and that any attempt to prove it either by pure reason or from experience is necessarily futile. It may be, of course, that

[1] *The Interior Castle*, 6. v. 12.

all three methods of approach are valid and that all three together may be found to support the truth of religious conceptions. The method of approach by experience—the empirical method—is only one of three possible methods of attempting the justification of religious belief, and the data of a psychological study of religion are only a part of the data of the empirical method.

I am emphasising this point because I do not wish it to be supposed that if we do not find any final and irrefragable proof of the truth of religion from religious experience, we have undermined the foundations of religious belief. Even if we found no satisfactory support for religion at all in the empirical method, we should still only have reached the position held by many religious intellectualists and by the sturdiest supporters of revelation as the supreme source of religious knowledge, for neither of these have ever supposed that any valid defence of religion was to be found by the empirical method. On the other hand, if we find that we have not a certain proof but a strong presumption of the truth of religion from evidence drawn from our study, this result may be, in reality, a very valuable one, although it would be disappointing if we supposed that we were discussing the sole source of evidence for religious truth. We have no reason for supposing that we shall be able to found a satisfactory apologetic on religious experience alone. Any indications with which it may provide us must be taken in conjunction with all our other sources of knowledge.

Metaphysicians point out that no empirical argument can give absolute certainty. All knowledge drawn from experience is essentially knowledge obtained by the in-

ductive method, and this can only give a high degree of probability. We do not know that the sun will rise to-morrow with the same apodictic certainty as we know that two plus two makes four. So long as we are using the empirical method in our approach to religious truth, it is necessary, frankly to recognise that we are working under the same limitation. By the empirical method we can reach no demonstration of the truths of religion which must command assent in the same way as the truths of mathematics. We might conceivably reach as high a degree of probability as we have when we assert that the sun will rise to-morrow, but that is not what is meant by apodictic certainty. In actual fact, of course, we shall probably find that we must be content with a much lower degree of probability than that.

Our attack on the problem will be made much easier if we bear in mind this limitation. We are not looking for an absolutely certain proof of the truths of religion. Such certainty may be supplied by revelation or by metaphysics, but with these we are not concerned. What we are looking for are considerations which appear to indicate, with however small a degree of probability, a solution to our problem. We shall not be content with working out one or only a few arguments for or against the reality of the objects of religion. If we could find one single convincing and final argument for the existence of God which must command the assent of the most obstinate atheist unless he refused to follow his reason, then we might be satisfied with that and go no further. But if we know that the limitations of our method are such that we have no hope of finding such a proof, and that we are necessarily limited to judging probabilities and establishing presumptions, then we

must take into account every item of experience that is available. The contribution of each particular part of experience may not be large, but the combined effect of a considerable number may be to produce an accumulation of evidence sufficient to compel belief in an unprejudiced mind.

In presenting a few of the lines of argument which have been followed by persons trying in this way to marshall evidence to create a presumption in favour of the truth of the religious explanation of the facts of religious psychology, I shall try to avoid the position of an advocate for this explanation. I do believe, in fact, that it is the true one. But nothing could more fatally weaken the case for this explanation than an attitude which refused to see the weak points in the arguments in its favour. Our judgment of probabilities will be valueless unless it is a genuine judgment, that is, one which does not proceed from the conviction that we must at all costs decide on one side. We may reasonably refuse to investigate these questions at all, being content with a simple faith or lack of faith which takes or refuses all on trust, but if we do investigate them we must do so as impartially as we can.

If we were convinced that the empirical method was the only one available for the discovery of truth, so that we would be left in the end with a choice between two sets of probabilities, we should be faced by the problem discussed by William James in his *Will to Believe*. We have what he calls a living, forced, and momentous option. Living because both the alternatives of religious faith and agnosticism are possible to us, forced because no attitude of leaving the question open is possible, momentous because it may be of unlimited importance

which choice we make. At the same time it is (on the above assumption) an option which cannot be decided on intellectual grounds. In this case, James pleads for the right of voluntary adoption of faith. He says:

> Our passional natures not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances, "Do not decide, but leave the question open," is itself a passional decision—just like deciding yes or no—and is attended with the same risk of missing the truth.

It is a caricature of this position to represent it, as many writers do, as equivalent to saying that we may believe anything, whether it be true or false, if only the belief is of sufficient practical value to make it worth preserving. James is assuming that the belief in question is a *live* one, which it would be only if we thought it likely to be true.

This position is the last trench into which the religious man can be driven by his empirical opponent, and unless it be possible to find a final and unquestionable metaphysical argument for the non-existence of God (surely a hopeless quest) it is impossible to drive him from it. Evidence might be brought forward against the belief in God, but the religious man could reply that there was still a chance (however small it might appear) that he was right, and on the strength of this chance and by the demands of his passional nature, he intended to regulate his life on the assumption that the religious hypothesis was the true one. The arguments I am about to describe are attempts to advance from this last trench and to capture some of the intervening country. They

are attempts to show that not merely is there a chance that the religious explanation may be the true one, but that there is a strong presumption in its favour; not merely that we may accept it but that we ought to. It is not possible to do more than sketch a few of the main lines of thought which may be developed, rather as indications of the directions in which evidence may be looked for, than with any idea that they will be found convincing in the attenuated form in which I am going to present them.

I will first take the lines of argument developed by Mr Will Spens in his *Belief and Practice*. These are: first, a justification of the appeal to intuition in the development of doctrine from religious experience by the proved success of the same appeal to intuition in the development of scientific doctrine from scientific data. Secondly, he finds in the explanation given by theology of religious experience, positive features which help to establish the validity of that explanation. Such are, its coherency and the power of particular beliefs to be extended over other kinds of experience than those for which they were originally found to be successful guides. On the whole, a consistent system is yielded by the various particular doctrines which have been found best to provide a guide to religious experience. The author concludes that these facts provide very strong evidence for the validity of theology as a system of thought. I propose later to develop more fully a line of thought closely related to the second of these. My present purpose in giving this bare and inadequate outline of two arguments from a book which follows the empirical method, is merely to illustrate the fact that it is possible to argue from religious experience to the truth of religious doctrine

without using the crude and obviously unsound psychological argument which was discussed earlier.

Another line of argument may be drawn from the region of mental therapy. Modern psycho-pathology inclines towards the view that the neuroses have their origin in the failure of the libido of the neurotic to find its normal outlet in the real world. It then finds satisfaction by the creation of the neurotic symptoms, which are substitutes for the normal employment of the libido. In emotional religion, the libido may be redirected in default of its normal earthly outlet to the religious object of love—God.

It has been said that religion is only a form of neurosis which, for some reason, is not regarded as pathological. There is, however, a good reason why the religious redirection of the libido is not considered to be pathological, for, unlike the neurotic symptom, it provides a permanent and satisfactory solution of the erotic conflict. A practising psychoanalyst, completely sceptical in matters of religion, once told the present writer that in nearly all his cases he found some religious belief which he did not touch because experience had taught him that it was the strongest force for the patient's recovery. One school of psychoanalysts—the Zurich school, followers of Dr Jung—make the inculcation of the religious motive a part of their therapeutic method.

This would seem to suggest very strongly that the religious solution of the erotic conflict is different in kind from the neurotic solution, and that when the soul which has found no earthly satisfaction for its love directs that love to God, it is doing something very different from the creation of a phantasy love-object in place of a real one. It has found a satisfactory resting-place for its love

instead of finding an unsatisfactory solution of the conflict between desire and reality in the neurotic symptom or in the phantasy. Now, many of the theories about religion which have been suggested by psychology of this type do, in fact, suppose that the objects of religion are merely phantasies woven by man to satisfy his emotional needs. But that there is this difference between the effectiveness of these two ways of dealing with his desire, seems to suggest that such different effects do not proceed from the same cause. I have pointed out in an earlier chapter that the acceptance of religion does, as a matter of fact, depend very largely on its power to satisfy man's emotional needs, and that emotional religion owes much of its character to its intimate connection with human love. It seems reasonable to suppose that the genuine satisfactoriness of the religious solution of the erotic conflict is the result of the fact that its object is a real one—that God is not merely a phantasy creation of the worshipping mind.

There is a third method of approaching the problem which is important. We may consider that its power to rationalise (that is, to give a coherent, intelligible, and reasonably simple account of) experience is a criterion (however imperfect) of the truth of a religious doctrine. It is necessary here to make a distinction between this position and that of the later pragmatists, who would consider that the truth of a doctrine is simply its power to rationalise experience, and that any question of its relation to an objective reality is meaningless. The position I am at present describing is that a doctrine rationalises experience because it has, certainly in a limited and relative way, that relation to an objective reality which we call *truth*.

This, we may notice, is the criterion used to test the

truth of a scientific theory. The atomic theory of Dalton was originated because it gave a coherent and intelligible account of a certain number of physical facts of which the hypothesis of an infinitely divisible matter gave no explanation or with which it could only be reconciled by a large number of arbitrary and complicated assumptions. Such facts were the following: the law of combination in definite proportions, the law of multiple proportions, and the law of combination in simple proportions by volume. This theory has also shown its power to rationalise other facts not known to its discoverer. Such are: the rates of diffusion of gases, the connection between the abnormal molecular weights of electrolytes in solution and the electrical conductivity of these solutions, and the success of Van der Waal's correction of Boyle's Law. Both its power of rationalising the facts known to its originator, and still more its power of rationalising later discoveries, give us reason for supposing that it possesses a real, though perhaps partial, insight into truth. We feel confident that, whatever new discoveries about the constitution of matter may be made (such as those embodied in the electronic theory), the conception of discrete (though not necessarily indivisible) particles is nearer the truth about the real nature of matter than would be the alternative theory.

It is necessary, however, to face fairly the weaknesses and defects of this criterion, which are the weaknesses and defects of the empirical method itself. Particular experiences may be illusory, *i.e.* the simple and intelligible explanation to which they appear to point may not be the true one. Thus, the simple rationalisation of monitory voices is that the person hearing them is in communication with a spirit, but a more careful psychological investigation may lead us to conclude that they

are really received from unconscious levels of his own mind. The appearance of purpose in the construction of organisms is rationalised in a simple and satisfactory way by the assumption of an intelligent creator, but it may be argued that this appearance can be the effect of mechanical causes acting under particular conditions. It is not, therefore, sufficient to accept the most satisfactory rationalisation of any particular experience. It is also necessary to ask what is the probability that it is really due to some other cause, that its apparent indication of the simple rationalisation is an illusion. Neglect to do this is characteristic of infantile and primitive modes of thinking. When, however, different experiences covering a wide range point to rationalisations, which are all essentially the same, the probability of error becomes less. The probability of error is, in fact, equal to the product of the probabilities of illusion in each particular case. But however small we may consider this probability to be, it cannot be zero. We can have a high degree of probability that the concordant indications of a wide range of experience are not entirely illusory, but we cannot have metaphysical certainty. At the same time, we have no reason for supposing that the truths we have reached are absolute, any more than we have in the case of the atomic theory. A wider experience has shown that it is necessary to modify that theory and to regard the atom, not as an indivisible unit, but as a system of negatively charged particles rapidly moving in orbits around a positive nucleus. But this in no way alters the fact that the atomic theory contained a real advance in truth from earlier theories. But the truth arrived at was not absolute and final. This fact might equally well have been illustrated by the Newtonian physics and the theory of relativity. In the same

way, there is no reason for claiming finality in religious doctrines; but so far as they are legitimate rationalisations from experience, later experience may be expected to modify, but not overthrow, these earlier rationalisations.

If this method be accepted as a valid one, it will mean that where in earlier chapters the methods by which I suppose the mind to have reached religious belief by a process of explaining experience, were outlined and were noted as facts of merely psychological interest, we shall now regard them as of importance in helping to establish the truth of those beliefs. The fact that the belief in God rationalises, let us say, our experience of the moral conflict, will be one piece of evidence in favour of the view that the belief in God is a true one. If we find that this same belief also rationalises the facts of religious experience the evidence is proportionately strengthened, and so on for all the experience we can investigate which is relevant to the belief in question.

To sum up, we may regard its power to rationalise experience (which will include subjective experience) as a criterion of the truth of a religious hypothesis, as it is of a scientific hypothesis. Since we can never be sure that particular experiences are not illusory, we can never say more than that the success of a religious doctrine in rationalising experience creates a strong presumption in favour of its truth. A further presumption is created by its power to rationalise different and independent kinds of experience.

In practice we find ourselves perpetually adopting this test of its ability to rationalise independent kinds of experience as a criterion of religious truth. The critically reflective mystic believes in his experiences only when they have as their result the progress of the soul in virtue. If he be a Catholic, he adds that they

must be in conformity with the teachings of the Church; if a Protestant, with the teachings of the Bible. We may state his position in other words by saying that the justification of religious experience must be by its conformity with the demands of the moral consciousness and with authority in religion as attested in other ways.

If we find that by following the dictates of religious experience, we build up a system which, on the whole, corresponds with the religious system built up from consideration of the other types of relevant experience—*i.e.* the facts of the natural world, the historical facts of religions, and the facts of the moral consciousness; then we have a very impressive argument for the general validity of religious experience. It is not necessary for the purpose of this argument to show that one of these four ways of approaching the truths of religion is certainly valid in itself and that the others may be justified because they are seen to point in the same direction. Undoubtedly an argument in this form would be simpler and more direct. It is enough to show that all four of these independent ways of approach point to a solution of the problems of religion which is substantially identical to provide a strong presumption that they are all based on a real insight into truth. If the God revealed by religious experience is found to be, in fact, the God required by the moral consciousness, and to be the God required to explain the world as we find it, and to be the God revealed in historical Christianity, then the probability that each of these largely independent lines of approach to God is based on error becomes small. The probability that the concordant result of all four expresses some real insight into objective reality becomes proportionately great.

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